Latin (Advanced Higher): project-dissertation

Commentary on candidate evidence

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The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for each aspect of the project-dissertation.

Candidate 1

Aspect: Content

The candidate was awarded **16 marks** because they had clearly engaged seriously with their topic, exploring a familiar character from a less familiar angle, in a way that offered plenty of scope for perceptive comment.

The candidate drew together very interesting examples, spanning the ancient and the modern, and demonstrated knowledge and understanding across a range of genres and time periods. The choice of material was clearly relevant and embraced issues that were key to the topic. The broad sweep of the examples however, although well handled, did limit the space available for deeper investigation.

Aspect: Use of primary and secondary sources

The candidate was awarded **12 marks** because they were clearly familiar with the Latin texts and whenever they quoted from them, were able to engage effectively with the Latin, commenting on style and tone in a way that developed the argument.

Overall, however, the candidate made very little use of Latin, even though the topic invited more engagement with the language. There was also very little reference to secondary sources. Again, the candidate was clearly well informed and as such, the secondary reading they did cite was of a serious and academic nature that allowed them to demonstrate engagement with scholarly debate.

Referencing, however, was very limited, in terms of both footnotes and bibliography. The candidate's achievement here straddled more than one category in the marking grid, but it was the limited amount of Latin that proved decisive.

Aspect: Argument and analysis

The candidate was awarded **15 marks** because they wove together a range of perceptive insights to produce a very lucid and fluent discussion.

In comparing Virgil and Ovid, the candidate drew out significant implications in terms of the Aeneid's Augustan agenda, Roman values and attitudes to women. Also in this section, the candidate was able to weigh up alternative interpretations and reach their own conclusion.

However, although the discussion flowed smoothly, this depth of analysis was not sustained throughout and although interesting, the comparative material did dilute the strength of the overall argument.

Total marks awarded - 43

Candidate 2

Aspect: Content

The candidate was awarded **20 marks** because they had amassed a wealth of relevant information and their approach was consistently analytical, confident and assured. It was evident that the candidate had carried out extensive and thorough research and had a very firm grasp of their material, in all its detail.

The candidate identified and investigated issues implied in the question and were able to demonstrate both breadth and depth, from Suetonius' gossip (*never wore the same clothes twice*) to details of fiscal policy.

Aspect: Use of primary and secondary sources

The candidate was awarded **18 marks** because they made substantial and skilful use of a wide range of both primary and secondary sources. The Latin texts were carefully integrated into the argument and formed the basis of analysis and evaluation, whether the quotation amounted to several lines or just a telling phrase. The choice of quotation was also judicious, allowing the candidate to engage with the Latin and draw out its significance in a way that developed the argument.

The candidate also made effective use of secondary sources, citing them regularly, either as supporting evidence or in order to engage with academic opinion. They had clearly done a serious amount of wider reading and although secondary sources were occasionally quoted simply as a way of conveying knowledge, they generally demonstrated a mature ability to analyse and assess alternative views as a prelude to forming their own judgement. Referencing was consistent and accurate.

Aspect: Argument and analysis

The candidate was awarded **20 marks** because they consistently sustained a coherent line of argument, which displayed a confident grasp of the evidence and reached carefully reasoned and well-judged conclusions.

The candidate showed particular skill in marshalling evidence in support of their views, and in synthesising material from a diverse range of sources. Their argument was firmly based on analysis of this evidence, and they were able to draw out implications, consider their significance and then knit the various strands together into a cohesive whole, without ever losing their way or sense of direction. Not only was their line of argument strong, but it developed as it progressed, building towards its conclusion, step by step.

Total marks awarded - 58

Candidate 3

Aspect: Content

The candidate was awarded **15 marks** because the factual content and the approach were clear and consistent with the title.

The candidate did well in tackling a more unusual topic and they were able to assemble their findings in a way that demonstrated knowledge and understanding. They had been thorough in researching the construction and function of various instruments, and although their information was very densely packed, it offered some breadth as well as depth and detail.

The candidate had clearly engaged actively with the material and worked hard to extract as much information as they could from their data.

Aspect: Use of primary and secondary sources

The candidate was awarded **14 marks** because their discussion was firmly based on a range of primary and secondary sources, including visual sources.

Latin texts were central to the discussion and the candidate made use of Latin quotation from several Roman authors. When they quoted Latin, they were able to engage with the text, picking out key words and phrases for further explanation. In this way, they were able to use the Latin to drive the argument, but they did not however, provide a full translation. The use of secondary sources was more limited and relied heavily on one book and several generic websites.

Sources were referenced in both footnotes and bibliography, although not entirely accurately.

Aspect: Argument and analysis

The candidate was awarded **16 marks** because they developed a clear and consistent argument based on reasoning and close analysis of the evidence. The real strength of this dissertation was that it was so clearly evidence based. The candidate showed skill in synthesising data from a variety of sources, in order to develop a convincing argument.

Although their grasp of the material seemed a little uncertain at first, the candidate's confidence grew as the discussion progressed and their handling became more assured. By inferring the sound of ancient instruments from their design and analogy with later examples, they were able to build their argument from the ground up and although their comments occasionally sounded more like expressions of belief than sound reasoning, they were able to draw on the likely effects of context and function to enhance their conclusions .

Total marks awarded - 45

Candidate 4

Aspect: Content

The candidate was awarded **11 marks** because the factual material related to the title, with only a few deviations, and showed some breadth and occasionally some depth. The Vestal Virgins, for instance, were discussed in some detail.

The information was presented in a way that was clear and informative, albeit rather more simplistic and naïve than might be expected at this level. The candidate engaged with the topic and demonstrated a basic level of knowledge and understanding, although the overall approach remained rather one dimensional and under-developed.

Aspect: Use of primary and secondary sources

The candidate was awarded **9 marks** because there was limited use of primary and secondary source material. Secondary sources of information were rarely cited, and those that were tended to be very generic and heavily reliant on Wikipedia.

Latin primary sources tended to be accessed via the secondary sources, and there were some puzzling aspects, such as the use of an adapted version of Aulus Gellius, and the Latin quotation of a Greek text (Dionysius of Halicarnassus). On the other hand, where the candidate used Latin, they made a good attempt to engage with the text and to draw out its significance. Their referencing was clear and consistent, and they made appropriate use of footnotes. Although discussion of the images was not integrated into the body of the text, the candidate commented on and referenced all the images used.

Aspect: Argument and Analysis

The candidate was awarded **12 marks** because they presented an argument that displayed a grasp of the evidence and reached a conclusion. The structure of their discussion was clear and coherent and divided into sensible chapters.

However, subsequent division into a series of short subsections did tend to militate against the development of sustained discussion. The candidate's comments were often closer to personal response than analysis, but nevertheless, they were able to draw conclusions from their findings and assess Roman women's religion role in the light of modern comparisons.

Total marks awarded - 32