



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2012**

**Classical Civilisation 2020**

**CIV2D: Athenian Imperialism**

***Report on the Examination***

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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## CIV2D Athenian Imperialism

### General Comments

An identical number of students to last year displayed a good range of knowledge of Athenian Imperialism and had clearly enjoyed their studies. The improvement in knowledge of the inscriptions from 'The Athenian Empire' continues and there were fewer poor papers this year. Twice as many students chose to answer questions from Option B (Camarina) than Option A (Mytilene). There was a similar division in favour of Option D (Athens v Sparta) for the 30-mark essay over Option C on the inscriptions. The performance on both sets of short questions was disappointing (see below). For the ten mark questions, the majority Option B group scored almost a mark higher on average for Question 09, the historical question, than the corresponding group who offered Question 04. Students must be aware that, if they attempt a literary context question, they must quote or refer closely to the passage in order to obtain Level 4 marks. This differential held good for the 20 mark essays where Question 10 on the speeches outscored Question 05 on the Spartans by an average of over a mark per student. Perhaps surprisingly, the minority of students who tackled the inscriptions for Question 11 fared slightly better than the main group with Sparta. There is a danger in students bringing to mind a prepared essay on a major theme (such as the Delian League in Question 12), when the essay set takes a different line of approach. All too often, Sparta only appeared late in the essay or not at all; hence the lower average. Finally, students clearly find the bullet points useful but they must beware that using them creates a series of 'mini-essays', only loosely (if at all) related to each other.

### Section One

#### Option A

Less than 5% of students could name the venue and give the correct reason for Question 01. A tiny handful named Olympia as the venue; many scripts featured a blank space here, but almost invariably followed this with the correct answer to Question 02 before half went on to gain at least some credit on the Mytilenian response as required for Question 03. Here answers tended to be vague, often gaining one mark from a rather scattergun approach covering many of the likeliest responses rather than by revealing confident knowledge. By contrast, it was gratifying to see a much better approach this year to Question 04 asking for comment on the quality of a section of a speech. Most students built their responses around direct quotations from the passage, rather than resorting to unsupported generalisations as was so often the case last year. The main weakness elsewhere was a tendency to examine what the ambassador said, rather than how effectively he made his points. Again the 30-mark essay on the Spartan situation (Question 05) was often answered in a rather general way, students overlooking the instruction in the title to 'refer to the books of Thucydides' in formulating a response. Most students however gave a competent outline of the main events, often focusing in large part on the events leading up to and during the Sicilian Campaign; only the best few essays displayed a detailed knowledge of key events between 412 and 404.

#### Option B

Most students started much better with Question 06 than was the case with Question 01. A few confused the status of Syracuse; seeing it as the Athenian ally in trouble rather than a potential aggressor. Question 08 was also more confidently handled than the parallel Question 03. Perhaps because the 10-mark question here, Question 09, had a historical rather than literary

focus, the range of marks and general level of performance was higher. Students clearly felt confident in their knowledge of the Sicilian Campaign and the great majority reached at least Level 3 on this question. Interestingly, the main focus was usually on the build-up to and early days of the Campaign, rather than the catastrophic events which rounded it off. Question 10 again usually revealed a sound knowledge of the set speeches and often featured a most impressive range of key quotations from each; unfortunately this was often coupled with a tendency to sketch out each speech in isolation rather than attempt to draw out points of comparison with which to assess similarities and differences.

## Section Two

### Option C

It is pleasing to note the year-on-year improvement in students' knowledge of the inscriptions from *The Athenian Empire*. This question was perhaps predictably less popular than Option D, but provided a good range of narrative from those students who chose it. As in options A and B the main weakness here was a lack of incisive analysis focusing on the question set. Few answers really addressed the relative importance of the inscriptions, Thucydides' main account and the reported speeches in formulating their assessment of the ways in which the Athenians treated their allies. This question above all led to the 'mini-essays' referred to in the introduction. There were however very few poor answers and a small number that climbed above the lower reaches of Level 4. These were able to relate the three distinctive aspects of the question to each other; so for example Thucydides' account of the punishments of Naxos and Thasos were compared and contrasted with the treatment of Miletus and Kolophon as recorded by the inscriptions, while the attitude of the Athenian speakers throughout the period was seen as confirmation that such allies did indeed get a rough deal (although some interesting ideas to the contrary were also evident, and welcome).

### Option D

It is clear that every year students are looking to answer a question on The Delian League. As mentioned last year, they seem to feel a sense of security in its linear development and the clear key points, in particular throughout its early years. There was a feeling again this year that many had a prepared test answer ready to deploy without noticing that this particular question had a Spartan focus. Hence a large number of essays either left mention of Sparta until late on, or never actually got round to Sparta at all. Again stock answers appeared, starting with the formation of the League (a key point in the Sparta question for those who had considered the title), then Eion and Scyros, the rebellions of Naxos and Thasos (another opportunity for bringing in Sparta overlooked by many) and the Egyptian Campaign. It was often at this point that the essay found its feet, discussing the replacement of Cimon by Pericles and moving on to consider the effect of this on relations with Sparta. Unfortunately, the key events of the period after the transfer of the League Treasury to Athens are more complex, and many students signed off with a rather general account. Even so there were few really poor answers.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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