

## GCSE Classical Civilisation Topics

### GREEK RELIGION

- **The gods** Zeus, Hera, Demeter and Persephone, Poseidon, Hades, Hestia, Hephaistos, Apollo, Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, Ares, Dionysos (and his companion maenads and satyrs), Asklepios, Hermes. Their responsibilities and how they are typically represented in Greek art.
- **Worship** The religious functions of a temple: the position of the altar, the cult statue, use by worshippers. The priests and priestesses (Pythia, hierophant, *mantis*, *hiereus*): their duties, responsibilities and rewards. Omens, divination, prayer and sacrifice (how it was performed), the differences between Olympian and chthonic ritual. Votive offerings, state and individual dedications: their appearance and purposes.
- **State Festivals** Their functions, content and organisation, with special reference to: (a) The Panathenaia: the programme, the participants, the rewards, the differences from other state festivals. (b) The Eleusinian Mysteries: eligibility, the programme, the rewards, the differences from other state festivals.
- **Oracles** The nature and function of an oracle, the procedure of preparation, consultation, response and benefits. Delphi: position and layout of the site (Sacred Way, treasuries, temple of Apollo, theatre, stadium), including topography and means of access.
- **Attitudes** Belief and scepticism: comparisons with modern religious beliefs with which the candidate is familiar.

### HOME AND FAMILY IN ATHENS

- **The *oikos*** The concepts of house and home, self-sufficiency.
- **Houses** Building materials, simplicity of construction, the differences between urban and rural housing. The function, content and appearance of the rooms and areas (*andron*, *gynaikon*, slaves' quarters, kitchen, courtyard, other domestic areas). Religious items (Herm, altar to Zeus Herkeios, hearth to Hestia).
- **The Husband** His duties and rule as *kyrios*, differences between rich and poor, urban and rural.
- **Symposia** The organisation, guests, types of food and drink, entertainment, purpose, benefits.

- **The Wife** Her status as *kyria*, duties within the household, equipment used (loom, spindle), differences between rich and poor, urban and rural. Property rights.
- **Children** The differing treatment of boys and girls, healthy and weak. Their upbringing, toys and games. The education of boys: the *paidotribes* (the importance of athletics and the variety of events), the *palaestra*, the *grammatistes*, the *kitharoidos*, school buildings, equipment, methods of teaching, the *paidagogos*. The education of boys and girls in preparation for their adult roles.
- **Festivals involving women and children** The organisation, content and significance of the Thesmophoria, the rituals of betrothal, marriage and birth.
- **Slaves** Skilled and unskilled, male and female. Their origins, acquisition, duties, appearance. Their religious, legal and social status. Their treatment.
- **Death and burial** The organisation and conduct of a funeral. Burial, tombs, grave goods, libations, *stelai*. The consequences of a death for family members.

## SPARTA AND THE SPARTAN SYSTEM

- **Territory** The geographical position of Sparta and her allies within the Peloponnese.
- **Social divisions** The origins, duties and obligations of, and the differences between, the *Spartiatatai*, the *Perioikoi* and the Helots. The concept of *eunomia*.
- **Education** The role of Lykourgos, the purpose of the *agoge*. The treatment of boys both before and after the age of seven: games, discipline, food, clothing, organisation (platoons, *eirenes*). The role of the *paidonomos*. Religious ritual.
- **Women** Their education (the influence of Lykourgos), marriage, daily life, physical appearance, duties and land holding.
- **Military organisation** The army's organisation and fighting methods. Training, appearance, equipment, accommodation. The *syssitia*, *krypteia*, sanctions.
- **Government** Eligibility for the Royal Families, the *Apella*, the *Gerousia*, the Ephors. Their duties and responsibilities, and the sanctions against them. The *rhētra*.

- **Culture** Artistic achievements: poetry, bronze works, sculpture. The poetic ideals of Tyrtaios, Alkman and Terpander as a contrast to the later militarism.
- **The Spartan system in action** An understanding of the basic facts on: The heroism of Leonidas and the 300. The corruption of Pausanias, Agis. The achievements of Brasidas and Lysander.

## ROMAN SPORT AND LEISURE

- **The Theatre** The origins of Roman comedy: *Saturae* and Atellan farce. Comedies and their production in Plautus' time: typical plots and types of character, use of masks. A theatre building: design, including stage and scenery. Audience attitudes to plays and actors, involvement and comfort of the audience. The Odeon: design, types of performance (music, recitals, mime).
- **The Amphitheatre** Gladiator shows: origins as funerary honours, armour, weaponry, the midday shows, executions, the audience. Animal shows: hunts, the use of animals for executions, the *bestiarius*, fights between animals, types of animal, the business of capture and import, the audience. Mock sea battles: how they were staged. The Colosseum as a specific example: seating, structure, gates, holding cells, movement of fighters and animals from cells to the arena. The significance of the shows for both the Emperor and his citizens.
- **The Circus Maximus** The arena: its structure, the seating, the track, the *spina*, the *metae*, the *carceres*. The races: different types, the teams, the colours, the dangers, the status of charioteers and horses, public attitudes, betting, the social significance of such events.
- **Hunting** The *venatio*: techniques, weapons, types of animal, responsibilities of those involved. (Candidates should be able to describe a *venation* from its organisation to its conclusion.) The appeal and social importance of hunting.
- **The Baths** The building: the layout, the heating system, progress through the rooms (*apodyterium*, *palaestra*, *tepidarium*, *caldarium*, *frigidarium*). Other amenities and services provided in the complex.
- The importance of the baths in relation to the climate, daily routine, business and social life of the Romans.

- **Archaeological evidence:** for example, plan of Pompey's theatre; a well-preserved theatre (e.g. Merida, Sabratha or Jerash); mosaics of gladiator fights and chariot races; the Colosseum; a suite of baths (for example, Herculaneum).

## THE ODYSSEY

- Homer's narrative and descriptive techniques.
- The characterisation of Odysseus, Penelope, Telemachus.
- The suitors' challenge and Odysseus' management of the situation.
- The role of the gods.
- An outline of the other events of his travels.

## THE ILIAD

- Homer's narrative and descriptive techniques.
- The theme of the anger of Achilles, observing: The causes (Book 1). The attempt at reconciliation. His final onslaught and the death of Hektor (Book 22). The final release of his anger and the growth to maturity (Book 24).
- The characterisation of Achilles, Agamemnon, Odysseus, Priam, Hector.
- The role of the gods.
- An outline of the death of Patroklos (Book 16) in so far as this is relevant to Achilles facing the cost of his continued anger.

## THE AENEID

- Virgil's narrative and descriptive techniques.
- The characterisation of Aeneas, Dido, Anna and the major deities.
- The presentation of the Greeks and the Trojans.

- The role of Fate and the gods.
- Aeneas' mission and heroism.