

GCSE

Biblical Hebrew

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J196**

OCR Report to Centres June 2015

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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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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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A201 Language

1. General Comments:

This specification is an increasingly popular choice for schools wishing to give their GCSE candidates the option of a basic grounding in Biblical studies. The syllabus is accessible, and the numbers of candidates sitting this examination continues to grow year on year.

Examiners are encouraged by the maturity of the responses and the high standards of instruction evident in these papers.

The examiners would encourage teachers to focus on developing their student's appreciation of the importance of not literally translating word for word, rather they should translate such that the end product flows in sensible English.

Words such as 'sojourn', often spelt as 'sujern', or 'surgeon', are not used in spoken English today. Neither is 'midst', often written as 'mist', 'missed', 'mixt'. There are many commonly accessible alternative to these archaic forms, and candidates are encouraged to translate using such alternatives.

2. Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1:

Grid Sheet:

ישמיעו: candidates must recognise the causative: they should make hear – announce.

והביאו: For a one mark question, the translation must be perfect, and must recognise the imperative – 'And bring'.

The translation was well handled by majority of candidates.

Question No. 2:

(a) (ii) The word והקימותי appears twice in this paper, and most candidates recognised the causative meaning, and translated correctly 'uphold' or 'fulfil'.

(c) Most candidates achieved the full 6 marks available.

(d) (ii) חמושים was frequently misidentified as 'fifty' or 'a fifth', instead of the correct 'armed'.

(e) (i) & (ii) To achieve the marks for this question, candidates had to specify 'you – past' / 2nd Perfect and then 'you – future' / 2nd Imperfect.

(e) (iii) Not many candidates appreciated that the letter 'ה' is replaced by the 'ת' when a suffix is added.

(g) Examiners encourage teachers to provide their students with accurate grammatical references. However, marks are not deducted for a failure to use the grammatical terminology.

Candidates should recognise the cardinal and ordinal use of the numbers, but marks were awarded for writing '4' and '4th'.

(i) (i) Very few candidates understood the phrase 'אחרית הימים' as an idiomatic reference to the distant future, i.e. the end of days, with many candidates writing things like 'the days after'.

(j) (i) To achieve this mark, candidates were required to note that this is the feminine plural form, not simply 'plural'.

A202 Literature

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates were unsure of the correct answer and wrote 'the kings' or 'the four and five kings'.
- (b) Well answered by most candidates.
- (c) Well answered by most candidates.
- (d) Well answered by most candidates as there were many points to choose from.
- (e) The answer had to be intelligible and those scripts that had 'souls' rather than 'people' did not receive both marks.
- (f) This was answered well by most candidates but no mark was given for 'he raised his hands' unless there was mention of 'to G-d' or 'as a sign of an oath'.
- (g) The vast majority of answers for this question were good.
- (h) This question had some good responses though some confused עשתרות קרנים with שוה קריתים or עמק שוה and wrote the wrong response.
 - (i) Well answered by most candidates.
 - (j) Almost every candidate received one mark for this question.
- (k) This was well answered as long as the candidate realised that ויכו is an imperfect with a vav consecutive rather than a past tense verb. The current rule for marking dictates that the examiner takes the first response given and so those who wrote: ויכו "Past, they smote"; מהכות "infinitive construct, from smiting" would only have scored a mark for the comment on מהכות.

Question 2

- (a) This was answered correctly by practically all candidates.
- (b) (i) Most scored well on this question though some merely transliterated בן משק.
(ii) A variety of answers was accepted and most candidates scored two.
- (c) Well answered by most candidates.
Many answered this competently although there were some errors in translating the word ויָשָׁב and בתרו.
- (d) The question asked for the difficulty in translating the phrase and did not require responses like 'why did he hurry to do it?'
- (e) There was a range of answers to this question and most scripts received two marks.
- (f) (i) Most candidates had the right root but some had the wrong conjugation.
(ii) This question proved more difficult and many candidates wrote ישוב or שוב.
- (g) Candidates found (i) harder than (ii).

Question 3

- (a) The examiners would like to point out that the rubric of the question specifically asks the candidates to answer the questions in English. A minority responded to this question by writing שאול in Hebrew ('after שאול's death') which technically invalidated the answer.
- (b) (i) and (ii) Well answered.
- (c) Most candidates answered this competently.

- (d) Whenever a question asks for the derivation of a word, the candidate is required to write the root of the word, the translation of the root and explain its connection to the word in the passage. Hence the answer is: פלג 'half' – א פלגש is a 'half-wife' as she is married but with fewer privileges.

Many scored at least one mark for this question by saying that a concubine is a wife without a *ketubah* (marriage document).

As a point of advice, teachers should observe *any* unusual word in the set texts and research its derivation.

- (e) On the whole, well answered.
- (f) Also well answered.
- (g) This translation piece was also well answered.
- (h) (i) Some wrote 'question hé' which is wrong.
(ii) Some just wrote 'mappiq hé' or 'feminine' which were not accepted as they did not provide enough information. What was required was 'feminine possessive' or 'her'.
(iii) Most answered this correctly.
(iv) The examiners did not accept 'cohortative' as that is reserved for the 1st person imperfect. Some wrote feminine suffix which is wrong.
- (i) The question was looking for the contextual use of the root עלה not simply the parsing of the word האעלה.
- (j) Some scripts had an abundance of information but failed to show points of contrast.

Question 4

- (a) Generally answered correctly but again some wrote דוד in Hebrew [see note on 3(a)] and were awarded 0.
- (b) (i) This piece was well translated by most candidates.
(ii) The examiners only awarded a mark for 'passive' if the translation had 'were spread out' to match.
- (c) This question, on occasion, attracted the humorous response of 'by means of the hé interrogative' when the question clearly asked for a 'method'.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question correctly scoring two marks.
- (e) Well answered by virtually all candidates.
- (f) Well answered, although some candidates struggled with the middle phrase אז תהרץ.
- (g) Again, well answered by most candidates although some gained no marks as the answer was only written in Hebrew. See above 3(a).
- (h) Candidates who merely translated the relevant verses gained no marks. The question demanded more than this, asking for 'clever ways' in which Michal conveys her message. Ideally, candidates should write a line heading such as 'sarcasm' or 'speaking disdainfully in the 3rd person' and then quote a proof from the verse.
- (i) This question attracted a range of good responses.
- (j) Some candidates had three correct answers, some less, while some had no clue what the pausal form meant.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates tackled this translation piece very well gaining 5-6 marks.
- (b) Almost every script had two correct answers, though, as has been said before, some candidates wrote the names in Hebrew for which one mark was deducted.

- (c) There was a huge range of possible answers and virtually everyone scored full marks.
- (d) Many candidates noticed the mixture of masculine and feminine. Some wrote 'the word should be שתיהן' which was given credit. However some said, 'the word should be שניהם' and this was given no mark since the verse is referring to women.
- (e) (i) A large number of candidates had a wrong root; many were fabrications e.g. תהם המי נהם המא etc.
(ii) This root also invited some original but incorrect answers such as מהמר and מרא מרה.
- (f) This was well answered although some candidates referred to the names Naomi and Marah without explaining the meaning of Naomi (pleasant or sweet).
- (g) A large majority knew that Moab was on the east of the Jordan River.
- (h) The question was a grammatical one and was asking for negative words like אל and לבלתי. Some people thought, erroneously, that it referred to sad or unfortunate events.
- (i) There were some very good responses to this question but again, those who wrote only in Hebrew scored zero. Some candidates surprisingly did not know what a metaphor was.

Question 6

- (a) Some people confused צר with צער and translated the last phrase as 'when you are in pain'. Very few candidates recognised the hé cohortative of ונלחמה.
- (b) Most candidates scored at least two marks losing the third one by failing to recognise the Hiphil of משיבים and writing 'if I return with you' rather than 'if you return me'.
- (c) Well answered although some candidates tended merely to paraphrase the lines referred to in the question thus coming up with answers like 'your eyes should be on the field'. This was not an answer to the question.
- (d) Not many candidates scored full marks. Some wrote that Naomi blessed G-d or left out the fact that Boaz was the redeemer.
- (e) (i) Many but by no means all noticed the change from 'girls' to 'boys' or the reversal of the word order.
(ii) Most people realized that Ruth was unfamiliar with the language but failed to mention that the reason was that Ruth had been a Moabite-born woman. Those who had written about the change of word order were generally unable to explain why.
- (f) Surprisingly many scripts had 'she returned' for the word ותשוב and lost one mark.
- (g) Most candidates tackled the dots in the כ and ה.
Unfortunately, many candidates recognised the כפת בגד rule but did not say that the dot was a dagesh!
For the dot in the ה, many wrote 'the dagesh in the ה is a mappik'. This posed a contradiction and gained no mark.
- (h) A large number of candidates received a mark for 'if' but did not realise the word אם in line 5 was a negative after an oath.

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