AQA

**General Certificate of Secondary Education
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Classical Civilisation 4020

**Unit 1H: Greece and Rome: Stories and
                   Histories**

Report on the Examination

Unit 1H Greece and Rome: Stories and Histories (40201H)

General Comments

Once again the most popular topic by far was Topic A the Odyssey followed by Topic C, Athens and Sparta. Topic C was handled much better by students this year and on all topics there was more awareness of the different assessment objectives. Assessment Objective 2 still causes students the most problems as they tend to write narrative rather than using their knowledge to make an assessment or explain actions and motives. A few students still ignored the questions set and offered what was essentially a prepared answer to a different question and there is still some reluctance to offer their own personal opinions to AO3 questions. The number is dropping but unfortunately there were still some students entered for the wrong tier and teachers must think very carefully about how the weaker students will cope with the AO2 and AO3 essays. However, the vast majority of students performed well across the paper and appeared to have enjoyed the course.

Topic A Homer, *Odyssey*

The majority of students correctly identified Calypso in Question 1(a) although a few guessed it was Athene. In Question 1(b) most mentioned Zeus sending Hermes and a lot of those students knew it was at Athene's instigation but very few explained why Calypso felt obliged to obey Zeus or knew that Athene said it was Odysseus' destiny to reach Ithaca.
There were many good answers to Question 1 (c) although some students lost a mark by being too generalised and saying Calypso gave Odysseus materials to build a boat or that she helped him or offered instructions. Question 1(d) was usually well answered and there were plenty of thoughtful answers to Question 1(e).

Some students thought Odysseus' gift had been the name 'Nobody' in Question 2(a)(i) and then tried to use the information needed in Question 2(b) in 2a(ii) but the majority of them knew the correct answers. Teachers need to be aware that Questions like 2(b) are AO2 and students who write pure narrative (AO1) will not score full marks. They had to explain the result of the Cyclops telling his brothers 'Nobody' had blinded him. Virtually all students knew that Odysseus had blinded the Cyclops in Question 2(c) but quite a few failed to score the second mark as they wrote about the men sharpening and hardening the stick , which they had done previously. There were plenty of well considered answers to Question 2(d) but some students fell into the trap of writing narrative and ignored the question while others decided to answer a question about whether the reader could sympathise with the Cyclops.

Both sets of essays were equally popular and in both sets the middle AO2 question caused the most problems. There was plenty of knowledge about the behaviour of Odysseus' men in Question 3(a) with the majority of students believing them to be more foolish than wise. Some thought carrying out Odysseus' orders was wise but the plan to blind the Cyclops was his wisdom and using the wax to block out the Sirens was Circe's and so these examples were not credited. A few students failed to read the question properly and wrote about Odysseus. The majority of students knew who Eurylochus was but a surprising number thought he had advocated opening the Bag of Wind. Many lost marks because they simply wrote narrative and didn't really address the question. In answers to Question 3(b)(ii) there was plenty of knowledge about the role played by Athene but the majority of students ignored the 'to what extent' part of the question and it was rare to see a really good assessment of her part coupled with the part played by other gods and mortals and Odysseus' own qualities. Answers which

focused purely on what Athene did could only score a top level three mark. Answers to Question 3(a)(iii) were generally sound and there were some delightful responses to 3(b)(iii). The best students did exactly as the question asked and examined Nausicaa's character and then added their own views of her.

Topic B Livy, *Stories of Rome*

Question 4(a) was generally well answered with the majority of answers focusing on the siege and the food shortage but there was no mention of Tarquin's attempt to regain the throne. Question 4(b) was not so well answered as students did not always explain why he might be thought to be a deserter/traitor or exactly what the correct behaviour was i.e. the senate ran Rome and he was respectful of their authority. Students coped very well with all parts of Question 4(c) and there was some thoughtful analysis with good reasons offered for the aspects of Scaevola's behaviour which would be admired by Romans. (Question 4(d).)

In Question 5 the behaviour of the Fabii was well known by the majority and in Question 5(b) there were many excellent answers which really explained in detail why the Romans lost the battle at the River Allia. A few students misinterpreted Question 5(c) and thought it referred generically to the Romans rather than to individuals as well but usually they still scored at least two marks on this question.

There were far more answers to Question 6(b) than to 6(a) and the answers to Question 6(b) were much better. Surprisingly for an optional AO1 Question 6(a)(i) students did not appear to know in detail exactly what the kings after Romulus did. Question 6(a)(ii) was answered better but few students looked at Romulus' life before he became king or mentioned he was thought to be Mars's son or that he had founded the city! The poorer answers tended to revolve around the capture of the Sabine Women and contained a lot of narrative. There were some interesting interpretations of Question 6(a)(iii) by students who gave examples of kings being liked or disliked by the Romans rather than simply giving their own opinions of the kings' personalities. Cloelia's behaviour was generally well known in Question 6(b)(i). Question 6(b)(ii) was a good example of time being wasted on telling the story as too many answers were long descriptions of the 'best wife' competition instead of starting with Lucretia's rape and explaining her motive for suicide and why her death led to the fall of the monarchy and the inception of the Republic. There were some excellent answers to Question 6(b)(iii) with really thoughtful analysis and the best answers compared the characters of the three women. Some weaker students ignored Tarpeia as presumably they did not know who she was!

Topic C Athens and Sparta

Question 7(a) is an excellent example of students failing to score well on an AO2 question because they simply write narrative (AO1).   Many answers simply listed what an Athenian girl was taught without saying when / why she would need such skills in the future. There was plenty of knowledge evident about the lives of females in Athens and Sparta for Questions 7(b) and 7(d) but the key words were girls and women and the information had to be relevant to the age mentioned in the question. Question 7(c)(i) was very well answered. In Question 7(d) students were expected to write about the good and bad aspects for full marks and there were plenty of well considered answers.

Question 8(a) was very well answered but in Question 8(b) it was evident that some students did not know what the s*ymposiarch* (president) did and wrote about the host of the dinner party. Those who did identify him correctly invariably scored both marks.   Answers to Question 8(c)

were patchy and students too often failed to state the actual trades. Those who stuck to what the question asked produced some excellent suggestions. Question 8(d) elicited plenty of personal response and was a delight to mark.

Question 9 (a) was less popular than 9(b) and seemed a surprising choice by some students who knew little about the sophists in Question 9(a)(i). However there were some good answers here especially by those who knew why rhetoric was important and explained why the sophists had a bad reputation in some quarters. Answers to Question 9(a)(ii) were variable with some excellent understanding but others merely knew physical education was needed for military service. Students who actually answered the question set in Question 9(a)(iii) scored highly but there were some prepared answers offered which dealt with differences between schools in the fifth century and modern ones with no preferences stated. Question 9(b)(i) produced excellent essays with some very fine knowledge being demonstrated. Question 9(b)(ii) was more testing and a range of reasons was needed for a top mark. There was certainly a range of knowledge in Question 9(b)(iii) and students produced many thoughtful answers with good personal response.

Topic D History of Roman Britain

Nearly 70% of students scored both marks in Question 10(a)(i) but less than half knew why Caesar failed to return to Britain in Question 10(a)(ii). There was also poor knowledge about Caligula's order to collect seashells in Question 10(b). Students were on much more solid ground in Question 10 (c) but Question 10(d) found many wanting as either they didn't know who Cogidubnus was or they failed to gain the third mark by not actually answering the question and failing to give their own thoughts about his behaviour.

With the exception of Question 11(b) answers to Question 11 were better than to Question 10. Question 11(a) was well answered but no student gained full marks on Question 11(b) as Cerialis was simply unknown to them and a lot confused him with Catus Decianus or Suetonius Paulinus. It was rare for students to fail to score on Question 11(c) and there were some well thought out answers to Question 11(d) with many students trying to justify Boudicca's behaviour.

It is evident that students who answered on this Topic had little knowledge about the battles in early Roman Britain. Very few knew what happened either at the Medway in Question 12(a)(i) or how Scapula stormed the hill and forced Caratacus to flee. Indeed most of those who answered Question 12(a)(ii) only knew he had fled to the Brigantes whose queen handed him over to the Romans. Using a somewhat limited amount of knowledge students made a reasonable attempt at answering Question 12(a)(iii). Answers to Question 12(b) were also poor as students didn't really analyse the questions properly. Most knew what reforms Agricola had introduced in Question 12(b)(ii) but failed to evaluate what he had actually achieved overall. Too many ignored the word *general* in Question 12(b)(iii) and so didn't analyse Agricola's military ability and were content to offer generalised answers about Agricola as a governor.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades
Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the
Results statistics page of the AQA Website.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion