



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit  
State Examinations Commission**

**LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2004**

**ANCIENT GREEK**

**ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

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# LEAVING CERTIFICATE

## ORDINARY LEVEL 2004

### 1. Introduction

The Leaving Certificate Ancient Greek examination paper at Ordinary Level comprises three questions. Question 1 offers four Ancient Greek passages, two prose and two poetry, for translation into the vernacular: candidates must choose three of those four passages. Question 1 carries 210 marks. Question 2 requires candidates to translate a passage and to answer subsidiary questions from a prescribed text. Question 2 carries one hundred marks. Question 3 consists of Section A (History) and B (Art and Literature), each of which offers four questions. Candidates must choose to answer one question from each section, and a third from either section. Question 3 carries ninety marks. The total number of marks for the paper is 400.

### 2. Performance of Candidates

Only one candidate sat this paper in 2004. In recent years it has been a common occurrence for this paper not to be taken at all. The results were as follows:

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2004	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
%		0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	100

### 3. Analysis of Candidate Performance

Some general comments may be made about this paper as it is inappropriate to comment on the performance of one candidate.

An unusual situation obtains at Ordinary Level Ancient Greek in the Leaving Certificate: the prescribed text at this level is completely different from that at Higher Level. It would therefore be very unlikely for a candidate whose class had been following Higher Level to have any knowledge of the text or subsidiary questions examined at Ordinary Level. Added to that is the fact that the body of prescribed material at both levels is extensive. This discourages a student from changing levels during the two-year course, and makes it most inadvisable during the final year. This barrier to changing levels highlights an inequitable situation vis-à-vis other Leaving Certificate courses.

The Ordinary Level course should be accessible and attractive to students who find the Higher Level course too challenging. In the case of Ancient Greek, this is recognised by the syllabus in that composition is not examined at Ordinary Level. However, the Unseen passages in Question 1 count for 210 marks out of the 400 carried by the entire paper. In Question 1 the candidate is required to translate three of four passages offered – passages largely unedited, and, in the case of poetry, completely unedited. This is too demanding at this level. The experience in Latin would seem to indicate that in the context of an examination Ordinary Level candidates are more likely to benefit from sentences for composition than such unseen translations. It is worth noting that on the Ordinary Level Latin paper Unseen translation counts for 130 marks out of the 400 carried by the entire paper. There is an imbalance between the two subjects.

These are issues which need to be addressed by the NCCA course committee.

# LEAVING CERTIFICATE

## HIGHER LEVEL 2004

### 1. Introduction

The Leaving Certificate Ancient Greek examination paper at Higher Level comprises four questions. Question 1 consists of a choice between a passage for composition and a comprehension passage, each worth fifty marks. Question 2 offers four Ancient Greek passages, two prose and two poetry, for translation into the vernacular: candidates must choose to translate three of those four passages. Question 2 carries 180 marks. Question 3 requires candidates to translate a passage and to answer subsidiary questions from either of the two prescribed texts. (The prescribed texts in 2004 were *The Intellectual Revolution*, extracts from Euripides' *Medeia*, and *A World of Heroes*, extracts from Herodotus). Question 3 carries eighty marks. Question 4 consists of Section A (History) and B (Art and Literature), each of which offers four optional questions. Candidates must choose to answer one question from each section, and a third from either section. Question 4 carries ninety marks. The total number of marks for the paper is 400.

The Ancient Greek Leaving Certificate syllabus has been in place for many years. The most recent change, six years ago (1998), was the introduction of an alternative comprehension question in Question 1. A review of the syllabus is desirable.

A total of 15 candidates sat the Ancient Greek Higher Level paper in 2004. The following table shows the small number of candidates who have taken this paper in the past six years:

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Candidates	9	12	7	13	14	15

As can be seen from the table above, the number of candidates taking this paper has increased slightly in the past three years. Given the exceptionally small numbers taking the paper, this increase is not significant. The vast majority of candidates in Ancient Greek sit the Higher Level paper. It could be argued that the difference between the Higher and Ordinary levels of difficulty is not adequate. This is largely due to the innate difficulty of original texts which are required to be translated on both papers. However, there is an added anomaly in that the course content is different at the two levels. This is cited in the Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report.

## 2. Performance of Candidates

The results for this paper for the past five years are as follows:

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2000	12	0.0	8.3	50.0	58.3	16.6	8.3	8.3	8.3	24.9
2001	7	14.3	42.8	42.8	99.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2002	13	15.4	46.2	38.5	100.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2003	14	14.3	50.0	21.4	85.7	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mean		11.0	36.8	38.2	86.0	7.7	2.1	2.1	2.1	6.2
Std. Dev.		7.3	19.2	12.1	19.7	9.0	4.2	4.2	4.2	12.5
<b>2004</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

It can be seen from the table above that while the A rate of 13.3% is within the range of the previous three years, the B rate is significantly lower. The percentage obtaining a D grade (40%) is significantly higher than in the previous three years. While it is statistically impossible to extrapolate from such a small sample (15 candidates), the following comments on candidate performance in 2004 will serve to elucidate this situation:

- Question 1 offers a choice between composition (A) and comprehension (B). In 2004, a significant majority of the candidates attempted composition (A). Examiners noted that many of those candidates did not handle the option well. In general, their answers to Question 2 (see below) suggested that they would probably have fared better on comprehension (B).
- Question 3 requires candidates to translate a passage from a prescribed text (worth 50 marks) and then to answer three subsidiary questions based on the text (worth 30 marks). In 2004 a significant majority of the candidates had not prepared sufficiently well for the translation of the prescribed text; those candidates lost many marks in this way. In general, the answering of the subsidiary questions was good. This failure to translate the text caused a number of candidates to get a lower grade than they might otherwise have done. Although those candidates answered well on the subsidiary questions in Question 3 (b) this could not compensate for the loss of many marks in Question 3 (a).

### **3. Analysis of Candidate Performance**

#### **Question 1 A. Composition.**

In general, candidates displayed a low standard in their responses. Very elementary errors were common e.g. wrong cases for subject/object; wrong person endings in verbs; failure to form infinitives of verbs supplied in the glossary. The average mark for candidates who attempted this question was 19 out of 50 marks.

#### **Question 1 B. Comprehension.**

The small number of candidates who attempted this question did well, scoring an average of 40 out of 50 marks.

### **Question 2. Unseen Translation:**

In general, candidates presented good translations in this question. The Herodotus passage (B) was least popular, but this is understandable as no candidate opted for the Herodotus prescribed passage in Question 3 A. Those candidates who did attempt it scored well.

### **Question 3. Prescribed text – Herodotus (A) or Euripides (B)**

All candidates opted for **3(B)**, Euripides, rather than **3(A)**, Herodotus.

**Question 3 B (i)** As stated earlier in this report, a significant majority of the candidates had not prepared sufficiently well for the translation of the prescribed text. A number of candidates treated it as unseen text.

**Question 3 B (ii)** The subsidiary questions were generally well answered. In response to **3 B (ii) (b)** some candidates did not write enough to ‘justify’ their view that Medeia was insane; in **3 B (ii) (c)** a small number of candidates did not ‘discuss’ the reasons given by Jason. In **3 B (ii) (d)** several candidates referred to the unity of time concept when writing about Kreon. Not all of those candidates proceeded to show how this galvanised Medeia into action.

### **Question 4. A. Ancient Greek History**

**4A (i)** This question on Alcibiades was the most popular in this section of the paper. Some candidates mentioned that Alcibiades changed sides several times, but did not say that this was important to the outcome of the war. Those candidates appear not to have read the question in its entirety and not to have taken due cognisance of the latter part.

**4A (ii) and (iii)** Each of these questions was taken by one candidate; two candidates attempted **(iv)**.

#### **Question 4. B. Ancient Greek Literature and Art**

**4B (i)** This question was not popular with very few opting to attempt it.

**4B (ii)** This question on the life and work of Thucydides was the most popular. However, not everyone commented on ‘his importance as a historian’. Again, those candidates appear not to have read the question in its entirety and not to have taken due cognisance of the latter part.

**4B (iii)** Nobody attempted this question.

**4B (iv)** In question **(a)** some candidates believed the columns to be Ionic, despite the evidence of the photograph and the fact that they identified the building as the Parthenon.

In question **(c)** a small number of candidates wrote about Black/Red figure vases and ignored the question as asked.

#### **4. Conclusions**

- The numbers taking Ancient Greek remain very small with almost all sitting the Higher Level paper each year.
  
- A review of the syllabus at both levels is necessary in view of the lack of articulation between the Higher and Ordinary courses.
  
- A review of the syllabus is also necessary to examine whether a closer alignment with the Leaving Certificate Latin courses would benefit students and teachers.
  
- In 2004 the B rate was lower and D rate higher than in previous three years
  
- In 2004 a significant number of candidates
  - opted for composition without the requisite skills
  - were unprepared for the prescribed text translation

## **5. Recommendations to Teachers and Students**

- Where options occur on the examination papers students are encouraged to choose the question for which they are better prepared. This is of particular significance in Question 1.
- In subsidiary questions in Question 3 and in Question 4 (History, Literature and Art) students are encouraged to read the questions in their entirety and to address all parts of the questions.
- Students are also encouraged to take careful note of the question cues (discuss, explain, outline, etc.) and to respond accordingly.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Exemplars of Standard**

The following is a selection of exemplar material from the scripts of candidates who sat the Higher Level paper in Ancient Greek in 2004. These exemplars should be read in conjunction with the Higher Level paper and the Higher Level Marking Scheme. The exemplars are reproduced as they were written.

**Question 2 A. (Unseen)**

**Candidate wrote:**

*And so Klearchos did not go to the ridge, but by himself remaining with the army he sends Lukos with the Syracusans and the others against to the ridge,(8) and he orders one of those by the ridge is to report back. And Lukos both seeing a messenger that they persue with all their might. (4) And this nearly were caught. Then the remaining Ancient Greeks and Athenians rested the soldiers. (2) And before on the one had they realised that in the absence of Cyrus they might appear, but not the other of them. For . (2) and they planned if they possessing baggage animals next the might make camp. And so it seemed good to him to rest. (5)*

**Marks: 21 ex 60**

**Comment:**

The candidate has persisted in attempting the translation of this passage but has largely failed to grasp the meaning.

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**Question 2 B. (Unseen)**

**Candidate wrote:**

*Against this Cambyses waged war on Amasis for this reason. Cambyses having sent into Egypt a herald asked for Amasis's daughter. (11) And Amasis knew well that she wasn't going to be Cambyses wife but as a concubine.(8) The great daughter of Apries was of the prvious king and was pretty and the name to her was Nitetis. (6) Amasis having adorned that child with clothing and gold sent her forth into Persia as his own daughter (9) and after some time Cambyses greeted her, naming from her father, the child said to him 'O king, your won't learn having had been deceived by*

*Amasis (12) that he sent me forth to you, that giving his own daughter, she being the true (daughter) of Apries, that man killed him. (7)*

**Marks : 53 ex 60**

**Comment:**

This is a very good attempt at translation. The candidate has a small number of inaccuracies and omissions.

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**Question 2 C. (Unseen)**

**Candidate wrote:**

*Achilles: Where is the commander of the Ancient Greeks now? Would you tell a certain one of his servants that Achilles the son of Peleus is seeking him at the gates? (12) For having left the land of Pharoos and Peleus, I remain here by reason of a weak wind of Europe, and Myrmidons being strong. (9) And they are constantly urging saying "Achilles, why do we wait? How much time is it necessary to measure out an expedition against Troy. (12)*

*Clytemnestra: O daughter of the goddess Nereus, having heard your words they went out in front of the house. (9)*

*Achilles: Who are you? Why have you come into the camp of the Danaids?*

*Clytemnestra: I am the child of Leda, Clytemnestra is my name, I am the wife of the lord Agamemnon. (14)*

**Marks: 56 ex 60**

**Comment:**

This is a very good attempt at translation. The candidate has a small number of inaccuracies and omissions.

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**Question 2 D. (Unseen)**

**Candidate wrote:**

*And then the gleaming-helmeted Hector said to her: (5)*

*“O woman, also all the following concerns me. But I feel shame before very much to Troy and to the long dresses Trojans, if I slink off badly away from the battle. (16) My gaining father both having big ears neither orders me or himself swiftly when it is dear to him to know always (what is right) and the leaders to fight with the Trojans. (4) For I know these things well by courage and by swiftness (3) I believe that one day Helios and Priam disagree and thus he shines the light on the skilled spearsman of Priam.(0)*

**Mark: 28 ex 60.**

**Comment:**

The candidate began this translation well, but failed to grasp the meaning in the second half.

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**Question 3B (i)**

**Candidate wrote:**

*What is wrong with me? Do I wish to having been mocked by my enemies? I dared this. Out of my misfortunes, I want to speak soft words. (6) Retreat, children, into the house. Lest to be present to my. He will to her. And I am not in their two hands. (3) In fact, lest you this o unhappy thing to do this of your children Herewith me living I shall be present (2) to hide my children not for my enemies to mock at, avenging spirit of Hades. He will not escape. (6) In treachery I will destroy the princess I know well (3)*

**Mark 20 ex 50**

**Comment:**

This candidate was not adequately prepared for the prescribed text.

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**Question 3B (ii) (b): In your view, is Medeia sane or insane in this play? Justify your answer.**

**Candidate wrote:**

*(b) In my view, Medeia is insane in this drama. She is angry at Jason but her revenge is insane. She does not wish for her children to die by the hands of her enemies so she kills them herself. This is not a sane act of a mother. Also her actions of murdering the mistress of Jason is also insane. (10)*

**Marks: 10 ex 10.**

**Comment:** This candidate did not even attempt Question 3 B (i), the translation of the prescribed text. However, s/he has answered the subsidiary question (b) directly and with a justified answer.

**Another candidate wrote:**

*I think Medeia is insane. No mother could kill their own children for petty revenge. Medeia shows that she is ill when she will not ear or stop crying near the start of the play (7)*

**Mark: 7 ex 10.**

**Comment:** This answer is not fully convincing in its justification of the view that Medeia is insane.

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**Question 3B (ii) (c): Discuss the reasons given by Jason to justify his actions.**

**Candidate wrote:**

*Jason justifies his actions in a number of ways. He says it is wonderful luck to be offered the hand of a princess when you're an exile and he'd be silly not to take up the offer. He tells Medeia she'd agree if she wasn't so annoyed. He also tells her he's doing what's best for the kids. He says Medeia has no need for kids but he does. He can make them citizens and they can become aristocrats in Corinth. He also doesn't want to ever be poor or in want and this secures that.*

*He basically thinks this is a wonderful opportunity for him he'd be mad to turn down and can't see why Medeia couldn't be annoyed when he's got it so good. (10)*

**Marks: 10 ex 10**

**Comment:**

This is a developed answer where the reasons are discussed.

**Another candidate wrote:**

*Jason says that what he is doing is for his children and for the benefit of his wife Medeia. He is planning well for the future in the best interests of his family.(6)*

**Mark: 7 ex 10**

**Comment:**

The candidate presents the reasons given by Jason but does not discuss them.

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**Question 4 B (ii): Write about the life and work of Thucydides, and comment on his importance as an historian.**

**Candidate wrote:**

*The historian's accounts were accurate and his style contained the use of archaisms. He was not a very religious man. His writings were scientific, based merely on facts, not taking into consideration the acts of the gods.*

**Mark: 6 ex 6**

**Comment:**

The Marking Scheme allocated 6 marks for the latter part of the question, '... comment on his importance as a historian'. This candidate made a serious attempt to answer that section of the question.

**Another candidate wrote:**

*Thucydides influence lived on and was the greatest historian to have ever lived.*

**Mark: 0 ex 6.**

**Comment:** This is not an adequate attempt at the latter part of the question. The candidate has forfeited 6 marks.

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**Question 4 B (iv)(c): Identify the period to which the vase in Photograph C belongs, and list the features that are characteristic of this period.**

**Candidate wrote:**

*The vase in C is in red figure style. Red figure style technique first developed in Athens in 530 BC. This style caused the black figure style to die out in 450bc. An orangey red colour was painted onto a black pot. This technique enabled the artist to give the design or figure more detail and greater volume.*

**Mark: 0 ex 13**

**Comment:**

This candidate has not read the question carefully. The answer is on style rather than period.

