

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y302/01 Summer 2024 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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper Y302/01 series overview

Y302 is one of 21 units for Paper 3 of the A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of at least one hundred years through an interpretation question on a named in-depth topic and through two essays.

The paper is divided into two sections. In Section A candidates are required to use contextual knowledge to test the views of two historians about one of the three named in-depth topics or an aspect of one. The question does not require them to comment on the style of writing or the provenance of the interpretation.

In Section B candidates are required to answer two essay questions from a choice of three.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> showed a clear understanding of the views of the two interpretations in relation to the question were able to use contextual knowledge to test the interpretations, linking that knowledge directly to the interpretation through evaluative words were able to consider the strengths and limitations of both Interpretations using contextual knowledge covered the whole period in a balanced way adopted a thematic approach make links and comparisons between aspects of the topic explain the links and comparisons support their arguments with precise and relevant examples reach a supported judgement about the issue in the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> showed a limited understanding of one or both of the Interpretations did not go beyond a basic explanation of the Interpretation. did not link contextual knowledge directly to the Interpretation and therefore did not evaluate the Interpretation. adopted a chronological rather than thematic approach. did not make links or comparisons, even if events from different parts of the period were discussed in the same paragraph. did not cover the whole period. did not focus on the precise wording of the question. did not use specific and relevant evidence made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions.

Section A overview

There is one compulsory question in this section. This question requires candidates to explain the view of each interpretation in relation to the question and then evaluate the interpretation by the application of contextual knowledge. Responses should show an understanding of the wider debate connected to the issue.

Section A in Paper Y302 is focused on the development of York under the Vikings.

Question 1

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages.

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the development of York under the Vikings. [30]

Almost all candidates were able to correctly identify and explain the debate reflected in the passages, with Passage A suggesting that limited development of York occurred under the Vikings, and Passage B suggesting that significant development occurred. The vast majority of candidates found little to agree with in Passage A, and this was a perfectly valid approach, with stronger candidates able to use specific evidence to challenge some of the claims in the passage. Some candidates were able to support Passage A's claim that 'the Vikings may have contributed to the urban community but are unlikely to have created it' with knowledge of the existing Roman and Saxon city, and the integration of Viking culture that occurred. Most candidates found much to agree with in Passage B and were able to support the arguments about the impact of trade with knowledge of the variety of objects and treasures found in York as a result of Viking trading, such as silk.

Weaker responses simply explained the passages, without providing specific evidence either in support of them or to challenge them. Some responses were unbalanced, focusing mostly on one passage. It should also be noted that any evidence used should be linked to the question and the passages – some candidates used examples from, or wrote at length about, settlements other than York in their answer, and this could not be credited unless directly linked to the question.

In the exemplar provided, the candidate has clearly used detailed evidence to support the claims made in Passage B. The candidate is very well focused on the question, using evaluative language, clearly signposting at the end of each paragraph how they are addressing the question. They reach a reasonable judgement.

The exemplar response is Level 6 standard due to the detailed knowledge shown and clear focus on the question. It did not achieve full marks as there was still some slight imbalance between the treatment of the passages.

Assessment for learning



Remind candidates that evidence used must be relevant to the question and clearly linked to points made in the passages. For example, in this question, evidence should have focused on the settlement in York as opposed to settlements elsewhere.

Assessment for learning



Candidates can challenge the view in the passage as well as support it. As long as candidates clearly identify the claim they wish to challenge, and provide valid evidence to do so, this is a valid approach. For this question, many candidates successfully disagreed with the view presented in Passage A.

Exemplar 1

		In contrast to source A one point made by
		source B is that York was a "well-organised
		townscape". Implying that the Vikings allowed for
		York to thrive and develop under their
		control. This can be seen in the names of streets
		like Coppergate, as mentioned earlier. Allowing
		for the identification of small manufacturing

areas for goods. As the name would imply coppergate was responsible for metal work in particular copper goods. On top of this many houses in York were able to develop due to the money being brought in by the Vikings. With many houses being developed into 2-3 story houses, suggesting that the population of York grew under the Vikings not just the economy. Therefore I would argue that passage B correctly identifies the impact the Vikings had on the organisation of York allowing for ~~social~~ social and economic ~~growth~~ development.

On top of the construction of these 2-3 story houses the Vikings also rebuilt the walls left by the Roman Empire. Allowing for tighter control of who or what entered the city, and therefore tighter control on trade tariffs - better than previous Anglo Saxon ones.

Another point made by passage B is that trade links under the Vikings grew greatly, stating key links to Ireland, the eastern Mediterranean and also the Islamic world. Suggesting that under the Vikings trade developed beyond anything seen at this time. This is extremely clear by what goods were traded and discovered in York. For example amber and hides from Scandinavia have been found in York suggesting close

close ties with the Norse and Danes, which will have been reinforced in 1016 when Cnut incorporated England into the North Sea Empire. Furthermore the discovery of an ornamental horn^{sp} made from the ivory of an elephant tusk shows the vast trade links created by the Vikings. These luxury goods ~~found~~ that were not available in England truly show the links that the Viking introduction allowed York to develop economically, but also politically, as trade with these foreign countries strengthened relations.

~~to~~, in York itself,

Another argument made by the ~~the~~ passage B is that both minting and manufacturing grew under the Vikings. The growth of manufacturing can be seen in ~~the~~ silver and copper brooches made in York using Viking styles such as Ringvike or Urnes. But also with traditional pagan gods on such as the hammer mjolnir. Minting also developed under the Vikings with coins being minted throughout the city of York to add to the ~~the~~ economy brought to York by the Vikings. The minting of coins also allowed for the Vikings to control the wealth/economy of York as it was used to ~~control~~ gain control politically and economically. Similar to Cnut printing coins stating

Cnut king of England, to not just control the economy, but send a message politically - obviously the minting of coins in York was not to this scale with money fueling their war into hoards. ~~It~~ Therefore showing that passage B correctly portrays the effect that minting coins had on the development of York through the means of both economic and political control.

In conclusion both sources make a clear argument as to what they believe is the extent the Vikings developed York. However, passage A underplays the impact the Vikings had on the development both socially and ~~politically~~ economically, by making out to be that York ~~wasn't as important as~~ was ~~wasn't as~~ was just another city the Vikings occupied. Whereas passage B correctly shows the importance of trade links and the development of the city and how the Vikings allowed for this development to occur.

Section B overview

Candidates are required to answer two questions from a choice of three. To do well on Section B candidates need to make connections and links across the whole period of their study. They should explain similarities and differences between the events they are discussing to show an awareness of continuity and change across the whole period, unless instructed otherwise. The comparisons may be made across the period within the topic or between regions, depending on the topic. It is also important that the comparisons are explained - what is similar or different between the periods or regions.

The strongest answers will test a hypothesis and reach a supported judgement.

Question 2*

- 2* 'Throughout the period from c.790 to 1066, accession to the throne and personal power in Viking society was determined by personal wealth.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This was the least popular question of the three essays and elicited a range of responses from candidates. In order to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme, candidates were expected to compare personal wealth with other themes that may have contributed to accession to the throne or the growth of personal power, such as family links and heritage, or strength in battle.

The strongest responses considered a range of themes, and often concluded that personal wealth was linked to all other themes, as ruling families were often wealthy, and success in battle both required wealth to be successful and resulted in greater wealth. Some candidates took a theme-by-theme approach, providing examples from across the time period to illustrate each. Some candidates took a geographical approach, considering regional differences in how the rulers of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway came to power, as well as Viking rulers in other parts of Europe. Either approach was valid in order to show synthesis, providing candidates used a range of examples from across the period as a whole.

Weaker responses were often very vague/general, with candidates unable to call on specific examples to support their arguments, or occasionally candidates did not consider alternative themes to personal wealth.

Question 3*

3* 'The reward of treasure was the most important motive for Viking raids on England and Scotland.'

How far do you agree with this view of the period from c.790 to 1066?

[25]

This was the most popular of the three essays. Most candidates were able to identify a range of themes for discussion, comparing reward of treasure with 'push' factors from Scandinavia such as a lack of arable land, and 'pull' factors from England and Scotland such as slaves or fertile land for settlement, as well as themes such as Viking culture and the need to prove themselves in battle, revenge and ongoing feuds between the Vikings and Saxons later in the period, or desire for conquest. All of these were valid approaches and provided some interesting and varied answers. Most candidates were also well focused on raids in England and Scotland, though a minority did include examples from further afield, which were not relevant to the question.

The strongest answers were able to take each theme and provide examples from across the time period that showed either change or continuity in motives. Many candidates concluded that motives varied over time, but that reward of treasure always remained as a motive in some form. Many weaker responses were able to explain a variety of motives in general terms but were unable to support these with specific examples. Many candidates also provided evidence from earlier in the period, such as the raids on Lindisfarne and Iona, but did not cover the whole period, often neglecting the 900s/1000s.

It should be noted that when comparing examples across the period, candidates do need to explain these comparisons in order to show synthesis. Many candidates listed examples but did not explain the similarities or differences in order to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme.

In the extract shown, the candidate has chosen a range of examples from across the period to explore how reward of treasure and political reasons were motives throughout the period. The candidate largely 'lists' examples, but there is a little bit of explanation alluding to change or continuity at the end of each paragraph. This response achieved a mark at the top of Level 4, as it attempts synthesis with some detailed examples from across the period. It did not reach Level 5 as the response did not reach a final judgement.

Assessment for learning



Remind candidates that they must cover the whole period and reach a final judgement in order to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Exemplar 2

		To discuss the factor mentioned in the
		questions view of the motives for raiding,
		the reward of treasure did push the
		Vikings to do it. In the beginning of the
		period Lindisfarne was raided in 793,
		an isolated monastery off the Northumbrian
		coast holding religious gold embedded
		scripts and gold relics which attracted
		the Vikings so much they continued these
		hit and run raids in Scotland at Iona
		Abbey in 793 as well. In 986, Olaf
		Trygvason raided England in search of
		wealth but ultimately found a ten thousand
		pound danegeld payment from Edmund,

furthering the view that throughout the period money was indeed at the forefront of motives for raids. As well as the danegeld, the Vikings benefited from raiding places like York, Nottingham and Reading in the 860s where the Great Heathen army under Haldan and Ivar besieged wealth from inhabitants and stole their property. However, from this explanation it's clear the motive for raids being for treasure was only evident at the beginning of the period with portable wealth from churches and monk-run monasteries. The motive to conquer and settle which appears after the invasion of the Great Heathen Army in 865 is a more convincing explanation of the main motive for raiding, although we cannot expell social reasons overtime as an explanation.

To discuss political motives for raiding, which are arguably the biggest ones, we have to examine the way in which over the whole period of the Viking age politics dominated desires to come to England and Scotland. Even in Scotland at Dumbarton, before it was united by Kenneth MacAlpine in the late 800s, the Vikings took advantage of the Pictish and Scottish civil war and

raided numerous times, forcing the Dumbarton residents to move to Govan, modern day Glasgow. The Scandinavians knew they could take advantage of political assimilation in Scotland and use it to raid and steal. Even after the 1002 St Brice's Day massacre that Edmund carried out where Swein Forkbeard's sister Gunhild was killed in the Danelaw, Swein was prompted to invade for revenge and in doing so exiled Edmund to Dorset and became king for five weeks.

Yet again we see political motives driving the Vikings to invade. In 865 Ivar and his brothers came to Mercia to avenge Ragnar Lothbrok, their dad, murder by the hands of King Aelle whom they blood eagled to death in 867.

The Battle of Brunanburgh in 938 was politically driven as the Viking King of Scotland Constantine didn't like being put into submission by Edmund so banded together with Strathclyde Hiberno-Norse armies to overtake him. From this explanation it is very clear to me that throughout the Viking period their most important motive for raiding was revenge and conquest, they did collect treasure and wealth

along the way but no economic desire pushed them quite as much as the need to take England over and use the political instability of Scotland to raid and pillage.

Question 4*

- 4* 'Harald's Jelling monuments were the greatest expression of Viking culture and religion in the period from c.790 to 1066.'

How far do you agree?

[25]

This was a popular question, though responses were very varied in quality. The strongest responses identified a range of themes that expressed Viking culture and religion, comparing the Jelling monuments with themes such as art, literature, and sagas, feasting and other religious rituals, or even shipbuilding (particularly when also referencing ship burials). Some very strong responses were able to identify similarities and differences between regions, suggesting that expressions of culture and religion were often different not only at different times, but in different countries/regions. Some candidates concluded that the Jelling monuments were the greatest expression of Viking culture as they encompassed elements of pagan and Christian beliefs, while others concluded that the Jelling monuments were specific to a particular time and place, and that other features of Viking culture were more reflective of Viking culture as a whole. Both were valid conclusions, with no set answer expected.

Weaker responses to this question struggled to cover the period, focusing only on one or two specific examples. Some candidates also drifted from the focus of the question, and explored how successful different rulers were at introducing Christianity, rather than answering the question set.

The exemplar here shows a distinct difference between two paragraphs. In the first paragraph, the candidate has used examples from across the period to explain how Viking art styles changed, and therefore why Viking art is a great expression of Viking culture. It is well focused on the question. The next paragraph is more descriptive, showing knowledge of standing stones/monuments but with weaker explanation and focus on the question. Due to this inconsistency (the quality of the response continued to weaken throughout the response), the answer achieved a low Level 4. The response was mostly focused, with some detailed knowledge, but neither the focus nor the detail was consistent enough to achieve Level 5, or secure higher in Level 4. The first paragraph shows the synthesis and focus that we are looking for in this unit.

Exemplar 3

		Early Viking art styles depict beast-
		like shapes alluding to the early
		pagan culture/religion that dominated
		Scandinavia at the beginning of the
		period. These early art styles have been
		found in ship burials across Scandinavia
		such as the Oseberg ship burial from the
		early 800s - featuring the Oseberg style - and

the Borre ship burial from the mid 800s - featuring Borre art styles. A Viking art styles developed more Christianised and English influence as the period went on, as the Mammen art style features Christian motifs such as lions, as well as the later ringarike art style featuring 'acanthus bud' motifs from the Anglo-Saxon Winchester style. The development from early to middle period art styles expressed the clear gradual transformation of Viking culture being pagan to the integration with other cultures, such as the English, and depicts the slow process of Christianisation. By the end of the period the Urnes art style uses explicit Christian motifs, such as snakes, and thus shows the full Christianisation experienced in Scandinavia. Similarly, Vikings adopted Christianity everywhere by the end of the period - in Russia, Ireland, England etc. The development of Viking art styles across the period, and its presence in a multitude of their presence across various countries (for example the Urnes style was used in churches in Scandinavia as well as in ~~Scandinavia~~ ~~and Europe~~ Ireland and Europe) show the clear development of Viking culture and the impact on it from other countries and

Christianity across the time period, making it a valuable expression of culture and religion like Bluetooth's Jelling monument.

Standing stones like Bluetooth's Jelling monument were in far greater abundance in Scandinavia than elsewhere in the world, and picture stones are limited only to Gotland, making these stones different to other cultural expressions such as art styles and burials which were found almost everywhere. Standing stones in the late period such as the Dynna bridge stone in Norway ~~appear~~ exemplify the change in Viking culture and religion as ~~most~~ they show Christian influence on Vikings (the Dynna stone depicts ~~the~~ a nativity scene). In contrast, standing stones in Gotland also celebrate long-lasting Viking cultural traditions such as seafaring, as the existence of stones ~~with~~ with written acknowledgements of far-travelled individuals show.

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