



History 7042
Specimen Question Paper 2D (A-level)
Question 01 Student 2
Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0

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

01 With reference to these source and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these sources to an historian studying the fall of Wolsey.

[30 marks]

Student response

Source A is useful to historians studying the fall of Cardinal Wolsey as Edward Hall was an MP in the House of Commons at the time at which Wolsey began to be a focus of criticism from MPs. However, although Sir Edward Hall witnessed the events he described, the source was actually written almost twenty years later. The tone of the source is more reflective of views which were held after the break with Rome not before. Hall makes the faults of the Church in 1529 paramount 'many griefs' 'extortions' and suggests that the complaints were too many to list. The subjective nature of the source is reflected in the emphasis that the source places on MPs who began 'to complain bitterly'. In 1529, Henry and Wolsey were trying to find a basis to criticise the Church in Rome, but this source is very negative.

A main area of concern from the MPs was the greed demonstrated by Wolsey illustrated in this source 'Sir William Compton had to pay Cardinal Wolsey... a thousand marks sterling'. The source is useful because it argues that Wolsey was believed to have behaved in an arbitrary manner, contrary to the law of the land'. However, the source only gives one example of excessive fines which may be an extreme example to justify the decision to place a charge of an Act of Attainder against Wolsey. It is interesting as in his career Wolsey had angered the nobility by attempting to make access to the law more straight forward for commons yet the speech is made in the Commons. The source is useful in suggesting why there was little support for Wolsey, but it doesn't really explain why he fell.

Source B is also an account written by a contemporary of Wolsey's which was written significantly after the event. It was written during the reign of Mary Tudor which lends perspective to the events but may distort Cavendish's memory and make it less valuable to a historian. The account is a very detailed narrative of the events; a day by day account of what happened in Parliament leading up to the Act of Attainder, this detail may affect its value – how much had Cavendish actually remembered? The tone is very respectful of both Cromwell and Wolsey 'my lord, the Cardinal'. It attempts to get the reader of the source on the side of the writer 'Now let us return...' Together these reinforce that this is a defence of Wolsey rather than to present a balanced account.

Cromwell, like Cavendish, was a member of Wolsey's inner circle 'his faithful servant' and he did defend Cromwell in Parliament. The source does give some detail as to why Wolsey fell in the last paragraph which provides valuable evidence to the historian. Wolsey was charged with Praemunire; it was believed that his failure to persuade the Pope to grant the annulment, particularly the failure of the court at Blackfriars suggested that Wolsey put his position as Legate a latere above his position as the King's first minister. The needs of the Church had been put above the need of the King which was to gain the annulment, marry Anne Boleyn and

to have a male heir, thus securing the Tudor dynasty. Equally, important to Wolsey's downfall was the wealth which Wolsey had accrued. Henry was angered by Skelton's 'Come ye to court...' which suggested that Wolsey was richer than the King. Henry wanted to gain 'possessions' such as Hampton Court'.

Source C is very useful to historians as it was a speech made in Parliament at the time of Wolsey's downfall. It is not affected by hindsight and it is interesting as it is a defence of the King's position by Thomas More who later challenged the King's decisions. The House of Lords was particularly critical of Thomas Wolsey; the nobility had felt that their position had been directly challenged by Wolsey, for example in the Eltham Ordinances. The language used in the source uses very strong religious imagery. Henry VIII is described as 'the good shepherd' who like Christ 'attends well his sheep'. Wolsey is described as 'the great whether'. A whether sheep is a ram – this may be a slight to Wolsey's fathering of children against his vows, or may have created an image of a ram – the devil – for his listeners. This imagery undermines the use of the source for historians in terms of detail, but demonstrates the strength of the King's anger against Wolsey.

Whilst the actual details given in the source are limited. More does put Henry's viewpoint that without the annulment of the marriage the country would face 'perils'. There was a real fear that the succession of Mary would result in a disputed throne and a repeat of the Wars of the Roses.

More suggests that Wolsey had 'craftily and unruly juggled' and was guilty of 'fraudulent juggling' which was a reference to Wolsey's attempt to meet the pressure of his responsibilities to Henry and the Pope at Blackfriars. It is difficult to support More's assertion that Henry was 'quick' or that he used 'gentle correction, a small punishment'. The negotiations for the annulment were protracted and Wolsey was effectively ruined by having all his titles and his possessions being taken from him and being exiled to York. The minimising of these events does undermine the evidence presented, but demonstrates the length to which Henry would have his ministers go, in rhetorical terms, to justify his actions.

Commentary – Level 4

The answer is consistently focused on the sources and deploys knowledge of context to support the assessment of value. It offers a judgement as to value in relation to each source. There are, however, some weaknesses in the answer. It does not always relate comment to value. For example, it states that Hall's account in Source A was written some time after the events described, but it does not suggest how this might affect the value of the source. Similarly, it overlooks that although Source C is a speech which appears to be a verbatim account, it too is contained in Hall's Chronicle. There are other occasions where careful explanation are not explicitly linked to value and is a Level 4 answer.