

GCE

Biblical Hebrew

Advanced GCE **H417**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **H017**

OCR Report to Centres June 2017

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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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CONTENTS

Advanced GCE Biblical Hebrew (H417)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Biblical Hebrew (H017)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Content	Page
F191 Translation, Comprehension and Literature	4
F192 Translation, Comprehension, Composition and Literature	6

F191 Translation, Comprehension and Literature

- 1 a Some candidates merely transliterated במות as 'bamot'; others thought מצבות meant 'garrisons' (confusing the word with מצודות)
- 1 b Some mistranslated הניח (from root נוח 'rest') as 'left' which is from the root ינח. Others did not know the words: בריחים (bolts) or צנה (shield).
- 1 c Many scripts struggles with the phrase "אין עמך לעזור בין רב לאין כח" and the word המון (crowd).
- 1 e Candidates were supposed to write the contrasts not just what happened in one of the battles.
- 1 f Some candidates wrote (wrongly) that the *dagesh* was after a short unaccented open vowel; in the word נשענו the *patach* is actually accented.
- 2 a The word מצור (siege) was often confused with מצודה (fortress).
- 2 d Some candidates merely translated the phrase rather than explain it.
- 2 e Some translated "כי קללת א-להים תלוי" as 'for the hanged person has cursed G-d' which is wrong.
- 2 f (i) and (ii) Here also the translation did not give the accurate **meaning** of the phrase.
- If a *yevama* were first to perform the levirate marriage or *chalitzah* (ceremony to release the *yevama* from the need to perform the levirate marriage) then she could marry an 'outsider'.
- Similarly, "יקום על שם אחיו" is not to be taken literally; the newborn son of the levirate marriage does not need to be named with the same name as the deceased.
- 2 h Some candidates did not understand the meaning of 'part of the verb'.
- 3 b A number of scripts had the wrong translation for אסף, among them: 'I will include you' and 'I will add you on.'
- Others wrote 2000 for מאתים אלף and 20000 for עשרת אלפים.
- 3 c (ii) Many candidates thought the root of נמבזה was בזז; others failed to account for the added מ.
- 3 e There were two alternatives: שחה Hispael / Hispalel or חוה Hishtafel. A number of candidates wrote one root with the conjugation of the other root. One mark was awarded in this case.
- 3 g A number of candidates were confused with conjugations of שכלה and תשכל probably because both have a *dagesh* in the middle root letter, although for different reasons.
- 4 a No credit was given for those who translated ספרים as books or מנחה as meal-offering.

OCR Report to Centres – June 2017

4 e A number of candidates mistranslated the following words:

להשאות 'to remain'

גגות 'gardens'

ושבתך 'your returning'

Others failed to translate נצים.

4 f Quite a number of scripts had the root חתה and / or Piel for the conjugation.

On the whole all the 8-marker questions were well answered.

F192 Translation, Comprehension, Composition and Literature

General Comments:

Overall the paper was dealt with competently by candidates, with the usual range of responses anticipated.

English to Biblical Hebrew:

Candidates need to be trained to avoid using constructions which do not exist in Biblical Hebrew. Common mistakes include the word עולם to mean 'world', and the preposition ׀, which, although it does appear very rarely, is so uncommon that its use will never be stylistically appropriate. Candidates should be encouraged to use common, simple vocabulary, and to include complexity by their use of idiom and style features.

Essay:

Examiners have noted that the quality of the essay writing is far short of what is expected at this level. Many candidates write a rambling list of events from the text, with very simplistic conclusions, often repeated at the end of each point. Furthermore, no attempt is made to structure the essay with an introduction and conclusion.

Candidates should be trained to set out an argument in a short introduction, make five coherent points in relation to the question, supported by quotations and examples from the set text, and then sum up their argument in a brief conclusion.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 3 (b): Candidates conflated different interpretations, demonstrating a lack of clarity as to the how the commentaries approached the passage with different viewpoints.

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