



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

Classical Civilisation 2020

CIV2C: Athenian Vase Painting

Report on the Examination

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CIV2C Athenian Vase Painting

General Comments

More students than ever before attempted this unit in 2012. As in all previous years it was clear that the relatively small number studying Athenian vases had done so with interest and enjoyment. Poor papers are exceedingly rare on this topic and like last year, there was a good spread of achievement; much was worthy of commendation. It needs to be pointed out again that the students who score the highest marks are those who compare and contrast the styles and composition skills of the painters, rather than dealing with each painter in isolation. The essay questions are always phrased to encourage such comparisons and to draw out progression over a period of time. As seems to be traditional on this paper, the introductory short questions in both sections were well done; students had few problems in dating vases or naming their shapes. 70% of students attempted Option A, but the overall marks were very similar for both alternatives. If there were slightly more top marks on the Option A 10-mark Question 04, the reverse was true for the 20-mark essays. In the 30-mark essays, only six students attempted Question 13 on the Berlin Painter and his successors. The majority opting for the black-figure painters (Question 12) produced all the Level 5 and higher Level 4 answers, although the average mark for the two questions was identical.

Section One

Option A

Few students found any trouble in dating the cup (Question 01), identifying Heracles (Question 02) and describing the subject (Question 03); many identified the figures of Achilles and Patroclus in Question 03, but this was not necessary to gain both marks. The Sosias Painter is known for this one vase, so it was no surprise to read a succession of full, detailed responses to Question 04. Most students recognised the potential artistic limitations caused by cup interiors and explained well how the painter had attempted to overcome these. It was generally agreed that he was successful; with many pointing to the use of the figures to fill the space, the curves of their backs and heads echoing the circular frame. The Sosias Painter was seen by many to have made a virtue of the simple floor line with its floral motif relieving any possible conflict with the vase shape. A number of students commented on the focal use of the bandage at the central point. All in all there was some very good work here with nearly all scoring a mark of at least eight out of ten. Unfortunately a degree of confusion in Question 05 led to some students attributing the painting in Photograph B to the Kleophrades Painter (despite the clear attribution to the Sosias Painter in the question heading). This was doubly unfortunate as it both removed the likeliest second painting from their discussion of the Sosias Painter and caused a number to fail to mention any work actually by the Kleophrades Painter. In addition, a small number of students confused the Kleophrades Painter with the Andokides Painter with inevitable consequences here and in Question 12. That said, there were a number of very good answers, typically looking at the great Trojan War kalpis of the Kleophrades Painter; other interesting examples included his 'Berlin Painter style' amphora of the Rhapsode and the two-sided amphora of revellers and departure scene. Nearly half of students reached Level 4 for this question. For the others, while some good detail was included, the comments above on the failure to compare and contrast were particularly true here.

Option B

Again, the introductory questions were generally met with great confidence by students. The two vase types were almost always accurately identified while the uses of the krater at symposia struck a chord with many. Similarly students seem to know their painters' dates well.

Only a minority failed to score the full five marks for Questions 06 – 09. The limitations of the Pioneers in figure portrayal were as well appreciated in Question 10 as were the skills and innovation apparent in their work. As with Option A, the painting here was a well known example of the artist's work and most students discussed it with relish. Many saw echoes of black-figure order in the composition; the depiction of musculature was much commented on as a positive, although the facial expressions brought out some curious comments: several wondered why the participants in a scene of abduction were all smiling; others talked of similar expressions on statuary of the time. Again, there were some very good ideas expressed by many students. The longer essay (Question 11) seeking a comparison between Euthymides and Euphronios was somewhat better understood than the corresponding Option A title. Even so, some students could not produce two detailed examples of each painter to support their decision, thus rendering such conclusions as 'so Euphronios produced much greater work than Euthymides' largely unproven. Many of the better efforts made use of Euphronios' curious perspective in his Heracles & Antaios krater, the body positions of the comely young ladies on one of his psykters as well as the 'Sleep and Death carry Sarpedon' offered in Photograph C. These were often contrasted with Euthymides' psykter of the wrestlers (for body positions) and his reclining ladies on the famous hydria. On a cautionary note it is vital for students to read the instructions, which disallowed consideration of Photograph D for this question; one or two students suffered by basing their answer heavily on this painting.

Section Two

Option C

Question 12 was answered by a majority of students, who had clearly been expecting a chance to answer on black-figure painting. Here they were asked to show their knowledge of the three painters of this genre from the specification. There was some pleasing analysis of the work of Exekias, the 'lead' character in the question; quite often an example or two of the Amasis Painter's work was offered, more rarely as a direct comparison to Exekias. Some essays either failed to bring in work by the Andokides Painter or referred briefly to his bilingual work. Students should feel secure in attributing the black-figure sides of these vases to the Andokides Painter, and in including brief discussion of his red-figure paintings in so far as they reflect upon his black-figure work. One or two essays sensibly brought in examples he 'copied' from Exekias, in particular his version of the Ajax / Achilles board game. It was a pity that insufficient detail was sometimes provided of each to justify the quality judgements offered. There was a feeling of disappointment with some responses, a sense of opportunities missed. The black-figure genre was quite different to its successor and it would be good to see more students using detailed examples to illustrate its technical successes and limitations.

Option D

The minority who attempted Question 13 had a good range of later painters to choose from in formulating their responses. The Berlin Painter was generally well known and the advances he made in portrayal of posture and movement were nicely explained. Regular examples of his work included the Athena/Heracles amphora with its spotlight figure, the Ganymede krater for pose and symmetry and the oinochoe of Nike and the youth (for composition, pose and movement). More problems appeared when it came to selecting paintings by other painters for comparison: the Achilles Painter was a popular choice for his clear similarities to the Berlin Painter, but one or two students gave a lengthy discussion of his white-ground work; a brief mention would have been fine, but the answer must focus on his red-figure work. The Meidias Painter's famous 'Garden of the Hesperides' hydria was another regular choice, but disappointingly little detailed comparison was offered; often a sentence described the painting as 'multi-layered' or 'crowded', then claimed that it was (or was not) 'better' than the work of the Berlin Painter, leaving the reader to supply any real evidence either way. As in other questions,

it would be nice to see closer attention paid to the differences between the painters in their depiction of figure, pose and movement; more usually each painting was discussed in isolation, causing the mark to remain in Level 3.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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