



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

A Level History A

Y310/01 The Development of the Nation State: France

1498–1610

Friday 9 June 2017 – Morning

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 answer to each question on the Answer Booklet.
- Do **not** write in the barcodes.

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 nature of the French monarchy during the reign of Francis I.

[30]

Passage A

Throughout the sixteenth century, the kings of France maintained the idea that the monarchy was fundamentally consultative in nature. All royal laws and decrees were therefore prefaced with a statement to the effect that the king had taken the opinion of the realm's most important men in devising his latest measures. In nearly all cases, the king had actually done so and his words were not empty rhetoric. The extent to which the king heeded the advice given to him naturally varied. The most frequently used instrument for taking advice was the royal council. But because the council consisted of only a few persons, usually great lords selected at will, it was customary for the king to consult other bodies when important decisions had to be made. Assemblies of notables became a more common event. The requirement of consultation obliged the kings of France to preserve institutions which had no place in a uniform system of royal administration. The parlements and the provincial estates jealously guarded their powers and they resented the increased authority of the crown. The logical step for the King of France would have been to abolish these institutions outright and fill any resulting gaps with royally-appointed officials. However, the consultative tradition ruled out such far-reaching reform. Thus, the proud institutions of French local government remained in existence, ever ready to reclaim their lost powers should royal authority show signs of faltering. The institution of the governorship confirms the contradictory nature of developments in French government during this period. On the one hand, as royal expenditure exploded to meet the cost of mercenary armies, new administrative methods had to be found. These invariably prompted a greater degree of centralisation and extension of royal authority over local organisations. However, this tendency was constrained first by the consultative tradition of French monarchy, and secondly, by the crown's continued reliance on the great nobility.

Adapted from M. Rady, *France: Renaissance, Religion and Recovery 1494–1610*, first published in 1988.

Passage B

Can the monarchy be called 'contractual' if local privileges are repeatedly flouted, or 'popular and consultative' if the bulk of the population is unrepresented and consultation is usually nothing more than a sham designed to give a veneer of respectability to preordained policies? Many of his [Francis I's] statements, notably the angry outbursts he directed at the parlements, reveal an uncompromising authoritarian disposition, bent on centralisation. The estates of Languedoc certainly did not see him as a 'contractual monarch': they complained in 1522 that they were being treated 'as if they had never had or acquired the said privileges'. True, Francis did sometimes bargain with them, but only over the means of raising the sum, not over the sum itself. He did not mind suppressing offices so long as he received as much money in compensation as he would have got from their sale. Sometimes he got more! The estates could hope for a reversal in their favour, but in the long run royal policy seriously undermined provincial autonomy. The political philosophy of Francis is best summed up by the words of Chancellor Poyet in 1540: 'the King is not asking for advice as to whether or not they [his laws] are to be obeyed: once the prince has decreed them, one must proceed; no-one has the right to interpret, adjust or diminish them'. Can a monarchy holding such views be deemed 'contractual' or 'popular and consultative'?

* *Preordained* = already decided

Adapted from: R. J. Knecht, *French Renaissance Monarchy*, published in 1984.

SECTION B

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

- 2*** 'France was no more unified in 1610 than it was in 1498.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 3*** 'Religion helped rather than hindered the development of France in the sixteenth century.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4*** Assess the impact of warfare on the stability of France in the period from 1498 to 1610. **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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