



General Certificate of Education

Classical Civilisation

CIV1B Athenian Democracy

Report on the Examination

January examination - 2009 series

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CIV1B Athenian Democracy

There was a pleasing number of very good scripts on this option which demonstrated secure knowledge and sound understanding of the topic as a whole, although some lacked precision in the recall and use of detail.

Question 1

The facts about ostracism required for parts (a)(iii) and (iv) were better known than the identity of Xerxes in part (ii) and the use of the eponymous archon's name to identify the year in part (i). In part (b), most candidates were able to demonstrate a general awareness of the use of ostracism to remove potential tyrants or political rivals and/or of the power it gave the people (acting in their new tribes), but fewer supported these points with details. There was only occasional mention of the infrequent use of ostracism after Salamis and its eventual replacement by the *graphe paranomon*. In part (c), candidates could generally outline the overall direction of Cleisthenes' reforms, although they did not always explain their importance in any depth or with any detail, especially with respect to the reorganisation of the tribal system and use of demes. Better answers assessed *how* democratic Cleisthenes' reforms were by discussing who, despite the reforms, was still technically, or for practical reasons, excluded, and where the balance of power lay between archons / Areopagos and assembly / Council of 500.

Question 2

Most candidates in part (a)(i) knew that Bdelycleon is Philocleon's son and in part (ii), despite some irrelevant repetition from the passage, recalled at least some of the earlier preparations for a dinner-party. There were many very good answers to part (b) which demonstrated considerable knowledge of relevant detail and used it to support appropriate judgements. The most perceptive candidates made a clear distinction between the two elements of Harmodius' reputation as stated in the question.

The final part, part (c), did not regularly attract the same level of precision. Although candidates frequently made a range of sensible observations on *Wasps*, their insights were not always supported by sufficient detail or focused on the exact terms of the question. There was sometimes unevenness in the coverage of the play, the social targets in the later part, for example, being rarely addressed.

Question 3

Many candidates initially failed to focus sharply on the question, which was not about all Solon's measures but about the immediate and long-term effects of his legal and judicial reforms, but they tended to address the question more precisely as the essay went on. The key features of his *seisachtheia* were generally better known than the details and significance of the right of appeal and third-party redress. However, most candidates made some link between Solon and Ephialtes / Pericles, although coverage of the longer term was sometimes sketchy, especially with regard to the *euthuna* and *graphe paranomon*.

Question 4

Candidates generally approached the question in an evaluative way and showed some understanding of the way in which the radical democracy operated, but sometimes they did not include sufficient references to accurate, telling detail to support their general assertions effectively.