



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2011**

**Classical Civilisation**

**CIV3B**

**Unit3B      The Persian Wars**

**Exemplar Script 1  
Grade A\* 68/75**

**SECTION 1****Option A**

- 01 Outline the circumstances in which the Athenians received this oracle.  
Make five points.**

**(5 marks)**

Xerxes is advancing into Greece [1], with bigger force [1], this time without demanding submission [1]; the Athenians visit Delphi and initially receive an oracle which advises them to give up and flee [1] as their city will be destroyed [1]. The envoys demand a second one [1] and the quoted passage is the outcome [1]. The envoys report back [1] and a debate follows [1].

**Response**

The Athenians had been at Tempe. They send a messenger to Delphi who initially gave them a negative oracle, so they asked for a second oracle and received this oracle. They send the messenger as they were unsure of where to fight as the Spartans wished to defend the Isthmus and the Athenians wanted to defend the Corinthian Darnes line.

**Comment**

This answer notes the first visit to Delphi, the negative oracle (but not its content) and the second oracle.

**3 marks**

- 02 How dramatic is Herodotus' version of the debate in Athens about the meaning of the oracle?**

**(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**

- Level 2** Demonstrates  
**either**
- a range of accurate and relevant knowledge
- or**
- some relevant opinions with inadequate accurate knowledge to support them.
- 3-4**
- 
- Level 1** Demonstrates  
**either**
- some patchy, accurate and relevant knowledge
- or**
- an occasional attempt to make a relevant comment with no accurate knowledge to support it.
- 1-2**

**Response**

The Herodotean account of this debate is highly dramatic. The opinion is divided over the meaning of the oracle which increases the dramatic tension. One group believe that the wooden walls refers to the wooden walls of the Acropolis and set up a garrison there. However Themistocles insists the wooden walls relates to the fleet. Herodotus makes the debate dramatic by opposing Themistocles' view with the views of the Spartans in particular Eurydides. However the account is deemed by Herodotus placing the decision to fight at Salamis to Mnesiphilus and then Themistocles presented Mnesiphilus' arguments as his own which makes the debate dramatic as it highlights Themistocles manipulative nature. Futher more the ability of Themistocles' trickery is highlighted when instead of presenting the same ideas of Mnesiphilus that the Greeks will break up if they leave; he instead focuses on the tactical implications. This makes it dramatic as it highlights how Themistocles was manipulative. Furthermore the debate features direct speech which is used to break the narrative up therefore engaging the reader more directly and making it dramatic. Finally he includes a debate between Themistocles and the Corinthian commander who accuses him of having no say as Athens has been destroyed. His reply of why she still has 200 ships, Athens is still a city is dramatic as it shows nationalistic pride and is a short, punchy reply. Furthermore the tension between the two commands (based on 5th century naval rivalry) increase the drama as it is a secondary debate.

**Comment**

This response provides evidence of a detailed knowledge of the text of the debate, and of evaluation of Herodotus' characterisation of Themistocles and others involved. It makes the key points on interpretation of the oracle, and on Themistocles' presentation of Athens as a survivor, since she still has her fleet and her citizens.

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

**03 How crucial, in your view, was Themistocles’ interpretation of this oracle both to Athens’ survival and to his own career? (20 Marks)**

<b>Level 5</b>	<p>Demonstrates</p> <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>	<p>Demonstrates</p> <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> </ul> </li> <li>is generally clear and coherent, using appropriate, generally accurate language and</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">generally makes use of specialist vocabulary when appropriate.</p>	<b>14-18</b>
<b>Level 3</b>	<p>Demonstrates</p> <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>	<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>5-8</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>1-4</b>

**Response**

Themistocles' interpretation of the wooden walls oracle is highly crucial to the survival of Athens; however it is linked in with other factors such as Themistocle's intelligence and the Greek allies. While it was vital to Themistocles' own career, highlighted by the factor that after Salamis his name was on everyone's lips and he was thought of as the most able man in Greece, it does fade in Greece in the long term. His interpretation allowed the Persians to think so highly of him that he settled there after being exiled from Athens.

The interpretation of his oracle is crucial to the survival of Athens, it was the lynch pin decision of the entire campaign. This is shown not only by the after effects of Salamis but also by how easily the defenders in the Acropolis were removed. The reference to Salamis by the oracle seems slightly too accurate to be genuinely thought of by Delphi, possibly it was included as the Greeks stated they intended to fight there although there is no reference to any such question in Herodotus. However as Themistocles believes that the wooden wall is the fleet, it is enough to convince him (in conjunction with "Mnesiphilus" arguments) to fight at Salamis.

His interpretation and decision to fight at Salamis is vital to the Greek campaign as the narrows of Salamis helped to neutralise the threat from the worst Persian fleet. While previous battles had shown that the Persian army would not advance without the fleets support (shown by the battles of Artemision and Thermopylae) Themistocles would have known, or at least suspected that victory at Salamis would neutralise the Persian threat. Therefore his interpretation of the oracle is highly crucial as it gave Themistocles the ideal opportunity to defeat the Persians and save Greece.

However other factors were crucial in Athens survival, one of which is the manipulative nature of Themistocles to highlighted by him sending his slave Sicinnus to Xerxes to tell him that the Greeks were thinking to retreat in order to lure Xerxes into the narrows. While the twisting of Mnesphilus' advice could be seen as manipulative it is highly likely that Mnesphilus was an invention by Herodotus to discredit Themistocles plan to fight at Salamis. However the sending of Sicinnus shows how Themistocles tactical brilliance highlighted by his convincing of his allies to fight on strong tactical grounds as well as convincing the Peloponnesians it would be just as effective as fighting at the Isthmus. So while his interpretation of the oracle is the most vital point of Greek survival, there are other crucial elements that support it such as his manipulative nature and tactical brilliance.

The impact on his own career was highly significant as well. His successful interpretation of this prescriptive oracle gave him a boost in popularity shown not only by the fact he was on everyone's lips but also that from Sparta he received "the wealth of honour" a chariot the finest in Sparta as well as being the only foreigner to be escorted by the 300 knights to Tegea. Herodotus' lack of editorial comments underlines his anti-Themistoclean stance, only praising him by saying he gave the finest speech before Salamis.

The arrival of Aristides highlights how Themistocles is perceived to be tricky “you tell them, if I tell them they think I will have invented it and not believe me!” While the Athenians sent Themistocles into exile (showing his interpretation was not completely beneficial to his career) when he arrived in Persia they greeted him heartily as he had proven himself to a great warrior thereby showing how in the long term the interpretation was crucial to his career.

In conclusion both Themistocles’ career and Athens survival were crucially dependant on Themistocles’ interpretation. While his career stopped in Athens his interpretation gave him a long term success. The survival of Athens however would have been lost if not for his interpretation.

#### **Comment**

This answer deals very ably with the key issues of Themistocles’ reputation in relation to his career, not least in its later stages. It is well-constructed around paragraphs on the interpretation of the oracle and its effect on Athenian strategy, Salamis and its outcomes for Persian strategy, Themistocles’ capacity for trickery and manipulation, as evidenced by the Sicinnus episode, and the aftermath of victory and its impact on his career, summarised well in the conclusion.

**Level 5**

**19 marks**

### **Option D**

- 7 How far do both Herodotus and Aeschylus focus their accounts of the Persian Wars on the actions and personalities of individuals? Support your answer by reference to both texts. ( 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> <li>is generally clear and coherent, using appropriate,</li> <li>generally accurate language and</li> <li>generally makes use of specialist vocabulary when appropriate.</li> </ul> </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**

Herodotus and Aeschylus both see the actions and responsibilities of the individuals as hugely important although to different extent one being a historical account the other tragic. However this importance in both is secondary to the actions of the gods on events.

Herodotus causation or 'aetiological perspective' appears to be largely based on individuals. The best example of this is in the Ionian revolt where Herodotus argues that the entire revolution is due to Aristagoras fear of Megabates after the failed invasion of Naxos there causes of alarm made Aristagoras contemplate rebellion. This puts the Ionian revolt and therefore by consequence all three invasions of Greece (492, 480 & 480 BC) due to him alone. This completely negates the huge impact of social-political factors on revolts- indeed it is impossible that without some long term dissatisfaction with the Persians that whole Ionian sea board from Caria to before Halicarnassus would revolt. This therefore, makes it appear that Herodotus causation is largely due to individuals.

This is also true impact of Themistocles' interpretation of the prophecy 'the wooden walls only shall not fall. Divine Salamis you will bring death to women's sons' as referring to the fleet and defeat of Persia at Salamis respectively led to the crushing defeat of Xerxes. The impact of Themistocles as an individual is also seen in his decision to build 200 ships with the silver from Laurion. This gives Athens a fleet and thus "we are both a city and a country more powerful than yours" as Themistocles says to Corinthian Adeimantus. This fleet makes up a large part of the allied fleet both Artemium and Salamis helping defeat the Persian fleet. Themistocles role in events is therefore seen as key by Herodotus and in both these events no other cause is credited with any importance, such as a patriotic desire to become a natural power in Athens rather it is Themistocles the individual. Xerxes role is also seen as very important by Herodotus. Xerxes desire to expand the Persian empire until its border are gods is seen to be the cause of this invasion. There is no concept of expansionist feeling in Persia or any mass feelings. Although his advisors give their feelings. Mardonius in favour Artabanus against it is again purely their role as individuals. Therefore in both Themistocles and Xerxes the importance of individuals is shown. This huge role of individuals is to be expected in Herodotus due to his context. He lived in a world of small polities of a few thousand where an important figure would have a much greater role than today. Also he was inspired by Homer and as such describes war as a battle of individuals, just like Hector and Achilles in the *Iliad*. However like Homer he also sees the logical causation as very important. In fact with Xerxes the real reason he invades Greece is that he is visited by a 'phantom' in his dreams who tells him 'if you do not undertake this war.... you shall be brought low'. Therefore there is apparent individual influence on events there is divine work in the background.

This is Herodotus' whole approach to history, that the deeds of men are caused by the gods behind them. This is reflected in his belief in a prophecy 'I do not doubt there is truth in prophecy' which by implication means that events are preordained such as the victory at Salamis described in the prophecy earlier or the sacking of Miletus which had been prophesied 'Miletus will be a feast for many'. This theological causation is so strong Herodotus argues 'it was the Athenians-after the gods – who defeated Xerxes showing the role he gives to divine intervention. This so seen again in the storm which wreck large numbers of Persian ships which Xerxes feels is 'god doing everything possible to reduce the size of the Persian fleet'. Thus for Herodotus behind all seemingly individual caused events lies a divine influence which is more important.



The same is largely true for Aeschylus, although it manifests itself differently due to the tragic nature of 'the Persae'. As it is a tragedy the most powerful divine influence is in punishing hubris with nemesis and humbling the mighty resulting in kathasis from the pathos created. This Xerxes individual role is great in causing his eventual downfall. Aeschylus presents it as Xerxes 'counched his armies against the world' showing how it is his individual hubris causing the invasion. Aeschylus shows this again when he writes 'Xerxes in his mortal folly sought to overpower the immortal gods'. This there is a feeling that the hubristic rise and the invasion that is part of this is down to Xerxes. Indeed this is how his councillors feel 'Xerxes has brought far or not vengeance but a world of suffering.

However Aeschylus hints that this may not be the whole case 'some god robbed xerxes of his wits' reflecting that it maybe there was a theological influence on his decision to invade. However largely this decision is due to Xerxes the individual.

However the eventual fall from grace, or nemesis, is due entirely to the gods. The victory at Salamis is not due to superior naval tactics or numbers 'had fortune favoured numbers we would have won the day' but was caused by the gods themselves ' some god protests Athens city. This is true far all of Xerxes nemesis. Indeed according to Aeschylus the root of Xerxes suffering comes from impiety "their sacrilege is matched in their suffering". Indeed for Aeschylus story this must be the case as it gives a didactic message, common in tragedy, that pride comes before a fall. "ruin and untold pain... the just reward of pride and goddess insolence" or as Aeschylus puts it. This is Aeschylus perseas individuals are focused on or the creator of their hubris but it is the gods are the focus of the result of this.

To conclude both Herodotus and Aeschylus focus on individuals and their actions as the causes of events but only after the gods. However, due to their different genre this occurs differently - in Herodotus divine actions occur behind individuals decisions but can be seen in oracles dreams and strange events but in Aeschylus the individual causes events but the gods have the ability to then punish them for it. However in both the focus is on the individual rather than underlying socio-economic factors.

### Comment

This answer is a perceptive response to a question which asks for an analysis of both Herodotus' and Aeschylus' use of key individuals to track cause and effect, and might include discussion of both authors' interest in characterization, their use of their major and minor characters as both motivators and reactors, and the role in both of a sense of individuals' judgement and their motivating ambitions. The answer reflects on good examples of these factors, Themistocles' and Xerxes' decisions and actions in particular, and argues for a view expressed by both authors that the gods are the true motivators who influence human behavior and action. The essay is well constructed and argued and deserved a level 5 mark.

**Level 5**

**38 marks**