



History
Paper 1A (A-level) Specimen Question Paper
Question 02 Student 1
Specimen Answer and Commentary

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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 1A (A-level): Specimen question paper

02 To what extent was effective leadership responsible for the establishment of the crusader states in the years 1096 to 1154?

(25 marks)

Student Response

There are a number of reasons why the crusader states were successfully established in the years 1097-1154, but by far the most important of these reasons was that they had effective leadership, for the most part.

From the outset, the crusader states relied on effective leadership. For example, on the First Crusade, the leadership of Bohemond of Taranto was pivotal both at the Battle of Dorylaeum and the Siege of Antioch. Even after the First Crusade, when the crusader states were "little more than a loose network of dispersed outposts" (Asbridge), the leadership of Baldwin I of Jerusalem was important in establishing this nascent kingdom. Through a clever use of clemency mixed with ruthlessness, Baldwin was able to take Arsuf, Caesarea, and Acre in quick succession by 1104. As there was a real threat to Baldwin's kingdom from Egypt, he had to not only pacify the region between Egypt and Syria, but also create a loyal and subservient aristocracy, which he did. Later on, the crusader states received effective leadership from Fulk of Anjou and later Baldwin III. Fulk, for example, allied with Unur of Damascus and in 1140 successfully repelled Zengi. Baldwin III, at the Battle of Aintab in 1150, repelled Nur al-Din. During both of these kings' reigns, there was great potential for an unravelling of the kingdom, as there was hostility between Fulk and Melisende and Melisende and Baldwin III, but in both cases a settlement was reached.

Another factor in the successful establishment of the crusader states was that the Muslims were not united. On crusade, during the Battle of Nicaea, Kilij Arslan was away fighting the Danishmends and in Syria, Ridwan and Duqaq would not attack at the same time due to their ongoing civil war. For a time after the crusade, too, calls for a Muslim counter-crusade fell on deaf ears, with only six people on one occasion turning up to hear Al-Sulami preach jihad. Yet, Muslims were prepared to fight one another. In some cases, independent Muslim emirs preferred an alliance with the Franks rather than lose their independence, e.g. Unur of Damascus preferred an alliance with Fulk to repel Zengi in 1140. This Muslim disunity doubtless profited the crusader states.

However, during the period under discussion, it is not the case that the Muslims were always at war with one another or unwilling to unite. While independent emirs may have resisted Zengi, he did succeed in uniting parts of the Muslim world. After defending the Seljuk Sultan from the Abbasid Caliph in 1126, Zengi is rewarded by being made atabeg of Mosul. By 1128, Zengi succeeds in uniting Aleppo with Mosul. The first blow to the crusader states was struck in 1144, with the loss of Edessa to Zengi. However, this defeat only occurred as it was coupled with a lack of effective leadership in the crusader states. Raymond of Antioch was unprepared to lead the northern Syrian barons to the aid of Edessa and at the time of Zengi's attack, Joscelin had been away to the south helping the Artuqids. Therefore, what

we see here is a lack of any strong correlation, so to speak, between Muslim unity and the fortunes of the crusader states. Rather, what was paramount always was effective leadership; when it was absent, the crusader states foundered.

Another factor which contributing to an extent in the establishment of the crusader states in these years was aid received from Byzantium and the West. Tyerman describes the aid provided by Byzantium as “pivotal” to the success of the First Crusade, with ships provided at the Siege of Nicaea, and Manuel Boutoumites and Takitios providing their military expertise. The Genoese also provided aid during the First Crusade. Afterwards, a number of smaller crusaders were launched, including the 1101 crusade which featured the disgraced Stephen of Blois and the 1105-6 crusade led by Bohemond. The crusader states sometimes did have good relations with Byzantium and thereby received aid from them.

However, it is arguable whether the aid provided on the First Crusade was pivotal after all. Byzantium’s aid stopped at Antioch and it was a culmination of Muslim disunity and strong leadership which helped the crusaders to victory in 1099. Also, smaller crusades were not that important after all as crusaders would not stay in the Holy Land, but would return home afterwards. A major problem of the crusader states was that they needed a standing army. This was provided by the Military Orders, whose effective leadership was crucial. Also, relations with Byzantium were not always good. Bohemond’s crusade was led against Byzantium itself and later on the Byzantines would effectively wage war against the Principality of Antioch in an attempt to force Byzantine suzerainty on them. Furthermore, not just any aid was needed. Aid was needed that would help, rather than hinder, the crusader states. The best example of aid which hindered rather than helped was the Second Crusade, whose chief flaw was that it lacked effective leadership which evidenced itself in the lack of agreement over a target.

Another factor which was important to an extent in the establishment of the crusader states was assimilation. A good example of a willingness to assimilate into Outremer is provided by Fulk of Anjou, who leaves Anjou to marry Melisende. There are also examples of architectural assimilation provided by castles such as Krak des Chevaliers. For example, two important features of this castle are stone machicolations and a ramp designed to draw attackers in. These features are not crusader, but Islamic and Byzantine respectively. However, the strategy of assimilation still relies on an effective leader to put it in place. Fulk of Anjou also represents an effective leader, as his reign shows. While the second generation of crusader castles, as Ellenblum argues, were in rural areas and tended to be designed for administrative and agricultural purposes, this must be understood as the result of effective leadership which had already secured the kingdom. Assimilation, also, was not the only strategy. The Military Orders and castles were important, too. What mattered was not which strategy was followed, but whether these were carried out by an effective leader. In conclusion, effective leadership was pivotal to the establishment of the crusader states as without it there would have been no hope of taking advantage of Muslim disunity or any aid provided. Also, while the Franks undoubtedly assimilated, this assimilation was often carried out by strong leaders such as Fulk of Anjou. His willingness to assimilate into the politics of Outremer may have been behind his decision to ally with Unur against Zengi in 1140, but it is best understood as evidence of him being an effective leader. Furthermore, while the Islamic Middle East was not united at the time of the First Crusade, Zengi and Nur al-Din were beginning to unite the Muslim world by force. While they did this, the crusader states still survived and it was only when there was an absence of strong leadership, or any leadership at all in the case of the fall of Edessa, that the Muslims triumphed.

Commentary – Level 4

The response is consistently relevant and analytical, examining a range of reasons and reaching supported judgements about them. There are, however, some weaknesses: the argument about effective leadership is not always convincing and tends, at times, to be assertive and the premise of the question has been accepted perhaps too readily. In addition, there is a tendency to change tenses for no apparent reason. This could have been a Level 5 response with a more direct challenge to the premise of the question being made.