



History

Paper 1C (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 02 Student 2

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.1 20/08/15

Specimen Answer plus commentary

The following student response is intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. This response has not been completed under timed examination conditions. It is not intended to be viewed as a 'model' answer and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Paper 1C (AS): Specimen question paper

02 'The consolidation of royal authority in the years 1487 to 1509 was due to Henry VII's control over the nobility.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

(25 marks)

Student Response

Henry VII's control over the nobility contributed to his consolidation of royal authority, but it was not solely responsible for it.

For example, in 1487, the Battle of Stoke, fuelled by the Yorkist desire to place Lambert Simnel on the throne was dealt with very effectively. Henry VII's army of 15,000 against the rebel army of 8,000 was victorious. This battle consolidated Henry VII's royal authority as it was the last engagement of Wars of the Roses and therefore a watershed over real Yorkist and Lancastrian conflict, therefore securing Henry's royal authority by showing his dominance and strength.

However, this battle could not have been achieved without Henry's accountants and lawyers, who he heavily valued more than nobleman. Advisers such as Reginald Bray were constantly consulted by the King on matters such as the Battle of Stoke so power within the counsel became concentrated to fewer men such as lawyers and accountants and therefore diminished the importance of the nobility as group. This consolidated Henry's royal authority because it concentrated royal power to fewer men, who he had more control over, increasing his political authority.

Despite this, Henry VII's royal authority was largely consolidated through his relations with foreign powers regarding his own political stability. Perkin Warbeck challenged Henry's international standing by taking refuge from Charles VIII of France in 1492, securing the backing of Maximilian, Holy Roman Emperor in 1494 and receiving backing for war by James IV of Scotland. Henry's reaction to these foreign threats consolidated his royal authority on a foreign stage resulting in the security of his throne and becoming allies with large global powers. The Treaty of Etaples in 1492, the Intercursus Magnus in 1496 and the Treaty of Ayton in 1502 among other terms, agreed not to support pretenders or imposters to the English throne. This consolidated Henry VII's royal authority because he now had assurance that his crown was safe, not only domestically but internationally.

Even though Henry VII's treatment of the nobles was not his key to establishing royal authority, it was extremely important because his treatment of the nobles constrained noble power, secured it and at times dismissed it. This helped to consolidate royal authority as it solidified his position above the nobles and in turn amplifying his domestic power. For example, Acts of Attainder were used against nobles, that would declare a nobleman guilty of treason, imprison him and his lands would be given to the crown. These were used to consolidate Henry VII's power by threatening nobles with them, or promising to reverse them if the nobleman did the King's bidding. This allowed centralised royal authority to the crown. In 1487, 28 people were attained. The Star Chamber was set up 1487 to hear charges against those who broke the law. This allowed Henry VII to consolidate his royal authority as it allowed him to control the power of the nobles thus increasing his own power. These measures

allowed Henry VII to also dismiss or remove nobles, which means he had control over the composition of his nobles, this consolidated his royal authority as he had unquestionable support from his nobles.

Despite Henry's strict treatment of the nobles, there were other aspects which consolidated his royal authority, such as his management of finance. Henry VII changed from using the Exchequer system for accounting for the King's income, scrutinising ward-ships, debts and recognisances to the Chamber in 1493. This consolidated his royal authority because the Chamber system took place within the King's household, so Henry VII had complete supervision of his and the crown's finances. He made the final decision on all matters to do with finances, consolidating his royal authority by him having supreme economic control. The Chamber's income in 1508 was £42,000; allowing Henry's wealth to increase, furthering his influence and authority.

Henry VII's treatment of the nobles was an important way in which he consolidated his royal authority. His stringent granting of titles meant he kept large amounts of land and money, by not having to grant them to his nobles. This also meant few nobles had sufficient power to rebel, cementing Henry VII's royal authority. Henry VII did grant many Orders of the Garter, but this honour was ceremonial and offered very little political influence. This consolidated his power by increasing his wealth, centralising his political power and expanding his lands.

In conclusion, Henry VII's consolidation of royal authority in the years 1487 to 1509 was only partly due to his control over the nobility. Though it was an essential aspect of his royal authority, the consolidation could not have been achieved without gaining political security from foreign countries, his success against imposters such as Lambert Simnel and his calculated approach towards his finances, all ensuring either financial gain, centralised political power or peace between warring parties.

Commentary – Level 4

The range of issues examined is effective and there is appropriate supporting detail; as such, this has elements of a good Level 4 response. There are, however, some significant weaknesses which undermine what could have been a very effective response. The treatment of Stoke ends with an assertive non-sequitur and the assessment in relation to the nobility tends to be episodic: it is apparently dealt with and then dealt with again.