



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Tuesday 21 May 2019 – Afternoon

A Level History A

Y312/01 Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet (OCR12 sent with general stationery)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Answer Question 1 in Section A and any **two** questions in Section B.
- Write your answers in the Answer Booklet. The question number(s) must be clearly shown.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended responses will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document consists of **4** pages.

SECTION A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the increase in the persecution of witches in Southern Germany in the period from c.1590 to 1630. [30]

Passage A

The relationship between state-building and witch-hunting, especially with reference to the centralisation of the legal system, is complex but also revealing in Germany. The complexity derives from the fact that during the period of witch-hunting there was no unified German state. In this period it consisted of more than 400 relatively autonomous [independent] territories of varying size, all of which were loosely included within the large Holy Roman Empire. The autonomy of the German territories is most clearly evident in judicial affairs. Each territory had its own courts, and each had virtual autonomy over its own judicial life. There was no central judicial establishment to send judges on circuit or to supervise the conduct of local justice. Without effective control by imperial authorities, the judges and inquisitors of the smaller territories had enormous freedom to hunt witches as they wished. It is no surprise that the largest witch-hunts took place within German territories; reports of the most barbarous tortures come from those same territories; and that the total number of executions for witchcraft within the Empire was greater than in all other areas combined. There are many reasons for the relatively high intensity of German witch-hunting, but the judicial system must be considered the most important. Some of the smaller German states were among the most zealous in prosecuting witches. In at least some of these witch-hunting served the clear political purpose of strengthening the ruler's authority and securing the obedience of the subjects. Moreover, rulers of smaller states were more likely to be aware of, and frightened by, the presence of witches. The relationship between the size of the political units and the intensity of witch-hunting in Germany can be appreciated by comparing the intensity of the persecution in the smaller territories with the larger states. In those larger areas the prosecution of witches, while not minimal, was far more restrained than in the prince-bishoprics, the smaller ones.

Judicial – relating to the legal system and the administration of justice

Adapted from: B. Levack, *The Witch Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, published in 2016.

Passage B

The complex legal and political boundaries in Germany were made dangerous by the religious passions of the period. The Reformation had set towns and territories at war with themselves, as the new faith gradually established a foothold. In the second half of the sixteenth century the Counter-Reformation began to win back ground in Germany for the Catholic faith, led by militant prince-bishops and powered by the intellectual energies of the recently established Jesuit order. These men saw themselves as fighting Satan's agents. Protestants, for their part, believed that Catholics were the emissaries of the Devil and the Pope was none other than the Antichrist. Religious passions became all the more volatile because Catholic, Calvinist and Lutheran territories lay next to each other. The godless enemies of salvation were not distant foes but neighbours, and so religious hatreds were murderously immediate as well as apocalyptic in significance. It was in the second half of the sixteenth century, as the Counter-Reformation began its advance and as the second generation Reformation came to power, that the witchcraze took off. The very fragmentation of political and legal authority in Germany made it possible for panics to get out of hand, while the intensity of the religious struggle, with the forces of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation confronting each other directly, nourished a kind of moral fundamentalism that saw the Devil's hand at work in all opponents. But the form such fears took and the kind of fantasy to which they gave rise had a great deal to do with local conditions; with religion, history and law in seventeenth century Germany.

Adapted from: L. Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany*, published in 2004.

SECTION B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** To what extent did participation in popular culture change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? **[25]**
- 3*** How far did the geography of the European witchcraze change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? **[25]**
- 4*** How important was the use of torture in the development of witch hunts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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