



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2011**

**Classical Civilisation**

**CIV3A**

**Unit 3A    *Mycenaean Civilisation***

**Exemplar Script 1  
Grade A\* 67/75**

## SECTION 1

### Option A

- 01 **What name is usually given to the particular tomb illustrated in the drawing above? Give its site and approximate date.**

The 'Treasury of Atreus' or 'Tomb of Agamemnon' [1], Mycenae [1] c. 1400-1200 BC [1].

(3 marks)

#### Response

The treasury of Atreus at Mycenae  
c1350–1300 BC

#### Comment

Three correct answers

3 marks

- 02 **What are the conventional names given to this type of tomb and to the feature labelled 1 in the drawing?**

Tholos tomb or beehive tomb [1] *dromos* [1].

(2 marks)

#### Response

A tholos tomb  
1 is the dromos

#### Comment

Two correct answers

2 marks

- 03 **How successfully has the architect solved the problems of constructing this type of tomb?** **10 marks**

#### Level 4

Demonstrates

- accurate and relevant knowledge covering central aspects of the question
- clear understanding of central aspects of the question
- ability to put forward an argument which for the most part has an analytical and/or evaluative focus appropriate to the question and uses knowledge to support opinion
- ability generally to use specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

8-10

#### Level 3

Demonstrates

- a range of accurate and relevant knowledge
- some understanding of some aspects of the question
- some evidence of analysis and/or evaluation appropriate to the question
- some ability to use specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

5-7

<b>Level 2</b>	Demonstrates <b>either</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a range of accurate and relevant knowledge</li> </ul>	
	<b>or</b>	<b>3-4</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some relevant opinions with inadequate accurate knowledge to support them.</li> </ul>	
<b>Level 1</b>	Demonstrates <b>either</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some patchy, accurate and relevant knowledge</li> </ul>	
	<b>or</b>	<b>1-2</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an occasional attempt to make a relevant comment with no accurate knowledge to support it.</li> </ul>	

**Response**

The architect has solved the problems of building a tholos tomb using skilled engineering techniques. The site of the tholos tomb is in the side of a hill. Using a hillside gives the structure support. Moreover, it would have impressed the people living there at the time. A tholos tomb was incredibly difficult to build, taking two to three years for a large workforce to complete. The Argolis was a number of hilly areas including Mycenae and Midea and the architect used the landscape to his advantage. Not only was the tomb impressive due to its difficulty in construction, but they were highly decorated, for example the Treasury of Atreus (c1350–1300 BC) which had green marble half columns and a half-rosette frieze under the relieving triangle.

Moreover, the architect solved the problem of the heavy weight of the earth on the lintel by cutting a triangle shaped hole, called a relieving triangle, from the area above the doorway. This solved the problem of the large weight by diverting the weight to rest on the door jambs. The cyclopean blocks used to make the posts and lintel were incredibly heavy; the lintel weighted 120 tonnes alone. The weight of the structure bearing down on the door posts was solved by a skilled architectural solution of a relieving triangle invented by the Mycenaeans.

The tholos tombs were created for the elites who probably had a large processional funeral, therefore the architect has incorporated it into the design by creating a large dromos. The bricks were dressed to create a finished look. Moreover, the dromos was forty metres long, which corresponded to the thirteen metre diameter of the tomb. The ceiling was corbelled and layered with several stratas of clay, which kept it waterproof.

**Comment**

The answer shows awareness of the problems of constructing a very large tomb in this shape, the probable time- frame, and the work force needed. In particular, the second paragraph indicates detailed knowledge of the engineering involved in constructing the door, the purposes and size of the dromos, and the waterproof lining of the chamber. This is a level 4 answer.

**Level 4****8 marks**

**04 How important are the structural remains at Mycenae, other than those of graves, to our understanding of Mycenaean society? Evaluate the advantages and limitations of this kind of evidence. 20 Marks**

<b>Level 5</b>	Demonstrates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well chosen, accurate and relevant knowledge covering most of the central aspects of the question</li> <li>• coherent understanding of the central aspects of the question</li> <li>• ability to sustain an argument which</li> <li>• has an almost wholly analytical and/or evaluative focus,</li> <li>• responds to the precise terms of the question,</li> <li>• effectively links comment to detail,</li> <li>• has a clear structure</li> <li>• reaches a reasoned conclusion</li> <li>• is clear and coherent, using appropriate, accurate language and</li> <li>• makes use of specialist vocabulary when appropriate.</li> </ul>	<b>19-20</b>
<b>Level 4</b>	Demonstrates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generally adequate accurate and relevant knowledge covering many of the central aspects of the question</li> <li>• understanding of many of the central aspects of the question</li> <li>• ability to develop an argument which               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has a generally analytical and/or evaluative focus,</li> <li>is broadly appropriate to the question,</li> <li>mainly supports comment with detail and</li> <li>has a discernible structure</li> <li>is generally clear and coherent, using appropriate, generally accurate language and</li> <li>generally makes use of specialist vocabulary when appropriate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>14-18</b>
<b>Level 3</b>	Demonstrates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a range of accurate and relevant knowledge</li> <li>• some understanding of some aspects of the question</li> <li>• some evidence of analysis and/or evaluation appropriate to the question</li> <li>• some ability to structure a response using appropriate language, although with some faults of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> <li>• some ability to use specialist vocabulary when appropriate.</li> </ul>	<b>9-13</b>
<b>Level 2</b>	Demonstrates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>either</b> a range of accurate and relevant knowledge</li> <li>• <b>or</b> some relevant opinions with inadequate accurate knowledge to support them</li> <li>• <b>and</b> sufficient clarity, although there may be more widespread faults of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	<b>5-8</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	Demonstrates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>either</b> some patchy, accurate and relevant knowledge</li> <li>• <b>or</b> an oc</li> <li>• casual attempt to make a relevant comment with no accurate knowledge to support it</li> <li>• <b>and</b> little clarity; there may be widespread faults of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	<b>1-4</b>

**Response**

We might begin by saying that the various structural remains at Mycenae are critical to our understanding of Mycenaean society, though there certainly exist limitations in this form of archaeologically evidence given that structural remains alone are rather vague and restrictive in building a picture of the nature and form of Mycenaean society.

We might first begin by considering the palace complex itself atop the acropolis at Mycenae dating, in its current form, to around c1350–1300 BC. Central to the palace complex is the megaron, which entered through the palace forecourt – it is a similar feature of other Mycenaean palaces, with the most notable being at Tiryns and Pylos. With regard to our understanding of Mycenaean society, the function of the megaron at Mycenae and elsewhere is unclear. Certainly, the centrality of the complex and its prominent location in comparison to other citadel / town buildings would suggest a structure and purpose of some importance or status, perhaps confirming the possibility of there existing some form of social hierarchal structure within Mycenaean society. Furthermore, the presence of a ‘throne’ in the throne room of the tripartite megaron structure at Mycenae and the surprising restrictiveness of the space could suggest Mycenaean society to have been dominated by a leading aristocratic or elite figure (this would certainly be supported with evidence from the Pylos Linear B tablets which list an obvious structure / hierarchy within Mycenaean society through records of landholdings with the wanax (or king) as the biggest landowner). Such evidence at Mycenae, then, would suggest the central megaron and palace complex to have had a political structure, though the presence of a hearth in the throne room has led some to suggest the megaron to have had a more religious function, with space for sacrifice, though this is unproven.

We can also learn much about Mycenaean society with regard to the economy from the palace / citadel at Mycenae. The existence of a granary within the walled enclosure would certainly suggest (coupled with written and structural evidence from Pylos and Tiryns as well) that the palace was central to the running of the economy and that somehow, perishable and manufactured goods were stored and distributed centrally by the palace, with a great sense of bureaucracy. Despite the granary being advantageous in confirming this / leading us to suggest this, however, structural evidence at Mycenae is limited in that there is little evidence of other areas of storage (unlike at Pylos and Tiryns). Furthermore, residential housing at Mycenae also provides both glimpses of the workings of the Mycenaean economy and the nature of residential living. Although the house of the oil merchant in particular would be immediately associated with the economy (the name was allocated after the discovery of oil storage vessels on the basement floor), little other structural evidence would support this relationship. Structural evidence from housing is, however, advantageous in increasing understanding of residential living, with evidence suggesting that houses (whether private or dependencies of the palace) were half-timbered, two-storey structures with storage areas on lower floors, and with residential areas above.

Although the walls and fortifications at Mycenae may at first seem advantageous in understanding Mycenaean society, they are rather limited, alone, in what can be taken from them, as their function is unclear. Though they may be / may serve a defensive function, we might argue this to be perhaps unlikely given the absence of siege equipment in the Bronze Age and scarcity of evidence for protracted sieges. We may instead infer from the fortifications at Mycenae that they served a function of imposing the authority of the palace and, like later castles, were a display of power (particularly the imposing Lion Gate).

Finally, we can also infer from the later cult centre at Mycenae, with the ‘temple’ and room with the idols certainly inferring religious / cult activity within Mycenaean society. Whilst structural evidence is in place for this, however, there is little evidence for any form of belief system.

Overall, then, we can learn / infer much from the structural remains from Mycenae about Mycenaean life, and the evidence is certainly advantageous, though there are limitations in the applicability of this evidence, given that we are often unsure of the time, function and purpose of buildings and their relationship to the wider society.

#### **Comment**

This answer displays a thorough knowledge of the surviving palace structure at Mycenae, including its megaron and its storage spaces; it also uses the other remains of housing, defence walls and cult centre to make good points about the knowledge we can acquire from them, and its limitations. The answer makes comparative reference to Pylos and Tiryns, and to information gained from the Linear B tablets. The inferences it draws about governance, economics, defence and religious practice are in themselves reasonable, and the candidate points out that there are some limitations to the knowledge they provide, not least about religious belief, and how to apply evidence from a particular type of site to a social structure. A good level 4 answer, sharper concluding assessment of importance of structural remains would have placed answer in Level 5.

**Level 4**

**17 marks**

## **SECTION 2**

### **Option C**

- 10** *How far does the study of Mycenaean metal objects, both decorative and military, and of their techniques of metalworking contribute to our understanding of Mycenaean civilisation?* **40 marks**

#### **Level 5**

Demonstrates

- well chosen, accurate and relevant knowledge from different sources which thoroughly covers the central aspects of the question
- coherent and perceptive understanding of the links between the central aspects of the question and the values of the classical world
- ability to sustain an argument which
  - is explicitly comparative,
  - has an almost wholly analytical and/or evaluative focus,
  - responds to the precise terms of the question,
  - fluently links comment to detail,
  - has a clear and logical structure
  - reaches a reasoned conclusion
  - is clear and coherent, using appropriate, accurate language and makes use of specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

**37-40**

<b>Level 4</b>	<p>Demonstrates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generally adequate, accurate and relevant knowledge from different sources which covers many of the central aspects of the question</li> <li>• sound understanding of many of the central aspects of the question, including the values implicit in the material under discussion</li> <li>• ability to develop an argument which                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>makes connections and comparisons,</li> <li>has a generally analytical and/or evaluative focus,</li> <li>is broadly appropriate to the question,</li> <li>mainly supports comment with detail and</li> <li>has a discernible structure</li> </ul> </li> <li>is generally clear and coherent, using appropriate, generally accurate language and</li> <li>generally makes use of specialist vocabulary when appropriate.</li> </ul>	<b>27-36</b>
<b>Level 3</b>	<p>Demonstrates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a range of accurate and relevant knowledge from different sources</li> <li>• some understanding of some aspects of the question, including some awareness of classical values</li> <li>• some evidence of analysis and/or evaluation appropriate to the question</li> <li>• some ability to structure a response using appropriate language, although with some faults of spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> <li>• some ability to use specialist vocabulary when appropriate.</li> </ul>	<b>17-26</b>
<b>Level 2</b>	<p>Demonstrates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>either</b> a range of accurate and relevant knowledge</li> <li>• <b>or</b> some relevant opinions with inadequate accurate knowledge to support them</li> <li>• <b>and</b> sufficient clarity, although there may be more widespread faults of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	<b>8-16</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	<p>Demonstrates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>either</b> some patchy, accurate and relevant knowledge</li> <li>• <b>or</b> an occasional attempt to make a relevant comment with no accurate knowledge to support it</li> <li>• <b>and</b> little clarity; there may be widespread faults of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	<b>1-7</b>

**Response**

A study of Mycenaean metalwork contributes greatly to our understanding of Mycenaean civilisation. The most obvious example of metal and its importance is at Grave Circle A at Mycenae. Here we can see the wealth of the civilisation in the early Bronze Age, with over 14 kg of gold being found here we can see that Mycenae lives up to Homer's description of it in the Iliad as "a city rich in gold". However, it is not simply the wealth itself that tells us a lot about Mycenaean society but the way it has been used – it doesn't decorate the walls of the palace complex, but is buried with their dead. This shows us the level of respect the dead held in Mycenaean times. We can see this especially in the "personal" items such as the face mask of Agamemnon (1550 BC) and the gold covering of a child's body – both found in Grave Circle A. These show a level of respect for the body itself, and to the person they were before they died. This idea is reinforced by the other metallic objects found, such as the lead weights. It is assumed that these refer to the person's job before they died – showing us both that the person's life is still valued after death but also indicating that they believed in some kind of afterlife where their "tools of trade" would be useful.

Religion is also represented on metal items: gold rings found both at Mycenae and Tiryns show cult scenes, many including goddesses or seated women being offered goods by men or mythical creatures. While Mycenaean religion is incredibly difficult to understand, these gold rings give us a small amount of insight into their beliefs, as does their treatment of the dead.

Our understanding of Mycenaean society is also influenced by our understanding of their armour, and therefore their warfare. The Dendra panoply is the most complete suit of armour found. It shows us that many of the items, including the leg greaves and cuirass, were made of metal, in many cases bronze. As well as showing us how their armour was constructed it also gives us an idea of how Mycenaean civilisation developed. The fact it is one of very few full panoplies found indicates that the bronze was very often recycled, meaning the society was perhaps becoming less wealthy. This is backed up by the diminishing use of the cuirass during the post-palatial period. Archaeologists have speculated that this may have been down to the use of spears and javelins, which could pierce the cuirass, but also due to the society not being able to afford the bronze.

Despite this suggestion, spearheads continued to be made from bronze, as shown by the 42 recorded on a Linear B tablet at Knossos and the 500 found in the armoury at Pylos. This level of weaponry suggests an army who was used to battle, or even one that was expecting one. The idea that the Mycenaeans were a warlike society is reinforced by the development of their swords. Over time the swords became more sturdy and less elaborate indicating, perhaps, diminishing wealth as well as a practical need. The short cruciform shape of the warrior's sword towards the end of Mycenaean civilisation can be compared with the elaborate, decorative dagger from C16th BC found in Grave Circle A. Its silver blade and gold inlay depicting a hunting scene made it impractical – it was purely decorative and so indicates a wealthy owner.

While wealth may have been diminishing, trade continued; the wrecks of Kas and Gelidonya, c1306 and 1225 BC respectively, both held large numbers of copper and tin ingots. These show us that the Mycenaeans had large trading areas and were able to both import and export goods. Greece lacks many raw materials, especially those that make bronze, meaning the Mycenaeans were forced to trade with other countries. Kas also held Syrian weapons, which shows that the Mycenaeans were expanding much further than the Mediterranean.

Mycenaean metalwork can tell us a lot about their civilisation. It shows us the wealth of the early Bronze Age in Mycenae and Grave Circle A. It shows us how they changed techniques to make swords and armour less expensive and more practical and durable.



Trade was pushed forward by the search for the raw materials needed to make bronze, and then continued until it affected the everyday lives of the Mycenaeans. Trade gave them precious stones such as amber and lapis lazuli, as well as more mundane things such as sheep and goats, which were not native to the area. The search for metal opened up the world to the Mycenaeans.

However, while we can see the decline in wealth, the metalwork alone cannot tell us everything. For that we have to look at items such as the siege krater found in Grave IV of Grave Circle A and the battle rhyta found at Tiryns. These show a warlike nation attacking and being attacked. It is the same with religion. While the lion and bull rhyton of the Grave Circles indicate ritual practice and sacrifice, the wall paintings show aniconic images of their gods as well as obvious pictures of goddesses and mythical creatures.

So, while the metalwork of the Mycenaeans can certainly tell us a lot about their civilisation, it alone cannot tell us everything. To fill in the gaps we must look to other artefacts.

### **Comment**

This answer shows knowledge of Mycenaean work in both precious and non-precious metal, and is able to cite specific examples, such as the mask of Agamemnon, and the Dendra panoply to explore a civilisation with a hierarchical social structure and a focus on war. Further material from the Kas and Gelidonya wrecks is cited to discuss both trade and the translation of materials for manufacturing purposes. The candidate demonstrates awareness of the existence of complex skill sets in the working community, as in the commentary on the hunt dagger, and is able to draw an inference about its owner and its (real) status as a luxury item. There are some interesting observations about the recycling of metal and its economic implications. The answer demonstrates knowledge of military practice and of both weapons and armour. Scenes depicted on some metal objects are cited to contribute information on the wider social structure which produced them. The answer makes some sensible comments on the information which we cannot expect to acquire from the surviving objects. A good answer, which deserved its level 5 mark.

**Level 5**

**37 marks**