



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS1C

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS1C

Unit 1C: The Reformation in Europe, c1500–1564

General Comments

Most students appeared generally well-prepared for the examination. Many scripts showed the benefit of ample revision and careful consideration of the techniques required to succeed in an examination which places substantial demands on the resources of students. There were, however, some areas of under-performance. Thus, some rather sketchy accounts of the Peasants' War, often accompanying knowledgeable evaluations of Lutheranism, were seen. Moreover, there were some rather rambling and unfocused answers to the 12-mark questions. These questions require concise and focused analysis in which students identify relevant reasons, support those reasons with appropriate evidence and, where possible, make appropriate links between the reasons. Anything else in response to the 12-mark questions is padding and cannot score highly. In contrast, there were many highly focused and well-organised responses which achieved Level 4 marks. Concision is important; too many long answers did – eventually – score well, but often at the expense of a loss of rather more marks because of incomplete answers to the 24-mark questions.

Question 1

- 01** The best answers to this question obtained Level 4 marks through the ability of students to link the long-term socio-economic decline of many German peasants to the specific religious milieu of 1524, by which time there had been an upsurge in religious radicalism which had long since evaded the control of conventional theologians such as Luther. Some students, however, were less well prepared and offered long and often descriptive responses of the Ninety-Five Theses and their reception. Such answers were usually placed in L2. It was unfortunate that some students appeared not to have revised this area of the specification and combined a weak answer on Question 01 with a much stronger response to Question 02.
- 02** This question was answered very well by many students who showed effective knowledge of printing, drew on a range of examples and evaluated the importance of printing appropriately within a wider context of reasons for the success of the Lutheran Reformation. The question did specify the importance to the success of Lutheranism; it was not simply about Luther's own publications. A greater awareness, therefore, of the importance of the writings of Philip Melanchthon would have helped students. It is worth remembering that it was Melanchthon and not Luther who drew up what was to be the document which defined the Lutheran faith, the Confession of Augsburg. Many students showed an awareness of the importance of woodcut images in broadening the appeal of Lutheranism; some students, however, seemed to be unaware that woodcuts were produced by means of printing technology.

Question 2

- 03** This was answered effectively by many students who were able to give a number of reasons for the expulsion of Calvin, combining a grasp of his personal shortcomings with an understanding of the wider political context in which Calvin was operating in Geneva. Many of those answering this question achieved marks at Level 3 or Level 4 by producing

work along such lines. The minority of students who answered the question less well often tended to extrapolate the reasons for Calvin's expulsion in 1538 from his activities after 1541. In particular, the inference that because Perrin opposed Calvin in the 1550s he must have been an enemy of Calvin in 1538 is not correct.

- 04** Most students were reasonably well informed in general about Calvin's activities during his second ministry in Geneva. The best answers to this question were sharply evaluative and demonstrated a convincing understanding of Calvin's activities as a religious reformer with a grasp of the wider political and social context within which he had to operate. Amongst weaker students there was haziness about some aspects of Geneva's religious polity, especially the social role of the Consistory (which, incidentally, could not impose the death penalty, despite what some students appeared to think). There was, perhaps, a tendency to assume that Calvin's path to religious domination was somewhat easier than it appeared to be at the time. Students who believed this often also exaggerated the extent of Calvin's political influence, which was always conditional and dependent on institutional support that might at any time have been withdrawn. It should also be noted that, within the context of sixteenth-century religious values, Calvin was not uniquely sadistic in his treatment of Servetus, whose anti-Trinitarian views would have induced a similar fate in many other places, irrespective of their religious affiliations.

Question 3

- 05** This question was, on the whole, answered less successfully than the other 12-mark questions. Well-prepared students experienced little difficulty and could explain a wide range of humanist criticisms of the Church. Erasmus, naturally enough, figured prominently in many answers – with varying degrees of competence. Many students showed a keen awareness of his writings and clearly understood their implications for the Catholic Church. Some students, however, struggled to make Erasmus's influence relevant. Erasmus did not, as some students seemed to think, translate the New Testament into Greek, nor did he make the Greek New Testament accessible to ordinary people. Other humanist critics of the Church were also noted, most importantly Lorenzo Valla's demonstration of the fraudulent basis of the *Donation of Constantine*. There were, however, two fundamental and often linked shortcomings in many answers. Humanists were not *ipso facto* critics of the Church, and Luther, even if he used Erasmus's edition of the Greek New Testament, was no humanist. On the other hand, many other reformers, most notably Melancthon and Zwingli, were humanist scholars, and this distinction was noted by a few better informed students.
- 06** This question was answered less successfully than the other 24-mark questions. The best answers were excellent and demonstrated a broad understanding of the importance of the Council of Trent to the success of Catholic renewal, along with a detailed knowledge of both the workings of the Council and of the Tridentine decrees. Unfortunately, some students abandoned the Council at an early stage of their answers and wrote about the process of Catholic reform in general, which was not the focus of the question. Such answers, if done well, achieved Level 3 marks, but the top two levels were reserved for those students who could demonstrate their relevant understanding of the key theme.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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