

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

CLASSICAL GREEK

J292

For first teaching in 2016

J292/02 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 2 series overview

As usual, the '*Tales from Herodotus*' prose literature option was offered by the vast majority of Centres. In this second examined sitting of the 'Solon and Croesus' story there were, once again, many impressive scripts, expressing candidates' enjoyment of original Greek literature and their appreciation of its literary merits. Teachers and students have evidently adjusted well to the requirements of the new specification and deserve credit for engaging wholeheartedly with a subject that often has to be delivered under timetabling constraints, in a short period of time.

Two general points are worth noting about the extended-response questions:

8-mark question

The marking grid for Level 3 and 4 requires candidates to make both content **and** style points in their answer. In order to access Level 3 (5–6 marks) candidates were required to make at least **one** style point; to access Level 4 (7–8 marks) candidates were required to make at least **two** style points.

10-mark question

When the prescribed text is being examined for a second time, candidates are cautioned against regurgitating a prepared essay learned in response to the question set on the previous year's paper.

Shortcomings in English expression are particularly exposed in the 10-mark essay. There is much to be said for taking time to draft a brief plan at the beginning and reading through the whole response at the end.

Question 1 (a)

1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Tales from Herodotus IX(a). 17–21

(a) Name the Athenian whose life is being described in this passage.

..... [1]

Almost all candidates got this answer correct.

Question 1 (b)

(b) How does Herodotus' language emphasise that this man had a glorious death?

You should make **two** points, each supported by close reference to the Greek.

[4]

The best answers quoted the Greek and its matching translation rather than gesturing towards its meaning. Most performed very well, finding a variety of points to make about Herodotus' use of language, and easily meeting the requirement for at least one point about language/style. There was some confusion over grammatical terms (*κάλλιστα*, for example, described as an adjective rather than an adverb) but examiners exercised a degree of flexibility in such instances.

Exemplar 1 illustrates a full-mark response to this question.

Exemplar 1

- He uses a superlative with 'τερπότατη' (most glorious) to describe the end of Tellus' life, emphasising that his death was more glorious than any other.
- He reveals that Tellus was buried at 'δημοσίᾳ' (at public expense) and 'τητερεοῖς' (where he fell) which illustrates the honour he received as a result of his death, and that he died like a hero.

[4]

Question 1 (c)

(c) Immediately after this passage what question does Croesus ask **and** why does he ask it?

.....
.....
.....

[2]

Almost all candidates received full marks for this question.

Question 2 (a)

2 Read the passage and answer the questions.



Tales from Herodotus IX(b). 18–25

(a) ή δὲ μήτηρ ... ἀριστόν ἔστι (lines 1–3): what prayer did the mother of Cleobis and Biton make to the goddess?

.....
.....

[1]

Almost all candidates earned the mark for this question. A few omitted to say that the mother's prayer applied to her sons or said that she asked for the best 'end' a man can meet with.

Question 2 (b)

(b) μετὰ δὲ ταύτην τὴν εὐχῆν ... ὡς ἀνδρῶν ἀριστῶν γενομένων (lines 3–6): do you think that the mother of Cleobis and Biton would have been happy with their eventual fates?

You should make **two** points and provide evidence to explain your view.

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.....

[4]

This is an example of the sort of personal response questions (AO3) which feature in the new specification. Candidates who focused carefully on the specified lemma and were not distracted by the earlier section of the passage (about the mother's pride in her sons' achievements) easily earned full marks. Most interpreted the deaths of Cleobis and Biton and their subsequent commemoration in a positive light; very few were brave enough to suggest that their mother might not have been happy.

Exemplar 2 illustrates a full-mark response to this question.

Exemplar 2

- Yes, as both her sons died a comfortable and peaceful death in the temple during their sleep and it was considered a great honour for this to happen in a temple.
- In addition, her sons were remembered and left a great legacy; they had their statues made and situated in Delphi which would have made the mother proud especially due to Delphi's association with the god Apollo and the oracle. [4]

	Misconception	<p>Greek quotation and literary analysis are not required here (although many excellent responses included supporting evidence in Greek). Some candidates were under the impression that the young men had been buried at Delphi.</p>
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Question 3 (a)

3 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Tales from Herodotus IX(c). 8–15

(a) εὐδαίμονα ... ἀνέτρεψε (lines 1–3): why, according to Solon, can he not yet call Croesus fortunate?

.....
.....
.....

[2]

Here, too, there is a need to focus closely on the specified section of Greek. Even very good candidates often achieved just one mark because they omitted the last part of the lemma (*πολλοῖς γὰρ δὴ ὑποδείξας ὄλβον ὁ θεὸς προρρίζους ἀνέτρεψε*).

Question 3 (b)

(b) ταῦτα λέγων τῷ Κροίσῳ οὐ πως ἔχαριζετο ὁ Σόλων· λόγου δὲ αὐτὸν ποιησάμενος οὐδενὸς ἀποπέμπεται ὁ Κροίσος, κάρτα δόξας ἀμαθῆ εἶναι, ὃς τὰ παρόντα ἀγαθὰ μεθεὶς τὴν τελευτὴν παντὸς χρήματος ὄρᾶν ἐκέλευε (lines 3–6).

Translate these words into English.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

[5]

This translation question was a good discriminator and full marks often proved elusive. Common pitfalls included: the tense of *λέγων*; reversing the subject/object (Solon/Croesus); the idiomatic phrase *λόγου δὲ αὐτὸν ποιησάμενος οὐδενὸς*; the relative link (*ός*); and the indirect command (*όρᾶν ἐκέλευε*) at the end. Three of these are explained in more detail in the 'misconceptions' listed below.

Exemplar 3 illustrates a translation which earned 2/5.

Exemplar 3

Having said these things Croesus pleased Solon in no way. Not considering his words, he dismissed ~~the~~ Solon, for he thought ~~the~~ him very ignorant who ~~had~~ cast ^{away} the present good and demanded to see the end of the ~~whole~~ whole affair.

	Misconception <p>λέγων: commonly translated as aorist rather than present</p> <p>λόγου δὲ αὐτὸν ποιησάμενος: many translations referred to 'the words' [of Croesus], making λόγου the object of the participle</p> <p>όραν ἐκέλευε: 'demanded to see' was not accepted as a translation of this indirect command</p>
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Question 4 (a)

4 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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Tales from Herodotus IX(d). 12–20

(a) καὶ οὐ Κῦρος ἀκούσας (line 1): what had Cyrus heard?

.....
.....

[1]

Nearly all candidates got this answer correct.

Question 4 (b) (i)

(b) ἐκέλευσε τοὺς ἔρμηνέας ἐπερέσθαι τὸν Κροῖσον τίνα ἐπικαλοῦτο (lines 1–2).

(i) τοὺς ἔρμηνέας: why do you think he needed to use these people to question Croesus?

.....

..... [1]

Almost all candidates were able to get across the idea that Cyrus and Croesus spoke different languages, although the latter was sometimes assumed to be a Greek speaker. Credit was not given to the few who suggested that Cyrus used translators because the fire was too hot for him to approach.

Question 4 (b) (ii)

(ii) what did they ask Croesus?

.....

..... [1]

Nearly all candidates got this answer correct.

Question 4 (c)

(c) καὶ οἱ δὲ προσελθόντες ἐπηρώτων. Κροῖσος δὲ τέως μὲν σιγὴν εἶχεν ἐρωτώμενος (lines 2–3).

Pick out and translate a **Greek phrase** which indicates that Croesus took some time to reply.

Greek phrase:

English translation:

[2]

Answers which offered a phrase of two or more words, correctly translated, earned full marks. Despite the instruction in the question, however, many candidates gave just one word. While *τέως* is best translated by an English phrase ('for a while'), it does not constitute a phrase in Greek.

	AfL	Teachers are encouraged to reinforce the distinction between a word , a phrase (a small group of words standing together as a conceptual unit) and a clause (a group of words that contains a subject and a verb).
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Question 4 (d)

(d) μετὰ δὲ ἔλεγεν ... δοκοῦντας εἶναι (lines 3–6): what did Croesus say to show that he finally appreciated Solon's wisdom?

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.....

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.....

.....

[4]

The best candidates made detailed use of the whole lemma and could earn full marks by making at least four of the five acceptable points. Candidates are advised to look carefully at the number of marks on offer to work out how many points are needed. Some lost marks by starting at *καὶ πάντα* (line 4) rather than at *ἔλθοι ποτὲ οἱ Σόλων* (line 3), omitting any reference to Solon's visit or Croesus' wealth. Many seemed unsure about the meaning of 'οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον εἰς ἑαυτὸν λέγων η̄ εἰς ἄπαν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον' but well-learned translations did earn credit.

Question 5

5* Read the passage and answer the question.

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Tales from Herodotus IX(e). 9–14

How does Herodotus create a dramatic conclusion to this story about Croesus?

In your answer you may wish to consider:

- the strong emotion expressed by Croesus
- the description of divine intervention

You must refer to the **Greek** and discuss Herodotus' use of language.

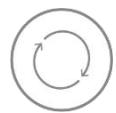
[8]

There were some excellent responses to this question. The great majority knew the text well and found the passage a rich source of material for literary comment. The best made use of the whole extract, selecting a range of apposite quotations, translating these accurately and engaging very well with the question. Those who did not convey an understanding of the meaning or context of the Greek fared less well. *δακρύων* was a popular discussion point: strong candidates developed this well, finding dramatic effect in the contrast between Croesus' previous arrogant over-confidence and his desperation now. There was liberal peppering of literary terms (not always understood), with 'tricolon' particularly popular this year. A number of candidates considered *συνέδραμεν* to be an example of personification without explaining this idea in sufficient detail.

Exemplar 4 is extracted from a response which earned full marks, showing good use of the Greek and relevant discussion. It also illustrates the AfL point below.

Exemplar 4

Drama is furthered created with the gathering of clouds out of 'άλλο πλας τε λακιάνες' (clear skies and calm a weather). This pleasant sounding and somewhat pleonastic phrase creates does emphasise how dramatic and sudden the change in weather. This is intensified by 'εξίτιντος' (suddenly), and the delaying of 'νεφέλη' (clouds) to the end of the line, which makes for a dramatic reveal.

	AfL	When commenting on a prose text, it is not appropriate to talk of the emphatic positioning of words in a line . Candidates should refer to the position of words in a clause or a sentence .
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Question 6

6 Read the passage and answer the question.

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Tales from Herodotus XIV(a). 6–12

How does the language of this passage show that Alcmaeon was eager to take advantage of the offer he received from Croesus? You should make **two** points, each supported by close reference to the Greek.

[4]

Although the question asks about Herodotus' language, examiners allowed two content points since there is no accompanying English translation provided (unlike Question 1(b)). The great majority of candidates were therefore able to earn full marks; in fact, most did manage to address the 'language' element of the question. Answers which did not make the meaning of the Greek clear, or which made vague stylistic points without reference to the text could not be credited. Exemplar 5 illustrates a response which earned 2/4 for this reason.

Exemplar 5

- The repetition of adjectives to do with size being 'μεγαλούς' large, 'βαθύς' deep and 'ευπατατός' evident demonstrate the terms Aeolias has gone to to take advantage of the offer. He is not afraid of embarrassment by putting on these oversized garments but just wants the gold.
- The use of polysyndetic listing of how he is preparing for the mission demonstrate the terms he would go to to receive as much gold as possible. It emphasises to also how he has thought the plan through carefully, due to he 'ισχύς'. Showing he is taking the challenge seriously. [4]

Question 7

7* How does Herodotus balance positive and negative characteristics in his portrayal of Croesus?

You should support your answer with a range of references to the stories you have read, and you may include passages printed on the question paper.

[10]

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.....
.....

Most candidates were able to offer a wide range of examples of Herodotus' balance of characteristics in his portrayal of Croesus. Strong candidates analysed each story carefully, choosing either to paragraph Croesus's various characteristics, or to weigh up how some behaviours could be viewed as both positive and negative: Croesus' generosity towards Alcmaeon, for example, might be taken positively (he is rewarding a foreigner's support of the Lydians) or negatively (humiliating someone for his own amusement). A few made life difficult for themselves by interpreting the phrase 'balance positive and negative qualities' too narrowly, looking for a balancing episode every time a positive or negative characteristic was identified; this often made for an awkwardly structured answer and some strained comparisons.

The best-prepared candidates understood that the Alcmaeon episode, although located at the end of the text in the prescribed editions, does not follow chronologically on from the conclusion of the Solon and Croesus story. (An excellent articulation of this was: 'Between Solon's dismissal and the arrival of the Persians we see the story of Alcmaeon.') Many, however, assumed that the Alcmaeon story happened chronologically after Croesus' epiphany on the pyre, so that Croesus had 'gone on a journey' and become a better person (miraculously regaining his wealth!). Since even very strong candidates offered arguments along these lines, examiners indulged such conclusions (if dubious). Exemplar 6 illustrates the end of a response of this sort, which earned full marks despite the misconception.

In some cases, there was a temptation to re-word a pre-learned response to last year's question.

Exemplar 6

Finally, we are able to see 'humour in Croesus', as he can freely laugh at Alcaemon when he is covered in gold. This reflects Croesus' change in character as a whole from arrogant and materialistic to generous and good natured.

Herodotus effectively balances the two contrasting characteristics in the story. It is organised in a logical way, with negative arrogance, materialism and in the first story and a story in the middle about self-reflection and becoming away and finally a concluding passage set a little later to show a clear moral change for the better in Croesus.

END OF QUESTION PAPER

	AfL	When studying an episodic text such as this, students need to understand that the stories do not necessarily follow in chronological order.
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