



History

Paper 2D (A-level) Specimen Question Paper

Question 03 Student 1

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.1 10/09/15

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 2D (A-level): Specimen question paper

03 'The changes to the Church between 1536 and 1547 were motivated by the need to protect England from invasion.'

Assess the validity of this view.

(25 marks)

Student Response

Following the Dissolution of the Greater and Lesser Monasteries, England came under threat from the European powers of Charles V and Francis I. The Act of Ten Articles was used as an instant appeasement to those provoked by the Dissolution, as it reinforced catholic doctrine such as the belief in Purgatory. However, it was intentionally vague to allow Henry flexibility in future religious reform; he had ensured momentary security without having to deviate from his intentions.

The Act of Six Articles further highlighted the aspects of catholic doctrine which Henry still supported – at least ostensibly. Perhaps most significantly, it reinforced the importance transubstantiation, which was intended to prove to foreign powers that Henry was not willing to completely abandon catholicism. It may be appropriate to be sceptical of Henry's motives in this Act, as it followed the Pope's excommunication of Henry and the entirety of England with him. This led to suggestions of a potential invasion from Spain and France against the heretical English nation, encouraged by the papacy. The likelihood of the Six Articles being a representation of Henry's personal religious view is further decreased in the knowledge that he was a Humanist, and so sought to remove aspects of superstition in the Church, namely transubstantiation.

Henry's abolition of shrines, holy days, and pilgrimages are all clear examples of Henry's Humanist religious views, which achieved the opposite of protection from invasion. His abolition of pilgrimages was particularly offensive to Charles V, as one of the most significant pilgrimages that could be taken was the Camino de Santiago in Spain. The King's Book, a re-writing of the earlier Bishops' Book, showed no intention to appease foreign powers, rather to alienate them further. No mention of transubstantiation was included in either text and the fact that Henry believed his edition to be more correct than the Bishops' Book, showed an insistence on enforcing Royal Supremacy. Given Royal Supremacy's nature as a direct attack on Papal authority, to reinforce it in a written work to be circulated across England was a particularly provocative move. The inclusion of Lutheran ideas like salvation by faith alone in both books further increased tensions between England and foreign powers.

Perhaps the most provocative Henrician religious reform was the introduction of an English – vernacular – Bible into every English parish church. As this allowed individual interpretation of the Bible, the functional role of the Pope became obsolete. This disregard for papal importance was increased by the introduction of the English litany in all parish churches. This move allowed all members of the commons, regardless of their literacy, the access to Biblical texts that had previously been out of their grasp. This was a direct challenge to the Roman Catholic Church, and all who followed it, which could easily have led to a foreign invasion.

Despite Henry's provocative religious reforms, no foreign invasion occurred, largely due to his undulating religious policy, which could ostensibly appear to be more conservative when potential threat from abroad necessitated it. The fluctuating defence of transubstantiation at key moments was most likely a tool to defend Henry from foreign invasion, and also from domestic conservative discontent. The fact that he allowed the Reformist faction to dominate the Privy Council in the last – and thus perhaps most vulnerable – years of his reign suggests that his main concern was that of the succession of the Tudor dynasty, with Edward's Royal Supremacy. This had been Henry's aim from the beginning of the Reformation, and thus any other motives could only ever have been small deciding factors.

In conclusion, it is apparent from the fluctuating nature of Henry's religious policy that it was often used only to manipulate and appease the foreign Catholic powers of Charles V and Francis I. A lack of continuity in upholding Catholic doctrine suggests that Henry's commitment was to reform; it into the Reformist faction's hands that Henry placed the future of both his son and his nation. While the need to protect England from a foreign invasion was of the utmost importance, it could not be the ruling force in Henry's religious policy, as it would guarantee a return to Rome. Henry's execution of the Protestant extremist Anne Askew was a clear enough demonstration to the Catholic foreign powers that Henry would not condone Protestantism in England. This was not only a tool for ensuring English safety, but also a clear representation of Henry's religious view: he did not want to follow Rome, but he was by no means Protestant.

Commentary – Level 4

The answer lacks a clear introduction setting out the argument to be advanced and is not always completely accurate in relation to the religious changes cited, what they indicated and why they were introduced. Some comment, especially on the introduction of the Bible in English, is assertive and dubious. These weaknesses notwithstanding, the essay overall has a clear focus on the question of what it was that motivated religious change, although it focuses too much on the king's Humanism and does not indicate the range of influences on him, especially of Cromwell and the Protestant faction. Given that it does focus directly on the central question of motivation and is generally analytical, it has the essential characteristics of a Level 4 response, but it lacks some accuracy and tends to be assertive which places it at the bottom of the level.