

## **Biblical Hebrew**

Advanced GCE **H417**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **H017**

# **OCR Report to Centres**

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**June 2012**

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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# F191 Translation, Comprehension and Literature

## General Comments

The examiners are pleased to report that the standard of knowledge and evaluation was generally high. Some responses were ambiguous and therefore it proved difficult to award an appropriate mark. Therefore it must be emphasised that clear presentation and accurate expression is expected at this level. . The examiners offer these remarks with the hope that they will be a help for future candidates in achieving a high standard.

### Question 1: Unprepared Translation and Comprehension.

All candidates were required to answer this question and were generally well prepared for the challenge.

(a) (ii) The noun **אָרָא** in this passage personifies 'the people of the land' and thus it was logical for the verb **וָאב** to be in the plural. This was not always recognised.

(b) (i) Many good attempts were recorded.

(ii) The idea of 'placing one's hand to the mouth' was well understood. However, only a few responses indicated that this involved using one's hand as a scoop.

(c) The translation was generally of a high standard. The use of the *hiphil* in line 5 was not fully understood (see the Mark Scheme).

(d) (ii) The term 'tense' was often confused with that of 'conjugation'. It should be noted that tenses are either Imperfect or Perfect. The terms past and future are too imprecise at this level.

(iii) The feminine plural ending **הָ** should be easily recognised (albeit that it is not very common). It was sometimes confused with the interjection **אָן** (please/now).

(e) (i) The translation was generally sound.

(ii) The noun **פְּנוֹת** (corners) was sometimes confused with the noun **פְּנִים** (face). This offered some interesting (but incorrect) observations.

(f) (i) The phrase **כִּי הָא** was only recognised by a minority of candidates. (This is dealt with fully in the Mark Scheme).

(g) This translation was slightly more difficult than the previous two, (c) and (e)(i). This is based on the principle that the comprehension accelerates in difficulty as it progresses. The verb **הִפִּילוּ** (line 15) caused some difficulty although the context should have elucidated its meaning. Similarly, the meaning of the *niphal* verb **וּלְכַד** (line 15) proved difficult for some (see Mark Scheme).

**Questions 2-4: Literature Set Texts.**

Question 2 was answered by a minority of candidates. The responses were of a good standard. (a) to (c) were well answered.

(d) (i) The phrase ותרץ את שבתותיה (line 9) was met with difficulty (although this was prepared set-text translation).

(ii) proved difficult (see Mark Scheme for full treatment). Generally at least 1 mark was gained.

(f) was well answered, although the idea of the importance of the priestly evaluation was sometimes missed.

(g) and (h) were well answered

Question 3 was a popular question.

(a) was well answered.

(b) A few candidates commented, interestingly, that in conversation words are used informally and thus the Infinitive Absolute started with a נ (instead of the anticipated ה) as a parallel with the main verb.

(c) (i) and (ii) were well answered.

(d) (i) For help in future examinations, it is worth noting that a *dagesh* in the first radical of the Imperfect could well indicate the *niphal*.

(ii) was well answered.

(e) was well answered.

(f) (i) Translation, alone, could not produce full marks. This is a very common phrase used in the books of Samuel/Shmuel, Kings/Melachim and Ruth. It implies a very strong oath invoking G-d's authority.

(ii) Plural nouns, such as דמים, very often imply a conceptual idea. Here it means 'bloodshed'. (See Mark Scheme).

(g) There was a tendency to summarize the Biblical narrative. Some responses went 'off target' and described the relationship between Jonathan/Yehonathan and David. All the points made should be comprehensible and convincing to gain due credit.

Question 4 was also a popular question, which was generally well answered.

(a) (i) and (ii) were well answered.

(b) Most responses gained at least two marks. The idea that selling land was often the result of impoverishment or a desperate situation, as in this incident, was not always understood.

(c) The translation was generally of a high standard.

(d) Few candidates realised that the Absolute Infinitive can be used as an Imperative.

(e) and (f) were well answered.

(g) Although the majority of candidates wrote a reasonable response to this question, it was not always focussed on how their circumstances 'affected them as people'. (See the Mark Scheme for a full explanation.)

(h) The concept of legal obligation was generally recognised. However, there was less understanding of how a social contract within society devolves responsibility on individuals. (See Mark Scheme for a full treatment.)

# F192 Translation, Comprehension, Composition and Literature

## General Comments

Most candidates were well prepared for this specification and very often their responses reflected linguistic talent. The examiners offer these remarks with the hope that they will be a help for future candidates in achieving a high standard.

### Question 1: Language–Unprepared Translation and Comprehension

All candidates were required to answer this question and were generally well prepared for the challenge.

(a) The verb ופתחת was not always recognised as a privative *piel*. Therefore the instruction to the prophet was not always understood.

(b) The translation was generally of a high standard. The following comments will hopefully be useful for preparation for future examinations.

The verb ינהג (line 4) was often mistranslated as ‘behave’ rather than ‘lead away’. The verbs וחתו ובשו (line 5) were often not known, although they are fairly common. The noun מבטם (line 5) was similarly not always appreciated. Encouragement should be given to deduce the root [נבט], which will elucidate the meaning of the unknown noun or verb in question. The *niphal* Infinitive להנצל (line 7) was often translated actively.

(c) and (d) were well answered.

(e) (i) In order to gain a high mark, it is important to read the passage in its entirety. It would then be understood that the subject referred to in line 10 was connected to the last clause in line 9.

(ii) Though there was sometimes a failure to identify the subject referred to in part (i), responses indicate that it was still possible to gain 1 mark in this sub-question.

(f) (i) Often these participles were parsed, which was not required. When the passage was read in its entirety, no problems were encountered when responding to this question.

(g) There were some ingenious responses to this question. At least two or three examples were cited.

(h) Almost all candidates secured at least 2 marks. It is considered advisable that close attention is paid to the structure of words and phrases within the set-texts. This will reap benefits when answering this type of question.

### Question 2: Translation of English into Biblical Hebrew

All candidates were required to answer this question and scored at least half marks in transcribing this passage into Biblical Hebrew. Some good attempts were noticed. It was similarly noted that in almost all cases, there was a general appreciation of the Biblical Hebrew style. However, few candidates scored highly in this question. Only Biblical Hebrew expressions are acceptable. The use of an anachronistic phrase such as עולם הבא is a post-Biblical expression. [See the Mark Scheme for alternative ways of tackling this question.]

### Questions 3-5: Literature Set Texts

Candidates are required to answer two questions in this section.

Question 3 was a popular question.

(a) and (b) were well answered.

(c) (i) and (ii) were well understood when the background to the Set texts was duly considered. This is a pre-requisite in such a question.

(d) Merely translating or summarizing the text scored a minimum of marks. The passage has to be understood within the context of the Set texts in order to attain a high mark.

(e) A good definition was not always elicited. In order to prepare for future examinations it is advisable to consult the Mark Scheme.

(f) was well answered.

(g) The examiners were specifically looking for the elucidation of the various stages of the argument presented in the text. Translating or summarizing scored low marks.

Question 4

Very few candidates answered this question. The examiners are pleased to note that those who attempted this question showed a high degree of accuracy.

Question 5 was a popular question

(a)(i) Some responses only briefly referred to the use of participles in a very general sense e.g. Jerusalem is a feminine noun. No credit could therefore be given. It was important to cite examples and comment accordingly. The gerund מעלות was accepted as a possible participle. (See Mark Scheme).

(iii) Merely stating 'feminine' was not considered sufficient for any credit. (See the Mark Scheme for the correct approach).

(b) The idea of alliteration was well understood. However, simply citing the Biblical Hebrew text without comment could not gain credit. The use of assonance was rarely discussed.

(c) and (d) were well answered.

(e) (i) and (ii) were the most popular choices in this sub-question and were well answered.

(iii) The small number of responses to this sub-question rarely indicated the reason for the use of the use of the ל. For future reference, it should be noted that the preposition למן is considered a non-separable preposition, generally used (but not exclusively so) before an Infinitive Construct. (See the Mark Scheme).

### Essays: Questions 6-8

Candidates are only required to answer one question in this section.

### **Question 6**

Although responses indicated a wide knowledge of the Set texts, the underlying meaning of the term  $\tau\upsilon\psi$  was not always appreciated. (See the last point on the Mark Scheme). The examiners were specifically looking for evidence to show understanding that the term  $\tau\upsilon\psi$  was not simply a 'judge' in the conventional sense. Those who attained a high mark gave such a definition and demonstrated, through examples, how it is applied. The Mark Scheme offers possibilities emphasising the limitation that leadership in this era encountered.

### **Question 7**

No candidates attempted this question.

### **Question 8**

This was the most popular question in this section and was generally well answered. Most responses cited information from the Psalms studied. In order to achieve a high mark in this question, there was an expectation to analyse and justify the viewpoint offered. (See the criteria listed in the 'content and quality of written work' in the Mark Scheme.)

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