

OCR Report to Centres

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Latin (J281)

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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Overview

As in January 2012, entries for A401 and A402 were small, especially at Foundation Tier.

The performance of candidates on A401 was very similar to that in the January 2012 sitting.

The Higher Tier A402 paper turned out to be less testing than the rather demanding January 2012 paper. Grade thresholds were correspondingly higher than in January 2012, though in line with those set last June.

A401/01 Latin Language 1: Mythology and domestic life (Foundation Tier)

General Comments

As in January 2012, the number of candidates entered for this paper was very small. Generalisations are therefore difficult to make, though it is true to say that most candidates handled the comprehension questions more confidently than the translation question.

Candidates appeared to have had sufficient time to complete the paper. Some produced a rough draft, followed by a neat copy, of the translation question. The number of corrections elsewhere in scripts suggested that candidates had plenty of time to check their work. Examiners noted, however, that sometimes correct answers were changed to incorrect responses. Any alterations need to be clear and unambiguous, and the rough version of the translation should be crossed out.

Some candidates showed a tendency to provide alternative answers, using either brackets or an oblique stroke. Teachers should discourage their students from so doing, since an incorrect alternative response negates the mark they would have been awarded.

Candidates were generally well-acquainted with the Defined Vocabulary List, though there were some errors with the meaning of some common words, such as *senex* and *terra*. The usual 'little' words (*itaque*, *tum*, etc.) were often not known. Candidates should be reminded to make use of the glossary provided: *uvae* was commonly translated as 'grapes'.

Noun number was an issue for some candidates, with *canibus*, *uvae*, *vitibus* and *vites* commonly translated as singular. Candidates are advised to look very closely also at verb endings when deciding on the tense of a verb; some translations were written entirely in the present tense.

The amended mark scheme for the translation question (introduced in January 2012), which broadens the three-mark band to include translations with up to one major *and* one minor error (or three minor errors), was welcomed by examiners. Valuable marks, however, were lost through the omission of words such as *itaque* and *tum*. Candidates should therefore be advised to check they have translated every Latin word in the passage. With the passage printed above the space for the answer, it is an easy matter to look at the answer and tick each of the Latin words translated.

Individual Questions

Q1: candidates found this a straightforward beginning to the paper, though a few mistranslated *terra*.

Q2: this question was generally quite well done, though some candidates missed the mark for *meum*.

Q3: this was a good discriminator: while most understood *ambulabo*, few were able to recognise the plural *canibus*; the second bullet point was generally well answered.

Q4 (a): a straightforward question for most.

Q4 (b): this was a challenging question for some: *nihil* was often not known or translated as 'never', which affected the rest of the answer.

Q5: a straightforward tick-box question, which was usually answered correctly, though some put a tick in only one box.

Q6: this proved to be a good discriminator, as only the strongest candidates understood *paucas*, and some misread the meaning of *uvas*, which was provided in the glossary.

Q7: the correct answer was given by almost all candidates.

Q8: the translation question proved, as expected, a very good discriminator. Good responses demonstrated attention to noun and verb endings and rarely omitted words in the Latin (see General Comments).

'And so the young man asked the old man, "Why do you have huge bunches of grapes in your garden?"'

Many candidates made a good start to the first section, and scored at least two marks. Common errors included the omission of *in horto tuo* and failing to recognise the cases of *iuvenis* and *senem*. As in Q6, some translated *uvas* as 'grapes', but no marks were lost, if this was a repeated error.

'The old man laughed. "You are stupid," he replied.'

Vocabulary was an issue here, with the majority of candidates not recognising *risit*. The testing of verbs in forms other than the present tense (e.g. *risi* rather than *rideo*) is good practice.

"I prepare the ground well and give very little water to the grapevines."

The first half of this section was usually handled well, though *bene* was sometimes translated as an adjective. The most common errors in the second clause were failing to recognise *minimam* as superlative and translating *vitibus* as singular.

'Then he taught the young man many other things. The young man praised the old man and said,'

There were many good attempts at the second sentence, with most showing an understanding of the young man's actions. *laudavit* was occasionally not known or confused with *laetus*. Generally candidates found the first sentence more challenging, with many making the first noun *iuvenem* the subject of *docuit*.

"I want to work for many hours in the garden." The young man went away happy.'

Although many coped well with *volo* followed by the infinitive *laborare*, some struggled with the phrase *multas horas*, while others did not know the meaning or tense of *abiit*.

Q9: as two of the words were glossed, most candidates scored at least two of the three marks available, but not all recognised the genitive *senis*.

Q10: candidates who took note of the glossary usually scored full marks here.

Q11: this was fairly well answered; many were awarded the first mark, but *quoque* was often omitted or not known.

Q12: most picked out the correct Latin word, but the mark for the translation was often lost, because the meaning was not known or the correct tense not given.

Q13: this was a straightforward question and answered correctly by most.

Q14: this was fairly well answered, though some thought that *omnes* referred to the slave girls.

Q15: this proved to be quite tricky for some: the meaning and tense of *ivit* were often not known, with the result that *Romam* was also rendered incorrectly.

Q16: this was generally well answered, the main error being the infinitive *aedificare* translated as 'he built'.

Q17: this question is designed to be accessible to candidates of all abilities, and it was pleasing to see that a good number of candidates achieved full marks. However, some candidates are still translating the Latin word instead of giving a word derived from it. When defining the derivative, candidates are reminded not to offer an alternative meaning, which may invalidate the first, correct meaning.

Most candidates managed to follow the storyline fairly well, and there were some good scripts, which reflected the hard work done by both the candidates and their teachers.

A401/02 Latin Language 1: Mythology and Domestic life (Higher Tier)

General Comments

It was encouraging to see a small increase in the number of candidates entered for this paper, the majority of whom performed well. A number of candidates gained full marks, and there were very few low-scoring candidates. Only a handful would seem to have been entered for the wrong tier, and may have achieved a better mark on the Foundation Tier equivalent.

Examiners felt that the paper was accessible to the full range of candidates, whilst differentiating well, particularly in certain questions. Both the translation question and the comprehension questions revealed a sound understanding of the storyline, in most cases. There were very few examples of 'No Response', suggesting that candidates of all abilities were able to engage with the questions.

Candidates appeared to have had sufficient time to complete the paper. Many were able to produce a rough draft, followed by a neat copy, of the translation question. The number of corrections elsewhere in scripts suggested that candidates had plenty of time to check their work. Examiners noted, however, that often correct answers were changed to incorrect responses. Any alterations need to be clear and unambiguous, and the rough version of the translation should be crossed out.

Some candidates showed a tendency to provide alternative answers, using either brackets or an oblique stroke. Teachers should discourage their students from so doing, since an incorrect alternative response negates the mark they would have been awarded.

Most candidates were well-acquainted with the Defined Vocabulary List, though there were some surprising errors with the meaning of some common words, such as *laudavit* and *festinaverunt*. Candidates should be reminded to make use of the glossary provided: *vites* and *uvas* were sometimes translated as 'grapes'.

Noun number was an issue for some candidates, with *uvas*, *vites*, *arbores*, *silvas* and *insulas* commonly translated as singular. Candidates are advised to look very closely at verb endings when deciding on the tense of a verb; some translations were written almost entirely in the present tense.

The amended mark scheme for the translation question (introduced in January 2012), which broadens the three-mark band to include translations with up to one major *and* one minor error (or three minor errors), was welcomed by examiners. Valuable marks, however, were lost through the omission of words such as *igitur*, *ipse* and *deinde*. Candidates should therefore be advised to check they have translated every Latin word in the passage. With the passage printed above the space for the answer, it is an easy matter to look at the answer and tick each of the Latin words translated.

Individual Questions

Q1: many candidates found this a relatively straightforward beginning to the paper, with almost all gaining the mark for *habitabat*, though *terra* was often rendered incorrectly.

Q2: this was a good discriminator: only some were able to recognise the comparative *laetiorem*, and *habiturum esse* was often confused with *habitaturum esse*.

Q3: a straightforward question for most; some candidates included incorrect additional information, which resulted in a harmful addition.

Q4: not all candidates knew the meaning of *nihil* and there was some uncertainty about *sciebat*.

Q5: this was generally well done, though not all candidates knew the meaning of the verb *invenit*.

Q6: this tick-box question was well done by almost all candidates, though occasionally only one box was ticked.

Q7: this proved to be a good discriminator, as only the strongest candidates understood *paucas*, and some misread the meaning of *uvas*, which was provided in the glossary.

Q8: this was another very good discriminator: only some were able to recognise the pluperfect tense, and *in* was often ignored.

Q9: the translation question proved, as expected, a very good discriminator. Good responses demonstrated attention to noun and verb endings and rarely omitted words in the Latin (see General Comments).

‘Therefore the young man, having knocked on the door, asked the old man why he had so many huge bunches of grapes in his garden,’

Most candidates made a good start to the first section, and scored at least two marks. Common errors included the omission of *in horto* and *tot* was often translated as ‘such’. The ablative absolute was generally handled well: both literal and more natural translations are acceptable. The case of *ille* was sometimes not recognised, resulting in translations such as ‘in that garden’.

‘but he himself (had) almost none. The old man, laughing, replied, “You are more stupid than a donkey.’

Though there were some excellent translations of this section, *ipse* was often omitted and *nullas* translated as ‘nothing’. *ridens* proved challenging to many, in terms of both meaning and recognition of the present participle. Most candidates understood the meaning of the words *stultior* and *asino*, but only the best recognised the comparative form of the adjective and the ablative of comparison.

‘You do not look after the grapevines well. You ought to give very little water to the grapevines and destroy the rest of the trees.’”

As with *es* in the second section of the translation, not all candidates recognised the second person singular verb endings. *bene* was sometimes translated as an adjective. *debes* was commonly linked with only the second infinitive *delere*, and occasionally mistranslated as ‘you owe’. The best discriminator was *minimam*, with only the best candidates recognising the superlative form. At the end of the section some struggled with where to put *-que*, and *ceteras* was sometimes confused with *celeriter*.

'After he heard these things, he praised the old man on account of his help. Then the young man promised'

Many handled the temporal clause well, though some translated *postquam* as 'afterwards'. *laudavit* was sometimes confused with *laetus*, and, consequently perhaps, *senem* was made the subject of the verb. *deinde* was occasionally omitted, and candidates are reminded that one omission is regarded as a major error (see General Comments).

'that he would work for many hours and departed happily.'

Most candidates coped very well with this final section, and the indirect statement was generally handled well, though even the best responses sometimes included an erroneous 'himself'. *discessit* was not always known, and examiners recommend the testing of verbs in forms other than the principal parts.

Q10: this was a straightforward question and answered correctly by most.

Q11: most candidates scored the mark, though some failed to recognise the plural *vites*. The mark was not lost, however, if this was a repeated error.

Q12: this was a good discriminator: most candidates referred to the slave girls cutting back the vines, but *tam* was also required to indicate the extent of the pruning; *omnes* was sometimes omitted or made to refer to the slave girls.

Q13 (a): this was very well answered on the whole, though *vehementer* was occasionally not known or omitted.

Q13 (b): as *festinaverunt* is such a common verb, examiners insisted on the meaning 'hurried'; noun number caused problems for some, with *silvas* often rendered as singular, and not all recognised the accusative case following *in*.

Q14: this was generally well answered, though *non posset* was sometimes rendered as 'it was not possible', which was accepted only when 'for him' was added.

Q15: the correct box was ticked by almost all candidates.

Q16: this was a good discriminator, with only the best responses recognising *minus*; slightly more candidates were familiar with *plus*.

Q17 (a): a straightforward question for most, though sometimes *divitem* was omitted.

Q17 (b): most gained the first mark for *aedificaret*, but *insulas* was regularly made singular.

Q18: this question is designed to be accessible to candidates of all abilities, and plenty of candidates achieved full marks. However, some are still translating the Latin word instead of giving a word derived from it. When defining the derivative, candidates are reminded to give a clear and simple definition, and not to offer an alternative meaning, which may invalidate the first, correct meaning (e.g. 'clamour' = 'loud noise' (*accepted*) / 'disruption' (*not accepted*)).

Most candidates performed well on this paper, and many scored high marks, which reflected the hard work done by both the candidates and their teachers.

A402/01 Latin Language 2 (Foundation Tier)

As in previous January sessions, the entry for these papers was very small and it is difficult therefore to draw comparisons with the performance of candidates last summer. Candidates seem to have found the narrative clear to follow and it was a pleasure to mark such a good number of competent answers at both tiers.

The entry was very small. Most followed the storyline well and there were fewer really weak responses than usual.

Q1: most candidates got off to a good start on this relatively straightforward question.

Q2: *pro* was not always understood ('in front of', even at this level, was not accepted here), but otherwise most candidates found it easy to pick up marks.

Q3: to gain the mark, candidates needed to show that they understood the sense of *vivebat*.

Q4: as at Higher Tier, some, perhaps falling into the trap of taking the words in the order in which they appeared in the Latin, missed the fact that it was Phocion who provoked the anger of the citizens, not the other way round.

Q5: straightforward and well answered.

Q6: straightforward and well answered.

Q7: well answered.

Q8: well answered by those who used the help in the glossary.

Q9: well answered.

Q10: 'Finally Phocion came back to the city'. The compound *revenit* was sometimes a difficulty but most got the gist by supplying a verb of motion.

'Therefore the citizens came into the forum to catch sight of him.' The *ut* clause was generally handled well.

'A few were praising him in a loud voice.' As at Higher Tier, some took *magna voce* as the subject, which was taken as a 'major' error in the mark scheme.

'Many, however, were saying that he was a traitor.' The accusative and infinitive construction is difficult at this level but most responses made some sense here.

'Then, although Phocion was now an old man, the citizens decided to kill him.' As at Higher Tier, *iam* was sometimes omitted.

'When the guards were taking Phocion to death ...' this was well answered by candidates.

'... a friend said 'The citizens are punishing you very cruelly, Phocion!'' The superlative form of *crudelissime* was sometimes missed but this was otherwise handled well.

'He replied 'Many others have had this death.'" Some candidates took *alii* as 'allies' but those who knew it tended to translate the rest well.

'In this way the Athenians killed a good leader'. *interfecerunt*, as seen often at this level, was sometimes not known.

'The citizens were so angry that no one wanted to bury his body.' The straightforward result clause was generally handled well.

A402/02 Latin Language 2 (Higher Tier)

The entry on this paper was also small compared to June, though higher than on Foundation tier.

Q1: this was a straightforward start to the passage. A variety of meanings of *patria* were accepted, and the only common error was to take the adverb *fortiter* as if it were *ferociter*.

Q2: many understood the point in the second half of the sentence that Phocion preferred to live modestly, but not all saw the importance of *poterat* in the first half. The point was that Phocion *could have* been rich, but chose not to be.

Q3: this question was not well answered; some did not see that Phocion was the subject of *incitavit* nor that *ira* was a noun. As a result there were frequent references to 'angry citizens provoking'. Even so, such answers gained at least one mark. It is worth helping candidates to distinguish between nouns like *ira* and cognate adjectives like *iratus*.

Q4: this question was answered well – occasional errors over the meaning of *paucis diebus* did not prevent candidates scoring full marks if they got the rest right.

Q5 (a): apart from those who took *portum* as 'gate' (and who therefore imagined that the citizens were telling Phocion to close the gate), this question was successfully answered by the majority.

Q5 (b): most understood that the answer had something to do with food, but for the second mark it was necessary to show understanding of the compound verb *inferre*. A variety of translations were accepted, but it was not quite enough to say that the port was important for them to 'get' food.

Q6 (a): successfully answered by the majority of candidates.

Q6 (b): some candidates found it difficult to decide who or what had been captured, but most candidates understood the point.

Q6 (c): this was answered very well by those candidates who made full use of the glossary. A variety of meanings of *expulerunt* was accepted (e.g. expelled, driven out, banished, exiled, kicked out etc.) on the principle that comprehension was being tested here, not the precise meaning of the verb *pello*.

Q7: 'Afterwards, when Phocion had been recalled to the city ...' The adverbial meaning of *postea* (*postea* not *post* or *postquam*) caused some difficulty, but the most common error was to fail to recognise that *revocatus est* was a compound of *voco* and/or to confuse it with *regressus est*.

'... the citizens gathered at the forum to catch sight of the famous general'. The gerundive was mostly handled well, unlike the meaning of *clarum*, which was often not known or taken as 'clear' (e.g. 'to get a clear sight of').

'Some in a loud voice praised his virtues'. *nonnulli* often causes problems when it appears, and *magna voce*, despite the ending of *laudaverunt*, was often taken as the subject of the sentence (which counted as a 'major' error). Examiners had hoped that candidates would spot the plural ending of *virtutes* and see that the translation 'virtues' (rather than 'courage') was required. Not all did, but those who took it as 'courage' were still able to score full marks on this section.

'The rest, however, angrily shouted that he had handed over the port to the enemy'. The regular difficulty here was the indirect statement after *clamaverunt* – many candidates took it as an indirect command, which either made no sense in the context (e.g. 'they shouted to him to hand over the port to the enemies') or which required *tradidisse* to be taken as a passive (e.g. 'for him to be handed over to the enemies at the port').

'Therefore, although Phocion was now an old man, the Athenians decided to punish him with death'. The structure of this sentence was found straightforward by candidates, though many candidates lost marks by omitting *itaque* or *iam* (or both), and some were not quite literal enough with *morte punier*. Examiners were looking for recognition of the noun *morte* and did not accept freer translations such as 'the Athenians decided that he would die was a punishment'.

'While Phocion was being led away very sadly by guards, a friend approached him.' Difficulties here were the meaning of *dum* (often taken as *tum* whenever it occurs), the sense of *abducitur* (Phocion was being led off to his execution, not abducted), and the meanings of *comes* and *quidam*.

'Phocion!' he said crying, 'how cruelly you are suffering!'. This sentence proved to be very testing. The phrase *quam crudeliter* was sometimes mistaken as *quam crudelissime* but the greatest problem was the form of *pateris*. Relatively few recognised it as a form of *patior*, and only the best responses took it as a present tense.

'He replied, 'Don't be surprised; for many of the best men have had this death'. Unfortunately, many here were misled by the glossary to write 'I am not surprised'. It is worth pointing out to candidates that verbs in a glossary are always given in their first person form, but shouldn't automatically be translated as they appear in the glossary (*mirari* was in the infinitive here). It is also worth practising the use of the forms *noli* and *nolite*, which often cause confusion (e.g. 'I do not want to ...'). A further difficulty in this sentence was the placement of the object (*hunc mortem*) before the subject (*multi viri optimi*), but those candidates who knew their endings coped well.

'In this way, a man who had held the highest command was killed by the Athenians.' *hoc modo* has appeared regularly in passages like this to introduce the summary of a story, but causes difficulty, either because *modo* is not known or the *hoc* is taken with the wrong noun. A further difficulty was the sense of *imperium* - 'command', 'power', 'authority' were all more appropriate than 'empire', though all these alternative responses gained full credit.

'So great was their anger that no one dared to bury his body'. The meaning of *audere* was expected to cause difficulty, but it was correctly translated by many (perhaps helped by the context). A surprise, however, was the number of candidates who took *eorum* as his anger rather than theirs.

Candidates' responses were mostly legible and candidates helpfully signalled, by the use of asterisks or notes to the examiners, when they had continued their answer on a separate page. Some wrote their answers to the translation question on alternate lines. Unless candidates have particularly unclear handwriting, the use of alternate lines is no longer necessary. The increasing number of word-processed 'special consideration' scripts that use a small font (e.g. only 10pt) and minimal spacing between lines does cause some problems however. To allow space for the examiner's annotations, it is helpful if such answers can be in 12pt font and double spaced.

Few, if any, candidates ran out of time during this examination. This question paper allows some candidates time to write a draft translation before copying up neatly and this is helpful to examiners as long as it is clearly indicated which version is to be ignored as the draft.

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