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# A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/2D Religious Conflict and the Church in England, c.1529-70  
Report on the Examination

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7042  
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**Q1**

The source question required students to assess the three sources' value for an historian studying responses to religious change during the reign of Mary I. The topic was found to be accessible by the vast majority. Most students made sure that they addressed the sources' provenance and tone as well as their content; however, some merely described the authorship instead of explaining how it affected the sources' value. Another feature of low-scoring answers was formulaic commentary, along the lines of 'he is a Catholic priest, so he would have been biased towards Mary's restoration of Catholicism'. While such observations show some understanding, better answers expanded on the significance of the sources' provenance, deploying contextual knowledge to good effect.

Source A, an extract from the diary of the Yorkshire parish priest Robert Parkyn, provided students with plentiful opportunities for identifying value. Parkyn's rapturous response to the repeal of Edwardian religious legislation and the punishment of those 'lustful' clergymen who had taken wives (whom he described as 'whores and concubines') elicited much comment on the popularity of the Marian revival of Catholic practices. Parkyn's reference to 'heretical persons, and there were many' was also viewed as valuable evidence of English Protestants' opposition to change, which students substantiated by describing the Marian exiles, the 'Underground Church' and the willingness of nearly 300 Protestants to accept martyrdom by burning.

Source B, a letter from Stephen Gardiner to Reginald Pole, was found to be the trickiest source of the three. Some students struggled to explain the significance of the source's provenance, other than noting that the letter's author and its recipient were leading figures in Mary's government. Better answers referred to Gardiner's support for Henry VIII's break with Rome in the 1530s and subsequent imprisonment during Edward VI's reign, recognising that his spiritual journey back to Rome ('I have returned to that state and condition which I have for a long time desired to regain') reflected the relief with which many English people greeted Mary's restoration of Catholicism. As well as regaining the Bishopric of Winchester, Gardiner served as Mary's Lord Chancellor and masterminded the progress of her religious changes through parliament. This made his reference to 'that great obstacle' extremely valuable: as Gardiner discovered in 1554, a majority in the House of Lords opposed 'any alteration in the possessions and inheritances acquired from former monastic lands'. Good answers included details of the failure of Mary's second parliament and the eventual concession by the papacy that those who had profited from the Dissolution of the Monasteries would not be expected to relinquish their lands. Thus, Source B was chiefly valuable in demonstrating that there were clear limits to the positive response to Mary's religious changes.

Source C, John Foxe's account of the famous speech made by Thomas Cranmer before his execution, was valuable for the insight it offered into Protestants' responses to the Marian campaign against them. The former Archbishop of Canterbury's execution led most students to write about the burnings that were carried out from 1555 to 1558. The source also referred to Cranmer's recantation, which was valuable as evidence of the fear that gripped Protestants in this period and the lengths some would go to avoid the fire. Source C's provenance also prompted much analysis. While a few answers focused only on the reliability of the 'anonymous bystander' whose testimony informed Foxe's account, most students were aware of Foxe and his agenda. The Book of Martyrs' publication in 1563, and its subsequent popularity, led some students to argue that the source had value as evidence of the negative response to the religious changes demanded by 'Bloody Mary'. An alternative, and more popular, argument was that Foxe's anti-Catholicism led him to exaggerate the extent to which Cranmer and the other victims of the Marian regime represented public opinion.

In general, students were able to identify the ways in which the sources were valuable for the purpose given in the question. To achieve high marks, it is also necessary to balance this by addressing the sources' limitations. As stated above, this should go beyond merely noting the bias of Robert Parkyn or John Foxe. Stronger answers referred thoughtfully to the sources' nature and purpose, as well as paying due attention to when they were written. Mary's reign was only short but, as her policies changed, her subjects' responses to the religious changes did too. One final point is that students should remember that Q1 in the depth study differs from its counterpart in the breadth study. They are not asked to evaluate how 'convincing' the source is; nor should they confuse 'value' with 'validity'.

## Q2

By far the most popular essay was this question on the break from Rome. This was unsurprising: the events of c.1529-36, including the Great Matter, the fall of Wolsey, the pressure placed on Pope Clement VII, the creation of the royal supremacy and the establishment of the Church of England, should be familiar to every student.

However, although there were some excellent answers, there were even more that failed to score high marks. The main stumbling block was the given factor of 'demands for religious change'. Many students saw this as an opportunity simply to describe the corruption of the clergy, to demonstrate their understanding of what absenteeism, nepotism and simony were, and to recount (often at great length) the various sins of Cardinal Wolsey and the tribulations of Richard Hunne. Descriptive answers fared less well than those that offered evidence of the demands made by evangelical activists (such as Tyndale and Fish) and the vocal clique of MPs who denounced the excessive power of the Church once the Reformation Parliament was called in 1529. Better still were the answers that drew a clear connection between these demands for religious change and the actual changes, enshrined in statute law by a pliant parliament, that ensued.

Most students correctly viewed other factors as more significant to the break with Rome. For all that Henry sincerely desired ecclesiastical reform (as shown by the changes he made in the 1530s and 1540s), from 1527 his focus was on procuring an annulment, marrying Anne Boleyn and securing the Tudor dynasty. Some students were unable to resist the temptation to describe in detail the dynastic insecurity that Henry undoubtedly felt, delving into the Wars of the Roses, Catherine's miscarriages, the birth of Henry Fitzroy and so on. This information is relevant, of course, but not sufficient in and of itself. The link to the break with Rome had to be made to achieve a good mark, and this analysis had to be supported by clear and specific evidence. This can be found in the increasingly aggressive moves towards the establishment of royal supremacy, including the compilation of the *Collectanea Satis Copiosa*, the charging of the clergy with *praemunire*, and the passage of the Reformation statutes. The latter, such as the Acts in Restraint of Annates, the Act in Restraint of Appeals and the Act of Supremacy, were also used by thoughtful students as evidence of Henry's other aims. The break with Rome gave Henry the 'imperial' power he craved; it also went some way to fulfilling the promise that Cromwell had made: to make his master 'the richest prince in Christendom'.

**Q3**

This question was answered less well than the other essay options. Nearly every student who opted for it was able to show understanding of factionalism and the role that factions played (or attempted to play) in the formulation of religious policy at the court of Henry VIII. The composition of the conservative and evangelical factions was well known, as were their motives. Most responses balanced this with analysis of Henry's own aims, which included foreign policy success, national unity and a secure succession. Good answers assessed the extent to which the factions were able to influence Henry; most concluded that the King, even at the end of his life, remained dominant.

Yet it was not enough to speculate on the relative power of king and courtiers; to achieve marks in Level 3 or higher, analysis needs to be supported by evidence. The years specified in the question, 1541-7, tripped up some students. Some answers were replete with details of the religious policy in the years before 1541 – the Ten Articles, the Bishops' Book, the dissolution of the monasteries, Cromwell's rise and fall – but had little to say about the 1540s. This is not to say that all the religious policies of the 1530s were irrelevant to the question. The Act of Six Articles was introduced in 1539 but it remained an important piece of legislation until its repeal in 1547, forming the basis for the conservatives' persecution of Protestant heretics. The Six Articles enabled Gardiner, Rich and Wriothesley to arrest Anne Askew, for example, and to threaten others, including Queen Catherine herself. That they did so was seen by some as evidence of the conservatives' influence on religious policy; it was argued by others that the conservatives were only able to hunt heretics because Henry allowed them to do so. Henry's devotion to transubstantiation (and other Catholic doctrines) and his wish for religious uniformity in his realm underlay the religious policies of 1541-7. The best answers to this question displayed wide-ranging knowledge of these policies, including the King's Book, the Act for the Advancement of True Religion, the abolition of chantries, and the introduction of the English Litany.

**Q4**

The challenges to the Elizabethan Church presented by Catholics and radical Protestants should be familiar to students of the English Reformation. This question required the focus to be on the 1560s, rendering irrelevant the extended descriptions offered by some students of the Marian bishops' opposition to the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity in 1559. Most responses included the Vestiarian Controversy and the Rising of the Northern Earls. Better answers went beyond these flashpoints, showing knowledge and understanding of the challenges posed to the established Church by 'Knoxians' and anabaptists on one side and recusants and 'Church Papists' on the other.

Details of the dramatic life of Mary, Queen of Scots, were included in numerous answers. Mary's role was relevant to the question: her flight across the Solway in 1568 led some northern Catholics (including the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland) to dare to dream of religious change in England. Elizabeth's imprisonment of her royal cousin was correctly viewed as a solution to this potential problem, and as one of the ways in which challenges to her Church were easily dealt with. However, although Mary's arrival in England was a catalyst of the Northern Rebellion, her importance was overstated in some answers, in which too much space was devoted to her back story. A similar lack of focus on the question was seen in answers which went well beyond the

specified timeframe. Students who wrote about the Ridolfi, Throckmorton and Babington Plots did not gain any credit for their knowledge.

Apart from demonstrating wide-ranging and precise knowledge of the threats to the Church of England, students were expected to evaluate the ease with which Elizabeth's government dealt with them. This was generally done well, with the consensus being that Elizabeth and her councillors were successful in their handling of religious challenges. Catholics were kept under control through a mixture of carrots (e.g. those who refused to swear the Oath of Supremacy were not prosecuted) and sticks (hundreds of participants in the Rising of the North were executed). As for the Protestant challenge, the Book of Advertisements may not have had the desired effect of ending non-conformist attacks on ecclesiastical practices, but Elizabeth showed typical cunning in withholding her official assent and ensured that the Bishops bore the burden of enforcing discipline. The strongest answers demonstrated conceptual understanding, emphasising Elizabeth's pragmatism, which was in evidence not only in the government's short-term response to challenges but also in the Religious Settlement she had created. The Elizabethan Settlement was acceptable to most English people, which meant that challenges were not widespread and could be easily contained. Ultimately, the clearest evidence of Elizabeth's success is that, unlike the Henrician Church of England and Mary's Counter-Reformation, her Church endured.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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