



A-level
History

7042/2D

Report on the Examination

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Question 01

The source question set the task of assessing three sources' value in relation to the Dissolution of the Monasteries. This is a popular and well-known topic. The three sources were generally found to be accessible, and most students seized the opportunity to exhibit their contextual knowledge.

Source A was an extract from the Royal Visitation to five religious houses in Yorkshire in 1536, which uncovered evidence of wealth and superstition in these monasteries. The vast majority of students made the connection between the inspection and the Dissolution's financial and spiritual motivations. Many answers discussed the evangelical agenda of the Vicegerent in Spirituals, Thomas Cromwell, whose agents facilitated the Dissolution by compiling the *Comperta Monastica*. Cromwell also oversaw the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, the financial survey carried out in 1535, which supports the idea that the Dissolution was financially motivated. It is true that Henry VIII needed money – but why? Some answers referred vaguely to 'the war with France,' seemingly unaware that no war was fought between the Kings of England and France in the 1530s. Higher marks were scored by those who showed precise knowledge of the King's need to defend the realm against the Catholic powers and his martial aspirations, as evidenced by the Third French War of 1544-6.

Of the three sources, Source B, an extract from the Act for the Dissolution of the Lesser Monasteries (1536), caused the most confusion. The Act's statement in support of the 'great' monasteries where 'religion is right well-kept and observed' led a significant number of students to assume that it was written by opponents of the Dissolution – even by monks themselves. Others, aware that it was from a statute, made the mistake of taking the source at face value. Comments along the lines of 'it is an Act of Parliament, so it must be accurate and reliable' were common. A more persuasive reading of the source is as propaganda. The Act emphasised the King's commitment to 'the glory and honour of God and to the total destruction of vice and sin.' It presents the suppression of the smaller monasteries as a necessary reform measure. The MPs, shocked by the lurid accounts of monastic misdemeanours in the 'Black Book,' passed the legislation. Thus, the source is chiefly valuable for showing the way in which the Dissolution was justified to the political nation. It is limited in that it does not tell us how else the King profited from the process. Moreover, since in 1536 the suppression of all the monasteries in England was not envisaged by anyone outside the Cromwellian clique, the source is limited in what it can tell us about the Dissolution as a whole. It was only after the risings, most famously the Pilgrimage of Grace, that the Crown turned against the larger monasteries. Their suppression in 1538-40 is unforeseen by this source.

Source C was from a letter written by Henry VIII to Sir Ralph Sadler, his ambassador to Scotland. The source's provenance enhances its value. In his advice to the Scots on how to carry out the dissolution of their monasteries, the King was looking back at the process as experienced in England. As such, the source gives the reader an overview of the Dissolution, from the examination of monks and nuns and the compilation of records of 'abominations' (as seen in Source A) to the collaboration with the nobility who, alongside the Crown, also benefited from the redistribution of monastic land. Many students assessed the source to be particularly valuable because it was a 'private letter' in which Henry could be entirely truthful about his motives and methods. This was an acceptable conclusion to reach. Henry gave vent to his contempt for the 'hypocrisy and superstition' of monasticism, a view which sprang from his long-held humanist beliefs. Alongside his desire to please God, Henry was also honest about the pecuniary and political advantages that the Dissolution offered the Crown. However, the extent to which Henry was being honest with Sadler (and himself) could be questioned. In the letter, the King gave the impression that the Dissolution had been effectively managed. This is misleading. The Dissolution followed a haphazard course. It aroused serious opposition, including the largest rebellion experienced in 16th-century England. Henry was writing with the benefit of hindsight, which enabled him to claim that the

process had involved ‘careful handling.’ This was not entirely true; thus, the source is not entirely valuable.

Question 02

This question focused on the Church in England in c.1529, asking whether the Church’s role in government was more important than its social role. As ever, it is important to read the question carefully. Those answers that analysed the governmental and social roles of the Church of England, ie the Church that existed after the Break with Rome, scored poorly. Although there were continuities, pre- and post-schism, in the ways in which the Church impinged on English people’s lives, it was expected that evidence would come from the pre-Reformation era.

Another truism is that, to achieve high marks, essays must exhibit wide-ranging, specific and precise knowledge. Many students were able to demonstrate some understanding of key issues, but the information that supported their analysis was generalist. Answers that were awarded marks in Levels 4 and 5 did not simply describe the liturgical year, the welfare provision of the monasteries, the importance to people of the sacraments, etc. They proved the importance to people of the Church’s social role by including precise details of, *inter alia*, the evidence of wills and the paucity of support for heresy. A similar point can be made about analysis of the Church’s role in government. Some answers merely asserted that senior clergy sat in the House of Lords and the Privy Council and gave the predictable example of Cardinal Wolsey as evidence of the clerical presence at the heart of power. This approach was fine but was unlikely to exceed Level 3. Better were those answers that supplied detailed evidence of the Church’s role in government at both local and national level. This came under threat in the late 1520s due to the ‘Great Matter’, as evidenced by the fall of Wolsey and the calling of the Reformation Parliament.

Question 03

This question required students to assess the importance of the mistakes made by the Duke of Northumberland in the failure to secure a Protestant succession in 1553. His errors were many. He attempted to subvert the succession, as set out in the Third Act of Succession and Henry’s will, with the quasi-legal ‘devyse.’ He forced the Council to proclaim his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Dudley (née Grey), as queen, but she lacked popular support. He failed to arrest and imprison Princess Mary, who fled to Norfolk, proclaimed herself queen and mobilised a huge force of supporters in the Thames Valley and East Anglia. Northumberland’s response to the Marian challenge was disastrous. He left London with an army which, outnumbered eight-to-one by Mary’s men, deserted him. His departure allowed the Privy Council to switch sides and declare for Mary. The reign of ‘Queen Jane’ lasted only nine days.

Set against Northumberland’s mistakes were other factors, including Edward’s untimely death, Mary’s actions in July 1553 and Mary’s popularity. Exactly why Mary received so much support was a question that was discussed thoroughly by knowledgeable students. Support for the Tudor dynasty certainly played a part, as did respect for her claim to be the lawful heir. Alongside ‘legalism and legitimacy’ (in Peter Marshall’s pithy phrase) was Catholicism. The Edwardian regime had succeeded in establishing a Protestant Church of England; it had failed to establish a nation of Protestants. In 1549, the Privy Councillor William Paget warned Northumberland’s predecessor, the Duke of Somerset, that the new religion was ‘not yet printed in the stomachs of eleven of twelve parts of the realm’. By 1553, little had changed. The restoration of the Mass in many parishes in July, even before a royal proclamation made it

legal, is a sure sign of support for a Counter-Reformation. As Christopher Haigh put it, Mary's triumph was 'the victory of the old religion, and... the defeat of the new.'

Question 04

This question asked students to evaluate the relative significance of Elizabeth's religious views on the development of the Church of England in the first decade of Elizabeth's reign. Some students misread the question (or misremembered the chronology) and provided detailed accounts of the Northern Rebellion of 1569. Better answers focused their analysis on the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity of 1559, the Royal Injunctions of the same year, the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 and the challenges posed to the Elizabethan Settlement in the years up to 1568, such as the Vestiarian Controversy. Aside from the given factor, students considered the importance of Elizabeth's pragmatism in the face of religious divisions, the influence of the returned Marian exiles, and the threat posed by foreign powers.

A disappointingly large number of answers demonstrated a simplistic understanding of Elizabeth's religious views, describing her as 'both Catholic and Protestant.' In extreme cases, Elizabeth was portrayed as a modern liberal whose ultimate aim was religious toleration. These answers did not score highly. Elizabeth was clearly a Protestant. She rejected papal supremacy, re-establishing the royal supremacy. She abolished the mass, reintroducing a vernacular liturgy. The English Bible was once again made available in every parish church. She banned pilgrimages and ordered the destruction of shrines. The Thirty-Nine Articles, which she adopted as her Church's official doctrine, rejected transubstantiation, purgatory and the seven sacraments.

Some confusion as to Elizabeth's religious views is understandable. Elizabeth's Protestantism was idiosyncratic. She allowed images, she positively encouraged music in church, she required her clergy to wear vestments and she only reluctantly accepted clerical marriage. Conrad Russell famously described the Elizabethan Church as one which 'looked Catholic but sounded Protestant.' Yet this ambiguity should not lead students to discount Elizabeth's commitment to Protestantism. After all, there were (and are) different versions of Protestantism. Lutherans accepted images, vestments and music, all of which were rejected by Reformed Protestants. Similarly, the Lutheran Churches retained the episcopacy, whereas the Reformed Churches adopted a presbyterian structure. Elizabeth is often said to have followed a 'middle way.' However, while this concept featured in many answers, most of the students who used the phrase meant it as a 'middle way' between Catholicism and Protestantism. A more correct understanding of Elizabeth's religious views is a 'middle way' between Lutheranism and Reformed Protestantism.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.