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# History

7041/1A

Report on the Examination

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## General Comments

Many students undertaking this option had reasonable contextual knowledge. In places this was quite impressive, but often this material was not very well deployed in answer to the specific questions being asked. It is important that students focus on the specific question wording and consider the significance of any dates carefully. The questions will all expect some coverage across a date range and the best answers will tackle this clearly.

### Question 01

Many students found the technical requirements of this question quite challenging and, as a result, the marks received were often quite low. There was some confidence in the contextual own knowledge deployed by some students; indeed some demonstrated an impressive array of knowledge about the Byzantine Empire and the situation with regards to the Seljuk Turks. However, there were a large number of students who made quite basic mistakes in their approach to the question. There was a lot of basic paraphrasing of the extracts, which demonstrated little understanding of the extract interpretations. Many of the statements within the extracts were taken at face value, often with little own knowledge being utilised in either support of, or contradiction of, what the historians had argued. Extract A caused particular problems for students who took this more formulaic approach and there was much misunderstanding of the line 'it would seem natural to assume...expansion in the East'. The best students took a more holistic approach to the extracts and focused on the overall argument, as well as identifying sub-arguments, rather than going through the source line by line. The most able were capable of showing that Extract A argued that, whilst Alexius had faced problems, it was not primarily from the Turks and Manzikert had not been an unmitigated disaster. However, by the 1090s the situation had deteriorated dramatically. By contrast, Extract B was more positive about the situation, arguing that Alexius had dealt with the serious threats he had faced in the first years of his reign and that he was looking ahead with confidence at the time of his appeal in the 1090s. Quite a large number of answers demonstrated weak understanding of the geography of the region, which meant that they struggled to address the issue of the 'Byzantine position in Asia Minor.' To secure the best marks students need to ensure that they use enough of their own knowledge to evaluate the interpretations fully, so that they can offer a convincing judgement about which is the more convincingly argued. In order to achieve this they should consider both the strengths and limitations of the interpretations, but limitations need to be clearly related to what the extract says rather than a simple list of omissions.

### Question 02

This question was marginally less popular than 03, but the students that selected it generally approached it with confidence. Most seemed happy to discuss the merits of Baldwin I and Baldwin II and so the main discriminator in terms of marks was the quality of the supporting evidence and the extent to which convincing analysis led to substantiated judgement. Some students were better informed on one of the kings, to the detriment of the other, but such answers failed to tackle the scope element of the question. The best answers tended to take a more thematic approach; directly comparing aspects of kingship. Whilst it was acceptable to deal with each king in turn, this tended to lead to problems with timing for some students. Students should be encouraged to aim for concise and relevant supporting material and they should pay attention to any dates within the question. Some students spent a lot of time discussing the role of the Military Orders, for example. Whilst this was relevant when considering the reign of Baldwin II, some overstated their importance in the years leading to 1131.

### **Question 03**

This was the more popular essay question and this reflects the confidence of many students with the period of Fulk and Melisende's reign. There was some good knowledge deployed in relation to Fulk's troubles with his wife and Count Hugh of Jaffa and on Fulk's castle-building projects, for example. However, a significant number of answers failed to appreciate that this question asked for a comparison between two periods: the period after the Second Crusade and the period of Fulk and Melisende's rule (i.e. to 1143, when Fulk died). Many answers provided a general commentary about the state of Outremer in the 1130s and early 1140s, but failed to make a valid comparison. Equally, some students were seemingly convinced that the entirety of Fulk and Melisende's reign was taken up with a civil war. In reality, they were reconciled quite early on and there were many other developments for potential discussion in the years 1134 to 1143. Many answers also contained sweeping generalisations about the levels of Muslim unity and the consequences of the fall of Edessa. Students would be advised to practise answering questions which compare two time periods, as this a key conceptual skill.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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