



A-LEVEL HISTORY

7042/1A The Age of the Crusades c1071 - 1204
Report on the Examination

7042/1A
June 2023

Version: 1.0

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General

As usual, the students sitting this examination were generally well prepared and had revised thoroughly. This meant that the vast majority were able to answer three questions and to manage their time effectively. Some students chose to write their essays first, which is perfectly acceptable, they just need to label their answers clearly and leave space at the end of each answer for the examiner comments. Legibility was an issue in some answers, which does make the assessment of extended written answers more difficult, as does the use of multiple asterisks and writing answers in the sections of the answer booklet outside of the lined sections.

Most students appreciated that this paper is assessing breadth topics and so tried to utilise a wide range of examples in their answers. Students who ignored this element and restricted their answers to a narrow period would clearly be limited in the marks they could achieve, even if they knew lots of facts. It is important that students answer the question they have been asked, rather than changing the question to something else.

Question 01

With this question, students were required to evaluate three separate extracts in relation to an issue – the situation in Outremer by 1187. They were not asked to compare the given extracts, nor evaluate their provenance and bias. Those that did this wasted valuable time, although they were not penalised for so doing. The answer did not require an introduction –nor an overall conclusion, but some concluding judgement on each extract in relation to the question posed was helpful to meet the criteria for the highest marks. The most obvious differentiator between student answers to this question lay in the ability to identify and address the overall argument raised by each extract. Some students adopted a line-by-line approach, which neither showed any overall understanding, nor kept the answer focused on the question demands. For the benefit of those preparing students for a future examination, it might be worth reiterating the importance of first considering the topic to be addressed (which follows the ‘in relation to...’ in the question) and then assimilating the whole extract before starting to write. Students should be reminded that the key argument of an extract does not necessarily appear in the first line.

Extract A posed the most difficulty for students. The argument in relation to the question here was that Outremer was doomed to fail, especially after the Second Crusade as the structure of Outremer meant there was an overreliance upon the West. Good answers were able to discuss how this is convincing because, for example, there was a marked decline in help coming from Europe in the 1150s-1180s, and many papal requests were ignored. However, students taking a line-by-line approach tended to get distracted from the issue in the question and began discussing the Second Crusade, essentially just ‘fact checking’ points from the extracts, and thus losing focus on what the question had asked them to do. B and C were more manageable for students and there was some good assessment of the arguments presented here.

This question does ask students to consider possible limitations to the arguments. However, it is entirely possible that one, or maybe even two, of the extracts provided might be deemed very convincing. Some capable students wasted time trying to develop a limitation to every single extract, even though some of their reasoning was quite tenuous. For example, in Extract B Morton argues that Jerusalem’s military might was strong. Some students decided that this was unconvincing because there was factional infighting. However, this is not a valid point as military might and factionalism are separate issues and Morton himself admits that there was infighting. Again, it was the line-by-line approach that tended to lead to less effective answers. ‘Balance’ will be achieved across the whole answer, so students should feel confident about deciding that an extract is ‘very convincing’ if that is what their contextual own knowledge is suggesting to them.

Question 02

This was the most popular essay question and students were quite confident in talking about the build up to the First Crusade, Alexius' letter and the reasons why Pope Urban might have wanted to respond to this. It was hoped that students might consider other Western interventions in the Near East (such as the proposed Papal army of Gregory VII or the activities of the Count of Flanders), but many students just wrote about the First Crusade. This was acceptable, so long as students ensured that they had provided relevant material from the period before 1095/96- otherwise their answers lacked scope and range. Effective answers were able to consider how the situation in Byzantium deteriorated between Manzikert (1071) and Alexius' request for help (1095) and how the relationship between East and West developed in this period. Many students balanced their answers by considering other reasons for crusading, which was relevant, though some answers became overly focused upon events which happened on the crusade, so focus was straying from motives here.

Question 03

Some students found the comparative aspect of this question difficult and essentially just wrote two summaries of the 1120s and the 1140s. The best answers tackled the question thematically and directly compared issues over time (eg the extent to which the Muslim world was a threat in the 1120s vs 1149). Knowledge of the 1120s was quite good, 1149 was less well tackled. Some answers just described the Second Crusade and what happened to the French and German armies, without really considering how this affected Outremer by 1149. The best answers were able to explain how Nureddin's victory at Inab was critical. Some students became rather distracted by the reigns of Fulk and Melisende, which was not really relevant, unless specifically linked to the situation by 1149 (eg Fulk's castle-building in the South of Jerusalem might be relevant here).

Question 04

This was a popular essay question and many students knew a pleasing amount about Nureddin's career and were able to write confidently about events from across the time period in the question. Some students tended to adopt quite a chronological approach, with analysis of motive being rather unconvincing. Better answers took a thematic approach and could explain why they thought that a specific event or action showed a particular motive for Nureddin. Some students showed a highly nuanced understanding of what waging a jihad might look like, for example suggesting that Nureddin's intervention in Egypt was partly religiously motivated as he disliked the Shia Caliphate, believing them to be Islamic heretics. Nureddin was the first of the Turkish warlords to emphasise his Muslim status rather than his Turkish ethnicity, which enabled him to begin uniting the Muslim world in a way that his predecessors had struggled with and the best answers were able to discuss these ideas with confidence.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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