



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

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GCE

Archaeology

Unit ACH3

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Unit 3: Religion and Ritual

Question 1

What do archaeologists mean by the term ‘iconography’?

(3 marks)

Target: AO1 (2) AO2 (1)

- L1: May discuss iconography in general in the chosen period rather than with specific reference to detailed elements of the sources. Explanation will be at a basic level or lacking. **1**
- L2: Discussion of iconography which not only refers to knowledge of the period but firmly contextualises examples from the sources within a clear and substantial explanation **2-3**

Indicative Content

The study of images/pictures and the messages that are encoded in them – the symbols that lie behind and are often hidden in artwork/sculpture and architecture, the meaning of icons in a broad sense at L1 with some understanding of their study and use by archaeologists with links to symbolism and meaning in a wider perspective at L2 plus an accurate example at L3.

Question 2

Describe the decoration in **Figure 1**.

(4 marks)

Target: AO1 (3) AO2 (1)

- L1: Some valid points made but description and explanation may be inaccurate or incomplete and grasp of terminology weak **1-2**
- L2: Interpretation good but description weaker **3**
- L2: Full explanation with good linkage to details of source which are accurately described with use of clearly understood range of vocabulary and terminology **4**

Indicative Content

PREHISTORY: Lozenges/spirals/waves and running motifs. Sets of concentric lines. Uses scale and understands horizontal orientation of stone. Relates decoration to its context on kerbstone. May include discussion of recent work on entoptic images.

EGYPT: Ma’at with explanation and reference to sun disks and ostrich feather attributes. Solar barque rests on symbol representing sky on top of schematic ‘way-station’.

MAYA: Zoomorphic mask of fanged earth monster – ‘wits’ with symbolic representation of maize and stone together with the cleft in the earth through which the Hero Twins gained access to Xibalba, skeletal maw that devours souls while at the same time represents the ‘cave’ entrance to the infernal regions. Ear flares and twin snakes emerge from mouth (symbolism). Explain context as part of building.

ROMAN: Fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii. Recent work suggests that this is not a continuous frieze but runs symmetrically along each wall and represents the main stages in the apotheosis of Semele and of Dionysus. The scenes show the rites undergone by a lady of the Roman aristocracy as she is initiated into the cult of Dionysus. The boy is Dionysus being taught with the priestess as teacher and nurse. He is shown naked apart from a pair of high boots such as actors wear. A woman brings a plate piled high with cakes, part of the funeral rites of the god, while the priestess lifts the veil on a basket – the revelation of the god’s sacred objects. In the next scene the priestess is shown as an elegantly dressed Greek woman who seems terrified and about to flee. On her right Silenus plays his lyre and sings a funeral song in honour of Dionysus. Two shepherds with goat’s ears accompany him. Note the sequence of events.

Question 3

Why do you think past people decorated ritual structures and objects? (8)

Target: AO1 (4) AO2 (4)

L1:	Some valid points made but description and explanation may be inaccurate or incomplete	1-3
L2:	Fuller explanation with good linkage to details of source which are more accurately described with some exemplification	4-6
L3:	Detailed explanation with fluent use of ideas and terms, firmly related to specific aspects of sources and examples drawn from own study	7-8

Indicative Content

A set of general criteria which might be applicable in any period would include:

- to convey messages to the illiterate
- to suggest the idea of liminality
- temple as billboard for religious and political ideas
- to strike awe into worshippers
- to focus the attention of worshippers
- to create an atmosphere of a place that is set aside from the normal
- to pay tribute to and honour deities
- to rehearse important aspects of myths – stories and images of gods
- to create a microcosm
- creation as part of a ritual

Question 4

Describe the structure of the ‘temple’ shown in **Figure 2** and the materials from which it is made.(6 marks)

Target: AO1 (4) AO2 (2)

L1:	Able to discuss the structure and materials in the sources at a basic level with little sophistication of understanding or expression. Aware of some contemporaneous examples but precision, accuracy of reference and detail may be lacking or patchy	1-2
L2:	May produce more confident interpretation of the sources together with more assured and detailed discussion of other examples from the same culture. May introduce the concept of liminality and separation. Descriptive vocabulary and style of argument will be more confident and sophisticated showing some awareness of the problems and limitations inherent in this kind of cognitive study	3-4
L3:	Able to discuss the sources in detail, abstracting and explaining particular elements to illustrate how the layout, organisation and materials may function as part of the building and the ‘message’ that it is projecting. Credit will be given for discussion of construction methods. Will be able to allude confidently to parallel forms of expression in other contemporaneous structures.	5-6

Indicative Content

Use the source to give size/shape/orientation. Pick up some individual elements and relate materials to availability/symbolism. Discuss overall as well as particular areas. Allow elements from own knowledge as supplement, especially aspects that cannot be seen such as plaster, painting, sculpture and the use of exotic materials, be strict about requiring the correct terminology and give credit for discussion of construction methods in L2 and low L3.

Question 5

Using evidence from **both** of the figures **and** your own knowledge, explain how ritual structures may have related to the beliefs of the people who made them. (12 marks)

Target: AO1 (8) AO2 (4)

- L1: General discussion of approaches to the study of belief but without specific evidence in support of argument. May suggest looking at structures and art in imprecise terms without mentioning any sites and will be unable to appreciate possible limitations **1-5**
- L2: More aware of case studies of work in this area with a basic understanding of limitations and ability to link the discussion to named sites within the context of clearly defined topics such as ritual activity carried out within the 'temple', suites of artistic material and other iconography, textual evidence where appropriate together with the shape and form of the structure itself may imply about belief **6-9**
- L3: Fully conversant with detailed case studies and able to adduce specific pieces of evidence in support of argument about the validity of the various approaches. Will be aware of limitations and will use the term 'cognitive' to explain the difficulties inherent in work that reaches the top of Hawkes's 'Ladder of Inference'. Able to explain that there are no 'right answers' here and that sources in architecture, in symbolism, in iconography and even texts are susceptible to a number of possible interpretations. **10-12**

Indicative Content

In all period the sites and beliefs must be specifically discussed and the overall discussion must take account of all three elements of the question.

Question 6

What evidence is there that religion and ritual changed during the period of your studies?

Target: AO1 (13)

- L1: Shows general awareness of ritual activity for the period but does not link this well to specific elements in the sources except in a superficial way. May show some awareness that change occurred without being able to demonstrate it through the evidence. **1-5**
- L2: Shows clear awareness of the possible range of evidence for change in ritual activities and associated beliefs that might reasonably be suggested for the period relating structures and their layout to other aspects such as images and associated artefacts where appropriate. Demonstrates more explicitly that change can be inferred from a range of evidence. Contextualisation may be patchy. **5-10**
- L3: Shows a more detailed awareness of the types of evidence and their complementarity that archaeologists could employ to suggest change in religion and ritual, mentioning specific sites and ranges of monuments and artefacts, whilst maintaining a healthy degree of scepticism about the limitations of such enquiry **11-13**

Indicative Content

PREHISTORY: Lots of scope here for change in burial monuments and associated ritual and presumed belief from the Neolithic collective and excarnation to the Bronze Age individual and associated grave goods to later cremation, water-based beliefs and later Iron Age complex inhumations. Candidates need not avail themselves of all the periods available but it does make sense to do this here.

EGYPT: Discussion may be long term and concentrate on changes in mortuary practice and tomb decoration or candidates may choose to focus in on a particularly traumatic shorter period such as the changes brought about by the monotheism of Akhenaten.

MAYA: The events chronicled in many Maya states around 430AD give an opportunity to look at the introduction of novel ritual practices and entirely new and exotic deities such as the goggle-eyed Tlaloc from north Mexico. Previous small scale gods are elevated into a regular state pantheon by individuals concerned to promote their own aggrandisement by associated with such powerful beings, increasing sophistication of architecture supplements iconography on stelae and in manuscripts to provide a wealth of evidence.

ROMAN: A brief survey of existing 'Celtic' practices on the eve of the Roman conquest may be contrasted with the Roman policy of assimilation of native gods into the classical pantheon by association with their closest classical counterpart. Further examples are provided by the introduction of eastern 'mystery cults' and finally by the massive impact of the adoption of Christianity as the official cult in the years after 312AD.