

AS-LEVEL **HISTORY**

7041/2D: Religious Conflict and the Church in England, c.1529-70
Report on the Examination

7041
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Q1

The source question focused on one of the central events of the era (and of this unit) – Henry VIII's attempts to solve his 'great matter' so as to secure the succession and, at the same time, to save his conscience.

Source A, a notable speech made by Henry to his courtiers at Bridewell Palace in 1528, encouraged perceptive students to comment on the emollient tone adopted by the king. Seeking the support of the political nation, and aware of Queen Catherine's popularity, he refers to her as 'a noble woman' and to Mary as 'a fair daughter'. In the speech, the king presents clear arguments for an annulment, including the risk of political instability and his own 'crisis of conscience'. Thus, both the content and the provenance could be used to comment on the source's value in explaining the ways in which Henry attempted to secure the succession in the late 1520s.

Some students were able to use Henry's allusions to 'mischief and trouble' as a starting point for a discussion of Henry's fear of a return to the instability of the 15th century. His reference, moreover, to '[living] together abominably and detestably in open adultery' was an opportunity, gratefully seized by many, to demonstrate their knowledge of Catherine's marriage to Arthur, the subsequent papal dispensation, Leviticus 20:21 and other features of this well-known story. A good understanding of context was necessary for higher marks.

Precise contextual awareness helped students when analysing Source B, an extract from the Succession to the Crown Act of 1534. High-scoring answers explained Cromwell's use of statute law to secure the succession as the consequence of the failure of attempts to inveigle an annulment from Pope Clement VII, and/or as the logical conclusion of Henry's vision of imperial kingship. That the Act also required the king's subjects to make an oath recognising the validity of the Boleyn marriage did not go unnoticed. Some students linked the threat of punishment to the treatment of Sir Thomas More, Bishop John Fisher and others, thus demonstrating the ruthlessness with which Henry attempted to secure the succession in the early-mid 1530s.

In general, this question was answered appropriately. As was apparent last year, most students are aware of the need to comment on the sources' provenance and content before reaching a judgement on which of the sources is more valuable. However, it is worth reminding students that they must address the question explicitly. A common mistake was to assess the value of the sources generally, for example as a source of information about Henry and the 'great matter'. While this is enough for Level 2, to gain higher marks it is necessary to link understanding of the sources and their context to the issue identified in the question.

Another, disappointingly common, error was to refer to Henry's desire to 'annul Catherine'. As Source B makes clear, it was the marriage that was deemed 'utterly void and annulled', not Catherine herself.

Q2

This was the more popular essay option. The pre-Reformation Church has been the focus of several questions in previous AS examinations and their A-level equivalent. This question required students to assess the challenge posed by humanists c.1529 and to evaluate this vis-à-vis other threats, such as those presented by Lutherans and Lollards.

The majority of students were able to identify several groups who challenged the power of the Church in England in the years immediately preceding the Reformation. Some also chose to

identify the behaviour of the clergy as itself a challenge. As long as this was not used as an excuse simply to describe nepotism, simony, pluralism and the like, this worked well as an argument. After all, if the clergy had heeded the words of John Colet, in his Convocation sermon in 1512, it was unlikely that reformist movements would have achieved such momentum.

Another common approach was to place emphasis on the role of Henry VIII, not just because he was a humanist himself, but because his calling of the Reformation Parliament in 1529 enabled anticlerical MPs to attack the clergy's privilege. This made for a strong argument. Less persuasive were those answers which adopted a rather too generous definition of 'circa', explaining in some detail Henry's assumption of power over the Church in the 1530s. In 1529, the king remained a loyal Catholic. He may have envied the Church's wealth and chafed by its legal independence. At this point, however, the challenge he posed was more potential than actual.

Those answers that achieved marks in Levels 4 and 5 constructed coherent arguments, substantiated by precise and wide-ranging evidence. Rather than simply describing the Lutherans' attacks on Church doctrine or humanists' criticisms of clerical practices, they also tested the statement in question by evaluating the relative significance of the various challenges faced by the Church in England. While Lutherans and Lollards were more radical, they were small, peripheral and critically endangered groups. The influence enjoyed by humanists, in contrast, ensured that their criticisms were heard.

Q3

This question examined students' knowledge and understanding of the changes made to the doctrines and services of the Church of England from 1536 to 1547. This was answered less well than the other essay option, possibly because the ecclesiastical changes that took place in the 1540s were less dramatic (and are less memorable) than the break with Rome and the dissolution of the monasteries.

Most students found it easiest to challenge the statement, listing reforms as a means of contradicting the proposition that there was 'little change'. Included in many answers were the publication of the Great Bible, the Ten Articles and the Bishops' Book, the introduction of the English litany and the partial dissolution of the chantries. The best answers were able not only to identify these changes and to provide some descriptive detail but also to explain each change and to evaluate its extent and significance. As the mark scheme makes clear, Level 4 and 5 answers must demonstrate conceptual understanding. Given the preponderance of arcane theological detail in this component, this question offered the opportunity to demonstrate such knowledge.

Balanced analysis is also necessary to achieve high marks. A common approach was to define only evangelical reforms as 'change'. Reactionary measures – the Act of Six Articles, the King's Book and the Act for the Advancement of True Religion, for example – were thus seen as evidence of continuity, supporting the statement in question. However, better answers demonstrated a more nuanced understanding, arguing that there was a great deal of change in the years from 1536 – but that its nature varied according to the circumstances and Henry VIII's whim. The same monarch supported the publication of the Bible in the vernacular but insisted on the Latin mass; he ordered the burning of John Forest (a Catholic martyr) and John Lambert (a Protestant) in the same year. As JJ Scarisbrick put it, Henry 'was his own theologian'.

A final point is the need to address the question that is set, not the one that students might have liked to see. Given the date range of the question, it was understandable that a high proportion of answers referred to the dissolution of the monasteries. This was valid – but only if the relevance to

the question was made clear. Therefore, those who linked the closure of abbeys to Cromwell's injunctions against pilgrimages were rewarded. Those who took the 'services' in the question to refer to the healthcare, education and other services offered by the monks, and on that basis used the question as an excuse to describe the dissolution in detail, were guilty of stretching the question too far.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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