

Mark Scheme with Examiners' Report GCE A Level Ancient History (9278)

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ANCIENT HISTORY 9278, MARK SCHEME WITH CHIEF EXAMINER'S COMMENTS

General Comments

Some scripts contained essays that were extremely short. Regardless of the quality of response, candidates should be aware that an essay that falls well short of one page cannot expect to achieve a very high mark.

Paper 1: Greek History - Outlines

Despite the small entry and the large choice of questions, candidates attempted every part of every question on the paper although, as always, some questions were much more popular than others.

Question 1

Answers needed to focus on Spartans, leadership, characteristics and differences from the Athenians, avoiding excessive introductory material about the Persian War and without saying too much about Athens and the setting up of the League - although some detail was clearly necessary to show why the Spartans were not involved. The time frame was deliberately left open but focus on the early stages of the Delian League was expected.

Answers were generally good on Spartan attitudes to foreign affairs but some candidates digressed too much on factors surrounding the establishment of the Delian League that had little or nothing to do with the question.

Question 2

This was a very popular question and produced answers of very varied quality. Some were full, thorough and excellent. Others wrote a far too generalised essay on the Delian League or failed to address the second part of the question.

The first word – **evaluate** – was included to remind candidates to do just that. Everything needed to be relevant to Cimon's role; for example, objectives are relevant in terms of evaluating whether he enabled the league to fulfil its purpose. The second part of the question, about events after Cimon's ostracism, required more than just a throwaway sentence.

Question 3

This required an evaluation of Pericles to see how far the statement is true and for what reason; and also reference to and analysis of other Athenian politicians, preferably with specific examples. Undue narrative detail of Pericles' time was not needed. The time frame was deliberately open to interpretation as wide as the 5th century.

There were some very good and full answers from candidates who knew their material and how to use it.

Question 4

This was about causes of the Peloponnesian War, but from a specific angle. Mere narrative of the various events leading up to the war was not sufficient. The second part of the question had to be addressed and candidates were invited to express a view (a) about what Athens could have done and (b) by implication, what she actually wanted to happen.

Some answers were excellent but others went no further than a basic outline of the events leading up to the outbreak of war, without really addressing Athens' attitude or whether she could have prevented it.

Question 5

This question invited analysis of (a) Brasidas' conduct during the Archidamian War, and (b) Spartan official policy at that time. Specific instances were required as well as general points about Brasidas being atypical. Examiners were looking for selective analysis of the latter part the Archidamian War.

Those who attempted this question demonstrated sound basic knowledge and understanding.

Question 6

This was a deliberately open question in terms of time scale, expecting candidates to look both before and after the main Sicilian Expedition. Most answers focused only on that expedition and thus were denied the higher marks.

Question 7

This question invited candidates to evaluate some of the longer-term implications for Sparta of victory in the Peloponnesian War and to try and link them to her eventual defeat at Leuctra. A decline in numbers, failure to make the best use of success and the continuing emergence of new threats were all factors.

There were a few very good, detailed and well thought out answers but this was not attempted by many candidates.

Question 8

This question was not attempted by many candidates, and many of those who did attempt it appeared to have misread the question. The question asks about 'benefits of empire for Athens' and in its second part requires assessment of how far these benefits were shared out across Athenian Society.

The question covers a broad time scale but required specific detail, not just generalisations. The second part had to be addressed fully to show an understanding of the structure of Athenian society and the way some sections of it may be said to have done better than others from Athenian Imperialism. Benefits needed to be seen not just in terms of wealth but also in terms of politics, culture and ethos. Consideration of the price paid in terms of war was also apposite. Some answers instead talked about benefits which member states of the Athenian Empire may have derived from their membership.

Questions 9 – 12

These questions on 4th century topics were attempted by only a few candidates. There were some very good answers and no obvious sources of confusion or uncertainty.

Question 9

Some narrative detail was required, but only so much as is relevant to the question. The key words are 'incredible and fair'. Candidates were expected to use the evidence to make whatever case they saw fit.

Question 10

Basic factual narrative of events was required but always with relevance to the heart of the question. Candidates could demonstrate breadth of knowledge by bringing in possible parallels from crises during the Peloponnesian War, recovery from which demonstrated Athenian resilience.

Question 11

This was a particularly narrative question, inviting clarity of presentation in selecting those aspects of what Philip did that are relevant. Implicit in the question is Philip's intent, but a sound outline of how he achieved control would be sufficient.

Question 12

Here candidates had to be very selective and avoid all but the necessary factual detail. Beyond a certain level there is no right answer, so effective use of evidence is important. The question does not ask whether the aims were achieved but what they were and how far, if at all, they changed.

Question 13

(a) Candidates were expected to demonstrate knowledge of how the Athenian Democracy actually worked under Pericles. A history of its development was not required, nor any account of threats to it or mistakes made in its name. Key factors are institutions, workings, numbers, powers.

(b) The question covered the whole time frame and three specifically named aspects of Athenian life. Some specific examples were necessary, not just generalisations about social structure in Athenian society.

Question 14

(a) A four-part question designed to help candidates frame and structure their response. All parts needed to be addressed, although not in equal measure. A mixture of general description and specific examples was expected.

(b) This required outline coverage of both Athenian and Spartan education. There was no requirement to compare the two in any evaluative sense although any expression of personal preference was acceptable. Candidates had to be selective and avoid being anecdotal or giving excessive detail. A broad outline covering as much as possible of both versions was preferable to getting bogged down in too much detail of any one particular.

Paper 2: Herodotus and the Persian Wars

Question 1 (a) to (e): Quotes from Herodotus

These questions were generally answered well, and in a number of cases, very well. There was a fairly even spread of responses to parts (a) to (d) with far fewer for (e). Some candidates seemed to find Q (b) (i) too vague and were unsure in what terms to couch their answer. A surprising number were reduced to guesswork over (b) (iii), 'Who were the Pisistratidae?'

Essay questions

Every essay was attempted by some candidates although some were much more popular than others.

Questions 2, 5 and 8 were tackled by very few candidates and there were very few good answers, especially to question 2. There was a fairly even spread of responses to all the other questions with a corresponding range in quality of work. Some candidates produced full, thorough, thoughtful, detailed and relevant responses. Overall the standard was encouragingly high and in general seemed to be a little higher than on Paper 1.

Question 1

In (a) - (e) examiners were looking for precise, clear, factually correct or effectively interpreted responses to the questions set on each passage. Candidates should refer to what is actually there in the passage but be prepared to go beyond this as appropriate. The mark allocation for each sub-section gives a guide to the scale of response required.

Question 2

This required the use of one particular Herodotus anecdote as a starting point for analysis of his general reliability. The main focus should be an account of the shield signal but other comparative material is essential to a balanced, comprehensive response.

Question 3

Care was needed here to avoid excessive irrelevant narrative. The focus needed to be specifically on reasons, not events, with a clearly comparative approach. Athenian provocation, the Persian desire for revenge, expansion, etc were all relevant.

Question 4

Candidates were not actually asked why Xerxes trusted the Ionians but a good answer would almost certainly comment on how far such trust was justified. 'Significant' is a somewhat subjective term; mostly this needed good detailed attention to the role of the Ionians, for better or for worse, in the service of Xerxes.

Question 5

This clearly invites speculation but answers still needed to rest upon a comparative analysis of the respective men. Good responses were based on sources as far as possible and not just a series of generalisations.

Question 6

This required an analysis of the myth of Spartan supremacy as perceived both by those who knew them and, as with Xerxes, those who did not. A good answer must use some specific source material and not just rely on generalisations about the Spartans.

Question 7

Themistocles is an interesting and complex figure. Candidates needed to focus only upon those aspects of his achievements that affected the course of the conflict with Persia. The word 'analyse' should make it clear that more than just factual narrative was required.

Question 8

A two part question, not necessarily requiring an equally divided response. Candidates who had studied the relevant source material found this fairly straightforward.

Question 9

There is no right answer to this, hence providing the opportunity to make whichever case the candidate wishes. The challenge is to present the evidence for what each side did in such a way as to lead to the conclusion which the candidate supports.

Question 10

A biographical question inviting a full, clear narrative about a major figure on the Persian side. There is no specific requirement for evaluation although good candidates were likely to make a judgement.

ANCIENT HISTORY 9278, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	N
Lowest mark for award of grade	65	55	48	41	35	29

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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