
AS-LEVEL HISTORY

Component 7041/2D
Report on the Examination

Specification 7041
June 2016

Version: 1.0

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Component 7041/2D

Religious conflict and the Church in England, c1529–c1570 Component 2D: The break with Rome, c1529–1547

General Comments

The AS focus of the new specification is chronologically the same as the legacy specification 2B; however, centres do need to be aware of the significant differences between the two. The new specification is much more clearly focused on matters of religion and their importance for both government and society. The focus of questions is also different, not simply in terms of the new style source question and the reduction in assessment tasks. Assessment in Component 2 is based around key assessment objectives: cause and consequence, continuity and change and similarity and difference. Students are expected to write an essay in 40/45 minutes and the choice of questions will, over time reflect these assessment objectives.

Section A

Question 1

In this new style source based question, examiners are looking to reward students' ability to assess the value of a source to a historian studying a particular issue, in this case Henry VIII's relationship with the Church. To assess the value, students are expected to consider the provenance of the source, the tone in which it was written and the content of the source. Having considered the value of the individual source, students are then expected to compare the two sources to make a judgement as to which is the most valuable source. Clearly, both have a value and it is acceptable to make a distinction that, in this case Source A is valuable in explaining Henry VIII's relationship with the Church in Rome, and whilst Source B does refer to the relationship with the Pope, 'The Bishop of Rome', it is clearly an explanation of the relationship between Henry VIII and the Church in England.

Students must avoid using GCSE style judgements – a source is likely to be indicative of a particular perspective, rather than 'biased', the negative of valuable is not invaluable and issues of accuracy and reliability need to be qualified and explained, if they are to be made relevant to the response.

Most of the high-scoring answers to this question analysed and evaluated Source A, first in terms of its provenance and then its content, before doing the same for Source B. That Source A was written by Eustace Chapuys elicited much comment, some of it relevant to the question. While it is true that Chapuys, like his imperial master, opposed the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, this led too many students to the conclusion that the source was worthless. Others correctly made the point that he was an observant – and therefore valuable – source of information about Henry and his activities. That he reported on a conversation with the Duke of Norfolk, a proponent of the establishment of royal supremacy over the Church in England makes the source even more useful. Knowledgeable students were able to provide detailed contextual information about the annulment, Charles V's role in thwarting it, and Norfolk's reasons for desiring a speedy solution to the King's 'great matter'. Source A's value was seen chiefly in its presentation

of the issues over which Henry clashed with the papacy, as well as the argument he used to justify the break with Rome.

Source B, meanwhile, was generally considered to be a more valuable source. For most students, the fact that it was an extract from an Act of Parliament was significant. Whereas A presented Henry's thoughts only second-hand, B could be (and was) thought to give a genuine insight into Henry's motives (although the extent to which Cromwell was pulling the strings did not go unmentioned). It was also thought crucial that Source B dates from 1534 – and so provides a vantage point by which one can assess the full extent of the change in relations between Henry and the Church. The source enabled students to show off their, in some cases, impressive knowledge of the Acts of the Reformation Parliament.

Section B

Question 02

Question 2 was the more popular of the optional essay questions. Students demonstrated good knowledge of the pre-Reformation Church, offering often very detailed accounts of the Church's power and wealth, reformers' criticisms of Catholic doctrine, and, in particular, the abuses of the clergy. Simony, nepotism, pluralism and absenteeism were described in virtually every answer; similarly, almost every student was keen to show his/her knowledge of Cardinal Wolsey's misdemeanours and of the Richard Hunne case.

However, while most of those who opted for Question 2 showed reasonable understanding of why the pre-Reformation Church was criticised, far fewer were able to provide **evidence** of criticism. Many answers were simply descriptions of the Church's flaws and, as such, did not gain high marks. It is essential that students not only construct an argument, but also substantiate it.

There were also many answers that achieved marks in Levels 4 and 5. These answers tested the statement in question by evaluating the seriousness of the criticisms of the Church. It was argued by some that the most significant criticisms were those concerning the financial demands made by the Church, since these reflected the disgruntlement felt by many ordinary people (towards tithes, mortuary fees, indulgences and the rest). The counter-argument, of course, is that the majority of people in England seem to have accepted the Church's power. This led other students to argue that the most serious criticisms were those levelled by reformers against the doctrines of the Church or, alternatively, the practices of churchmen. Good answers differentiated between the attacks on the Church made by Lutherans and Lollards, whose heretical status consigned them to the peripheries, and humanists, whose influence on Henry ensured that their criticisms were heard.

A small number of students focused on the date 1529 to argue that the criticisms made against Cardinal Wolsey had a very clear purpose in providing evidence for Parliament to attack both the Cardinal himself and the Church in Rome.

Question 03

The overall standard of answers to Question 3 was higher than that of Question 2 answers, perhaps because the question of Thomas Cromwell's sudden fall from power lends itself naturally to the analytical structure that is an essential characteristic of a good A Level History essay. The majority of those who attempted Question 3 understood its demands. Many of them, indeed, answered it well, demonstrating detailed and precise knowledge of the circumstances of

Cromwell's fall, providing analytical comment on a range of causes, and evaluating those causes' relative significance.

Religious division, the factor identified in the question, was defined in two main ways. Some students chose to emphasise the differences between Cromwell's evangelical radicalism, as evidenced by the dissolution of the monasteries, the Royal Injunctions, and so on, and the King's conservatism, demonstrated, for example, by his role in the trial and execution of John Lambert. This was a sensible approach. In too many cases, however, the beliefs of the King and his chief minister were simplistically presented as polar opposites, ignoring the way in which the two worked together for most of the 1530s, the flexibility of Henry's theology, and the uncertainty surrounding Cromwell's motives. The other way in which students approached religious divisions was to present them as flowing from the factional struggle between 'conservatives' and 'reformers'. This worked equally well as a means of explaining the difficulties Cromwell faced in maintaining his supremacy in a competitive, religion-soaked environment.

The best answers to this question showed excellent understanding of a range of factors, including the failure of the Cleves marriage, Henry's foreign policy aims, Norfolk's cunning, and the possibility that Henry may have wished to rule without a chief minister once Cromwell had served his purpose. Somewhat surprisingly, the Pilgrimage of Grace, and its leaders' demand that Cromwell be punished, received a great deal of attention. The Pilgrimage was certainly relevant, and in capable hands its relevance (such as the Pilgrims' attack on Cromwell as 'base born') was made clear. However, a large number of students exaggerated the importance to Cromwell's career of the rising – which, after all, ended years before his fall – discussing at length the supposedly important role played by the 'Aragonese faction' of Lords Darcy and Hussey. These answers failed to convince.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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