



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

Classical Civilisation 2020

CIV2D: Athenian Imperialism

Report on the Examination

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CIV2D Athenian Imperialism

General Comments

Once again this year it was apparent that most of the 250 candidates entered for this option had enjoyed their study of Athenian Imperialism and had acquired a good deal of knowledge, especially where the set speeches were concerned. It was pleasing to note that the inscriptions from *The Athenian Empire* were better known this year, but this remains an area for attention. 60% of candidates chose Option B (Melos) over Option A (Erythrai) In Section One; for the 30-mark essays the revolt of Naxos (10) attracted 75% of candidates, although Question 11 on the Sicilian Campaign produced a very similar mean mark. There was little difference in performance between the short questions on Option A and those on Option B: both were quite disappointingly done, with under half of candidates scoring full marks. For the 10-mark questions, Question 08 on the Melian Debate passage was much better answered than Question 03, where candidates seemed particularly loath to quote from the passage. The situation was reversed for the 20-mark essays where, perhaps surprisingly, those who tackled Question 04 involving the decrees outperformed those who chose the alternative on the speeches (09). Despite there being a similar mean mark for both 30-mark options, Question 10 on Naxos provided the only Level 5 answers, although Question 11 had fewer really poor answers. With the 20 and 30-mark questions it is important that candidates answer the specific title set; particularly in the case of Question 10 a large number of candidates appeared to reproduce a practice essay on a slightly different question.

Section One

Option A

Only 40% of candidates scored both marks for 01, many restricting their answer to a simple statement that Erythrai had revolted. Similarly, in Question 02 there was a great deal of generalisation with only a small handful of answers achieving the full 3 marks; less than half achieved a mark higher than 1, perhaps reflecting a tendency to treat the decrees as less worthy of careful study than the extracts from Thucydides. Few gave any details of the council set up. As mentioned in the introduction, Question 03 was also disappointingly answered: there was very little reference to the passage in many scripts, so some obvious points (such as the fines going to Erythrai and not Athens) were not picked up. Over half of candidates scored Level 2 or below, tending towards repeated generalisms in their responses. In Question 04, on the other hand, it was pleasing to see more detailed knowledge of the decrees than in recent years. The Kleinias and Coinage Decrees in particular were generally well explained. There were a number of excellent Level 5 answers and a mean mark at the top of Level 3. The weaker answers tended to reveal uncertainty about the likely dates of, and differences between, the other three decrees, often putting them together in one general paragraph. Even then there was often little attempt to use the points made to explore Athens' treatment of her allies. There were, however, gratifyingly few really poor answers to this question.

Option B

Most candidates started well with Question 05, although a significant minority believed that Melos was trying to leave the empire; Question 06 generally showed sound knowledge of the background to the extract, while the killing of males and enslavement of the other inhabitants had clearly made a firm impression on most candidates who scored both marks for Question 07. The 10-mark question (08) on the Athenian arguments and tone was better answered than its

equivalent in Option A, but the same criticism of not making full use of the passage applies here also. Few discussed the implications of the term 'practical people' for example, or the dismissal of 'fine phrases' in the opening sentence. That said, well over half of candidates achieved Level 3 or 4 on this question. The 20-mark essay (09) required knowledge of the set speeches listed in the bullet points and the construction of an argument around these to assess any changes in the Athenians' views of themselves: the basic knowledge was there in abundance (apart, quite often, from the Debate at Sparta) but many candidates retold the stories of the Melian and Mytilenian incidents and so failed to discriminate between the different moments captured by the speeches. There was also considerable confusion between Pericles' funeral speech and the one referred to here. On the other hand over 50% of candidates reached Level 3 and more than one in three reached Level 4, although only a very few reached Level 5.

Section Two

Option C

As mentioned in the general comments, this was by far the more popular choice for the 30-mark essay. The Delian League is clearly a topic which catches the imagination of many candidates, who appreciate its linear development and the clear examples along the way. It is also one for which they have obviously practised examination questions with mixed results. There was a large number of almost identical essays which started with the formation of the League, moved on through Eion, Scyros (sometimes referred to as Syracuse), Naxos, Thasos etc., revealing full knowledge but failing to make Naxos the focus of their answers. Knowledge often decreased with the passing years, resulting in a number not mentioning Thasos or the moving of the treasury in 454 BC. More commonly there was a lack of appreciation of Sparta eying Athens nervously and sending Athenian troops home. Cimon received a good press in many essays, and his removal was signalled by some good candidates as a key part of the change from league to empire. Nearly half of candidates achieved Level 4 on this option, with 5% going on to Level 5. Almost 90% scored at least Level 3, showing the candidates' obvious interest in the topic. In summary, there were very few poor answers, although too many that failed to give Naxos the prominence that the title demanded.

Option D

The less popular essay on the Sicilian Expedition also produced some very good answers, although none that reached Level 5. As with Question 10, there was a good story to tell and many candidates did so with aplomb. The machinations of Alcibiades often figured, along with the trials of Nicias. Many accounts were a delight to read, giving detail of arguments, battles, the dead bodies in the quarry and so on. However, there were other factors often missing: Gylippus and his contribution to Spartan efforts, the attitudes of the allies (sometimes dismissed in a blanket sentence) and the lack of foresight in Athens regarding likely problems in Sicily. There was also little detail concerning the final defeat. Nearly 43% of answers sat somewhere within Level 4, reflecting the positive points detailed above. Over 90% reached Level 3 (a slightly higher figure than for Question 10). There were no answers at all which fell below Level 2. On balance there was less inclination than usual to simply narrate, and most candidates offered an assessment of the various contributing factors.

The evidence of both these 30-mark essays suggests that those candidates who studied Athenian Imperialism made good use of their time and thoroughly enjoyed the topic.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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