

Examiners' Report

January 2011

GCE

GCE History 6HI01 B

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General comments

Examiners reported very positively on the overall quality of candidate responses for Option B, which was evidence of effective teaching and learning. The majority of answers were planned, which meant that most were able to sustain a clear focus on the question set. Answers were supported with a range of relevant and developed information, though some candidates provided extended narratives of accurate material with only limited explanation or analysis. Some stuck quite rigidly to the PEE system of point, evidence, explanation. This process worked well for many answers, but for high Level 4 and Level 5 marks answers needed some sort of overview, with candidates standing back and reflecting on how to evaluate their response to the question. There were few candidates whose quality of written communication weakened the impact of their answer; and, happily for examiners, even fewer whose work was difficult to read.

A common weakness, which has been mentioned several times in previous reports, is the failure to develop an accurate chronology of events. This influenced the effectiveness of some answers, notably in **Questions 2, 3 and 7**. If candidates are not certain of the course of events, they will be unable to understand the ways in which some key events influence subsequent developments. Candidates sometimes failed to cover the whole timescale set in the question. **Question 2** covered the period from 1517-55, but only a small number of answers referred to the Peace of Augsburg and the attempt to settle religious issues; and several answers to **Question 6** seemed unsure of the importance of the year 1609 for Spain and for the Dutch provinces.

Another concern was that many candidates dealt only briefly with the factor given in the question, in some cases showing little knowledge of this in contrast to the other factors which were sometimes explored in depth, assessed well, but with only limited application to the question. Some formed their answer through the discussion of three factors separated into a paragraph each with a very brief summing up at the end. A few candidates considered only the given factor, sometimes identifying others but with no effective development. The result was certainly a good discussion of the given factor, but the answer obviously lacked balance and neither a judgment nor a comparison was possible.

A large number of answers began by repeating the question set, prefacing this with 'To a certain extent I agree that...'. Others declared that 'many historians' agreed with the point made in the question, but were never able to substantiate their claim. Better answers avoided these approaches, producing their own opening statement which usually suggested individual confidence and a personal viewpoint. Future candidates might be advised that a prepared opening can take up precious time and adds little to the answer overall. Some students relied on quoting from historians. In the best essays one or two quotations can be integrated well and can be made relevant to the candidate's argument. However, in a few cases, the quotes were used as soundbites. Many answers on Luther referred to his message being like 'cheap gin', which did little to drive the argument forward.

B1: Luther, Lutheranism and the German Reformation, 1517-55

It was important in tackling **Question 1** that candidates understood just when the German Reformation started. For some it began with the 95 Theses in October 1517, but other answers offered information from the 1520s and 1530s, and even, in a few

cases, from the whole period to 1555. Some of the best answers noted that 1517 marked the beginning of Luther's challenge and was intended to spark an academic debate among theologians. This debate duly took place between Luther and Eck in 1518, and with Cajetan in 1519. However, it was only with Luther's excommunication in 1520 and the Edict of Worms in 1521 that it could be confidently asserted that the German Reformation got under way. Most understood Tetzels activities in 1517, though some were not clear on the nature of the indulgences offered, nor on just how expensive they were. In considering other factors many mentioned resentment against papal taxation, but few were able to say what this meant exactly, nor was this linked to the political structure of the Empire. Some candidates noted the growing wealth of the German states and the transition to a capitalist economy. Most were able to point to the corruption and personal immorality of several popes, notably Alexander VI Borgia, and believed that the disgraceful example set by the papal court was resented in Germany; however, recent research suggests that this may not be the case.

Previous questions on the development of Lutheranism in the years 1517-55 have asked for reasons for its spread and survival. Some candidates assumed that **Question 2** was addressing the same points, when in fact it was asking about the widespread support given to Luther's ideas in these years, which is obviously not the same thing. Some weaker responses noted the use of the printing press in the rapid spread of Luther's ideas, but had little to say on literacy beyond the fact that it was increasing. Better answers noted that Luther's pamphlets, especially those of 1520, led many German people to support Lutheranism simply because the views he set out were popular. Several provided numerical information on the number of pamphlets printed; some numbers were fairly accurate, others were wildly inventive. Many answers referred to Luther's works by name, though Melancthon's important *Loci Communes* seems to have been forgotten. Candidates were aware that many princes converted to Lutheranism for political rather than religious reasons, and that the formation of the Schmalkaldic League was intended to extend the independence of the German princes as well as provide military protection for Lutheranism. Only a few noted that Luther's views had a receptive audience because of the long-term growth of anti-clerical feeling in the years before 1517.

B2: The Catholic Reformation, c1540-1600

There were a few impressive answers to **Question 3**. Candidates were well-informed on the period of the Farnese papacy, and understood the extent to which Paul III took steps to correct abuses and reinvigorate the spiritual life of the Church. Most mentioned the Consilium, though some were unsure about its decisions and significance, but the significance of Carafa's role was understood, especially in the creation of the Roman Inquisition. The best answers noted that Paul's most important decisions were his authorization of the Jesuits and the decision to summon the Council of Trent. Other factors addressed included the role of the humanists, but again candidates were not always clear about their significance in creating a climate conducive to moderate reform. New religious orders such as the Capuchins and the Ursulines did not always receive the credit which is their due.

Candidates were not, overall, as well-informed about the Jesuits (**Question 4**). Many answers described the foundation of the order by Ignatius Loyola, its authorization by Paul III, and the high levels of personal discipline and education demanded of its members. The work of Peter Canisius in Germany was mentioned, including the close links developed with succeeding emperors and important noble houses. Few mentioned the vital work carried out by the Jesuits in maintaining the strength of the

Catholic Church in Poland, which had almost completely returned to the church by 1600. Most mentioned Francis Xavier's missionary work in Japan, though its significance in the counter-attack on European Protestantism was not established - nor, perhaps, can it be. Future candidates might be advised to consider other reasons for the success of the Counter Reformation. Paul III had begun a reform programme which was carried on by his successors, notably Pius V. It is also significant that Protestantism had divided into different groups, including the followers of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, and the English Anglican church; these divisions weakened their effectiveness against a resurgent Catholicism.

B3: The Revolt of the Netherlands, 1559-1609

There was only a very small number of answers to **Questions 5 and 6**. Several of these impressed with their general grasp of the chronology of a complicated series of events. For **Question 5** Parma's military skills were usually well known, unlike his diplomatic talents. Some answers were able to explore the reasons for the rebels' problems and failures, and tried to judge the extent to which these were due to Parma's activities.

The given factor in **Question 6** was dealt with in a fairly general way, with few knowing the precise dates of various bankruptcies and mutinies. Other factors were presented to explain a Spanish failure, with much credit given to Maurice of Nassau, Philip's distractions elsewhere, and foreign intervention. Many answers made a creditable attempt at a comparative analysis.

B4: The European Witchcraze, c1580-c1650

There was a noticeable tendency for candidates to use the same material in answer to both questions. For example, in considering reasons for the outbreak of the witchcraze (**Question 7**) candidates wrote on matters such as the impact of wars, religious, economic and social change, and the impact of climate change on the harvests. Exactly the same points were made by other candidates in answer to **Question 8**, on reasons for the varying levels of persecution in different parts of Europe. Future candidates need to be aware that, while some material might be relevant to both the origins and the development of the witchcraze, each question set does have a different focus.

Some candidates struggled to understand just what 'disruptions to the patterns of everyday life' was referring to in **Question 7**. A few illustrated this point by referring to the case studies of one or two individuals, and concluded that their actions had disrupted everyday life in their particular village. Such material could not be used effectively in illustrating the wider witchcraze. Better answers noted a number of factors which were influencing everyday life, such as economic change, notably the decline of living standards in many parts of Europe; and the important disruption caused by religious change in the years before c1580, though few were able to give substance to this point. Other relevant points were often well developed, including the spread of information, whether through books or sermons, and the growth of the stereotypical view of the witch. However, many candidates presented a whole range of other factors, and some seemed determined to include everything they have learned. Some factors were given very extensive coverage, which worked to the detriment of analysis of the whole question and to an effective consideration of other factors. A number of candidates rely very heavily on the viewpoints and quotations from several historians. These tended to be accurate, but many answers

read like a summary from a textbook. Those who did include examples developed a more secure answer.

Answers to **Question 8** were, on the whole, slightly better. Candidates focused well on the variations in the level of witch persecution, illustrating their points with some detailed information. The changes in the European legal systems were addressed, notably the development of the inquisitorial system, the legal use of torture, and the introduction of the Carolina in 1532. High level answers noted that the intense persecution in certain regions at certain times was often down to the role of an individual such as James VI in Scotland, Matthew Hopkins in East Anglia, Christian IV in Denmark, and the notorious Balthasar Nuss in Fulda. A few noted that some individuals were important in reducing the witchcraze, most notably Queen Christina of Sweden.

B5: Conflict and Conquest in Ireland, 1598-1692

Almost all of the small candidature for Option B5 answered **Question 9**. Most answers began at Yellow Ford in 1598, noting that Tyrone had inflicted a devastating defeat on the English, and that his rising was turning into a formidable threat. More might have been made of the disastrous interlude when Essex commanded English forces, but candidates were aware of the significance of Mountjoy's appointment, and the successful strategy which he followed. Several glossed over the real threat posed to Elizabeth I's power by the landing of the Spanish expedition at Kinsale in 1601; a successful link-up with Tyrone's forces would have created an army difficult to defeat in open battle. Answers overall were able to describe the important features of Tyrone's rebellion, while at the highest levels were those who were able to evaluate how serious his threat to English rule was, and how that threat changed over time. Examiners reported that the small number of answers seen were well written and clear in their analysis.

B6: The Thirty Years War, 1618-60

There was a small entry for Option B6, and almost all of these answered **Question 11**. Candidates tended to agree with the given factor and produced a number of reasons with varying levels of detail and analysis. They recognized the military superiority of the Catholic Habsburgs, mainly provided by their generals and or by the sheer support available to the Habsburgs in comparison to the protestants. Only a few mentioned Mansfeld's command of what remained of Protestant forces after the White Mountain in 1620. On the other hand, the contribution made by both Tilly and Wallenstein to the Habsburg cause was explained well.

B7: The Restoration Monarchy, 1660-89

Answers to **Question 13** showed some knowledge of only a few of the provisions which were made in the Declaration of Breda and the subsequent Restoration Settlement. This limited candidates' ability to assess the question and to get beyond the Level Three range of marks. Most did appreciate that there were early attempts to try to make the settlement work, but that opposing views were too entrenched. Only a few investigated the relationship between Crown and Parliament which developed in the years after 1660.

The few candidates who answered **Question 14** were usually able to give examples of James II's insensitivity in promoting the Catholic interest, but the overall impression of candidates' responses was a lack of developed knowledge.

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