



2005 History: Renaissance Italy GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students responded well to the new examination format. Although the knowledge and skills required were demanding, students are to be commended for meeting the challenge under examination pressure. Most students finished the paper and there were few blank answers; however, the use of evidence remains a discriminator between the mid-range and high-scoring responses. The best papers were those where students were able to discuss, balance and evaluate the different forms of evidence that they had cited. Although marks were not deducted for misspelling, it was disconcerting that this skill had deteriorated for both English and Italian terms of reference.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

Section A

Question 1

The republic was one type of city-state that existed on the Italian peninsula. Explain the characteristics of a republican government, using one or more republics to provide specific evidence.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	2	3	5	8	10	13	17	16	12	14	6.7

This question was handled successfully, although some students confused characteristics with the pre-conditions for a republic. Essentially, the Italian republics of the 14th and 15th centuries were constitutional oligarchies and government was restricted to a small group of politically enfranchised citizens.

The best responses specified small, powerful councils and executive bodies; rotation of office; short term in office; complex electoral procedures; and checks and balances. Most students referred to Florence and/or Venice for specific evidence.

Question 2

Explain the role of patronage in the development of Renaissance art. Refer to more than one type of patronage (for example, leading families, private individuals, the Church, the State or corporations like guilds) and name some examples of artworks commissioned.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	0	2	5	8	9	14	19	19	10	14	6.8

Students had no difficulty identifying a number of examples of patronage from a variety of sources, especially as this had been fully explained in the question. Better responses were able to link such patronage to the introduction and development of classical ideas and to point out the extent of control by the patron over the artist. A number of students included discussion on specific classical ideas, such as realism and perspective, that were introduced through patronage. Weaker responses just listed works of art, while others discussed the development of art but failed to link this to patronage.

Section B

Question 1

How do Il Burchiello and Antonio di Meglio each react to the news of Cosimo de' Medici's recall from exile in 1434?

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	0	0	3	8	88	3.9

Essentially, this question assessed how well students had comprehended the document given, and most students handled the question well.

The following response is typical of successful student responses.

Il Burchiello and Antonio di Meglio have contrasting views and opinions regarding the recall of Cosimo de' Medici from exile in 1434. Il Burchiello is angered and warns the people against 'this untrustworthy tyrant' and 'wicked man' which is in stark contrast to the views of Antonio di Meglio who is overjoyed as he believes that Cosimo will bring 'happy Fortune and the favour of the heavens'.

2005 Assessment Report



Question 2

What does Il Burchiello believe Cosimo de' Medici will bring to Florence and what does Antonio di Meglio consider will be the outcome of Cosimo's recall?

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	0	0	4	24	72	3.7

As with Question 1, most students responded successfully. They observed that Il Burchiello believes that tyranny would result because Cosimo 'tramples upon our sovereignty', whereas Antonio di Meglio considers that civic concord will be the outcome given that 'by God (we) are united in pulling all together on a single rope'.

Question 3

The two commentaries provide contrasting reactions to Cosimo's recall from exile. However, it could be argued that between Cosimo's return from exile in 1434 and his death in 1464, both reactions were applicable. Discuss this claim using evidence from both primary and secondary representations.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
%	4	2	4	5	7	8	10	9	15	11	13	7	5	7.1

This question demonstrated the importance of reading the question carefully so that all components are addressed. Dates were specified to act as parameters for the response, yet some students went outside Cosimo's reign. The specification to provide both primary and secondary representations to support the argument was also ignored by some students. Factual mistakes and inaccurate quotes from primary sources were disconcerting.

High-scoring answers pointed to Cosimo de' Medici's manipulation of the Florentine constitution and its offices (for example, manipulation of electoral offices and use of *balie* to exercise direct control over the government) and that he ruled as an autocrat in the guise of a private citizen. They then noted that Cosimo was widely admired for his contributions to the city—his patronage, his charity and his diplomacy—and that when he died the phrase *Pater Patriae* was inscribed on his tomb, for he was perceived by many as the ultimate father figure of Florence.

Section C

Question chosen	1	2
%	68	32

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	6	3	6	4	9	9	11	8	8	7	6	2	3	11.9

Question 1

In his *Ricordi* the Florentine merchant Giovanni Morelli advised his sons: 'to become familiar with the men of substance in your neighbourhood...'

Discuss how the social map of Florence reflected social identity.

A number of students struggled with the term 'social map'. The point of reference here was the *gonfalone*. High-scoring responses discussed how the *gonfalone* gave meaning to social identity, given that political eligibility and taxation were decided at this local level. They also argued that social identity could be attained beyond the *gonfalone* through friends, business associates and marriage connections.

The following introduction set the parameters for a high-scoring response.

The social map of Florence not only reflected but reaffirmed one's social identity in Renaissance Florence. The gonfalone, the social hub of political and economic life, not only offered a sense of identity, of lineage, tradition and honour, but also social ties such as parenti, amici, vicini which were equally important to one's social identity.

Question 2

In his description of Venice, written in 1493, Venetian patrician Marin Sanudo observed that 'there is no sedition [troublemaking] from the non-nobles (*popolo*), no discord among the patricians, but all work together...'

To what extent did cooperation between classes characterise Venetian class relationships?

Relevance was important when answering this question; some students ignored the phrase 'cooperation between classes' and simply wrote a descriptive piece on social classes. Essays that addressed the ways in which there was interaction between classes, such as in *scuole*, in parishes, in guilds, through marriage or civic ritual, allowed for a more complex analysis.



The idea of cooperation between the social classes in Venice was one that really required students to structure the essay around the places within Venice where the social classes met or worked together. Students could have formulated an argument around the question of whether these relationships were cooperative, pragmatic or competitive. The best responses showed extensive knowledge not only of class relationships but also legislation which served to mitigate class tensions on the civic level.

The following introduction demonstrates the ability to set up a proposition for analysis.

The clearly delineated class structure of Venice is best emblemised in Paris Bordone's 'The Chess Players' where 'each piece has its correct role and place' [Fortini Brown]. The board itself is a metaphor of the well ordered society and reflects an idyllic image of social concord. However, it is also suggested that factionalism and lack of cooperation were also very much evident. What we must decipher is to what extent cooperation between classes characterised relationships and whether harmony was the result of goodwill intrinsic to Venetian society or simply instilled in the people by a paternalistic and controlling ruling class.

Section D

Question 1

What aspects of the Myth of Venice represented in the relief describe the relationship between the position of the Doge and the Republic of Venice?

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	10	15	18	27	27	3.4

The question was very specific. In order to achieve a high score, students had to point out that the Doge knelt to demonstrate subservience to the state. Each Doge was obliged to commission a visual image of himself, demonstrating this subservience to the state. A key component of the Myth was the promotion of the idea that the nobility ruled on behalf of all and that no individual was more important than the state. There was a collective ethos. Students who outlined the components of the Myth as depicted in the Porta Della Carta were not awarded marks.

Question 2

Explain how one or more Doges challenged the Myth of Venice.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	21	17	11	14	12	26	2.6

The most popular response was to discuss Falier and Foscari, and their particular challenges to the Myth were explained in accurate detail. Others discussed Doge Agostino Barbarigo and Doge Loredan in terms of corruption. Surprisingly, a number of students simply wrote about 'a Doge'.

Question 3

How did the Venetian government use the Myth of Venice as a political tool? What criticisms were made of the Myth? In your answer draw on other visual and written representations.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	2	5	8	9	14	14	16	16	9	8	6.1

There were some very good responses to this question. The best responses were well balanced, with the initial discussion involving examples of how the state perpetuated the Myth through art, architecture or written sources. They also acknowledged the criticisms of the Myth.

The following response scored a high mark.

The glowing reputation and hyperbole of Venice being the 'most serene Republic' was utilised by the Venetian government as a political tool to convey Venice's sense of 'otherness' (Fortini Brown). Visual representations such as Bassano's 'Consignment of the Sword' and Jacopo de Barbari's 'View of Venice' pertain to Venice's singular location 'in the middle of the salt sea' (Handorff). The granting of the sword, an emblem of sovereignty and just rule, carried a strong political message. The Myth was further expounded by the panegyrics of Sanudo in describing it being 'built more by divine than human will'. Venice's immense wealth is alluded to in Veronese's Juno lavishes her gifts upon Venice wherein Juno literally showers the figure of Venezia with riches. The figure of Venezia is shown defending Venetian liberty in Jacopo Palma's Allegory of the League of Cambrai wherein she brandishes a sword defending Venice against Europa, astride a bull. However Chabod argues that it was not until Venice reached its 'deepest paroxysm of insecurity' with the discovery of spice routes around the Cape of Good Hope, the disastrous war with the Turks and with the League of Cambrai that the Myth grew in 'inverse proportion' to the decline of actual power. Thus the Myth fell victim to criticism in what became the anti-Myth, with Machiavelli and Pius 11 unleashing the diatribe that Venice was 'vile, tyrannical and militarily impotent' (Pasoli). Criticism of the Myth is best emblematised in Giorgione's Tempesta that shows the 'appalling psychological damage' (Hollingsworth) of the League of Cambrai, which had been glossed over by the Venetian government.