



**2009 History: Renaissance Italy GA 3: Written examination**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Although there were some excellent answers this year, it was clear that some students found this examination challenging and as a result the quality of the responses was mixed. Although some students were unable to complete the whole examination, most demonstrated effective time management and completed all questions.

Again, the discrimination factor was the effective use of evidence. This is a point that has been made in a number of past Assessment Reports. Students need to pay careful attention to the demands of particular questions and, where they are asked for primary and secondary sources, they need to make an effort to include both in their response. Some students made up quotations or attributed quotations to the wrong historian; it is advisable to avoid this.

**SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

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

**Section A**

Some students began their answers to these questions with a restatement of the question or a vague introductory statement. With the demands of time and the limited amount of space available on the examination paper, students should avoid this and immediately begin to address the questions asked.

**Question 1**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Average</b>
%	3	1	4	5	13	13	16	17	14	8	7	<b>6.1</b>

This question asked for a comparison of two different types of political structures on the Italian Peninsula. Most students wrote accurately and comprehensively on the republics; however, many struggled to provide details on the nature of the Kingdom of Naples or the Duchies of Milan and Ferrara. These were the most popular choices, but some students were able to write on other city states such as Urbino and Mantua. Some detailed knowledge of the structure of government, the Councils and the political bureaucracies was required in order to score full marks.

**Question 2**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Average</b>
%	1	1	4	3	10	16	18	19	13	9	7	<b>6.3</b>

Most students had prepared for a question of this type and as a result were able to address all areas of the question. Students had to identify the advantages that patronage brought to the patron, 'piety, prestige and power', and also to the artists who relied on the commissions for their living and for the development of their reputation. Patronage also gave the artists the ability to develop innovation in artistic technique. The question demanded particular examples and the best answers linked the motivation of the patron to the artist and to the particular work of art.

**Section B**

**Question 1i.**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Average</b>
%	4	96	<b>1</b>

**Question 1ii.**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Average</b>
%	2	98	<b>1</b>

**Question 1iii.**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Average</b>
%	2	98	<b>1</b>

This question required students to identify the three demands contained within the petitions made by the Ciompi:

- removal of police official from the Lana guild
- combers, carders, trimmers, washers and other cloth workers to have their own guild
- all outlaws and those condemned by the Commune, except rebels and traitors, to be pardoned.

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## Question 2i.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	20	80	0.8

## Question 2ii.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	29	71	0.7

Students had to identify, in their own words, the two main objections of the anonymous chronicler. Students could choose between the following three alternatives:

- the disarray of the Palazzo della Signoria
- the burning of the scrutiny bags
- the disreputable quality of the people choosing the beans.

## Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	7	17	26	25	17	8	2.5

This question asked students to discuss the different means available to Renaissance Florentines to exert and represent their power. Many students seemed to think that this question excluded political techniques but this was not the case. Others disregarded the use of social networks, festivals and patronage as ways of representing and exerting power.

Students could have chosen between a wide variety of formal and informal means of political, social and cultural activity. Florentine citizens could use:

- informal networks such as friends, family and neighbours
- formal networks such as the Guilds and the Confraternities
- networks of the *ottimati* and factional alliances
- economic and commercial networks
- foreign policy
- manipulation of the political process such as electoral manipulation, and constitutional change such as the introduction of new councils
- civic patronage of festivals and feast days.

Following is an example of an excellent response.

*Najemy describes 'networks of amici' as one of the primary means through which political power was maintained and enhanced. The Medici made use of their faction 'never ruling as a single family but through the power of their partisans' (Murphy) and Cosimo de Medici, in particular, fostered a 'network of amici that was more extensive and cohesive than any other Florentine could manage' (Najemy).*

## Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	6	9	11	15	16	14	10	7	5	2	4.7

Students could have organised their responses into three parts:

- the Ciompi Revolt itself and the period of eight to ten weeks of upheaval, and the creation of new guilds and the seizure of leadership by Michele di Lando
- the second period of 1378–1382 when the Guild Regime had been extended by the creation of new guilds and a 'broader based government' (Najemy) was established, and was a direct heir to the government of the August revolutionaries
- a third section about the 'sharper turn toward oligarchy' and the factional control by the Albizzi, including the use of electoral manipulation and exile that the Medici subsequently used more effectively.

Other methods of answering this question were also acceptable and, with the use of appropriate detail and example, could have scored highly.

This question challenged most students, and most answers were incomplete as students struggled to discuss the whole period.



## Section C

Question chosen	None	1	2
%	3	74	23

### Essay

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	5	3	6	5	7	8	10	9	8	6	6	2	3	11.5

Many students found the essay questions very difficult and struggled to write within the terms of the question. Some students relied on broad generalities and the evidence they used did not really relate to the point they were making. In order to score highly it was important to construct an argument and support this argument with primary and secondary sources. It was pleasing to see, however, that some students were able to use their knowledge to address the specific demands of these questions.

#### Question 1 – Florence

In order to score highly for the Florence essay question, students needed to go beyond a general description of the elements of Florentine social life and identify the institutions, events and locations where rich and poor, males and females interacted. Many students simply recited the *parenti, amici* and *vicini* and added that it was important for all to have friends and marry well. This very general approach was not an appropriate response to this question.

Florentines prayed together and so the Parish would have been a useful area to examine. The Confraternities were engaged in charitable work and their support of the poor was evidence of the relationship between the elite and the rest of the population. Festivals were occasions where many of the different groups in the city came together. Although many students touched on festivals, they often did not give examples or did not go on to discuss the social interaction the festival provided for. Some excellent answers considered the arrangements that were made for poor women through the Dowry Fund and others discussed the regulation of the lives of prostitutes and homosexuals. There was some good writing that made use of the government control of the granary and the distribution of grain that occurred in times of famine with the resultant social interaction.

Following is the beginning of an excellent response to this question.

*Although the dominant elite profited the most from Florentine social life, those from a lesser social standing and background were still included in this life. Brucker says that each gonfalone was a 'melange of palace and cottage' emphasizing the social and economic heterogeneity of each neighbourhood and thus apotheosizing this concept of all classes taking part in social life. One of a limited social status could 'gain access to the networks of others', (Weissman) through the friendship of the elite. One could take part in the festivals of the city, which joined rich and poor alike. Charity was another means of ensuring that all Florentines could contribute to the city's social life. Despite this, there were deviant groups such as the Jews and prostitutes, who although discriminated against were still accepted in society.*

#### Question 2 – Venice

The Venice essay question asked students to identify the ways in which the Venetian Government tried to enhance civic harmony through the use of social legislation. The students who scored highly on this question were those who constructed an argument in relation to the means by which the Patriciate was able to encourage civic harmony. However, the question demanded that students use three types of legislation. Many students seemed to struggle with the identification of laws; a starting point could have been the Serrata in 1297, which defined the ruling elite and created the social structure that remained constant in Renaissance Venice. Other examples of the types of legislation that students could have used include the control of Venetian institutions like the Scuole by the Council of Ten, the regulation of the lives of foreigners, the Poor Laws of the 16th century and the Sumptuary Laws.

Following is the introduction to a high-scoring response to this question.

*The Venetian Government prided itself on 'standing more stable on a foundation of civil concord (Petrarch 1364) and to enhance or even force civic harmony, it used legislation. In 1483 Marin Sanudo acknowledged the Council of Ten is a 'very severe magistracy' enforcing the idea that social harmony resulted primarily from government enforcement and legislation. The Serrata of 1297 was the first and most crucial piece of legislation that truly enabled the Venetian government to maintain control of Venetian social life. With the closed patrician class, the popolani or cittadini classes never had any hope of gaining political office in the Venetian government. This created a strictly stratified society that with tight government control enabled the Patriciate to rule Venice with stable institutions and no serious revolt. Elements involved in the maintenance of this control*



*included legislation put into place that restricted, controlled and segregated foreigners and crucial laws that compensated the cittadini class for lack of power with prominent roles in the scuole.*

## Section D

### Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	7	16	32	46	2.2

While students were keen to recite the elements of the Myth and link it to the Gates of the Arsenal, it was important that they remembered that the question was asking what these statues suggested about Venice's image of herself **as an Empire**. Therefore, students needed to identify a number of the statues in order to attract full marks. Neptune as the God of the Sea could be linked to Venice's Maritime Empire. The statue of Mars could have been linked to Venetian aggression on the Terraferma that led to the formation of the League of Cambrai. The Lion of St Mark is a symbol of the intimacy of the relationship between the Republic and the saint, and as such suggests the idea of God's favour in relation to Venice's imperial ambitions.

### Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	8	30	37	24	1.8

Many students seemed unsure about what this question was asking. Points that could have been made include that the Arsenal:

- was the largest industrial enterprise in medieval Europe
- provided employment for 2000 men, including large numbers of foreigners at different times of the Republic's existence
- was at the eastern end of the city, linked by proximity to the Doge's Palace and the Piazza San Marco
- was a remarkable place that visitors to Venice commented on
- was in close proximity to where the Arsenalotti lived and formed a community
- was also seen as part of the fortress against invasion
- was connected to the grandeur of Venice.

### Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	16	36	29	15	2.3

Students could have referred to the following points, among others:

- translation of the body of St Mark
- the origins of Venice
- Alexander III myth
- links made to classical mythology, with Venice enjoying the special protection of Neptune, Mars and Mercury
- the sacred legend of St Mark appearing in the 14th century
- Venice as a 'gateless city'
- Venetians as 'sea birds'
- no walls emerging from the waves
- the inviolate quality of the Republic.

It was important for students to address both parts of the question, 'sacred legends' and 'unique location', in order to gain full marks.

### Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	3	4	9	7	14	15	13	16	10	6	3	5.3

Again, in this question many students were keen to discuss the Myth, but unfortunately did not address the terms of the question. Students needed to discuss the use of the Myth as a propaganda tool, as a smoke screen to hide the foreign policy challenges that Venice faced, including the reduction of territory and of markets. Students could approach this in a number of ways. They could discuss the early cult of St Mark and the evolution of the Myth, or they could have begun with the point made by Muir and Cosgrove that the Myth really only developed when the reality of Venice was changing.

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It was important to use at least one example of primary, secondary, visual and literary sources and so meet the demands of the question.

An excellent response to this question included the following paragraph.

*Rosand claims that at this time 'the myth refined itself rhetorically' and humanists and politicians articulated the Myth and promoted it to compensate for diminishing power. The League of Cambrai was dissolving Venice's dominion on the terraferma and the Ottoman invasions and the Portuguese discoveries of spice routes threatened Venice's suzerainty over the eastern trade routes. At the time of the Battle of Agnadello in 1509 Doge Loredan gave a discourse to the Venetian Senate to raise the morale of the people...*