



A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2A: Royal Authority and the Angevin Kings, 1154–1216
Report on the Examination

7042
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General

On the whole, students seemed to have prepared thoroughly for this exam and there was a very pleasing amount of knowledge on display, with some very impressive essay-writing skills and developed analysis being shown in numerous answers. Those who took their time to fully consider what the question was asking and plan their responses tended to do very well. Those who had learned a lot, but failed to apply it to the specific questions did, unfortunately, not score as highly. Time was generally well managed and most students tackled the correct number of questions. As always, organisation and legibility was an issue for some, which did make assessing their work more challenging.

Question 01

With this question, students were required to evaluate the value of three separate sources in relation to an issue – King John's relationship with the Church. They were not asked to compare the given sources or find a 'most valuable' and those who did wasted precious time, although they were not penalised for so doing. The answer did not require an introduction or an overall conclusion, but some concluding judgement on each source in relation to the question posed was helpful to meet the criteria for the highest marks.

Students showed a very good level of contextual own knowledge about this topic area, and the vast majority were able to confidently apply this in their assessments of value. Equally, most answers attempted to balance the assessments being made - with consideration of both the strengths and the limitations within the sources. However, there were some students who wasted time by paraphrasing the entire source and then simply saying 'I know this is true'. This 'fact checking' approach does not garner many marks.

Most students made an effort to identify the provenance and the tone of the sources, but many failed to then use this information to make specific comments about the value of the source in relation to the question. Students need to go beyond the generic, 'this source is biased and so is not valuable' or 'this has hindsight and so is not valuable' and become more nuanced in their assessments. A surprising number of answers wasted time explaining that the sources were 'contemporaneous' and so therefore were valuable. This does not really add anything worthwhile to the answer as all of the sources chosen for component 2 will be contemporary to the period being studied. It is worthwhile emphasising to students that sources written 'at the time' are not necessarily more accurate- this is something which needs to be explored in greater detail. Equally, 'this is valuable because it shows the Church's view of events' is fairly low-level analysis. It is worth noting that comments on provenance need to be securely developed in order to access the higher levels of the mark scheme - it is not simply an 'add on' to the rest of the answer.

There were many answers which demonstrated a limited awareness of the purpose of certain types of sources, for example saying that 'chroniclers write to tell the truth and so do not lie', 'chronicles are written to inform and so do not have agendas' or 'monks cannot lie as they are religious figures'. This generic and rote-learned approach is not very effective. It appears that a significant number of students do not fully understand what 'tone' is, often incorrectly identifying what the tone of the source was. Very few managed to link tone effectively to an evaluation of value. Tone does not have to be commented upon to achieve full marks and the most effective answers would link comments on tone to an assessment of the actual content and argument at the same time.

Those answers which achieved the best marks dealt thoroughly with the main arguments within the sources, alongside a developed assessment of provenance and tone. For example, an effective answer might argue that Source C suggests that John had a very close and positive relationship with the Church, as evidenced by the Pope's support of the Crown during the conflict with the barons over Magna Carta. Indeed, not only did the Pope annul the Charter through the Papal Bull 'etsi Karissimus', he also recalled Langton to Rome for his part in the squabble. This source would seem valuable as it does not shy away from mention of John's earlier troubles with the Church and also references his 1213 submission as a Papal vassal. As the Pope himself is writing this letter, to an open audience, he is very well placed to be able to comment upon the relationship. The tone of the source is very positive about John ('our well-beloved son') and this further supports a positive relationship. However, there are still limitations as this simply shows the Pope's own views, not that of the whole Church- Langton for example had certainly helped in the drafting of Magna Carta. Equally, Innocent's own motives for annulling the charter might make him more vociferous in support of John than he might necessarily have been.

Some students had clearly researched potential chroniclers of this period and could add their own knowledge to their assessments of men like Wendover. This is not expected in the mark scheme, but was rewarded where it was done well. It was disappointing to see a persistent minority making very few references to 'value' at all and conflating this with validity, utility, reliability and accuracy, which are not the same thing. It is vital that regular links to the wording of the specific question are made. It is also worth reinforcing the meaning of 'invaluable' with students, as this was often used inappropriately.

Question 02

This question was the second most popular on the paper, but achieved the least number of high marks. Some of the answers here were very impressive indeed, showcasing some excellent knowledge about Henry's attempts to reform and develop the justice system. The most successful answers were able to consider the significance of 1166 specifically. A few answers muddled the Constitutions of Clarendon and the Assize of Clarendon, but largely the material used in support was well deployed. Where a disappointing number of students dropped marks was in their failure to understand exactly what the question was asking. Many answers simply wrote about Henry and the general restoration of royal authority in the aftermath of Stephen's reign- with very lengthy descriptions of what happened to various barons or how Henry reorganised the coinage. This was an issue in the 2018 exam, where students fell back on a rote-learned answer to a general question, when the question required a more in depth focus on a particular area of Henry's government. It is worth noting that this is a depth paper and so various areas of government and administration might be tackled in isolation from the wider picture which might have been more familiar on the old specification.

Question 03

This was the most popular of the essay questions and was tackled confidently by many students. Some failed to gain marks by getting bogged down in the course of the dispute with Becket, but most were clear that the debate was about the aftermath and there were some very convincing arguments put forward. A lot of students chose to talk about Henry's expedition to Ireland and this was often very persuasive, so long as a clear explanation of why this was relevant to the 'aftermath of the Becket dispute' was offered. Discussion of the Great Rebellion was often less well-linked and some students became somewhat unfocused here. The most effective answers had a nuanced understanding of the nature of the 'church' and were aware that a quarrel with Becket did not necessarily mean a quarrel with the English episcopacy as a whole. Equally, there was

understanding that the Papacy and the English Church were not the same thing. Some students were a bit muddled over the precise details of the Constitutions of Clarendon, but others showed impressive knowledge here.

Question 04

This was the least popular essay question, but did produce some excellent answers. It seems that those who were confident in this topic chose this question, but those who were not, tended to opt for Q2. The most effective answers had precise knowledge about the anti-Semitic attacks during Richard's reign and could analyse and evaluate the possible reasons for it. Less effective answers tended to know what happened, but sometimes they lapsed into narrative and description. Higher marks were awarded to answers which tackled the key factor from the question in detail ('crusading zeal'), where lower marks went to those who failed to develop this with much precision. Students were happy to discuss other possible reasons, and there was quite a wide range of material offered here from the very long-term problem of the Deicide accusation to the linking of the Jews with unpopular financial policies of the Angevin kings.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.