

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y209/01 Summer 2023 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

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Paper Y209/01 series overview

Y209 is one of twenty four units in Paper 2 for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about 100 years through a short answer essay and a traditional essay. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short answer essay and a traditional essay and candidates had to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short-answer essay question, candidates needed to consider the significance or importance of both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay, candidates needed to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. To reach the higher levels candidates needed to assess the issues they discussed and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short answer essay • reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important • linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question • discussed at least two relevant issues in depth • the supporting detail was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic • reach a supported judgement about the issue in the question • make a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way • produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response • were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question • showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay • were unable to support their response with relevant or accurate material • did not focus on the precise wording of the question • made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Which of the following was the more important factor in the rise of the Kingdom of Kongo in the period from c.1400 to c.1709?

(i) Political and administrative centralisation

(ii) Trade and commerce

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

Knowledge of both factors was reasonably developed. For part (i), candidates were aware of the significance of Mbanza Kongo in the political and administrative centralisation of the kingdom, as well as the central importance of the Mwissikongo ruling class in dominating political power. The fact that the centre effectively controlled the appointment of provincial governors was also noted as a feature of political centralisation. In relation to part (ii), candidates commented on the importance of the slave trade to the rise of the kingdom, with some responses even focusing on it to the exclusion of any other aspect of trade or commerce. European trading links, in particular those with Portugal, were also well known, particularly in relation to the slave trade. Some responses digressed when referring to Portugal by discussing the negative impact of this connection. Responses that did this tended to lose focus on the question. Responses in the higher levels also included a valid and developed judgement.

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* Assess the importance of the role of the *Alafin*/King in Oyo and Dahomey.

[20]

Responses to this question were mixed, in that some examined the roles of Alafin/King in both kingdoms, often comparing them at the same time, while others focused on one and excluded the other. Responses that did the latter tended to fall into Level 3 (partially focused on the question). The most successful responses approached the question by looking at the role of Alafin/King in separate spheres: governance, religion and economy. This allowed for a more comprehensive coverage. Factors discussed included the circumscribed nature of the Alafin's power due to the prominence of the Oyo Mesi; the absolute power of the King of Dahomey; and the spiritual foundation of the Alafin's power. Other factors were highlighted to argue that the Alafin/King was less important. These included the internal conflict in Oyo involving the Oyo Mesi and the role of trade and commerce in assisting the rise of each kingdom. Responses in the higher levels included more detailed explanation of factors together with a valid judgement.

Exemplar 1

In Oyo and Dahomey the king played an important role, economically, spiritually and military. In Oyo the king was the Alayin, whereas in Dahomey the head of state was the dudu. Considering the whole period of the Kingdom of Oyo and Dahomey it is clear that the most important role of Dahomey the Alayin/King in Oyo and Dahomey was ~~spiritually~~ Military.

One important role of the Alayin ~~was~~ was ~~military~~ ~~exp~~ economic and trade ~~part~~.

For example in 1790 a trade was signed between Agaji (Dahomey) and the Alayin Ojigi. This allowed for endless trade between the two Kingdoms allowing slaves to be ~~imported~~ exported from ports such as Ouidah. There's also the fact that in 1757, Tegbesu, the dudu of Dahomey made a trade deal with the Dutch for ~~export of slaves~~ for the slave trade. This shows a important

role of kings in Oyo and Dahomey was securing economic and trade agreements with other countries. However it could be argued that it wasn't the biggest factor because the Alayin delegated many of his palace and administrative chiefs to negotiate with European Chiefs. For

example under Alayin Ojigi, he created titles for members for trade, agriculture and army. Showing that much of the economic decisions were made by his representatives rather than the Alayin. As a result it's not the most important role because initially the Alayin was used in its ~~decision~~ ~~for~~ the Benyodon's economic policy, however later on it was delegated to individuals in the palace.

Another role of the Alayin of Oyo and Dahomey was spiritual and developing cults. For example under Alayin Akpa, he created the cult Egungun, which was in honour ancestors. Furthermore under Agayin he created the Sango cult. This shows that spiritually the Alayin had an important role spiritually in both Oyo and Dahomey with the creation of cults, which allowed them to have a loyal following and consolidating their power. We also hear the fact that the Alayin had divine power, having prayers for themselves and life - life, meaning that they had religious authority over their people. This is seen by the fact of the festivals in Oyo. For example in here was the Mole festival in honour of the Alayin deity's, and the Bere festival where tribute was collected by ~~the~~ ^{the} provinces. This

It further reinforces the fact that especially the Alajin had a role of creating a perception of being divine. However it could be argued that the spiritual role was less important later on in the Kingdom. For example their was the ~~very~~ injection of Islamic movements into Oyo from the Sokoto Caliphate in 1804. For example in 1823, the Sokoto Caliphate under Usman dan Fodio captured Ilorin. This shows later in the Kingdom's history the role of the Alajin became less spiritual due to people's adoption of Islam, and had to take a larger role of military in order to defend the Kingdom from the Sokoto Islamic movement.

The most important role of the Alajin was military. For example under Agaja, Dahomey expanded its territory by capturing Abada in 1724 and Whydah in 1727. Similarly in Oyo, military played an important role, with the Alajin using Calray to attack Abada in 1698 and later Dahomey in 1728 under the Alajin Ojigbo. There's also the fact that in 1764, a coalition between Dahomey, the Alajin attacked Abante. This shows that the Alajin and King played an important military role heading the Calray or armies to gain territory. However

It could be argued that it wasn't the main role ~~because~~ of the King or Alpin because without the spiritual authority they had, the no one would have joined the campaign. As a result it could be argued that the Alpin most important role was spiritual, which allowed him to extend to a military role. Overall, ~~it was the military role~~ ~~the most~~ ~~important role~~ ~~because~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~case~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Alpin's~~ ~~spiritual~~ ~~authority~~ ~~decreasing~~, ~~while~~ ~~his~~ ~~military~~ ~~expedition~~ ~~continued~~, it shows that military was the most important.

Overall, military was the most important role of the Alpin, however it could be argued at the start of the Kingdom spiritual role was the most important. This is because at the beginning, military role and the ability to use an army depending on the Alpin's spiritual and spiritual authority. However, out of economic, ~~an~~ ~~spiritual~~ ~~service~~ and military, the military role of the Alpin was consistent, whereas other roles were reduced due to delegation to palace officers and ~~lack of~~ ~~direct~~ ~~control~~ ~~over~~ ~~the~~ ~~kingdom~~. Islamic regimes ~~have~~ ~~replied~~

replacing indigenous Agunin beliefs from Yorubaland. It also must be said that military roles were also present in both Oyo and Dahomey, whereas economically Dahomey lost economic sovereignty in 1728 ~~and~~ therefore due to being ~~to~~ the role of the Alayan ~~and~~ the Dada of Dahomey, as well as being consistent the role of the Alayan throughout the period, military was the biggest factor.

This is an example of a Level 5 response for Question 1 (b). It includes reasonably detailed explanations of some of the relevant factors together with a judgement in the conclusion. This was given Level 5: 14 marks.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Which of the following contributed more to the rise of Oyo and Dahomey?

- (i) Military factors
- (ii) Individual rulers

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

Candidates tended to argue that part (i) military factors contributed more to the rise of Oyo and Dahomey, and there was certainly more detailed knowledge of part (i) than part (ii) individual rulers. Candidates knew of the importance of cavalry in relation to part (i), as well as the role of cavalry when combined with infantry and archers. Candidates also knew of Dahomey's well-disciplined standing army, its recruitment of young boys as apprentices, and its use of weaponry acquired through trade with Europeans. Some referred to the Dahomey Amazons as a unique feature of its military. For part (ii), stronger responses provided detailed knowledge of the achievements of such ruler as Agaja and Tegbesu of Dahomey, and Abiodun of Oyo. In some responses, candidates interpreted 'individual rulers' as references to the office of Alafin/King. Knowledge in these responses tended to be broader and more abstract, referring to the role of that office in governance and military affairs. These responses tended to be more imbalanced and so didn't usually score as highly as responses that looked at named individual rulers. Responses in the higher levels included a valid and developed judgement.

Exemplar 2

Oyo and Dahomey were two African kingdoms who shared borders and were even a vassal state of the other. Despite their geographical proximity, both had unique military structures and rulers. Nevertheless, in both cases, the military factors were more important for the rise of Oyo and Dahomey.

Military factors were the most important contributing factors for the rise of Oyo and Dahomey. This was because their unique militaries allowed them to protect their existing territories and even subjugate new ones. In the case of Dahomey, through their relationship with the Europeans, their military had gunpowder weapons. This allowed them to repel forces with more medieval weaponry, such as Oyo itself when it attempted to invade Dahomey with its cavalry. The sound of gunshots frightened the horses, ~~allowing~~ who flung their riders in the air, causing some to be trampled. This would have allowed Dahomey to rise given its relative technological advancements would deter small tribes from contesting power, but also other African militaries. ~~In contrast~~ Oyo's contrasting military

structure afforded itself the same protection however it was even more contributory to the rise of Oyo. This was because despite Dahomey's gunpowder tactic working initially, Oyo's ~~superior~~ numerically superior cavalry based army was able to subjugate Dahomey, integrating it into Oyo's vassalage system. This was significant itself in allowing Oyo to rise, as the tributary and tax paid by Dahomey allowed Oyo to fund further military conquest, growing to a peak in territory that Dahomey would never see. Military factors were more important to both kingdoms than individual rulers because although policies shifted under different rulers, the unique military structures of each ~~and~~ kingdom remained a constant and allowed both to contest and consolidate power. Therefore military structures were more contributory to the rise of Oyo and Dahomey.

Although the role of individual rulers did not contribute as much ~~there~~ to the rise of O & D, it is still convincing to say that there was some contribution. In Oyo, there was the Alafin, a mainly ceremonial power who symbolised great

wealth and spirituality. In Dahomey, there was the Ahasu, who wielded significant tangible powers and was the head of the power structure. These Teybessou can be attributed to have contributed to the economic rise of Dahomey, as it was under them that Dahomey increased the slave trade - Teybessou themselves earned a revenue of £250,000. This was then funded into the development of imperial capitals like Abome and Allada, increasing the global prominence of Dahomey and contributing to its rise. Similarly however, in Oyo the Alafin did not wield much power apart from what was ceremonial and so individual rulers like Alafin Agaja would have been negligible. This is because the power structure in Oyo varies to Dahomey, with the Alafin being accountable to the Oyo Meshi (a collection of seven provincial rulers including the Basorun) and the Ogboni (alligiers body). This meant that policies including the military were largely decided by the Oyo Meshi and individual rulers in Oyo had limited contribution to the rise. Therefore it can only be argued that the role

of individual rulers only had an important contribution to Dahomey's rise, and that the effects were limited in Oyo. This is why the military remained the more contributory factor, as despite limitations to the ruler in Oyo, the military still allowed it to rise to tremendous heights. The military remained a constant overpowering force for both kingdoms and therefore was the more important factor out of the two.

In conclusion, although it can be argued that military factors and individual rulers contributed to the rise of Dahomey and Oyo, individual rulers were limited in Oyo and so had a greater contribution in Dahomey. The military was also more important in both cases given it allowed every ruler to contest and consolidate their power and cause their kingdom to rise.

This is an example of a Level 6 response for Question 2 (a). It includes detailed knowledge of both factors, together with a valid judgement. This was given Level 6: 10 marks.

Question 2 (b)***(b)*** How important were economic factors in the decline of Benin?**[20]**

Candidates generally demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of economic factors in relation to Benin's decline. In particular, candidates focused on the impact of the declining cloth trade with Europe, as a cheaper alternative found in India was favoured. Similarly, trade in ivory gradually declined as stocks dropped. Candidates knew that Benin came to rely on certain exports like palm oil which limited the development of its economy. Other factors discussed included the succession crisis of 1608 which precipitated a succession of fairly weak Obas, and the civil war of the following century which had a similarly destabilising effect. These factors undermined the status of the Obo within the kingdom. Candidates also referred to external threats to the kingdom. Responses in the higher levels included more detailed explanation of factors together with a valid judgement.

Exemplar 3

Economic factors were an important exacerbating factor of the decline of Benin in the 17th and 18th century, but was not however the greatest factor.

Q2a Bureaucratic changes and the rise of the Iyase after the reign of Echengbuda was the most important factor, being an underlying cause for the decline in power ~~of~~ ^{and} centralisation of the Oba. Succession disputes were a less important underlying factor, particularly in the 17th century. Thus, ~~A~~ ^{the} bureaucratic changes and the rise of the Iyase was the greatest in its decline.

Economic factors accelerated and exacerbated the extent of the decline of Benin with shifting trade patterns and the rise of the slave trade. For example, in the 1630s, changing trade meant there was a significant shift from Benin peppers and ivory, both of which the Oba held a monopoly over, to goods in the ~~free~~ ^{free} market such as cloth. This contributed to the decentralisation of Benin as rather than being taxed by the Oba and income centralised around the capital Edo, it reinforced the economic autonomy of the outer provinces rather than Benin proper, leading to the decline of Benin as a highly ~~of~~ centralised power with provinces such as Ilesikiri now trading ~~independently~~ independently with

the Portuguese. Shifting trade in the 1680s was also a reason in the overall decline of Benin. For example, this was when there was a decline in the cloth trade, with Benin as a whole losing its monopoly on cloth as it could not compete with Dutch cloth. This made Benin relatively weaker to neighbouring states participating greatly in the slave trade that Benin had an embargo against to the extent of 40,000 slaves exported annually from the region from 1600 - 1750. This led to growth of empires in Igbo and access to firearms in Oyo and Allada, a contributing factor to Benin's decline as it could not defend itself against these rising powers, shown by war over Gwaton in 1690s. Thus, as the changing trade made Benin economically weaker, it was important in its decline. However, this was only a factor in exacerbating the extent of decline as it was due to other reasons Benin was already weakened so was why it could not adapt to these economic changes. For example, Benin attempted to profit off the slave trade to avert its relative decline selling war captives in Gwaton in 1726. However, this should have been successful as it was in the context of the sugar revolution in Barbados increasing the price of slaves by 200%. However, Benin had already

declined to such an extent that it was unable to successfully join the market. Thus, economic factors were only important in amplifying the degree of the decline, with other more significant factors.

Bureaucratic developments and the rise of the Iyase were the greatest reason, with the declining centralisation and authority of the Oba the greatest reason for Benin's underlying and long-term weakness. For example, the decline can be ~~trace~~ traced to Eshengbuda who dying in 1606 ended the warrior king period of Benin's height since Ewuare I left. This was due to the delegation of military command away from the Oba to the military provincial leader the Iyase. This was important in decline as it reduced the incentive for the Oba to commit to expansion as it brought not ~~per~~ no personal military glory, explaining the lack of exhibitions or conquest after 1606. Also, it led to a political imbalance in Benin as the Iyase's role leading provincial troops was a position that led to rise to coups and as an alternative leader to the Oba. This can be seen with Iyase Oyinga and Ode, the latter who sacked Ido during the reign of Ewakupe from 1700 - 1712. Thus, as the Iyase challenged the authority

of the Oba, it was central in its decline. It could be argued that bureaucratic changes was most important in the declining power of the Oba. This can be seen with the rise of the administration, for example, in 1650 they reportedly blamed the judgement of the Oba, as the Oba Afo Akhpage was deposed for attempting to challenge this. Together with the rise of the Igbo, this eroded the central power and spiritual claim to the power of over life and death over his ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~stop~~ subjects held by the Oba. As this was an underlying cause of the instability of the 17th century, it was important in decline. However, it is true that there were attempts at ~~new~~ revival under Oba Ewalepe who challenged the role of the administration and recentralised Benin in 1712. Also, this factor was contributed too by shifting trade as the rise of cloth in the 1680s enriched the lower administration at the ~~extra~~ expense of the Oba. ~~to~~ Nevertheless, as the cause of the decline is rooted in Erenbuda's decisions in the 1600s, it is the greatest long-run factor in decline.

Succession disputes and civil wars was also an important underlying factor, but was not the greatest. It was most important in the 17th century with the death of Oba

Oluwa in 1608. As he had no heirs or brothers, this broke the line of primogeniture that the Obas claimed linked them to the Prince Orangiyun, cementing them as near divine beings, the partial reincarnation of the ancestors, a base for their legitimacy as rulers shown by the festival Ugie Eku Oba. As a result, the end of his led to civil war and a series of short reigns in the 17th century. As these internal disputes ended Benin as an expansionist power and weakened Benin economically, it was an important reason for decline. However, it could be said to be less of a reason out of the 17th century. For example, despite his father abdicating so he could not inherit the spiritual role of Oba, Ewuampe from 1700 to 1712 was successful in establishing a new line of primogeniture, ~~with~~ with new laws to help introduce a more orderly succession, limiting the number of disputes after his reign. Nevertheless, this was also immediately unsuccessful with the civil war between his son Ahenkpage who overthrew his brother Ozwoe in 1713. Thus, this shows to a degree disputes persisted, weakening Benin so contributing to decline. However, it was not the greatest as it was the decline in authority of the Oba

that caused these succession disputes. ~~For~~ For example, the rise of the bureaucracy added to the extent of them announcing the death of the Oba. As this reduced the personal authority of the Oba and his heir in deciding the terms of succession, it led to a decrease in authority of the Oba, such as of his will in deciding his heirs or the power of the Edaiken (crown prince). As this occurred before 1700, with Egbada removing the Obas' power to remove or kill members of the administration, this occurred before the disputes so was this the greatest factor.

In conclusion, ~~the~~ economic factors were somewhat important in exacerbating the extent of Benin's decline. It was less important than succession disputes and the rise of the bureaucracy and the ease in decentralising the power of the Oba.

Overall, the latter was the most significant ~~as~~ as it was the greatest long-term factor.

This is an example of a Level 6 response for Question 2 (b). It includes detailed explanation of relevant factors, evaluation of the relative importance of some of these factors and a valid judgement. This was given Level 6: 17 marks.

Assessment for learning



In relation to part (b), judgement is needed in order to reach the higher levels. A judgement provides a valid explanation as to why a factor is more or less important. It is not simply an assertion stating that a particular factor is the most important one.

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