

The University of Melbourne
Semester 1 Assessment, 2006

SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CINEMA, CLASSICS AND
ARCHAEOLOGY

Subject Numbers	Subject Title
107-104	ANCIENT GREECE: MYTH, ART AND TEXT

Exam duration: Two Hours

Reading Time: 15 minutes

This paper has 6 pages [in large print format].

Authorised Materials:

No texts or notes are allowed

Instructions to Invigilators:

1. One 14 page script book per candidate.
2. Students may take the exam paper with them on completion of the exam.

Instructions to Students:

There are two (2) parts. Please make sure you indicate clearly your choice of question in each of the two parts of the exam. **Do not write on the same Greek texts in part 1 and 2 of this exam.**

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Part One (60%)

Write brief comments (about 250 words or more) on any three (3) of the following passages. Identify the passage, the author, the speaker, the general significance of the passage, and any points of interest or importance.

- (a) There is an island close in front of Salamis -
small, with no anchorage, a haunt
of Pan, the god who loves to dance upon the shore;
Xerxes sent them, so if some hostile troops
were shipwrecked and sought refuge there
they could kill Greeks when they were easy prey,
and save our friends and allies from the sea.
He read the future badly: when the god
gave battle-glory to the Greeks,
that very day they put on heavy armour,
leapt down from their ships, encircling
the whole island, so our men had no idea
where they could turn. The Greeks hurled many
stones at them, and from their bowstrings
arrows struck down many of our men.
Then finally they charged as one
and club, hack at the limbs of our poor men
until not one was left alive.
When Xerxes realized our depth of suffering, he cried
aloud.
He had a throne with clear views of our troops,
on a high mound beside the beach;
he tore his clothes and uttered a shrill cry,
gave orders on the instant to the army,
rushed off in chaotic flight. All this we have
to grieve, as well as the disaster I told first.

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(b)

I checked him; I threw before his eyes
Obsessive notions, thoughts of insane joy,
To fall on the mingled droves of captured livestock,
The undistributed loot which the herdsmen had in charge.
He hit them,
Hewed out a weltering shambles of horned beasts,
Cleaving them down in a circle all around him.
Sometimes he thought he held the Sons of Atreus
In his grip to kill them, and then again
His fancy would seize some other of the chiefs.
The man was wandering in diseased delusions;
I pressed him, urged him into the fatal net.
At last, when he was weary of the slaughter,
He hobbled the cattle that were still alive,
And the sheep, and brought them to his tent, thinking
It was men he had captured and not poor horned beasts.
And now he has them bound inside the lodge
And is tormenting them. But I shall show you
His madness in plain view. Take note of it;
Then you can publish it to all the Greeks.

(c)

Oh, my dear child!
Even in death you shall be counted dear to me
as any of my children. Though I shall never feel
your hand on my cheek, or hear your voice again
calling me, your mother's sire, eager to know
"What's troubling you, old man? Who dares
to do you wrong, dishonor or vex your heart?
Tell me. I'll make him pay for it, Grandfather."

But now I am the saddest man on earth.
You are done for; your mother and sisters are ruined.
If there is anyone looking on who despises the Gods,
let him study this wreck of a man, and change his ways.

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(d)

O most wise spectators, apply your minds,
for we have been done injustice and blame you to your faces.
For although we of all gods benefit the city most,
to us alone of daimons you do not sacrifice or pour libations—
we who watch over you. If there is ever some mindless
expedition, then we thunder or drizzle.¹⁰⁶
Further, when you were about to choose as general the enemy
of gods,
the Paphiagonian tanner,¹⁰⁷ we drew our eyebrows together
and sent forth terrible things; thunder burst through lightning;
the moon was abandoning her courses; and the sun
quickly drew his wick back into himself,¹⁰⁸
declaring that he would not appear for you if Cleon were to be
general.
Nevertheless, you chose him. They say that bad counsel
belongs to this city, but that the gods,
whenever you go wrong, turn it to the better.

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(e)

Furthermore, the young men who follow me around of their own free will, those who have most leisure, the sons of the very rich, take pleasure in hearing people questioned; they themselves often imitate me and try to question others. I think they find an abundance of men who believe they have some knowledge but know little or nothing. The result is that those whom they question are angry, not with themselves but with me. They say: "That man Socrates is a pestilential fellow who corrupts the young." If one asks them what he does and what he teaches to corrupt them, they are silent, as they do not know, but, so as not to appear at a loss, they mention those accusations that are available against all philosophers, about "things in the sky and things below the earth," about "not believing in the gods" and "making the worse the stronger argument"; they would not want to tell the truth, I'm sure, that they have been proved to lay claim to knowledge when they know nothing. These people are ambitious, violent, and numerous; they are continually and convincingly talking about me; they have been filling your ears for a long time with vehement slanders against me.

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Part 2 (40%)

Write an essay in answer to **one (1)** of the following questions. Do **not** answer a question specifically on the same Greek text as you wrote on in Part 1 of this exam (eg. if you have written on the *Bacchae* in Part 1, above, do not answer question (f) below).

- (a) Consider the choruses in the plays you have read this semester. How do choruses add meaning to a play? How do you interpret their roles?
- (b) Discuss the significance of rhetoric in the texts you have studied this semester (weeks 7-11). Why is speech such a big issue in Athenian literature of the time?
- (c) To what extent can Athenian drama of the 5th century BC be used as a historical source for the period? Should we consider the plays reliable sources?
- (d) "In light of the recent historical events on which Aeschylus bases his *Persians*, the play should be seen primarily as a patriotic affirmation of Athenian strength and courage". Do you agree with this statement?
- (e) Why does Ajax kill himself, and how is this crucial to understanding Sophocles' play?
- (f) Why does Pentheus agree to dress up as a woman to spy on the Bacchantes? How important is this in understanding Euripides' play the *Bacchae*?
- (g) What are the basic aspects of Old Comedy (of which Aristophanes' *Clouds* is an example)? Do you agree with the statement that it is actually a very serious form of literature with a façade of humour?
- (h) What are the central aspects of Socrates' defence in the *Apology*? How is it that such a speech could fail to win the day against the charges?

End of exam