

## Preparing for the M.A. Greek Literature Exam

Students should be prepared to demonstrate both a broad and deep knowledge of Greek literature on the M.A. Exam. Read widely in the various genres and periods in translations to broaden your repertoire. Know some authors and works well enough to cite examples and discuss details from more than one perspective.

To learn the literary and historical context, use handbooks (listed below) and introductions in commentaries and translations. Some of the recent translations in the Oxford World Classics series have introductions by leading scholars. The Oxford Classical Dictionary (4<sup>th</sup> ed) should also be consulted.

*Cambridge History of Classical Literature: Volume 1, Greek Literature.* Edited by P. Easterling and B.W. Knox. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Dover, K. J., ed. *Ancient Greek Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, with contributions by M.L. West, J. Griffin, E.L. Bowie. Oxford University Press, 1997.

Read something of and be able to discuss the following genres and authors.

### Poetry

#### Epic

Homer (incl. hymns)  
Hesiod  
Apollonius Rhodius

#### Lyric/Elegiac

Pindar  
Bacchylides  
Theognis  
Lyric poets  
Callimachus  
Theocritus

#### Tragedy

Aeschylus  
Sophocles  
Euripides

#### Comedy

Aristophanes  
Menander

### Prose

#### History/Biography

Herodotus  
Thucydides  
Xenophon  
Plutarch

#### Philosophy

Presocratics  
Plato  
Aristotle  
Lucian

#### Oratory

Demosthenes  
Lysias  
Other orators (e.g. Aeschines, Andocides, Antiphon, Isocrates, Isaeus, Lycurgus)

#### Other genres

Novel  
Science/medicine  
Satire/parody

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### Format of the Exam

The Exam sets two essay questions and 12 identifications. There will be choice in both categories, but the candidate is reminded to demonstrate breadth and depth overall.

**In preparing for the essays**, consider the development of the genres and how individual works have shaped the conventions both innovating and responding to literary models. Know the literary arsenal: Be able to talk intelligently about, e.g., oral and written tradition, performance contexts, meters and rhetorical figures, historiography, periodic structure, and dialect. Be as familiar with the historical contexts of authors and works: When and where were they composed? What was happening in the Greek world at the time? In what ways does the work interact with Greek religion, politics, and culture? Think in terms of what you will want to be able to share with your students when you teach these authors.

As with all essay exams, it is useful to prepare outlines in advance. E.g. how would I answer a question on Comedy? Oratory? Marshal your ideas and your examples. Write up some sample thesis statements. Although you may not bring any notes or materials to the exam, this advance work will help you on the day of the exam.

**Identifications** will be drawn from the lists below. In a sentence or two or three, be able to report the who, when, where, and why for each. For authors, know something about what they composed. Be sure to know why each item is significant for Greek literature, and remember that there may be more than one significant context for each. For example, Pericles is of course important as a statesman, but why is he on a *literature* exam? Any author on the list above may also appear as an identification (boldface in the list below). N.B. These lists are also something of a study guide . . .

#### Persons

**Aeschines**

**Aeschylus**

Aesop

Alcaeus

Alcman

Anacreon

Anaxagoras

**Antiphon**

Archilochus

**Aristophanes**

Aristophanes of Byzantium

**Aristotle**

Bacchylides

**Callimachus**

Callinus

Corinna

Croesus

Democritus

Demosthenes

Empedocles

Eubulos

Eupolis

Euripides

Gorgias

Hecataeus

Heliodorus

Heraclitus

**Herodotus**

Hippocrates

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Hipponax

**Homer**

Ibycus

Isaeus

Isocrates

Longinus

Longus

Lucian

Menander

Mimnermus

Parmenides

Pericles

**Pindar**

**Plato**

Polybius

Pythagoras

Sappho

Semonides

Simonides

Socrates

Solon

**Sophocles**

Stesichorus

Theocritus

Theognis

**Thucydides**

Tyrtaeus

**Xenophon**

### Works

*Aetia*

*Aethopica*

*Anabasis*

*Antigone*

*Apology (Plato)*

*Argonautica*

*Bacchae*

*Clouds*

*Daphnis and Chloe*

*Dyscolus*

*Frogs*

*Gorgias*

*Hippolytus*

*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*

*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*

*Iliad*

*Lysistrata*

*Medea*

*New Testament*

*Nicomachean Ethics*

*Odyssey*

*Oedipus at Colonus*

*Oedipus Rex*

*On the Crown*

*On the Murder of Eratosthenes*

*On the Mysteries*

*On the Sublime*

*Oresteia*

*Parallel Lives*

*Philippics*

*Poetics*

*Republic*

*Symposium*

*Tetralogies (Antiphon)*

*Theogony*

*Works and Days*

### Terms/Things

Aeolic (dialect)

*agōn*

Alexandrian poets

Attic (dialect)

Atticism

choral lyric

choregia

chorus

City Dionysia

*cordax*

deliberative oratory

didactic poetry

dithyramb

Doric (dialect)

*ekphrasis*

elegy

epic

Epic Cycle

epigram

Epinician

epithet

epode

fable

forensic oratory

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funeral oration  
hamartia  
hexameter  
hymns  
iambic trimeter  
iambus  
Ionic (dialect)  
*koine*  
Lenaea  
Melian dialogue  
middle comedy  
*mimesis*  
monody  
*mythos*  
old comedy

paeon  
parabasis  
priamel  
ring composition  
Rural Dionysia  
satyr play  
Seven Sages  
*sophia*  
sophistry  
stasimon  
stichomythia  
sympotic poetry