

Report on the Units

June 2007

1943/MS/R/07

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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GCSE Biblical Hebrew (1943)

REPORT ON THE UNITS

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**GCSE Biblical Hebrew
Examiners Report
1943/01 Paper 1 - Language**

General Introductory Comments

The examiners are very pleased to report that there has been an increase in the number of candidates taking the GCSE Biblical Hebrew examination. Some 577 candidates took the examination this year as compared to 487 last year. This increase of 19% reflects a healthy subject and one that is becoming more popular year on year. The number of centres providing candidates remains stable.

Question 1

While the standard of this question in terms of vocabulary and grammar was in line with questions of previous years it is clear that some centres did not follow the subject specification recommendations. In order to answer this question successfully, centres must instruct their candidates to translate words and phrases accurately and contextually.

Some frequent mistakes were:

הגליתי - the ה of Hifil not recognised

בתים - frequently misunderstood and translated as 'daughters'

פרין - the pronominal suffix was translated wrongly

בנותיכם - the ending was frequently translated as 'their' instead of 'your'

הם נבאים - often the verb was translated as 'come' instead of 'prophecy'

שלחתים - the verbal suffix was frequently left untranslated or translated incorrectly

Candidates in certain centres have not been adequately instructed in how to answer in context. This is a simply learned technique which could be improved by greater reference to past papers.

Question 2

Following the 'war and conflict' theme of 2006, the theme this year was 'sheep and shepherding.' This thematic approach makes for a more interesting paper.

As in previous years, questions at the start of question 2 were designed to be answered by almost every candidate. Questions then get progressively harder. Graded questions test candidates of differing abilities and this aspect was as obvious in this year's examination as in previous years. Question (f) showed a wide variety of response. Centres which educated their student rigorously in Ayin Vav verbs scored well in this question. In the same manner, centres which taught the difference between similarly spelled Hebrew words scored well in question (g) (which tested knowledge of the difference between roots שקה and נשק).

Many candidates were unaware that the number of marks allotted to the question reflected the points that had to be given e.g. 2 marks required 2 separate points. This was exemplified well in question (o) which was a general question about sheep and shepherding. Many candidates missed out on all four marks because they gave 2 or perhaps 3 points only.

Question 3

The majority of students gained over half marks for this translation. As in previous years, a sizeable number of scripts demonstrated a 'word for word' approach to the translation. This naive attitude of course, produces a stilted translation which does not flow.

Some candidates ignored the 'vocabulary assistance' and scored less than they ought to have.

As in the translation in question 1(b), some candidates showed little appreciation of the Vav Consecutive so that their translation was in the wrong tense.

It is obvious from candidates' response that centres in general are using the vocabulary list.

As a general comment, it was clear that the majority of centres, with a small number of exceptions, prepared their students well for Paper 1.

1943/2

**Biblical Hebrew: GCSE: Paper 2
Literature**

Question 1

- (b) (ii) A small minority of candidates answered 'his father' instead of Jacob/Yaakov, which is, of course, not a name.
- (c) (i) A sizable number of candidates failed to recognize that the verb $\Psi\gamma\gamma$ is in the *hiphil* conjugation and translated it as if it was in the *kal*. Many candidates understood the phrase idiomatically (e.g. having brought them up).
- (f) Most candidates scored 2 out of the possible 3 marks. Few realised the force of *piel* (see Mark Scheme).
- (h) Few candidates were able to express clearly that the *mapiq* η is a feminine possessive object representing the noun τ (hand).

Question 2

- (b) A minority of candidates failed to understand the meaning of the noun 'relationship' in the context of the question. They often proceeded to describe the personality of Joseph/Yosef.
- (c) (i) The verb $\eta\psi\upsilon\beta\epsilon$ (line 6) proved difficult for a number of candidates. The *hiphil* force of the verb was very often not recognized. Similarly there was generally a failure to realise that the infinitive $\eta\lambda\alpha\mu\tau$ (line 6) has a contextual meaning of "... as follow ... when" and is introducing a time (temporal) clause. It must be emphasised that accurate translation is to be expected in the examination of set-texts.
- (d) Many candidates missed the parallel between Egypt and Ham/Cham. Many, however, noted that the Psalmist specified the strength of the Israelite nation in relative terms to the host nation.
- (e) Few candidates recognised the feminine plural verb.
- (f) Only a limited number of candidates realised that the verb in the *niphal* conjugation can be used reciprocally.
- (i) The background to Ham/Cham was generally known. However, the idea of parallelism in Psalms was not. (It is detailed in the Specification).

Question 3

- (b) Many candidates failed to realise that Zadok was the Chief Priest.

- (c) Many candidates found difficulty in expressing the idea that although the verb **הגיד** is in the *hiphil*, it has taken on, contextually, a passive meaning.
- (g) Although many candidates emphasised the spying roles of Ahima'atz and Jonathan/Yehonatan, few indicated their role in restoring the Ark to Jerusalem (line 7).
- (h) Most candidates could translate the phrase **נא סכל**, few had any idea for the basis of this translation (see the Mark Scheme for details).

Question 4

- (c) (i) The first clause of line 6 proved difficult to a number of candidates. The verb **ותהי** means 'it became' / 'was transformed'. The prefix **ל** attached to the noun **אבל** means '[in]to'.
- (ii) Candidates, generally, were able to indicate a *hithpael* but could rarely explain how it was being used.
- (e) (i) The verb **נגד** is often used in the sense of making an implicit declaration of intent.
- (h) The question form 'How' should indicate to the candidate that a citation from the Hebrew text with a short explanation is required.
- (i) Merely summarising the story-line will not gain marks. As with question (h) candidates were expected to demonstrate knowledge of the text and comment accordingly.

Question 5

- (b) Few candidates indicated that the **בני נביאים** were a specific community.
- (c) (i) There were a number of mis-translations:
 - שפת** - set on the fire
 - גפן שדה** - wild vine (not necessarily for grapes).

The verb **ויצקו** is from the root **יצק** and means 'they poured', whereas **צעקו** is from the root **צעק** and means 'they shouted out' / 'protested'.

- (ii) Many candidates did not realise that a **ׁ** with an attached *sheva* (:) precludes a *dagesh*.

- (d) The Biblical Hebrew noun כַּרְמֶל has not connection with wine.
- (f) Few realised that the verb וְהוֹתֵר is an Infinitive Construct (gerund) and not an imperative (Mandelkorn: p.256).

Question 6

- (b) Candidates should be aware of the historical background to the passage for study (see Mark Scheme).
- (e) (i) Many candidates did not distinguish between the answers required in the two distinct parts of this question. Part (i) dealt with the long term aims of the prophetic revolution, whereas part (ii) dealt with the specific steps leading to that revolution (see Mark Scheme).

Candidates were not penalised because of this. Many repeated much of the information twice. This could impede their progress through the paper.

- (f) Candidates should be aware of the geographical background to the passages for study. There are a number of recommended Biblical Atlases listed in the Specification.
- (h) וְהַבִּיאָתָּה: Few candidates realised that the ׁ represented the middle root letter ו.
אֲדָנֶיךָ: Few realised that although the intervening ׁ made the noun plural, in this specific example it represented the royal plural (see Mark Scheme).
- (i) A small minority of candidates failed to realise what was meant by “the affairs of the government” and simply summarised Elisha’s general activities. Examples were accepted from any section of the set-texts.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education Biblical Hebrew 1943
June 2007 Assessment Series**

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
01 - Language	100	76	63	51	44	37	31	25	0
02 - Literature	100	73	63	53	45	37	30	23	0

Each component represents 50% of the overall award

Overall

	Max	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall Threshold Mark	200	172	149	126	104	89	75	61	47	0
Percentage in Grade		12.0	29.2	28.3	14.6	5.1	3.9	2.8	1.4	100
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		12.0	41.1	69.4	84.0	89.1	93.0	95.8	97.2	100

The total entry for the examination was 569.

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