

Examiners' Report

GCE A Level Ancient History (9278)

June 2006

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ANCIENT HISTORY 9278, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

General Comments

There was an encouraging number of good, full and impressive responses across the examination this year. However, there were still too many candidates who submitted answers that were too short and shallow to have any chance of doing justice to an A Level question. Candidates must realise that while quality always matters more than quantity, no answer which is well under a said on length can realistically claim to be worthy of an A Level pass.

There were also, in a number of cases, examples of profligate and self-destructive misuse of time. Several candidates scored through substantial pieces of work and then began again with a different answer. Others produced essay plans that were almost as long as their essay. Candidates must grasp the need to be disciplined about their use of time in an examination, the need to make a careful choice of question and then stick to answering it as best they can.

There were only a few rubric violations. These involved candidates answering both parts of an 'either' / 'or' question.

Paper 1

As always some questions were more popular with candidates than others. Some questions were answered by only a small number of candidates. Question 11 (Philip's rise to power); question 12 (Alexander's problems) and all parts of questions 13 and 14 attracted very few answers and none of very high quality. A great many candidates answered question 1 (Delian League), question 2 (Themistocles and Cimon), question 3 (Athens and Sparta), question 4 (Pericles and the Peloponnesian War), question 5 (Cleon), question 6a (the Sicilian Expedition) and there were many good, full, thoughtful and detailed responses. Rather fewer candidates attempted question 6b (Oligarchic Revolution), question 7 (Persians and Peloponnesian War), question 9 (Jason of Pherae), question 10 (rise of Thebes) but of those who did, a high proportion did them well. Question 8 read 'Who were the leading generals in the fourth century...'. However, without exception, every one of the modest number of candidates who answered it limited their answer to generals of the fifth century - with obvious consequences.

Paper 2

Question 1

The answers to the various parts of this question, on the short passages from Herodotus, were generally most encouraging. All sections, (a) - (e) were attempted in numbers and a significant majority of candidates did well or very well in answering them.

Questions 2-10

All questions were attempted though question 2 (Marathon), question 5 (Herodotus as religious) question 10 (Herodotus' aims) by far fewer than the others. It was particularly surprising that a Marathon question should prove so unpopular. A number of candidates failed to provide a sketch map as required by the wording of question 8 and a very few provided only a sketch map with no accompanying explanatory text. Weaker candidates tended to limit their answers to narrative descriptions and accounts with little or no concession to the evaluative or analytical

requirements of the questions. There were, however, some good or very good answers to most of the questions.

ANCIENT HISTORY 9278, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	67	59	52	45	38

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