

EXAMINER'S REPORT AS LATIN 2011

There were 36 candidates, a very substantial increase on the 23 of 2010, which followed 27 in 2009 and 28 of 2008. The range of marks in the Language paper was 95.5 to 41.5 (96.5 to 16.5 in 2010, 95 to 53.5 in 2009), and the median was 79 (88 in 2010, 80.5 in 2009); in the Literature paper the range was 94.5 to 4 (95 to 12 in 2010, 96.5 to 55.5 in 2009), and the median was 79.5 (79 in 2010, 80.5 in 2009).

Latin Language 8282/01

Both translations were attempted by 9 candidates, the same proportion as in 2010 (6/23), lower than in earlier years (9/27 in 2009, 13/28 in 2008); Virgil was offered by 15 candidates, Livy by 11, a change from 2010, when Caesar alone was offered as a single translation. (Sections A, B, and C were all offered by one candidate; the two highest marks were counted). For Virgil, twenty out of twenty five translations scored better than 40/50, for Livy, ten out of twenty one; which reversed the balance between Virgil and Caesar in 2010. But the figures were too low for Virgil in 2010 to allow conclusions; and the examiner has no idea whether candidates make their choices in advance. For Section C six candidates out of twenty six scored better than 40/50; twenty two scored better for explanation of syntax than for translation into Latin (but not in every case by much).

In Sections A and B the mark scale and criteria, starting from one mark for each word for meaning and one more if appropriate for syntax make for a somewhat mechanical assessment; but holistic criteria risk subjectivity, and a more particular process recognises students' approach at this level to Latin they have not seen before. Candidates had less trouble with vocabulary; although some confused similar words (e.g. *munere* with *murus/moenia*) and many, in the face of the introductory information and the Glossary, took *Falerii* and *Veii* to be peoples. It is syntax in which they need practice, not only in accident and in the range of possible meanings of a case or a mood, but in the mental agility they need for (e.g.) *virgas eis quibus proditorem agerent... dedit*, where *eis* refers to the boys and *quibus* to the rods.

For Virgil accident and syntax may be indicated by verse rhythm; and candidates do not always need to scan the whole line. In *venimus* (528), as first word in the line, e is long and the tense is perfect. In *copia* (520) and *superbia* (529), in the fifth foot, a is short and the case is nominative. In *iustitia* (523) the third i is short in the regular sound structure of vowel vowel, and a must be long and the case ablative.

In Section C, Question One, some candidates offered explanations of exemplary concision and even elegance; others described the word in every detail. That may be safe (although additional detail that is incorrect may worry the examiner), but in (e.g.) (v) for *quibus* all that is necessary is 'ablative after *utor*', because that is the case used for the objects of that verb, and for *uterentur* 'subjunctive in a relative clause of purpose, imperfect in past sequence', because that is the mood and that is the tense used in that type of clause (in that sequence). (This point applies also of course to explanations of syntax in the paper on the set texts.) On the other hand some explanations were too concise. 'Mixed time' may be said of conditional statements etc. of all sorts, 'real' and 'ideal' as well as 'unreal'; in (ii) candidates need to specify

that the condition was ‘unreal’, and that the imperfect subjunctive referred to the present and the pluperfect to the past. Again ‘simultaneous’ may be said of two types of *dum* clause, of partial co-extension as well as complete co-extension; a necessary distinction is made by those latter phrases (which are used by Bradley’s Arnold, Gildersleeve & Lodge, and Woodcock). Datives have been divided too finely, perhaps; but ‘dative of reference’ (in explanations in the paper on the set texts) is too general. The dative with verbs of ‘taking away’ (in (iv)) can be distinguished from the ablative of separation (Woodcock).

The examiner apologises for setting a perfect subjunctive in a consecutive clause (viii); it was evident that candidates were not familiar with that tense in such clauses.

In Section C, Question Two, the examiner did not allow *quam primum* for ‘as soon as’ in (iv), because the phrase is used in that sense almost exclusively with *posse* in classical Latin; he did not allow *quam si* for ‘as if’ in (xiii), because that phrase is used almost exclusively after a comparative expression in classical Latin; and he did not allow the present tense in the conditional clause in (vi), although that usage (*si est... erit*) is common outside Cicero and didactic prose. But he did allow an imperfect subjunctive (*pugnaremus*) in (xiii) because the conditional sequence is used in comparative clauses if emphasis is to be put on the unreality of the comparison.

Literature 8282/02

Ten candidates scored higher for Virgil, twenty two for Livy (as candidates were more successful with the prose text in 2008 and 2009). On the other hand, in the translations twenty one scored higher for Virgil and eight for Livy; the examiner suspects, without having enough evidence, that it was easier to remember (e.g.) facts and stories about Delphi than the particular arguments that Anna urged on Dido (although the latter are perhaps more important for an understanding of the text).

For Virgil answers on the simile in lines 669-671 rightly referred to the fall of Troy in Book 2; but only one or two referred also to the anticipation of the fall of Troy in the simile at *Iliad* 22, 410, which is mentioned in the students’ handbook at 669 (an excellent note). Answers to the question about verse rhythm were disappointing overall. Line 667 is one of the most conspicuously expressive in Book 4, and is noticed in the students’ handbook (‘the rhythm... is wild’). Candidates should be aware, and may be confident, that examiners (this examiner, certainly) will take the students’ book as the first and best indication of what candidates should know. The notes on Virgil’s lines 15-30, again, excellent, point to a number of rhetorical and poetic effects, for which the question was formulated. But they do not describe *sparsos fraterna caede penates* (21) as an instance of chiasmus, and the examiner was surprised that some candidates did; the order is chiastic (ABBA) only in that the order of the cases is acc., abl., abl., acc., and there is not the contrast between the first pair and the second that is characteristic of chiasmus.

The terms of the question need to be noticed. For Delphi the omphalos might be mentioned for this question as in a building; but Zeus’ birds (identified variously) are less important for the question than the treasuries of the Greek states, and the Pythian Games.

One final lament (but laments are misleading, because the examiner continues to enjoy reading and admiring the scripts of the best candidates, of whom there are more than a few). In the question on verse rhythm the examiner has indeed already lamented the traditional requirement to mark the 'principal metrical caesura'. In line 667 the principal metrical caesura is either after *gemitu* or after *gemituque* (and the obscuring of that regular caesura has an effect, which at least one candidate did notice); the caesura after *lamentis* (the molossus is expressive, as some candidates observed) is a rhythmical caesura. The definition of 'the caesura' is too thorny for a mere half mark (and, at this level, for compulsion to answer).