
AS-LEVEL HISTORY

Component 7041/1A
Report on the Examination

Specification 7041
June 2016

Version: 1.0

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Component 7041/1A

The Age of the Crusades, c1071–1204

Component 1A: The Crusader States and Outremer, c1071–1149

General Comments

Most students seemed to be well prepared for the demands of this paper and many displayed excellent knowledge and understanding. Many had clearly read more widely than the standard A-level textbooks. Most students seemed to manage the timing within the examination to produce two thorough answers.

Clearly many centres were familiar with the crusading topics from the legacy specification. It is important to note that this new breadth option does examine a broader context than HIS1A though. For some, the focus on the Papacy in question 02 and the crusader states and the Byzantium in question 03 was not fully embraced and there were some lapses into describing why the First Crusade succeeded or the Second Crusade failed, which was reminiscent of the legacy specification.

Section A

Question 1

A large number of students seemed confident with handling the extracts and were happy to pick out relevant parts of the interpretations and use good own knowledge to assess how convincing these views were.

With regards to Extract A, most discussed the role of the military orders and Italian city states with some good detail, and the more able also tackled the issue of the insignificant noble houses. Some students failed to link their comments to the 1130s and 1140s specifically. Some students wasted time in discussing Baldwin I and Baldwin II, without much focus on the wording of the question. A 'line by line' approach to analysing the extract seemed to cloud understanding of the interpretation as a whole.

Extract B seemed to be the more accessible of the two extracts, with students being well prepared to talk about the problems faced by Fulk and then the issues of Baldwin III's minority and power struggles with Melisende. However, there were some unfocused comments about Raymond and Joscelin, where the relevance to the specific focus of the question was not explained.

Many students lacked confidence in assessing limitations within either extract, tending towards an approach of describing what the interpretation had omitted, rather than critical engagement with the issues within the interpretation itself in the context of the question posed. For example, some students pointed out that the military orders played a vital role in defence in the 1130s and 1140s due to their control of a number of significant castles and that this actually strengthened the monarchy rather than weakened it. This meant that students struggled to make well supported judgements about which extract was most convincing and there were a lot of bland statements about "A contains more factors" or "B is more relevant to the time period", which obviously achieved limited reward.

Several students seemed a little muddled about what the question was testing. Surprisingly large numbers discussed issues of reliability, value, provenance and tone rather than using their understanding of historical context, as instructed, to address the issue of which interpretation was most convincing.

Section B

Question 02

This was the slightly more popular essay question on this paper. Many students showed a clear understanding of the issue of Papal authority over the time period within the question, with the majority focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of Gregory VII and Urban II in turn. This produced some good answers, with supported judgements being made.

Some students failed to appreciate the breadth requirement for the question and discussed Urban II exclusively, or they tried to turn the question into an issue of Crusader motivation or why the First Crusade succeeded, which perhaps reflected a lack of confidence in the 1070s and 1080s (reflecting a change from the old specification). A surprising number were uncertain about the meaning of the terms 'Papacy', 'Holy Roman Empire' and 'Byzantine Empire', which affected the clarity of their arguments. However, despite this, there was some impressive knowledge on display and many students supported their assessments with precise dates, examples and evidence.

Question 03

This question was less popular and some students lacked confidence in talking about relations with Byzantium in any detail. This specified content has not previously been examined and may have taken some by surprise. However, many students managed to produce balanced responses, and students were very happy to discuss how events on the First Crusade (especially the issues at Antioch) affected relations. There were a number of ways in which balance could be achieved, but popular lines of debate included discussion of religious and social differences in the long term, or the behaviour of Bohemond and Tancred after the Crusade. Unfortunately some students wasted time discussing events post 1130 in depth.

Weaker answers tended to be very narrow in terms of time period considered, or they made statements which were quite bland and unsupported. For example, a number of answers discussed Byzantine alliances with the Seljuks and suggested that "this made Outremer not like them" as they were "allying with the enemy". Statements like this reflected a simplistic understanding of the nature of Outremer, which had many alliances with Muslim groups themselves.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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