

**FHS 2024
History
Examiners' Report**

REPORT OF THE EXAMINERS IN THE FINAL HONOUR SCHOOL OF HISTORY 2024

A. EXAMINERS' REPORT

Overall Performance

Detailed statistics on performance are set out at the end of this report.

95 candidates, or 40.8 % of the cohort were awarded Firsts. This compares with 36.5% in 2023, 40.8% in 2022, 50.5% in 2021, 51.7% in 2020, 48.7% in 2019, 45.96% in 2018, 38.7% in 2017, 34.8% in 2016, 29.61% in 2015. The marks profile for the last two years thus returned to pre-pandemic levels.

130 candidates, or 55.8 % of the cohort were classified in the Upper Second Class. This compares with 63.5% in 2023, 59.2% in 2022, 48.7% in 2021, 46.4% in 2020, 50.9% in 2019, 53.2% in 2018, 61.3% in 2017, 65.2% in 2016, and 68.7% in 2015. 3 candidates were awarded 2.2s, compared to 2 in 2023, none in 2022, 2 in 2021, and 1 in 2020. 0 thirds, 1 Pass and 2 Fails were awarded in 2024.

116 candidates, or 49.8 % of the cohort were women, and 46 of them or 39.7% obtained Firsts. The percentage of Firsts that were obtained by women in 2024 was 48.4%; which compares with the following percentages in previous years: 53.7% in 2023, 53% in 2022, 41.6% in 2021, 54.1% in 2020, 46.8% in 2019, 51.9% in 2018, 51.7% in 2017, 49.4% in 2016, 39.7% in 2015.

70 MCEs from 54 candidates were considered by the boards. This resulted in remedial action being deemed appropriate in 22 cases.

B. REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

a) History of the British Isles

BIF 1: The Early Medieval British Isles, 300-1100

11 students sat the BIF 1 paper in 2023, of whom one was a History and Politics student, all the rest being Main School. Two students received a first class mark, two a II.2 and the remaining seven all received II.1s (generally at the higher end of the scale).

18 out of the 30 questions received at least one answer and Q.5 on royal women was the most popular question on the exam paper with four answers (but that on women's experience of religion received none). It is to be hoped that the popularity of Q.5 does not reflect students' reliance on a topic with a particularly well defined and reasonably small body of secondary literature which was consistently cited by everyone. The significance of the dead and the laity's religious beliefs were the next most popular. There was a notably bias away from socio-economic questions: those on coins, towns, peasants and Domesday collectively failed to receive a single answer. More unusually traditional political questions on hegemonies, the early English kingdom, the relevance of regionalism to governance and the importance of consensus to kings were equally unpopular. Answers were generally very Anglo-Saxon in focus with one answer on Ireland and three on Picts/Scotland (always the most popular alternative to England).

On the whole there was much solid work on display here, although rarely anything of a noticeably higher quality than one might expect to see produced in a three-hour exam. The impression of both examiners was that students were not noticeably using the amount of time they had to produce this work to go further than they might otherwise do. Evidence of time spent thinking hard about questions and evidence was generally lacking; consistently sophisticated work was quite rare. The scripts receiving II.2s had obvious failings at the level of knowledge. Strong performance was marked by clarity of writing and structure, a good quantity of detailed information and a sound grounding in a reasonable range of

secondary literature. The examiners would hope that stronger students would also take the time to produce interesting, original and intellectually alert responses to the question.

BIF 2: The British Isles in the Central Middle Ages, 1000-1330

Seventeen candidates sat this examination by submitting portfolios of essays in week 9 of Trinity Term 2023. Of these, 4 candidates (24%) obtained firsts, 4 (24%) obtained a high 2i (of whom 3 obtained a mark of 69), 5 (29%) obtained a lower 2i, and 2 (12%) obtained a high 2ii. The answers were reasonably well spread, in that 23 of the 30 questions attracted at least one answer. (The questions which did not attract any answers were numbers 4 (on climate), 5 (lords and peasants), 16 (Gwynedd), 17 (unofficial power), 20 (records), 27 (neo-classicism), and 29 (British approach to the long thirteenth century). The most popular questions were numbers 2 (Jews, 8 answers), 23 (Norman government, 5 answers), 12 (independence from the king, 4 answers). In general terms, the essays were well organised and presented, so the main differentiating criteria were in the engagement, argument and information categories. The first-class answers developed arguments in a clear independent voice, drew on a wide range of material in the secondary literature to convey a sense of complexity and nuance; and substantiated with density and precision. The three candidates who obtained marks of 69 were very good, but not consistently impressive, in relation to these criteria. The examiners tended to reward candidates who were able to demonstrate sustained and imaginative use of primary sources, and were less impressed by those who gestured towards sources without clear evidence of direct engagement with them. Attention to the specific terms of questions mattered too. For instance, the answers to question 26 (on Angevin imperial overstretch) needed to conceptualise that term more clearly and answers with reference to competing rulers (including the Capetians) in a more sustained way; question 13 on historical writing needed to confront the issue of entertainment, even if other factors were given greater emphasis; and the question on Jewish communities needed a sharp focus on popular violence, differentiated from state-sponsored violence. Candidates who answered at least one question pertaining to realms beyond England tended to produce refreshing and arresting answers.

BIF 3: The late Medieval British Isles, 1330-1550

Thirty-three candidates sat the paper, 8 of whom received first-class marks, while three were given 2.2 marks and one person only submitted a single essay; the rest were awarded 2.1 marks, about half in the upper half of the class and half below. Answers felt a little bunched, with more than half the candidates answering on women's capacity to be authoritative, and around a quarter answering on the study of disease and what turned a complaint into a revolt. Other popular questions, attracting five or six answers, were those on visual symbols, whether kings were made or broken by war, whether the vernacular was inclusive, Richard II and 1399, and anticlericalism on the eve of the Reformation (not always answered from the latest literature). Six questions were attempted by no-one, most of them quite specific, though the absence of answers to an open-ended question on Henry VIII, or to another on the influence of monasteries, or to a third on poor relief, may suggest that few of those sitting this paper engage with the period after 1509, which seems a pity, as the opportunity to think about early Tudor society and culture with a perspective formed by real knowledge of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was a priority for the Faculty when the paper was created.

Answers were typically solid and relevant, and particular care was taken with illustrative evidence, which was almost always good and sometimes exceptional. Some candidates could take more care to mount effective arguments, introducing their essays by explaining the questions and/or clarifying key terms ('authoritative' was often quite hazily treated in the question about women, and 'power' and 'symbols' were sometimes loosely handled in the visual question, whereas 'inclusive', in the question of the vernacular, was typically dealt with better). Relatively few candidates commented in any depth on the historiography. It's not always essential to do so, but the questions are often framed with the historiography in mind, so showing awareness of how historians have confronted the topic under discussion can be a useful part of dealing with it. Some candidates were too ready to quote the views of historians as a substitute for evidence and their own arguments; while some gave too much attention to

illustration, and too little to developing and explaining their own interpretations of the material. Candidates need to take care to address the precise focus of the question, just as much as in a sit-down exam. Some took the question on complaint and revolts as an invitation to share their essays on popular uprisings without attending to the issue of how complaint became revolt; similarly, quite a few candidates answered the 'study of disease' question with a dumped essay on the socio-economic impact of the Black Death (that material might have been better suited to the unanswered question 21, on governments and economic conditions, but question 20 required some direct comment on the implications of studying disease for an understanding of the British Isles).

In the past, examiners regularly complained about undue focus on political questions. That era is behind us and only about a third of the answers dealt with political topics. Some of these were very well done, but the examiners felt that quite a few of the answers were pitched at a rather superficial level, emphasising personalities and retailing events, rather than showing understanding of the underlying structures of the political system – institutions, ideas, hierarchies and practices. There is now a sophisticated understanding of patriarchy – good! – but understandings of monarchy or aristocratic lordship are often weaker than they were.

BIF 4: Reformations and Revolutions, 1500-1700

Marking was split

There were 60 takers for BIF4 this year. Of these 13 gained agreed First Class marks; 41 gained marks of 60-69 (almost exactly divided between the upper and lower 60s); and 6 received marks in the 50s. As this suggests there was far more good, solid, and substantial work on display than there were scripts that the examiners felt to be excellent. This confirms the wider sense in the Faculty that the take-home exam format has not worked; or, at least, that it has not led to a significant rise in the quality of assessed work. Considerable 'bunching' was apparent in the questions addressed by candidates. Qs 3 (gender and politics), 19 (sixteenth-century Ireland), and 21 (witchcraft) all attracted considerable attention. The early and later chronological parts of the paper were once again relatively unpopular; so too social history other than gender, and the history of political thought.

The best scripts displayed excellent engagement with the ambiguities and problems of the questions as set, and offered sophisticated conceptual and definitional discussions. Too many candidates, alas, offered very 'safe' accounts based on relatively slender reading. Bearing in mind the scope offered by this exercise to augment and expand term-time reading during the exam period, this was perhaps the most disappointing dimension of many of the scripts: their authors had not pushed themselves to deepen their knowledge and understanding of big topics. The worst scripts were invariably characterised by sloppy writing and referencing; a tendency to try and twist questions to suit previous tutorial work; and a bare minimum of (often quite elderly) reading.

BIF 5: Liberty, Commerce, and Power, 1685-1830

27 candidates sat the paper. Overall, there were many solid performances, as well as more accomplished work, including seven first class scripts and no scripts in the 2.2 bracket. The best scripts engaged carefully and precisely with the question to provide a nuanced argument that was supported by carefully chosen examples and made historically imaginative use of different types of primary source material. Questions on demography, education, property and status, the unreformed electorate, the poor law, Methodism, the Irish Rebellion, and liberal Toryism received no attention from candidates. Questions on sexual identities, class, ethnicity, the industrial revolution and political instability after 1760 attracted only a few candidates. Questions on the Enlightenment, religion and national identity, art and architecture, consumption, radicalism, the Revolution of 1688-9, and slavery proved the most popular. Candidates are strongly encouraged to engage with the paper's chronological and geographical breadth and demonstrate a grasp of thematic range.

BIF 6: Power, Politics, & People, 1815-1924

Twenty-eight candidates took this paper at the end of their second year, four of them in the joint schools,

marking a slight slump in numbers (there were 34 candidates in [FHS] 2021, 29 in 2022, and 34 in 2023). This was the last year of the take-home exercise and it is therefore probably pointless to rehearse its merits or otherwise here; this year's examiners held slightly different views in that regard, but both were agreed that this yield was disappointing in terms of candidates' capacity to exploit the potential of the format. It remains striking that it did not encourage noticeably greater diversity in the topics addressed, as might have been expected given the greater time to contemplate the paper, and to respond to the exhortation 'to display some breadth of knowledge overall, whether thematically, geographically or chronologically'.

As many as eight (of the thirty) questions returned no echo, an unusually high proportion. Many of these were on topics which have some historiographical or topical currency and on which many tutors have (rightly) exhorted questions, such as those on education, popular politics, the abolition of slavery, and social science. Some hitherto popular questions on political topics (Whiggery and radicalism, politics and religion, party) appear to be falling out of favour. For all our efforts to expand conceptions of British history, it remains the case that few candidates take on the overtly non-English questions (fewer, surely, than candidates in BIF-5 or BIF-7): the question on ideas of national distinctiveness in Scotland/Wales/Ireland enticed two, and the question on British reaction to the Irish Famine one, though it should be acknowledged that the question on British national identity itself was the joint most popular question (see below). Also relatively marginal were questions on leisure (2 takers), foreign policy (2), the middle classes / domesticity (2), immigration (2), political revolution (absence thereof, 2), race (1), and free trade (1).

That said, there was no great bunching in the more popular topics. The big three were the aforementioned question on Britishness (8 takers), rise of Labour / Liberal decline (8), and the social consequences of the Great War. If questions on parliamentary reform (6) and Victorian Liberalism (6) demonstrate the enduring appeal of political topics to candidates, so too did such cultural and gender questions as those on fatherhood and/or motherhood (4), gender relations (5), poverty (6), and women's suffrage (5).

In terms of performance, the examiners were agreed that even the better work was not as good as it often might have been, with candidates failing to demonstrate the breadth of reading and citation, or to pursue the imaginative angles on a topic, which the take-home was intended to encourage. What was striking was just how weak the weaker work was: many candidates were simply not doing what the exercise so obviously allowed them to do – tendering for example flat, recapitulatory conclusions, and sometimes startlingly short bibliographies. Moreover the failure to conform to the guidelines on presentation was epidemic – and generated numerous penalties. It is hard to know how popular the take-home was with students, but intellectual enthusiasm and investment seemed thin on the ground in this paper this year.

BIF 7: Changing Identities, 1900 to the present

62 candidates submitted essays for the take-home paper this year. 20 received marks of 70 or above, with the highest mark a 74. The lowest marks were two 59s, one of which was partly the result of a 5-mark penalty. This confirms the impression that the take-home format results in fewer marks at either extreme than a 3-hour exam. Most portfolios were of a creditable standard, and one of the markers, who had not set or taught the paper, commented that it had succeeded in challenging and differentiating students. There was some bunching in the answers attempted, but perhaps not as much as in previous years. The most popular questions were Q. 5, on the welfare state (17 takers), Q. 11, on immigration (13 takers), Q. 2, on gender roles in political campaigning (13 takers) and Q. 23, on sexual morality (12 takers). It was striking that no one attempted either Q.13, on the pervasiveness of class in social life, or Q. 14, on social mobility. All other questions were attempted, but Q. 10, on foreign policy, Q.17, on the effect of WWI on Irish politics, Q. 28, on devolution and nationalist parties and Q. 29, on de-industrialisation, received only one answer each.

Some of the weaker answers tended to rely on a narrow reading of the most obvious texts, and there were some answers that were competent but very unadventurous. The best answers were those where the candidates had read widely and developed their own distinctive views on the topics they were writing about. Although the assessment format will be changing back to a traditional 3-hour exam in future years, we encourage students to continue to bear this important point in mind as they approach this paper.

BIT (a) Bodies of Feelings: gender and sexual identity since c.1500

Thirty-one candidates completed this paper. While two thirds of the 30 exam questions attracted at least one response, it is notable that a third of the questions on the paper were not attempted by any candidate. Among the questions which failed to attract interest, it was striking that several asked about particular periods within the span of the theme paper; these included titles on the Reformation of Manners, Industrial Revolution and Welfare State. Others which were not attempted included a question on fertility, one on celibacy and singleness, and two that posed methodological questions relating to the use of particular evidence. It was also striking that, of the twenty questions which were attempted, there was marked bunching around a small number. Four questions stood out in popularity, each attracting ten or more responses. The most popular question, attempted by twelve candidates, was 'Why has the selling of sex been controversial?'. The others, each securing ten answers, were: 'Have discourses of liberation been contradictory?'; 'Did either fashion or dress change people's sense of themselves?' and 'How porous have been the distinctions between homosexual and homosocial encounters?', indicating lively engagement with studies of the performance and politics of identity. Questions on disability and Empire were also notably popular, suggesting a strong interest in examining structural inequalities and the discourses through which they operated. The calibre of scripts was high overall. Over third of candidates secured a First-Class mark and a third again secured a very high 2.i. Most of the remaining candidates got a 2.i mark.

The least successful essays were those that appeared to answer different questions to those which had been set or which failed to unpack the specific terms of the question carefully. Other features of weaker essays included ineffective engagement with evidence and poor structure. For instance, less effective essays typically included limited evidence, or relied on a small range of evidence. Another issue was over-reliance on lengthy quotation from sources, without analysis demonstrating critical engagement. Some essays were uneven, with evidence being used insightfully for some but not all the periods discussed. In some cases, the problems linked to use of evidence occurred when candidates privileged breadth in their response, to the detriment of achieving consistent depth of analysis. In terms of structure, weaker essays tended to lack a cumulative argument or failed to cohere the elements of their narrative.

Conversely, the most successful essays demonstrated incisive and imaginative engagement with the question and responded with a persuasive and connected account. It was typical of the essays for this paper to have bibliographies of about ten items, but it was not unusual for some to refer to up to twenty sources. Some of the best essays were deeply researched, drawing upon evaluative reading of multiple sources in presenting each point made by the essay and assessing the evidence used by secondary literature. These essays demonstrated a secure grasp of the relevant field. Some candidates showed commendable initiative by also including independently-sourced primary evidence. Many successful essays were also informed by acute understanding of theory and historiography, which enhanced their critical reading of sources and their composition of nuanced arguments. A core aspect of the best essays was also their attention to historical specificity and ability to engage thoughtfully with processes of change as well as recognising continuities, focussing on a plausible selection of periods and themes which enabled analytical depth. The fact that such a significant majority of students performed so well on this paper indicates that the take home exam allowed students to reflect deeply on the subject matter and to produce truly thoughtful written work, demonstrating meaningful understanding of the paper.

BIT (b): The Making and Unmaking of the UK, 1603-present

Only six candidates took this paper this year but the standard was generally high, with no candidate scoring below the mid-2.1 level. The best candidates submitted essays that demonstrated a wide-ranging understanding of the chronology and themes of the paper, drew to good effect on primary materials to support their arguments, and engaged precisely with the questions set. Some candidates would have benefitted from making greater use of the primary sources in their answers. Overall, though, it was a pleasing run of essays to mark for the final take-home iteration of this paper.

b) EUROPEAN AND WORLD HISTORY

EWF 1: The World of Late Antiquity, 250-650

20 candidates took this paper (17 HHons, 3 J/S). The range of marks was between 56 and 73; overall, 5 students obtained a 1st class mark, 13 a 2.1 mark, 2 a 2.2 mark. No candidate did very poorly, but at the same time, we saw no really excellent scripts (thus no final marks above 75).

Of the 25 questions set, the most popular by far were a question about what made a ruler ineffective, and one on whether 'barbarian invasion' is a useful description of what happened at any point in this period (both more than 10 answers). Other popular questions were on the limits of religious intolerance, and on imperial rule in the third century. Questions on the Huns, on magic, friendship and marriage, parents and children attracted no takers.

The most effective answers were those where candidates had read the question with care, and were able to deploy primary evidence in support of coherent and relevant answers. Conversely, the least effective answers were those which made it look as though the candidates were rehashing tutorial essays on instead of addressing the question as set on the paper.

EWF 2: The Early Medieval World, 600-1000

Not needed as fewer than five candidates

EWF 3: The Central Middle Ages, 500-1500

Overall, the quality of scripts for this paper was high and the range of questions answered was both broad and imaginative. 14 students sat the examination, of whom 3 were given (very good) first-class marks. The best essays, as ever, were the ones which actually paid attention to the phrasing and vocabulary deployed by the examiners, and which therefore engaged directly with the exact terms of reference invited by the questions set. These were also the essays which sought to construct a broader argument at the same time as teasing out the complexities of the supporting primary evidence. The weaker essays were the ones which either stopped at broad and unsupported generalization (evident, in particular, in essays on Song China and the Mongols) or confined themselves to geographically and chronologically restricted micro-narratives.

EWF 4: The Global Middle Ages, 500-1500

Nine candidates sat the paper, five from the Main School and four from Joint Schools. 3 Firsts and 6 2.1s were awarded. The most popular questions were 7, How significant were distinctions between nomadic and sedentary societies (4 answers), and questions 2 (local testimonies and global disease) and 17 (comparison of cosmologies), with three takers each. While some essays paid fruitful attention to gender, this cohort focused mainly on the themes of climate and the environment (4: 2 takers; 5: 1 taker); trade (9: 2 takers) and slavery (8: 1 taker); religion (15: 2 takers) and pilgrimage (13: 1 taker), though individual candidates ranged more widely, for example addressing travel writing (19: 2 takers) and the term 'Global Middle Ages' itself (30: 2 takers). Questions 10, 12, 20 and 28 had one taker each; the rest were not attempted.

Many candidates made effective use of detailed case studies in formulating their responses. When case studies were harnessed effectively, this approach allowed candidates to undertake a precise and nuanced analysis of the evidential, methodological and historiographical issues at stake, giving due attention both to the specificities of historical contexts and to the wider conceptual frameworks and challenges of global medieval history. Sometimes, however, candidates lost control of their case studies, and seemed to be deploying information for information's sake, without linking the material clearly to the essay question. To work, case studies need to be subordinated to the overarching argument of the essay. As always, candidates need to keep a close eye on the exact question set. In particular, some candidates failed to engage fully with causes when answering questions beginning 'How'. In a few cases, candidates seemed to be deploying very detailed information from other papers they had studied. This led to a lopsided focus on a single part of the world, which needed to be redressed either by undertaking a wider historical comparison or by

applying a much stronger methodological and conceptual framework in the essay.

Overall, the examiners were impressed with the breadth of the historical scope and command of the historiography displayed by candidates, and their engagement with this demanding but stimulating paper.

EWF 5: The Late Medieval World, 1300-1525

Eleven candidates took this paper, gaining 1 first, 9 2.1s, and 1 2.2s. Overall, the standard was very good – a handful of students were in the upper reaches of marks in the sixties.

The geographical and conceptual range of the candidates was good. Answers ranged globally, and students are knowledgeable about a wide range of contexts: it is noteworthy that certain areas do continue to attract more attention (eg. Byzantium, the Mamluk state, Mali, Europe), and others far less (eg. China). Students showed that they have many different interests in their choice of questions – out of 26 questions, 14 attracted answers. There was a little clustering around questions about plague, mercantile cultures, empires, ideal rulership, and gender and sexuality. The strongest answers engaged with detailed and evidence-based examples to make compelling arguments; arguments were constructed which allowed for nuance arising from the foregrounding of the evidence itself. By contrast, the weaker answers often privileged bombastic arguments at the expense of detailed examination of the material itself. The weakest answers also often failed to address the precise terms of the question. It can be challenging to know how to address broad global questions: some of the answers focused on particular case studies, and this was most compelling when comparative insights were allowed to emerge. The very weakest answers were somewhat misinformed, and showed careless reading of the historiography.

EWF 6: Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700

Eighteen candidates sat this paper. The most popular questions were those on social conformity in the Reformation/s, witch-hunts, and the waging of war; followed by the questions on women and the home, the growth of the state, and the impact of polity size on the ruling of Spain and/or Poland-Lithuania. 19 of the 30 questions in the exam were answered by at least one candidate. While there were some weaker scripts, the scripts at the top end of range were often very impressive indeed. The question on the waging of war in early modern Europe in particular attracted a number of excellent answers, convincingly in dialogue with current historiography, and backed up with a pleasingly strong command and understanding of detail. Equally, the question on Spain/Poland-Lithuania produced some imaginative answers, and answers on queenship on the whole dealt nimbly with the absence of queens regnant in the question/paper.

Some of the more popular questions, however, saw many candidates fall into the same traps. Answers on the Reformations and social conformity too often missed the critical historiographical framework of this topic (i.e. on early modern social discipline and confessionalisation), and tended to answer this (unadvisedly) as a simple question on the success-failure of religious reform. Many candidates writing on art production and collaboration did not define collaboration in an early modern context, making it harder to produce a fine-tuned answer, and several of these answers defaulted to rather bland and over-general discussions of early modern patronage per se. In answers on women and the home, while insightful material was often deployed, overall candidates tended to miss the (much researched and debated) economic history aspect of this topic entirely, which undermined the persuasiveness of some of the arguments made. Many candidates referred to only very old historiography, eg. on witchcraft, or sadly to no historiography at all. As ever, the best scripts combined strong use of detail, insightful handling of historiography, and lively, fresh thinking.

EWF 7: Eurasian Empires, 1450-1800

Thirty-four candidates sat this paper: seven were awarded a 70 or higher, and four received a 59 or lower. Candidates' interests ranged widely across the paper, with all but three questions receiving answers (Q14 on the steppe, Q25 on maritime violence in the Indian Ocean, and Q30 on global historical consciousness). The most popular questions were those on Muslim and Christian conversion (12 responses), the Mughals (10 responses), global early modernity (9 responses), and rulers and religious identity (7 responses). In

Part A, the questions on the Portuguese, the Americas, and Timurid tradition were all popular, each of them receiving 6 responses. The strongest Part A answers were those that engaged closely with the specific prompt in the question, whereas some weaker answers appeared simply to rehash what felt like prepared answers to tutorial questions. In some cases, candidates incorporated primary sources or material from other papers in a way that suggested a lack of paper-specific knowledge of a topic. At the same time, Part B questions that offered the most opportunity for candidates to think about a topic from a new direction elicited only small numbers of takers or none at all, for example, in the questions on 'mobility' (Q23), 'class' (Q24), or why early modern historians wrote about the globe (Q30). Answers struggled to get marks above the mid-60s if they did not engage purposefully with the specific prompt in the question: answers to Q16, for example, tended to present well-evidenced discussions of conversion but without sufficient attention to 'heterodoxy' itself. Similarly, the reference to 'dynasties' in Q21 was too often taken as an opportunity to speak vaguely about 'empires' without specific reflection on the particular qualities of dynastic politics. Overall, candidates showed themselves very well-informed on a large number of case studies, however the general impression of the examiners was that more could be done to use this material to better address the main themes of the paper arising from the global history of early modern empires. As an outline paper, Eurasian Empires is not simply about political history. Candidates will be most successful in this paper if they can successfully incorporate a range of historical approaches to reflect the social, cultural, and religious dimensions of the topics in this paper.

EFW 8: Enlightenments and Revolutions: Europe 1680-1815 (1680-1848) (Old and new syllabus)

19 candidates sat this paper, most in the 'new syllabus' variant, and a handful in the 'old syllabus' extending further into the nineteenth century. The scores were distributed across the usual range of marks. 3 candidates achieved a first overall, and many more offered first-class answers in less consistent scripts. 1 candidate received a 2.2 mark, and the others 2.1.

As often, there was an unequal distribution of questions attempted. Quite a few were never attempted; those attempted included a combination of polity-specific and broader comparative questions, suggesting that the mix of the two types of question is working well. The most popular questions were on women in the world of knowledge, the Terror in the French Revolution, and reforms in Russia, followed by Enlightenment/religion, Joseph II, and Prussia. This shows that candidates appreciate the paper's focus on Europe and its differentiation from global alternatives. On the whole, it was pleasing to see that most answers engaged the question in a structured and well-presented manner. Stronger ones were characterized by a greater breadth of treatment and analytical and/or empirical depth.

EFW 9: From Independence to Empire: America 1763-1898

4 out of 18 students got firsts on this paper, which is a slightly lower proportion than in previous years. The rest got marks in the 60s. The overall mark range was 63-74. The best answers tended to recognise the historiographical as well as the historical problem suggested by the question. Students taking this paper also struggled, relatively speaking, with the Section C "thematic" questions. These do not require a synoptic overview of the whole period but students do need to think in ways that are perhaps slightly different from how they've prepared for many of their tutorial essays. The best answers suggested broad reading, and some systematic preparation about the big changes that transformed America in the period. Note that although the Section C questions often include some 'niche' topics, the big issues (race, the state, expansion, economic growth, imperialism etc.) are in principle as 'predictable' as the more topically focused questions on the rest of the paper. The weakest answers to Section C offered only pro forma responses to the theme under discussion and then tried to shoehorn in a slightly different essay.

EFW 10: The European Century, 1820-1925

There were 12 takers for EFW 10 in this year which is an increase from some recent years with single-digit takers. The number of students eligible to take EFW10 must always be qualified, however, by the rubric which forbids students who took EWP 4 from taking this paper too: it is good to see the continued health

EWP 4 at Prelims even if it does impact the take-up here. The quality of responses was largely strong, with an overall average mark of 65.5. One paper was graded between 55-59, three between 60-64, six between 65-69, and two between 70-74. What distinguished a stronger response from a weaker response was a clear grasp on historiographical stakes, an attempt to think across a broad chronological and/or geographic range of evidence, and a precision with dealing with the specific phrasing of the question, rather than jumping to broader issues on a topic or, in some instances, thinking more about past paper question phrasing on that topic.

Of the 30 questions on the paper, 17 were answered. Popular topics were reflected by a particular grouping on the Dreyfus Affair (five responses), Gender and power (four responses), multi-ethnic empires (four responses) and Revolution (four-responses). Nationalism, as ever, proved popular across three different questions (four responses on national consciousness in multi-ethnic empires, two on German unification, two on Italian Risorgimento). More specialist topics, perhaps only taught by one tutor across the university, were less popular: only one response for an urban history question (out of two questions), only one dedicated Russian response (out of two questions), only one Ottoman and Balkan response alike, only one on l'Année Terrible in France. There were no takers for dedicated questions on Bandits, Feminism, Childhood, World War One and a few other topics. These priorities might be considered in future revision of the paper and its teaching provision by my successor as paper convenor.

EWF 11: Imperial & Global History 1750-1930

Demand for this paper remains steady. In 2024 20 candidates sat the exam. Two other candidates were scheduled to sit it, but one was ill and the other was listed as withdrawn. Of the 22 candidates listed, 10 were in Joint Schools. Eight candidates achieved a First – which is roughly the same proportion as it was the last time I convened the paper, in 2022 – and all other candidates achieved an upper second. The essays were of a consistently high standard, and only two candidates slipped to the bottom end of the upper second bracket (with marks of 64 and 62 respectively). There was the usual clustering, as in previous years presumably at least partly a reflection of the way the paper is covered in college tutorials, as well as reflecting prevailing thematic interests. The most popular Section A question, strikingly, was that on the gendering of bodies in the context of empire, which was tackled by half of all candidates. In Section B, six candidates answered the question on the challenges confronting the Qing. Other relatively popular questions included those on the Great Divergence; Islamic revivalist movements; nineteenth-century racism; and the Indian uprising of 1857. Otherwise there was a fairly even spread of answers, although three Section A questions went unanswered by anyone: on the role of the periphery in the construction of empire; on race and colonial violence; and on cultural imperialism. Only one Section B question was not answered by anyone, that on the role of Egypt in histories of European imperial expansion. It might be suggested that students tend to steer clear of slightly more unusual or challenging questions that require the integration of knowledge from more than one topic. Overall, of the 60 essays written for this exam, 35 were from Section A and 25 from Section B, which indicates a slight preference – which was the case a few years ago – for thematic rather than place-specific topics.

EWF 12: The Making of Modern America since 1863

Thirty five candidates took the paper. Ten scripts were awarded first class marks, twenty three scripts were awarded 2.1s, and two scripts were awarded 2.2s.

Candidates attempted virtually all the questions on the paper, and there was no clustering of answers on any particular question.

The better answers to the asterisked questions took the opportunity to grapple with themes in depth by looking at the issue across a longer-time period, or by putting a particular period in a wider or comparative context (rather than using an asterisked question as a means to address a topic that hadn't appeared on the rest of the paper). Note that the lecture series, which covers a wide-range of topics and periods, is designed to help candidates make connections across the paper.

Some of the weaker answers tended to name check key books or authors rather than engage with their arguments or reflect on their contribution.

EWF 13: Europe Divided, 1914-1989: Crises, Conflicts, Identities

There were 30 candidates for EWF13: Europe Divided this year. Student interest in this paper is robust. Answers clustered around particular topics. 11/30 questions only attracted one or two answers, whereas 6 questions received no response at all. For section A (1914-45), popular topics were: the revolutionary left after 1918; the Holocaust; then the nature of Nazi occupation. The two questions on interwar democracy went unanswered. For section B (1945-89), there was a clear preference for: social movements and 1989; 1968; and the nature of democracy in western Europe. Questions on the Cold War and daily life, comparing east and west Europe, and dictatorships in southern Europe were not answered. Section C (thematic) showed slightly more of a spread, but there was a preference for consumerism; sex; and then religion. Questions on generation and art and culture went unanswered. I would like to flag the popularity of sexuality, which has not usually featured on the paper in its own right.

Performance was satisfactory on the whole. There were quite a number of scripts in the 60-64 bracket, and relatively few in upper 2:1 territory. Stronger responses engaged more thoroughly and directly with the question and in perceptive problematisation of the wording of the question or thought hard about concepts. This often featured in answers to questions that attracted fewer responses. Performance was weaker where candidates did not pay close enough attention to the wording of the question and failed to answer it directly enough (e.g. a lack of focus on social movements for the question on 1989). Most responses largely drew on evidence from the usual suspects: Germany and France, or else Prague/Paris in 1968, for example. Students who went beyond the traditional focus for a topic – and had the knowledge to do so – tended to think harder about their material, leading to a better response.

Europe Divided remains a popular paper. It is worth reflecting on how candidates can be encouraged to undertake a wider variety of topics, and to engage more directly with the question set.

EWF 14: The Global 20th Century, 1930-2003

Fifty-four candidates sat this paper, twenty of whom were in joint schools. (Six of these candidates were registered with SpLDs and three candidates withdrew.) A wide variety of questions were attempted: of the thirty questions on the paper, only three (Q7, *trente glorieuses*; Q13, resurgence of nationalism; and—perhaps surprisingly—Q27, economic development and environmental damage) attracted no answers. Clustering of answers occurred across all three sections, with the most popular questions being Q6 (development policies of new states, 13 answers), Q8 (global 60s, 11 answers) and Q5 (causes of decolonisation, 9 answers) in Section A; Q11 (end of the Cold War, 20 answers) and Q14 (religious revival, 11 answers) in Section B; and Q23 (genocide, 19 answers) in section C. Marks were generally satisfactory, and reasonably spread across the range, with 20 candidates being awarded first class marks, 29 2:1s, and five 2:2s. Poorer answers relied too much on general knowledge, showing little or no clear evidence of acquaintance with the scholarly literature; were thin on detail; were confusingly or incoherently argued, or argued at a tangent to the question. The best answers demonstrated an impressive, and genuinely global, grasp of questions, presenting cogent, clearly articulated and empirically detailed arguments grounded in a range of comparative cases and a good, critical knowledge of the literature.

EWT (A) Masculinity & its Discontents, 200-2000

Thirteen students took the paper, and one withdrew. Seven students gained first class marks (over half) and the rest, strong upper second class marks. This paper continues to produce truly outstanding work from students. Fourteen of the questions were answered, so about a third were not chosen by students; again, it is not clear whether such a long examination paper is helpful. However, there was a broad spread of subjects tackled. The most popular question was that on race, which eight people answered. Four answered the question on cross-dressing, and five, why societies have persecuted male homosexuality. This year, four students answered the question on Theory, and this is a pleasing development – this question produced some very strong answers.

The best answers impressed with the range and complexity of evidence they used, covering material from

a variety of periods and places. Using comparative methods allowed students to bring out similarities and make sophisticated arguments about why masculinity can be so varied across different societies. Occasionally there were slightly mechanical answers which restricted themselves to three 'case studies' for each question, without sustained comparative discussion, or precise focus on the question. The best papers showed wide and sophisticated reading. There was some absolutely excellent work produced in this paper, and it was clear that students had enjoyed it and that it had challenged how they think and write history.

EWT (B) Global Networks of Innovation: China, Islam and the West, 1100-1700

The examination results for this challenging outline paper were very satisfactory: all six candidates received marks between 65 and 70, with two edging into the first degree classification. This implies that student met the challenge of synthesizing relatively specialist literature across this huge topic into meaningful patterns. Quite a diversity of problems depressed results that might have been even better. One good paper was undermined by a tenacious attempt to undermine every question at all cost. Time management was an issue with another: the best first answer in any of the scripts was counterbalanced by a short-weight third answer. Especially in third essays, a tendency was evident towards knowledge dumping not closely tied to the question. The worst essays were most seriously flawed by errors of fact and garbled interpretations.

EWT (C) Waging War-in Eurasia

Nine finalists sat the paper this year (Main School 4, HPOL 4; HENG 1), three fewer than last year, but despite this the range of marks awarded was rather wider, unfortunately mainly at the bottom end. One candidate received a low 2:2 mark of 53, while three candidates received first-class marks, the highest at 72. There was also one low 2:1 mark of 61. With one exception all candidates chose to answer two 'case study' questions and just one thematic one, which is in line with previous years. Surprisingly Question 1 on the Mongols and nomadic warfare attracted only two candidates, down from four last year and much less than in previous years where almost every candidate had answered it. Instead the most popular question was no.15, on operation Barbarossa, which was attempted by four candidates. Three candidates answered question 3 on the Ottomans, and two wrote about Napoleon's invasion of Russia. Of the thematic questions the most popular was no.27 on 'war writing', which produced two excellent answers, particularly creditable as this is definitely one of the trickier topics. The pattern seen before 2023– where the 'thematic' essay received a lower mark than the two 'case studies' did not apply this year. There was one instance where the examiners differed by more than six marks in their evaluation, which led to the first marker revising his opinion upwards from a middling to a higher 2:1, and the second marker coming down below the grade boundary bracket. Overall the standard was rather mixed, with two papers showing significant weaknesses that dragged several answers (and one overall mark) down into the 2:2 band. There were no really outstanding first-class performances, but the remaining candidates all did well.

C) FURTHER SUBJECTS

FS 1: Anglo-Saxon Archaeology c. 600-750; Society and Economy in the early Christian period

Ten candidates sat the paper from History, History of Art and Joint Schools, alongside other candidates from Archaeology. Among the Faculty's candidates, marks ranged from 56-75: there were two 1sts, five mid to high 2:1s, a couple at the lower end of the 2:1 range, and one 2:2.

With one exception, answers were evenly spread across the paper. The question on Sutton Hoo received more than others, at the weaker end these displayed knowledge of mound 1 but not of the wider cemetery and its context. The only question candidates didn't attempt was on churches and monastic sites, perhaps reflecting the fact there has been relatively less new work in this area in recent times. The better answers showed awareness of the historiographical context which weaker ones tended to neglect. There is a sense that slimming down the number of 'set sources' would allow for more detailed knowledge which might foster more sophisticated, nuanced, engagement with them.

FS 2: The Near East in the Age of Justinian and Muhammad, 527-c.700

Nine candidates sat the paper this year. Three candidates were awarded a First Class mark, five a 2.1, and one a third. Of the fifteen questions set there was considerable clustering, with three questions prompting more than four answers each (on confessional allegiance and history-writing, early Islamic historiography, and the plague), while five received no answers. Interestingly section A received distinctly more answers than section B. Pleasingly there was a rough balance of answers focusing on Rome and early Islam, though other societies like Armenia and the Slavs were essentially ignored. The best answers demonstrated an excellent grip on the sources and their associated problems. They also engaged with the nuances of the question and the topic. Weaker answers tended to be too strident in their argument, too narrow or shaky in their evidence base, and too likely to rehash a tutorial essay. Candidates are also strongly reminded to give equal time to each answer, and not focus overwhelmingly on one or even two questions.

FS 3: The Carolingian Renaissance

No takers

FS 4: The Crusades, c. 1095-1291

15 candidates sat this paper in 2023/2024. The marks were generally clustered in the mid-to-high 2:1 range, which reflects the pattern of previous years, but there were noticeably fewer first-class and 2:2 marks awarded: only three firsts were awarded overall, down from six last year, and one high 2:2, compared to four in 2023. It may be the case that the examiners should be encouraged to make use of a wider range of possible marks, but it was felt that this set of marks did reflect the performance of this year's cohort: a set of generally competent scripts, showing good knowledge of the content of the paper, but which in many cases were lacking the precise command of the set texts that would merit a first-class mark. The exam paper consisted of fourteen questions, only two of which attracted no responses (on the function of castles and the military orders). In Section B, twelve out of the fourteen candidates chose to answer the question on the fall of Constantinople (Q.8) which remains one of the most popular topics among students. In Section A, eight chose Q.1: 'What did the authors of the Latin narratives of the First Crusade want their readers to remember?'. Other popular topics were the writings of Odo of Deuil (Q.2), Anna Comnena (Q.5), and crusader success in Egypt (Q.14). Students were generally reluctant to engage with questions on Joinville, William of Tyre (Q.3), social dynamics and integration in the Latin East (Q.10), or cohesion in the Islamic world (Q.7), each of which attracted only one answer. It would be nice to see students engage with a wider range of topics, and in particular they could be encouraged to make greater use of the Islamic sources.

The best candidates were able to locate their discussion in specific and contextualised examples from the set texts, using precise quotations and reflecting critically on their possibilities and limitations. Conversely, weaker candidates tended to rely on general paraphrasing of the sources, and/or often struggled to show a clear and accurate understanding of the key historiographical debates. A number of candidates who produced well-structured, analytical and fluently-argued essays seemed to have difficulty in combining this with the deployment of specific and relevant evidence from the set texts – this may be something that tutors will wish to work on in revision sessions for this paper.

FS 5: Culture and Society in Early Renaissance Italy, 1290-1348

(not needed only one candidate)

FS 6: Flanders and Italy in the Quattrocento, 1420-1480

(Suspended in 2023-24)

FS 7: The Wars of the Roses, c 1450-c.1500

Eight candidates took the paper, earning one 2.2, 6 2.1s and one first-class mark (though two of the 2.1s were agreed at 69). Answers were mainly very competent, and well-informed on the secondary literature. Nine of the questions were answered, but perhaps surprisingly no-one wrote about the correspondences of buildings, foreign affairs or Edward IV in 1471. The two main lessons for future candidates were [1] make sure to centre analysis on the primary sources, especially the set-texts, and [2] answer the question. On the latter point, many candidates tackled the question about chronicles and propaganda, but few thought about what 'propaganda' might mean, or why the circulation of the chronicles might be relevant.

FS 8: Gender and Protestant Cultures in England, 1558-1659

This paper was sat by 13 candidates. The overall standard was high, with 5 scripts securing First Class marks, and the remainder classified at 2:1 level. The most popular questions were those on spiritual diaries (6 responses), murder and salvation (5), cross-dressing (5), and the brides of Christ motif (4). Only three questions were not attempted: on masculinity, anti-Catholic polemic, and the *Little Gidding* set texts. The best answers tended to be particularly effective at combining an overall argument with a mode of analysis which brought the texts into conversation with each other. Such responses were also able to demonstrate a strong overall grasp of how their chosen sources were functioning while also including perceptive and telling details. Stronger scripts tended as well to engage more actively with carefully chosen historiography, which served either to frame the debate in a way that established larger stakes in play – for instance, to tell the reader something about protestantism, the nature of the reformation, or patriarchy – or to redirect a piece of analysis down a new route – for instance, contextualising a pamphlet in terms of how it was commissioned or edited, or showing how discussions of marriage can also be thought about as forms of political commentary. Finally, the examiners were impressed by the ways in which the strongest scripts were able to sustain distinctive textual interpretations which evidenced a great deal of creative independent thought and careful – and often connective – reading.

There were four main weaknesses which stood out to varying degrees across the run of scripts. The first was an at-times surprising failure to deal squarely with what the question was asking. Sometimes this simply involved ignoring a key word in the question, or failing to take a sufficiently firm grip of a tricky or problematic concept ('proto-feminist'; 'popular'). Alternatively, problems could result from the candidate jumping too quickly into detailed analysis, thus not pausing to consider what the question was driving at or the interpretative options available. Second, the theological dimension to the material was too often rendered in excessively straightforward terms or was simply sidelined. Candidates are not expected to become theological experts, but they do need to develop the confidence to reflect an understanding of how doctrine informed the premises and priorities of our authors. Third, key textual nuances were often overlooked – perhaps the most repeated example being the tendency to assume that authors were unambiguously declaring executed criminals to be elect or reprobate, when in fact the key to this issue usually resides in identifying what was being implied, and why ambiguities were often generated. Finally, there was a tendency to reduce the discussion to texts at the expense of contexts – this was most striking when addressing evidence from the 1640s and 50s where the distinctive nature of the social, political and theological situation should have been glaringly obvious. Of course, this is a paper which is designed to accent the deployment of set texts, but candidates should remember that as historians we are reading this stuff less for its intrinsic textual qualities than its relationship with larger processes and dynamics.

FS 9: Literature and Politics in Early Modern England

Eleven students took this paper, nine students taking Single Honours History and two Ancient and Modern. With the exception of one script, which received a mark of 54 after moderation, the standard was good; two candidates achieved first class marks (of 70 and 74), and the others ranged between 64 and 69. Most candidates demonstrated very solid knowledge of the texts, and many exhibited a pleasing understanding of the literary qualities of the set works. As ever, answers on single authors were the most successful, with particularly strong responses on Sidney and romantic love, and Wyatt and concealment; More, Wyatt, Sidney and Shakespeare were the most popular authors, with candidates leaving Jonson in the cold. Candidates struggled more to draw together insightful readings of multiple authors in the thematic

questions.

FS 10: The Iberian Global Century

Twelve candidates sat the exam paper this year (all for Main School, apart from one for History and Politics). The overall quality was quite good, with no overall mark above 75 or below 65. The spread of final marks was as follows:

75-79: 1

70-74: 6

65-69: 5

Ten candidates opted for answering one question from Section A and two questions from Section B, although answers from both sections showed a good degree of engagement with the set texts. The question about Indigenous records (Q.2) was the most popular among those from Section A with six attempts, although the average mark (67) was lower than the overall average mark for the paper (68). It is difficult to make a comparison with the marks for the other questions from Section A, since the number of candidates who attempted them was not representative: only two candidates answered the question on accounts written by merchants (Q.1), and three that on race relations (Q.3) and that on visual and material evidence (Q.4), respectively. Generally speaking, marks for questions from Section A were lower than marks for questions from Section B, which may point for a need for tutors to set more essay questions based exclusively on set texts when the paper is taught. The two most popular questions from Section B were about the spread of Catholicism (Q.7), which six candidates attempted, and the different ways of seeing (Q.13), which was answered by five candidates. Of the remaining questions, the one about the Iberian Union (Q.5) had four answers, while those about race (Q.9) and Iberian societies (Q.11) two answers each. Questions about mobility (Q.6), native litigants (Q.8), and Indigenous writers (Q.10) were tried by one candidate each. No one tried the questions about slavery (Q.12) and collecting as a colonial practice (Q.14), which was quite surprising.

FS 11: Writing in the Early Modern Period

No candidates

FS 12: Court culture and Art in Early Modern Europe, 1580-1700

Ten candidates sat the paper. Overall four first class marks were awarded and the remaining marks ranged across the 2.1 classification. The most popular question was Q.2 on Louis XIV's court, followed by Q.5 (collecting) and then Q.5 and Q.14 (court artists) and Q.8 (female rulers). No candidate tackled Q.6 (ephemeral events), Q.7 (Guido Reni) and Q.12 (the impact of Reformations).

Once again, the best work for this paper provided sustained engagement with the question and a detailed analysis of the prescribed sources, that was also alert to political, cultural and regional contexts to courts and court cultures. Such responses engaged with a range of different concerns, in ways which challenged the question's presumptions. Weaker responses were limited in the number of case-studies they deployed or displayed superficial levels of knowledge when discussing them. They used conceptual frameworks (such as those relating to gender) in an unsophisticated way, or accepted the terms of the question uncritically. Once again, all candidates are encouraged to consider developing case-studies located in the rich secondary literature for this paper.

FS 13: War and Society in Britain and Europe, c.1650-1815

Seven candidates sat this paper, and tackled a good spread of questions from both parts 1 and 2.

Questions on colonial warfare, war finance and the role of women attracted most answers (3 answers each), while questions on Maurice de Saxe, military honour, war and civilians, 'total war', and recruitment all attracted a couple of answers. The number of candidates was relatively low, so the absence of any answers on religion and warfare, navies, education versus experience, social status of soldiers/sailors, was not necessarily significant, though they are mainstream topics. Overall performance by the candidates was moderate. The best answers showed extensive knowledge of the primary sources and deployed these with

good awareness of wider context and of relevant historiographical debates. In a few cases, candidates wrote at least one first-class essay and then a couple in which their knowledge of the sources or focus on the question was much weaker, or where timing and balance between the three essays was badly managed. Weaker performances overall were characterized by limited engagement with the sources; they often failed to produce supporting evidence in support of their contentions, or showed limited engagement with the actual question.

FS 14: The Metropolitan Crucible: London 1685-1815

Not needed fewer than 5 candidates

FS 15: Histories of Madness and Mental Healing in a Global Context

13 candidates sat this examination in TT 2024 which included a student from a previous year.

The exam comprised 17 questions; 9 in Section A and 8 in Section B. As in previous years, certain questions were more popular than others, but the overall spread showed a diversity of interests. There were no instances of short weight scripts and there was no significant disagreement between examiners.

The marks ranged from a low of 64 to a high of 76.

Six students received a first-class mark (70 to 76) with the remainder in the 64 to 68 range.

The exam comprised 17 questions in two sections. There was a diversity of questions chosen with some clustering on some questions. Five questions went unanswered (6, 7, 12, 16, 17). The most popular questions covered the topics: patient-produced art; feminist critique (Kaysen and Gilman); anti-psychiatry; and gender and diagnosis. The strongest answers offered a scholarly analysis, awareness of the secondary literature, and a clear argument. The weakest answers relied too heavily on descriptions of sources. Some popular questions (gender and diagnosis) were broad enough to allow for a wide range of sources to be engaged. Other popular questions were also clearly popular in terms of student class participation and essay topics (such as *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Girl, Interrupted*). Overall, there is a bit more interest in modern history topics, which also reflects the design of the course, but some students did engage with early modern or medieval primary sources and historiography.

FS 16: Imperial Pathologies

Seven candidates took the examination, three of whom received first class marks and the remainder upper seconds. The upper seconds ranged from 63 to 67 and the firsts from 70 to 74. This is a similar spread of marks to previous years and a similar number of candidates.

Nine of the 14 questions on the paper were answered by at least one candidate. Question 2 (a primary source-based question) was the most popular, with 6 of the 7 candidates answering it. The question related to the issue of medical consumerism, which tends to be a popular topic each year, along with quackery, although this year, only one candidate answered a question related to the latter subject (Q.8). The second most popular topics were hospitals (Q.3) and quarantine (Q.6). Fewer candidates answered questions relating to empire and race than is normally the case but the level of interest in such topics (as opposed to domestic British topics) varies from year to year and there is no reason to suspect that this marks the beginning of a trend. No questions stood out as tending to stronger or weaker performance. In sum, there are no obvious lessons which can be drawn from the performance on this paper this year.

FS 17: Nationalism in Western Europe, 1799-1890

There were nine takers for the further subject this year, in line with our regular cap of between eight-ten students. A good range of questions were covered: of the 16 on the paper, 12 had at least one taker. Additionally, there was no real grouping on any one nation or theme: in Section A, each of the six nation-specific questions (two for each of Italy, France, and Germany) had at least two takers and across the whole paper only three questions had three or more takers (Italian regionalism, Gender, invented tradition). Section A saw 15 of a possible high total of 18 responses, meaning a slight student preference towards the set source questions: all bar one of the eight Section A questions had at least one taker too, indicating a welcome range of involvement with the paper's set sources rather than a concentration on any

one nation or author. It is notable that three of the four questions which had no takers at all (Cities, national art, military defeat) were Section B responses: there was instead a marked popularity for Q 12 on gender (four takers) and Q 15 on invented traditions (three takers). This may be reflective of the over-focus on national case studies in classes and tutorials and might invite fruitful thought for revision of the paper's structure in the future to think more thematically across nations in tutorials in order to view the wider historiographical landscape of nationalism. Finally in terms of breadth of coverage, while there was a spread of nations drawn on in the set source section, these sources tended either to be the longer written sources or the visual sources: the sourcebooks by Breuilly, Beales, and Price on Austria & Prussia, Italy and France seem unopened and no one engaged with Fanny Lewald, one of the only female authors on this paper. This is a shame as the sourcebooks present a good way to explore the popular and non-male engagement with nationalism and nationalist ideas and, again, might suggest ways to reform the paper in future years to integrate this wider range of voices more thoroughly.

In terms of quality, the average mark was 64 which reflects perhaps a lower level of quality overall than in recent years: two scripts were in the 55-59 band, five in the 60-64 band, one in the 65-69 band, and two in the 70-74 band. On the whole students were certainly able to demonstrate familiarity with a good selection of the set texts. However, there was a tendency to treat the exam as a test of knowledge of these texts, whereas the point of introducing students to primary sources is that they should illuminate a historical period. Exploring the texts is not a discrete exercise: they are our means to understand the issues that people in the past faced, and the means they employed to deal with them. Too often, these wider realities disappeared in student responses which were tightly focussed on specific contents. To perform well on this paper, future students should ensure that they answer the question as set, rather than jump to a wider theme or to a tutorial essay on a similar topic. Students should engage thoroughly with set texts within Section A, yes, but also ensure they branch out into wider historiographical stakes on our period for Section B responses. Within Section A, students who did better this year were able to do so by demonstrating a clear understanding of the context as well as the content of the set sources and were able to place multiple sources in conversation with one another to good effect. Weaker responses tended to treat primary sources in isolation from one another or only offered fleeting and surface-level engagement.

FS 18: Intellect and Culture in Victorian Britain

Thirteen candidates took the Intellect and Culture in Britain Further Subject in 2024: seven undergraduates in History of Art, five in History, and one in History and Economics. The overall standard of responses was high, with four candidates obtaining first-class marks overall, with the remaining nine in the Upper Second range. Of the candidates obtaining 2:1s, only three obtained average marks of below 65. The lowest mark was a 60, and the highest 75. Candidates attempted a pleasing range of questions. Only two questions received no answers – question four, on Mill and Spencer; and question thirteen, on the receptiveness of Victorian culture to European influences. The most popular question, attracting five responses, was question two, on the criteria by which historians judged national 'progress'. The candidates who scored the highest marks answered the question posed in a precise and focused way, drawing extensively on concrete evidence from the set texts, including from the less-trodden parts of the primary source bibliography. Weaker answers tended to be more diffuse, and vaguer in their grasp of the primary sources and their authors. On the whole, candidates were relatively more reluctant to answer questions – such as the question on European influences – which invited analytical interpretations of a dimension of Victorian life and thought as a whole: examinees tended to prefer the more obviously delimited topics. Whilst this reticence is understandable, future candidates should remember that the rewards for writing well and engagingly on a more general question – in a way that can use the primary texts to make an argument about a thematic dimension of nineteenth-century thought – can be considerable, leading to strongly first-class marks when done well.

FS 19: The Authority of Nature: Race, Heredity and Crime, 1800-1940

This year, nine candidates sat the examination. Of these, two students were awarded a first class (70+)

mark. The remaining seven gained marks in the upper-second-class bracket. The highest mark awarded was 71, and the lowest 61, with an average mark of 66. This range is broadly comparable with previous years, though it seems there were fewer outstanding performances this year. There were no instances of short weight scripts.

Despite the smaller number of students sitting the exam this year, almost all questions were attempted by at least one candidate, with the exception of Q7 (on *The Bell Curve*) and Q12 (on the extent of scientific support for eugenics in early 20thC Britain), which attracted no answers. The most popular questions were those on birth control and race improvement (Q6), and race science and slavery (Q8), both of which were attempted by over half of all candidates (5). The volume of responses to Section A questions (14) and Section B questions (13) was even, suggesting students are not tending to favour one scope of question over another. As far as is possible to judge for a sample this size, marks awarded for individual answers suggest the quality of responses was broadly comparable across sections.

As in previous years, the strongest answers were those which evidenced a solid grasp of the historiography, and which engaged in close analysis of the set primary sources. Answers which attracted the lowest marks tended to be vague or imprecise, superficial in their treatment of the primary texts, did not engage closely enough with terms of the question, or committed multiple factual errors. Some candidates showed a pleasing ability to deconstruct and problematise the terms of the question, usually leading to more compelling and sophisticated answers.

FS 20: The Middle East in the Age of Empire, 1830-1971

This paper was taken by 27 candidates, including 5 sitting for schools in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies: of the 22 History Faculty candidates, 12 were in the main school, 2 in History and Economics and 4 in History and Politics. The paper continues to attract a large number of students across history and its joint schools, and to be oversubscribed. (It is worth mentioning that tutorial provision sufficient to allow a cap at the existing level depends on the availability of suitably qualified advanced graduate students to cope with the number of interested undergraduates.) Performance on the paper was good overall though somewhat down on previous years: only four candidates (+1 in AMES) achieved a first class mark overall, with the remaining candidates awarded marks in the 2.i range. There were no overall marks below 60. The paper was taken by 13 women and 9 men; 2 women and 2 men achieved firsts. Questions were attempted across the whole range of the paper, with only one question (Q7, on British imperial attitudes to the Arab world) of the 16 available attracting no answers. The most popular questions were on the Palestine mandate (Q13, 14 answers), perhaps surprisingly the tanzimat (Q4, 13 answers), sectarian/ethnic violence in the Ottoman empire (Q10, 9 answers, mostly on the Armenian genocide), and perceptions of gender/sexuality (Q1, 8 answers). Poorer answers tended to contain errors of detail, especially regarding chronology and primary sources, make conventional or unevidenced assumptions (e.g. that “good government”, Q4, was an innate property of European states - ?), and remain analytically quite superficial with only summary discussions; stronger answers were well organised, covered a good range of sources and scholarship, and made coherent, sustained, detailed arguments.

FS 21: Transformations and Transitions in African History since c. 1800

In 2024 11 candidates sat the exam for this paper, of whom 3 were in Joint Schools. This was a slightly less impressive performance than last year, with four candidates achieving a first-class mark (half the number of last year) and everyone else an upper second. Only two candidates slipped to the bottom end of the upper second bracket, with marks of 62 and 64 respectively. As in previous years there was some clustering. The most popular Section A was that on Lugard’s *Dual Mandate*, reflecting a long-standing interest among successive cohorts for the architect of empire. In Section B, six candidates tackled the question on nineteenth-century ‘legitimate commerce’ and five candidates answered the question on African nationalism. Pleasingly, this reflects a slight shift toward the ‘precolonial’ compared to previous years, at least in a Section B context. More disappointingly, although most other questions attracted at least one answer, three did not: those on Kagwa and Johnson as African writers of history in the early colonial period; on anticolonial rebellions; and the challenges confronting African women in the colonial order. Some

reflection may be needed on why students have avoided these important topics. Overall, of the 33 essays written for this exam, 12 were from Section A and 21 from Section B, meaning that with the exception of a solitary candidate, all other candidates chose to answer only one question from Section A and the other two questions from Section B. This may indicate something of a preference for theme/event-related questions over source-based questions – perhaps the former are viewed as ‘easier’ to navigate than the latter – although of course there is also much greater choice in Section B.

FS 22: Modern Japan

Nine candidates sat the paper, and everyone passed. The cohort was offered a two-hour revision session in Week 1 of Trinity. Three candidates received a mark of First Class. Last year, we had five students who earned a mark of distinction, slightly lower this year but overall, this year’s marks more or less reflect the normal patterns of achievement from previous years, save the Covid impacted period. The marks ranged from 58 (the lowest) to 73 (the highest), again slightly lower than last year’s but all are in a good range of high 2-1 to first class. The assessors observed that a good range of questions were responded to as usual. Interestingly, however, many candidates this year went for more difficult questions such as questions 4 and 8 in which they needed to know not only the Japanese historical context but also European historical contexts to analyse them. These questions also required some knowledge of science such as microbiology and entomology to respond well, linking natural sciences with the humanities/social sciences. It was pleasant to see these students taking interest and striving to challenge such cutting edge modes of transnational, comparative and trans-disciplinary inquiries. All of them showed good skills in writing, analytical and conceptual skills, attesting both to their efforts and high level tutorial sessions conducted by the JRFs and advanced DPhils. The number of our TAs almost equalled the number of students. This is a system that we would like to maintain.

FS 23: Nationalism, Politics and Culture in Ireland, c.1870-1921

Eight students sat the paper. The median mark was 67. There were no marks below 60 and no marks of 70 and above. The general impression was one of solid competence and serious thought, but often a rather superficial and uncreative use of Set Texts. Memorisation and deployment of quotations from the Set Texts, as well as time taken to coherently paraphrase and source-criticise a number of them, will more clearly demarcate answers as responding to the particular demands of the Further Subject template. Candidates should also try to relate the different levels of Irish history at work in the period — agrarian, Fenian, cultural, constitutional — rather than hold them in separate silos.

FS 24: A Global War, 1914-1920

Fewer than five candidates

FS 25: China since 1900

24 candidates sat the “FS – China since 1900” exam in Trinity term 2024. It was a three-hour, in person written exam. Of the cohort overall, five candidates obtained an agreed first-class mark, one candidate obtained a third-class mark, and the remaining candidates obtained a 2.1.

The paper requires candidates to answer at least one question from both Section A and B. As in previous years, an equal number of candidates chose a second Section A or Section B question. There was therefore a good balance across the cohort, with as many candidates preferring to write about primary sources as about historiographical debates. Throughout, answers showed a good understanding of primary sources and several Section A answers combined sources in creative ways to present fresh arguments. Weaker answers, for example in response to the role of state-society relations in late Qing China and the role of propaganda materials in the Mao era, only discussed a very limited number of sources and then not in sufficient depth. In Section B, the strongest answers connected their analysis carefully to arguments in the historiography, drawing on a well-chosen range of readings. Weaker answers relied on summaries of the arguments of a few historians, for instance in the question about “backwardness” in Republican China, and did not offer much synthesis. All questions in both sections, ranging from those focused on the late

imperial period to question about the Cultural Revolution, proved equally popular, which was unusual.

FS 26: The Soviet Union, 1924-1941

Twelve candidates set the examination for 'The Soviet Union' Further Subject in Trinity Term 2024. The marks varied from 59% to 75%. Both the mean and the median mark were 68%. Candidates attempted all questions except 2, 3, and 12 (see the full list of questions below).

In Section A, questions 5 and 7 were most popular, each tackled by seven candidates. These questions allowed candidates to engage with some of the most cutting-edge debates in the field. Only one candidate attempted question 4. In future iterations of the paper, there will be more extended and explicit discussion of issues pertaining to questions 2, 3, and 4.

In Section B, most candidate tackled questions 8, 10, 13, and 15. This is encouraging because it suggests that students engaged with a wide range of social, political, and cultural history topics covered in the paper. Only one candidate tackled question 11 – this is surprising considering that issues pertaining to this question were discussed at length in classes and tutorials. In future iterations of the paper, more sustained attention will be paid to the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional population of the USSR. No candidates tackled question 12 – this is perhaps because historiographical debates surrounding this question are now somewhat tired. Overall, the syllabus for this Further Subject is now ripe for substantial revision or replacement. I am currently working on developing a new syllabus.

One paper was characterised by some errors of fact and interpretation. The quality of most answers was good and very good. Some candidates' marks suffered from overreliance on secondary sources/insufficient engagement with the set primary texts. Several marks in the First-class range showed an impressive understanding of the nature of the primary source material, with candidates deploying primary sources to make an independent contribution to historiographical debates. In question 13, some candidates focused too much on the institutional history of religion and not enough on social histories of religious faith. Apart from this, no single theme/issue proved more or less problematic than others – questions attempted by multiple candidates resulted in answers of varying quality.

FS 27: Culture, Politics and Identity in Cold War Europe, 1945-1968

This paper generated a pleasing level of performance. In particular, it is good to report that marking the paper was a positive experience, with the stronger candidates displaying a high quality of engagement with a range of set texts. The best essays showed real originality, marrying focused engagement with the texts and the context, with the scholarship in the field. Strong candidates also demonstrated an ability to write about both east and west, and to identify the convergences and differences between them. A weakness among certain candidates was to focus unduly on the theme of wartime trauma and its legacies, and to base their argument on rather familiar secondary writing, rather than working from the sources. A wide range of questions were attempted, but it was disappointing that the question on the Algerian war (in Section A), and those on the working class and on European identity (in Section B) received no answers. We feel however that, broadly speaking, this year's cohort of scripts demonstrated that the paper that continues to give students a stimulating means of engaging with the lived experiences of mid-twentieth-century Europe in their diversity and complexity.

FS 28: America's Hidden Empire: Soft Power & US Influence during the Cold War (new)

13 Students sat the exam; 6 achieved a first class mark, 6 a 2.1, and one a 2.2. 10 out of the 12 questions were answered and there was an even spread across topics. The strongest answers showed compelling conceptual knowledge such as "Hidden Empire" and "Soft Power", familiarity with core themes of the Cold War, and a detailed understanding of case studies such as Coca-Cola, COMSAT, and the Peace Corps. The strongest answers were based on detailed examples from the rich historiography and source base introduced in class.

FS 29: Jews in Poland in the Twentieth Century: History and Memory

There were four overall marks in the 70s (70, 70, 73, 75), four in the 60s (61, 67, 69, 69), and two in the 50s

(54, 59). The average mark was 66.7. The quality of most essays was good. Candidates generally strove to make an argument; showed adequate contextual knowledge of the period in question; adduced reasonably detailed evidence; and produced plausible interpretations of texts. The two lowest-marked scripts showed significant weaknesses in one or more of these areas.

All but one question was answered by at least one candidate, but only four questions garnered more than one or two responses. These were Question 14 (six responses), Question 5 (five responses), Question 6 (four responses), and Question 12 (three responses). The first of these focused on the POLIN museum, used as a case study for themes of commemoration and collective memory. The second two dealt with the Holocaust (the role of 'bystanders', and memory/representation). The popularity of these topics accords with what I remember from previous years. The third addressed Jewish life in the post-World War II period.

Having taught the paper, I have a number of hypotheses as to why candidates found Question 14 attractive. These range from students' strong interest in memory as a theme, to the concreteness of the case-study, to the reliable appearance of a question about the museum every year (reflecting the amount of time we spend on it and its function as a capstone for the paper as a whole). The average mark for this question was 69.58, nearly two points higher than the overall average. For most who wrote on it, it was the best of their three marks. The question is whether these essays succeeded because they allowed students to 'show what they know', or because they were in some way too 'easy'. I'm inclined to believe the former, but it does call for further consideration.

As for Questions 5 and 6, even though one of the aims of the paper is to 'de-centre' the Holocaust by exposing students to the breadth and complexity of modern Polish Jewish history, every year, many if not most students are more profoundly emotionally and intellectually engaged by this than any of the other periods we cover. Perhaps this is inevitable given the subject matter. At the same time, the exam format does not, in my view, sufficiently ensure that students will revise broadly over a range of periods and topics. As it stands, the division of questions into Sections A and B is determined by how they dictate the use of set texts, not (as I would prefer) chronological or thematic criteria. It would be good to know if there is any scope to change this.

FS 30: Britain at the Movies: Film and National Identity since 1914

All nine candidates performed creditably on this paper, with marks ranging from 66 to 75. Three students secured marks of 70 or above, and two were close behind on 69. The answers were generally excellent at incorporating context on the set films, especially relating to production. However, there were some rather episodic essays that dealt with films one by one, which made for rather descriptive answers that were weak on analysis, rather than bringing out important themes. One or two answers also included chronological inaccuracies. Overall, though, the standard of scripts was pleasingly high.

FS 31: Scholastic and Humanist Political Thought

(Fewer than five candidates)

FS 32: Political and Social Thought in the Age of Enlightenment

10 students took the Further Subject this year. There were 3 Firsts and the remaining candidates all secured Upper Second Class results (6 of them 65+). As usual the best scripts offered answers that directly addressed the question set, showed evidence of a good grasp of the texts and their relationship to wider contexts. Candidates clustered around particular authors, with Hobbes (7 answers), Rousseau (7 answers) and Wollstonecraft (5 answers) being clear favourites, contrasting with authors like Locke, Mandeville, Smith, Montesquieu (2 answers each) and Vico and Herder (just 1 answer each).

FS 33: Political Theory and Social Science, c. 1780-1820

Nine candidates took Political Theory and Social Science this year, eight main school and one joint school. The standard of answers was high, with every candidate achieving a mark of 65 or above. Four candidates gained marks of 70 or above. The very best answers showed a detailed and sophisticated knowledge of

the primary texts.

FS 34: Post-Colonial Historiography: Writing the (Indian) Nation

Twelve candidates sat this paper. Two candidates achieved marks of 70, only one candidate failed to achieve a 2:1 standard owing to short weight; six candidates were awarded a very high 2:1 mark. All questions set attracted answers, though some proved more popular than others. In Section A the questions on Tagore's Home and The World, the comparison of Gandhi and Nehru's conception of Indianness, and postcolonial disillusionment with the idea of the nation were answered by several candidates. In Section B the most popular questions were those on memory, history and Partition, feminism and nationalism before World War II, and the influence of globalization on Hindu nationalism. The strongest scripts displayed conceptual sophistication, analytical confidence and excellent insight into and knowledge of the set texts. They also demonstrated an ability to explore the links between various forms of national ideology, literary texts and their particular intellectual and/or political context. Outstanding scripts were also able to bring some critical perspective to their discussion of postcolonial concepts and approaches. Less strong answers offered competent analyses of texts, but made arguments that tended to the pedestrian or were rather thin on evidence. In these essays discussion of postcolonial theory was often quite descriptive rather than analytical and critical. On the whole, however, the general level of achievement on this paper was very high.

FS 35: Women's Liberation: Feminism in Britain, c. 1969-1990

(Suspended in 2023-24)

FS 36: Modern Mexico

(Not needed only one candidate)

SPECIAL SUBJECT GOBBETS PAPERS

SS 1 gobbets: St Augustine and the last days of Rome, 370-430

Eight candidates took the paper (8 HHons, 1 J/S); three of these obtained a first class mark, four a 2.1 mark, and one a 2.2 mark. All of the scripts showed an admirable commitment to engaging with the set texts and their contexts. Where they differed was in their ability to channel energy into precision. The most successful answers were those which started with the passage and worked outwards. Taking the long route round from general context to come back to the passage was a less effective strategy. Generally, the stamina shown was impressive. But, as ever, candidates as would be advised to think about how to pace themselves across the paper, so that each passage gets its due share of attention.

SS 2 gobbets: Francia in the Age of Clovis and Gregory of Tours

Five candidates took this paper of whom four were from the main school and one from history and politics. Two candidates secured agreed first class marks of 70 and 75 and the remainder secured agreed marks of 63, 68 and 69. The overall standard was very impressive with candidates displaying a real mastery of the texts and an ability to put them in play with each other; accuracy, close analysis and detailed contextualisation were much in evidence in the best scripts but also a sense of enjoyment as candidates teased out the meaning and significance of individual passages; lower marks reflected answers which were pitched at too general a level or were erroneous in important details.

SS 3 gobbets: On the Road to Baghdad (892-1055)

Eight students sat this paper. After moderation, the grades range from low 2:1 (63) to low 1st (71). It is a very positive indication that the lowest grade is safely in the lower second, and that no grades fall below this class. Of the eight submissions, three were awarded a first-class mark, which is over 37%. This is evidence of the students' engagement with the material. The median grade was a slight decrease from last year at 65 (2023 66). In all instances with one exception, the first marker awarded a higher grade,

sometimes significantly, than the second marker. While a suitable final grade was awarded after consultation, given the consistency of this pattern it should be taken into consideration for marking future cohorts. Overall, a strong performance reflecting a successful paper.

SS 4 gobbets: Byzantium in the Age of Constantine Porphyrogenitus
(not needed, fewer than 5 candidates)

SS 5 gobbets: The Norman Conquest of England

There were five candidates for this paper. The distribution of marks were as follows: three marks of 68, one mark of 65 and one mark of 63. As ever, the strongest candidates displayed a strong command of the set texts; answered with precision and analytical rigour, commenting on the quality of the evidence before drawing conclusions from it; wrote densely, commenting carefully on specific details; made effective comparisons between the set text where relevant; and registered the significance of the gobbets, making wider conclusions with clarity and confidence. The scripts of those candidates who obtained 68 contained some first-class answers but were brought down by some weaker answers: consistency of performance matters. There was also a tendency for candidates to list information about the sources without persuasively showing how this affects our assessment of the quality of the evidence, or shapes the conclusions that can be drawn from it.

SS 7 gobbets: Joan of Arc and her Age, 1419-35

Twelve candidates took this paper, gaining 3 first class marks, 7 upper 2:1 marks, and two lower 2:1 marks (62 and 63). Overall, the standard was excellent – the median mark was one higher than last year (at 68). The analytical skills of the students were abundantly visible. Detailed source analysis was extremely impressive – most students paid extremely close attention to particular linguistic choices, references and tone in the passages set. The students were all also extremely knowledgeable about an extremely complex period. There was, as ever, a tendency to prefer passages relating to Joan’s gender, devotional context, and trial – but the students were also excellent on the political and military dimensions of the material, and did not shy away from addressing gobbets on these subjects. We were particularly impressed by the level of detail in many of these answers: students were attentive to the minutiae of what was happening. Students were more willing to address visual material too, than in previous years. The very best answers offered a level of detail which was extraordinary given the time constraints allowed. And the best answers were able to cross-reference very effectively across different sources to point out emphases and omissions. There was a genuine sense of commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the material in the answers.

SS 8 gobbets: Painting and Culture in Ming China
(suspended in 2023-24)

SS 9 gobbets: Politics, Art and Culture in the Italian Renaissance: Venice and Florence

Nine candidates took this paper this year (a cap was set at 8 with 4 History of Art students, but allowance was made for one ‘latecomer’). Four achieved Firsts (all at 70), two high 2.1s (68 and 65) and three low 2.1s (63: all DHAR candidates; but DHAR candidate achieved a First). All of the gobbets were answered. The most popular included classics of the period’s ‘canon’ such as Savonarola and Machiavelli, but also newly introduced sources like a speech by Cassandra Fedele and Bellini’s portrait of Mehmed II: it was satisfactory to see that students have an appetite for the topics of women’s history and of the relations between Italy and the Ottoman Empire. Least popular (with one taker each) were: a passage from a convent’s *ricordanze*, which candidates probably felt required more specific contextual information than the others; a passage from Sanudo’s diaries concerning the author’s history-writing practice; and a drawing by Filippino Lippi which was studied in the Ashmolean. The gobbets’ arrangement encouraged students to engage with both textual and visual sources but (with the exception of the Bellini) the visual ones obtained the fewer answers. On the other hand, the rubric compelled students to engage with all the different

approaches to this period's history: political, social, intellectual, artistic, cultural. Candidates with the lowest scores supplied little precise and sometimes inaccurate contextualisation and failed to elaborate on the broader value of the gobbet. The best candidates commented in an informed way about the immediate context of the source and/or the author, and they also discussed the broader relevance of the gobbet by using them to comment on important historiographical debates and often by establishing connections with other sources (both in this exam paper and in the Special Subject more widely); some candidates impressively cross-referred from one gobbet answer to the other(s), thereby constructing broader historical arguments. Greater engagement with the most recent historiography would have helped candidates achieve even higher Firsts, but on the whole this was an impressive cohort.
(F de Vivo)

SS 10 gobbets: The Peasants' War of 1525

Six students took this paper, and five of them gained First Class marks on it. The paper produced absolutely outstanding work, and this was demonstrated in the precision and knowledge of the answers to the gobbet questions. A nice range of subjects was tackled. The very best answers showed an ability to contextualise the gobbet and then to analyse the particular passage, pointing out its use of language, anything unusual or significant about it, explaining anything unclear, and then explaining its significance in relation to the historiography and to wider interpretations of the Peasants' War. Students showed not only familiarity with the set texts, but an imaginative ability to interpret a source. And they also developed their own individual interests and interpretations of the Bauernkrieg as a whole, which they applied to the text at hand.

SS 11 gobbets: The Trial of the Tudor State, 1540-1560

The performance on this paper was good. Five candidates took the examination, of whom one secured a mark of 72, and the others between 65 and 69. Knowledge of the set texts was sound, although there was room for more detail, particularly with regard to the motivations of the authors concerned and the questions of dissemination and reception. Candidates should endeavour to develop their analyses as comprehensively as possible, and should reach a firm conclusion with each answer. They should also remember to connect each source with a broader array of primary sources where possible; the best answers brought in a substantial amount of supplementary evidence. Knowledge of the relevant historical debates was another strength to many answers. Candidates should be reminded that their treatment of each extract is not meant to be exhaustive, but it should be analytical rather than merely descriptive.

SS 12 gobbets: The Crisis of the Reformation: Political Thought and Religious Ideas 1560–1610

7 candidates took this paper of which 6 were from the History main school and one was AMH. The standard was reasonable; 1 candidate got a mark above 70 and 2 achieved marks of 69. 4 candidates achieved marks between 61 and 66; no candidate got a mark below 60. Gobbet responses tended to show a good level of understanding and engagement with the set texts, and the best responses balanced precise discussion of context and content with some broader comments on the significance of the extract. Similarly, the best short essays offered direct and thoughtful answers referring clearly to the relevant texts.

SS 13 gobbets: The Thirty Years War

There were nine candidates, all of whom passed the paper. Results were bunched towards the 2.1/1st borderline, as in previous years, but nonetheless with two clear firsts. The rubric of the paper compels students to tackle a combination of different types of sources and a variety of historical issues, whilst offering some choice within each category. Students selected evenly across the range of possible gobbets, with all the selection being addressed by at least some of the candidates. The stronger responses displayed a sure grasp of the wider context, as well as deep engagement with the texts or images. The best responses were distinguished by the candidate's ability to highlight ambiguities, or comment further on deeper methodological or historiographical questions. The weaker responses varied more in their treatment, but nonetheless offered effective treatment of the events and issues embedded in the texts

and images. Candidates' marks for individual responses were generally only a few points either side of the overall mark, indicating a good level of engagement with the full range of the topics covered on the course.

SS 14 gobbets: The Scientific Movement in the Seventeenth Century

Seven students enrolled in this paper, but one was absent from the final examination. Half of the six examined received first-class results, the other half 2.1 results, two of them at the bottom of the range (61-2). The mark distribution (admittedly on a very small sample) is rather the opposite of a bell curve. The weaker scripts failed to engage closely with both written and visual sources and also lacked the detailed knowledge necessary to interpret them accurately and to put them in a meaningful context. The best scripts engaged very closely with details of tests and images, contextualised textually, thematically, chronologically, and geographically with impressive precision, and made genuinely insightful observations. The facility of working with visual as well as textual sources was noteworthy. The rise of the median mark from 66 to 69 may be a blip: examiners and future years will need to keep an eye on this trend.

SS 15 gobbets: Revolution and Republic, 1647-1658

Six candidates took the gobbets paper this year. One gained a First, five 2.1s - the latter all in the upper part of the classification bracket. As this suggests, there was an impressive degree of above average work on display, but little that was outstanding. Several candidates showed elements of First Class ability in their script but were unable to sustain that level across enough gobbets. Pleasingly, there was a good spread of gobbets answered: twenty-three of the twenty-four on the paper attracted takers (only the Navigation Act missed out). The four most popular gobbets - with five takers each - were 2.c (Cromwell after Dunbar), 3.d (Muddiford's paper on Spanish America), 4.c (the Nayler case), and 4.e (the Humble Petition and Advice). The best work displayed a relentless focus on the core point(s) of the gobbet, with brisk contextualisation, and an ability to cross-reference related documents. Weaker work tended to focus on the general at the expense of the particular; failed to make key points explicit (instead leaving them assumed); or addressed only some aspects of the gobbet as set.

SS 16 gobbets: English Architecture, 1660-1720

SS17: Imperial Crisis and Reform, 1774-84

Eleven students sat the examination this year, of whom two achieved a first class grade overall, eight a 2:1, and one a 2.2. The standard on the whole was good, and answers generally indicated a very decent level of understanding of relevant contexts for the extracts and of the key themes studied on this paper, and showed a sound technique for answering them. The strongest candidates were precise about the key contexts in which extracts needed to be placed and also related these contexts directly to the meaning and significance of the extracts. As in previous years, weaker candidates were prone to too much general rehearsal of background and commentaries too quickly departed from the essential task of interpreting and elucidating the meaning and importance of the extracts in favour of offering broader comment on potentially relevant themes and issues. One or two of the gobbets appeared to pose more than usual challenges in terms of authorship and/or meaning; so, for example, in the case of 1e only a minority of candidates recognized that Burke was commenting on local responses to the acute invasion threat of 1779 or in the case of 2c it is very helpful to know who Thomas Pitt was and his political background. Most candidates simply omitted to comment on who was making the comments in the latter case. There was a general reluctance to engage very deeply with matters of tone and language, rather than the content, of the extracts. At the same time, the significance of particular terms and phrases in several of the gobbets was overlooked – for example, in the case of 2f very few, if any, candidates offered comment on why Sayers described 'intemperate eagerness' as the 'peculiar vice of the age' or what he might have meant by this. This suggests that candidates still at times tend to pass over too quickly the details of the choices of language and tone in the extracts and how this might relate to the author's purposes and their intended readerships and audiences.

SS 18 gobbets: Becoming a Citizen, c. 1860-1902

Twelve candidates took this paper. Four were awarded a first-class mark overall, five gained a 2:1 mark, two gained a 2:2 mark, and one was awarded a third-class mark. It was unusual in this paper to mark so many weaker scripts. The mark for some scripts was significantly undermined by problems with timing, showing the importance of practising writing twelve gobbets under exam conditions. The other weak scripts were undermined by a lack of knowledge. These candidates made a lot of factual errors and were unable to place the gobbet accurately in its historical context. Most candidates' knowledge was strongest in relation to the autobiographies. Gobbets are drawn from across the set texts, so it is crucial that candidates spend time understanding texts that offer more fragmentary narratives and that are studied later in term. The strongest scripts deployed an impressive amount of detailed and precise knowledge, including considering authors' aims, making comparisons and connections across the set texts, and identifying the wider historical or historiographical significance of the precise ideas raised by the gobbets.

SS 19 gobbets: Race-Sex & Medicine in Early Atlantic World

Eleven candidates sat the exam in Trinity term 2024. The average mark was 66, and marks ranged from 60 to 71. There were two firsts, 6 high 2.1s (65-69), and 3 low 2.1s (60-64). There was a good spread of questions answered. Every question was attempted at least once. Notably popular in section 1 were questions c and f, on man-midwifery and race/disease respectively. Only two students attempted 1d, an excerpt from a 17th century midwifery manual, suggesting that students may need greater support in reading materials from this period, which falls early in the span of the course and is not as well covered in the secondary reading. Answers were generally well distributed in section 2, but 2c received only two answers, suggesting that more attention to Mary Prince's narrative might be helpful in future, and 2e, another 17th century source, this one on the commodification of the enslaved, suggests that attention to both the early sources and the subject of commodification might be useful in future. Answers in section 3 and 4 were generally well distributed. In general, the best answers provided a wealth of context and had done the work of hunting down information about the authors in the secondary reading, while the weaker answers tended to summarize rather than analyze the gobbets, were weak on authorial perspective, or provided only very general wider context. It may therefore be useful in future for class teachers and tutors to be sure to offer support to students in connecting the set texts with the secondary reading.

SS 20 gobbets: Art and its Public in France, 1815-1867

(Suspended in 2023-24)

SS 21 gobbets: Slavery, Emancipation and the Crisis of the Union, 1848-1865

Overall, this was a very successful set of gobbet papers. Almost all the candidates demonstrated, most fundamentally, a strong grasp of the subject matter. They identified the source correctly and were able to explain its context -- the essential prerequisite for a successful gobbet answer. Most pleasingly, however, most candidates were also then able to move on to recognising why the extract mattered with the best answers identifying the historiographical as well as the historical stakes. Some, where appropriate, referred to other Set Texts in order to explain how a historian might use the evidence. To be able to do this -- consistently over 12 answers -- requires a sophisticated and deep understanding of the scholarship. One weakness we noticed was a tendency of some candidates to write about the source as a whole rather than concentrating on the specific extract.

SS 22 gobbets: Race, Religion and Resistance in the United States, from Jim Crow to Civil Rights

Nine students took this exam; 5 gained a first class and 4 a 2.1 mark. Most answers offered a detailed analysis of the gobbet and context, and showed a very good command of the major themes of the paper. There was an even spread of answers across the various types of gobbets. The strongest answers often paid close attention to the language and form of the gobbet, and included some reflection on how the main issue raised by the gobbet related to the wider history and key secondary texts.

SS 23 gobbets: Terror and Forced Labour in Stalin's Russia

(Suspended in 2023-24)

SS 24 gobbets: Empire and Nation in Russia and the USSR

(suspended in 2023-24)

SS 25 gobbets: The End of Empire: The Collapse of Soviet Order in Eurasia (new)

The paper was taught and examined for the first time in 2023-24. Four students took the paper and sat the examinations. Marks for the extended essay included one in the 2:2 range, one in the 2:1 range, and two in the First-class range. Marks for the gobbet exam consisted of three in the 2:1 range and one in the First-class range.

The paper requires a reading knowledge of Russian. In my assessment, the language requirement did not have a significant impact on candidates' performance.

Most extended essays reflected excellent understanding of the course material and were underpinned by close engagement with primary texts. Essays in the First-class range deployed the primary material to make an independent intervention into scholarly debates. Some essays would have benefitted from a tighter structure. It is a shame that candidates did not take full advantage of the opportunity to discuss bibliographies and essay plans in Michaelmas term. More emphasis will be placed on planning the extended essays during Michaelmas in future iterations of the paper.

Candidates engaged with a wide range of gobbets in English and in Russian in the timed examination. Excellent commentaries were characterised by concise discussion of the context in which the sources were produced, explicit reflection on the usefulness of the source at hand, a clear exposition of argument developed, and an attempt to situate the discussion in a historiographical context. At the other end of the spectrum, weak commentaries contained errors of fact and interpretation. Some gobbet examinations were uneven – the first few commentaries were excellent, and the last few were clearly written in a rush. More emphasis will be placed on time keeping when producing practice gobbets in future iterations of the paper.

SS 26: gobbets: From Gandhi to the Green Revolution: India, Independence and Modernity

Twenty-one candidates took the gobbet examination in this paper, and seventeen extended essays were marked (the difference is explained by candidates who withdrew last year having already submitted their extended essays which would have been marked last year). Four candidates achieved a 1st class mark for their gobbets, and a further ten achieved an extremely high 2:1 mark. Two candidates were awarded a 2:2 mark for this element of the paper. Eight first class marks were given for the extended essay including one mark in the 80s. No extended essay achieved less than a mid 2:1 mark.

All extended essay questions attracted answers, and there was less clustering than last year, with roughly equal numbers attempting questions of Dalit identity, caste mobilizations, urban-rural relations, language politics and women's political identities. Only the question on Gandhian revivalist politics failed to attract any candidates. The general quality of essays this year was extremely high. Essays were very well-researched and thoughtful. Examiners looked for a judicious balance of historiographical engagement and sensitivity to evidence and source material, together with fresh perspectives that linked different themes in the paper and drew on a range of set sources in a creative and original way. The very best essays were also exceptionally incisive and sophisticated in their handling of the debates in the historiography. Less effective essays, though often interesting, lacked such powerful critical and analytical acumen and were often flawed in structure.

The gobbet paper generally attracted very solid answers that demonstrated the ability to situate extracts accurately, and to establish their relevant context and significance. Very strong answers demonstrated greater ability to make connections and linkages between sources, and to discuss the significance of an extract in the context of important historiographical debates. The best scripts were very precise, sharply focused, and crisply written. Weaker answers were often longer than the best, tended to rely on more general background knowledge of the source at the expense of close focus on the significance of the

particular extract, and made few connections to other sources or to relevant historiographical themes. The weakest scripts often wasted time repeating phrases from the gobbet extract in their answers.

SS 27 gobbets: Nazi Germany, a Racial Order, 1933-1945

(Fewer than five candidates)

SS 28 gobbets: France from the Popular Front to the Liberation, 1936-1944

There were 11 candidates for this Special Subject this year, with a good range of marks from the very top of the Lower Seconds to the First Class. At the upper end, candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of the set texts and their contexts, and were able to rigorously tease out and analyse their meanings and significance. There were several flashes of originality which impressed the examiners. At the lower end, set texts appeared poorly read and/or understood, and the discussion was marked by imprecision.

There was a good range of answers across the gobbets paper, although de Sairigné (4b) attracted no responses, and the visual source only one response. Given that students were enthusiastic about using visual sources in class, an area to work on in subsequent years is building their confidence to engage in such gobbets under exam conditions. The new texts introduced this year to reinforce colonial coverage attracted a handful of responses, most of which were solid to very good indeed. Some gobbets were popular but attracted fairly middling responses – for example, many candidates seemed to be rather fixated on critiquing the class privilege of Benoîte Groult to the detriment of analysing what she might have to say of interest about the experience of the Second World War in France.

SS 29 gobbets: War and Reconstruction: Ideas, Politics and Social Change, 1939-1945

The best description for gobbet answers this year is probably high competence with a clustering of both individual and overall marks in the high 2.1/ borderline first bracket. There was very little work of low second class standard and very few gobbet answers in the high first class. Both markers were generally quite close in the assessment of scripts. All the gobbets were attempted by at least one candidate and the spread was generally quite good (with perhaps a slight under representation of the visual gobbets.) The marks profile was definitely a bit lower than the Extended Essay marks. Difficult to know how to advise future students to improve on this- probably by cultivating a level of detailed familiarity with the sources and historiography that enables more personal judgement in the answers. That is of course a high bar- as it should be for a first on this paper.

SS 30 gobbets: Britain from the Bomb to the Beatles: Gender, Class and Social Change, 1945-1967

Fifteen candidates sat this paper, and five candidates achieved first class marks, with one especially outstanding set of answers. All the other papers were awarded 2:1s. The strongest scripts were impressive in both breadth and depth, offering precise and detailed responses. Answers were consistently strong on class and gender, but the better papers also offered thoughtful critical analysis of other factors, such as the implications of race, age and place. These scripts showed an excellent grasp of the historiographical debates but were also able to offer original and imaginative responses, and were alert to both the value and limitations of different kinds of sources. Weaker answers tended to write more generally about the wider text, not the specific gobbet, and were unable to orient their answer with reference to comparative sources or the secondary literature. They tended to be vague on points of detail, such as aims, dates and audiences. Some scripts were a little hampered by shorter or missing gobbets, underlining the crucial importance of time management.

SS 31 gobbets: The Northern Ireland Troubles, 1965-1985

Fourteen candidates sat the exam. There were two marks of 70 or above and no markers below 60 The median mark was 66 compared to 65 in 2023. The standard was generally solid, with a commendable display of breadth and knowledge. Candidates were perhaps too wary of addressing elements of the gobbets that were not immediately recognisable. Even strictly incorrect observations will attract marks if they are plausibly asserted and backed by supporting evidence. Silently passing over important elements of

the gobbet will almost always hold the mark down below the Upper 2i / First Class level. While outright bravado should be avoided, certain amount of boldness in to be applauded in this paper.

SS 32 gobbets: Pop and the Art of the Sixties

There were 8 candidates for the Pop Special Subject this year. There was a wider range of marks than in previous years, with a number of exams falling just below a mid-2i. The higher marks were, as usual, in the mid-70s. The strongest exams demonstrated excellent knowledge of the prescribed texts and images and were able to offer precise analyses of their meanings, of the significance of the specific extracts, and of their relation to the wider historical context. At the lower end there was solid knowledge and understanding of the prescribed texts and images and of the historical context but the gobbets were less precise in analysis and less clear in organization. Even the weaker answers, though, were competent and thoroughly deserving of an upper second.

As in previous years, candidates selected a wide range of extracts and images across the gobbets paper, with a fairly even split between texts and images. Candidates performed equally well when addressing texts and images.

SS 33 gobbets: Britain in the Seventies

Nine candidates sat this paper, and all received marks between the mid-60s and 70, with two students on 70. This relatively tight range of marks is not particularly surprising given the peculiarly demanding nature of gobbets exams, but it was pleasing to see that all candidates demonstrated good overall knowledge of their set texts. As usual, the highest-performing candidates were more precise in their grasp of contextual detail, textual knowledge and nuance, whereas those in the mid-60s offered more generic or less sophisticated responses.

SS 34 gobbets: Neoliberalism and Postmodernism: Ideas, Politics and Culture in Europe and North America, 1970-2000

(suspended in 2023-24)

SS 35 gobbets: Revolutions of 1989

18 candidates sat the paper; the teaching is divided into two seminar groups, one led by Kate Lebow and the other by Paul Betts. 8 received Firsts, whilst 9 received 2.1s, and one a 3rd (45) since one section of the exam was not attempted. The quality of the responses was very good overall. Both examiners were impressed with the level of knowledge and range demonstrated in the exam responses, as well as the thoughtful engagement with set texts.

SS 36: Art and Politics: Class & Power in Chinese Art

[No report]

SS 37: Art and the Invention of Race

[No report]

Disciplines of History

As usual, the task of examining the paper was delegated to several pairs of examiners (16 pairs this year). The pairs of markers were selected so that different fields of expertise were represented in each: for example, medievalists tended to be paired with modernists or early modernists, and so on. Candidates should therefore be aware that (uniquely for this paper) it is statistically unlikely that their examiners will possess expert knowledge of the material their essays are concerned with. It follows that candidates should take care to situate their examples and case studies with clarity and precision.

There were 250 candidates for this paper. The highest mark (awarded to three candidates) was 76. There were 73 firsts (29%); 108 marks between 65 and 69 (43%); 59 marks between 60 and 64 (24%); 9 lower second marks between 50 and 59 (4%); and 1 third class mark.

The table below illustrates the distribution of answers by question. It reveals a reasonable spread of answers across the paper, though inevitably some topics prove more popular than others. One question (on Economic and Quantitative History) failed to elicit an answer, and four topics elicited only one answer (Markets and Consumerism, Diplomacy and International Relations, Social History and History of Everyday Life, and the Classical Tradition). The most popular themes on the comparison side of the paper were Revolutions, Régime Change, Riots (with 38 answers) and Gender and Sexuality (29 answers). The most popular themes on the making historical argument side of the paper were Global and International History (which this year had a question concerned with Eurocentrism) (32 answers), Oral History (26 answers) and Material Culture and Archaeology (18 answers).

Themes	Question	Answers
SECTION A: Making Historical Comparisons		
1. The Arts: Visual, Drama, Music	Why are some societies more open than others to foreign influences on their artistic production?	10
2. Orality & Literacy, Education	Is the history of education necessarily about class?	4
3. Crime, Punishment, The Law, Judicial Systems	Has the punishment ever fitted the crime?	5
4. Family, Marriage & Household	How successfully has religion determined family structure?	5
5. Gender & Sexuality	Has gender been performed more consequentially in private or in public?	29
6. Body & Disabilities	Under what circumstances have ideal forms of the human body been created and challenged?	14
7. Religion, Belief, Conversion, Persecution, Toleration	How far has religious belief accommodated earthly power?	22
8. Ritual, Custom, Myths	Do EITHER customs OR rituals suppress non-conformity?	16
9. Class & Status	How unstable is class identity?	2
10. Slavery, Serfdom, Underclasses	Is slavery OR serfdom primarily a legal or a social condition?	11
11. Globalisation & Development	Is globalization a euphemism for hegemony?	3
12. Markets & Consumerism	Do free markets AND/OR consumerism promote inequality?	1
13. Environment, Urbanisation, Town & Country	What are the most significant effects of urban growth on rural people?	3
14. Identities, National, Ethnic, Geographical	In situations of overlapping identities, is one always dominant?	21
15. Political Ideas & Ideologies	Does it matter what the creators of political ideas intended?	2
16. State-Building, Government, Bureaucracy	Is the state made by making war?	15
17. Revolutions, Régime Change, Riots	What propels the masses into large-scale militant action?	38
18. Empires, Centre-periphery	How important is the control of information for effective imperial rule?	22

Themes	Question	Answers
19. Diplomacy & International Relations	Are relations between states invariably asymmetric?	1
20. Science, Technology & Medicine	Is EITHER the history of medicine OR the history of technology best understood as history from below?	3
21. Migration & Diaspora	What sustains diasporic identity over multiple generations?	3
22. Ethnic Violence & Genocide	What makes ethnic tension escalate into extreme violence?	23
SECTION B: Making Historical Arguments		
23. Material Culture & Archaeology	Is it possible to write history using only material evidence?	18
24. Space & Place	Have new interpretations of space AND/OR mobility proved productive?	9
25. Environmental History	Have historians sufficiently grasped the impact of environmental change on human societies?	7
26. Marxism	Have Marxian historians paid enough attention to the history of elites?	7
27. Economic & Quantitative History	How do historians evaluate the significance of those economic activities that are not subject to market or monetary valuation?	0
28. Social History & History of Everyday Life	Is social history the same as the history of society?	1
29. Historical Anthropology & Microhistory	Is micro-history anti-Marxist?	6
30. Cultural History	What are the limitations of cultural history?	7
31. Literature in History	Are some kinds of literature more historically significant than others?	0
32. Gender & the Body	How successfully has gender history grappled with differing gender norms?	14
33. History of Sexuality	What is the relationship between the history of sexuality and the history of the body?	13
34. History of Emotions	Is the subjective experience of emotions truly recoverable?	12
35. History of Science, Medicine & Technology	To what extent have historians of medicine moved away from progress narratives?	2
36. Race & Postcolonialism	Why have historians defined race in different ways?	8
37. Visual Sources & Methods	How significantly has the study of visual culture enhanced understanding of non-elite groups?	5
38. Memory & Tradition	Do historians of memory rely on too narrow a range of sources?	12
39. Oral History	Why is oral history a latecomer as a historical discipline?	26

Themes	Question	Answers
40. The Self	'Here we meet a man more clearly, more personally ... who thus becomes to us instead of a "nameless human" ... a distinctive ego' (JACQUES PRESSER). How convincing is this claim about ego-documents?	3
41. Intellectual History	How significant has the linguistic turn been for the history of ideas?	6
42. Religious Historiography	Have religious historians spent too much time examining social practice and too little time thinking about theology?	4
43. Political History & Political Culture	Why has the conception of political history broadened over time?	17
44. Global & International History	To what extent have global historians freed themselves from Eurocentrism?	32
45. Atlantic History & European History	What are the drawbacks of Atlantic history?	4
46. National Traditions	To what extent have national traditions of historiography endured?	5
47. Public History	To what extent has historical scholarship been shaped by the preoccupations of the public?	3
48. The Classical Tradition	Which ancient historian offers the sharpest lessons for the modern historian?	1
49. Genres of Historical Writing	Have historians understated the importance of classical models for subsequent historical writing?	3
50. Archives	Have historians been sufficiently alert to the ways archivists have shaped the historical record?	13
Wildcard 1	What are the specific merits of exploring the history of historical writing?	3
Wildcard 2	How widely applicable has post-colonial theory proved?	3
Wild card 3	Does a recognition of the literary qualities of historical writing automatically undermine its claims?	2
Total		499

In general terms, examiners tended to reward thoughtful answers and carefully constructed arguments, rather than longer answers which simply contain more information. Indeed, the importance of this point was stressed to candidates in a new rubric on the front page of the paper: 'Candidates are advised to use the additional time per question to think about the questions carefully and to plan arguments, rather than to write longer answers.'

The examiners comments reflect careful attention to the published examining criteria. Accordingly, they reward clear, incisive and direct engagement with the question; the depth and sophistication with which conceptual matters are explored; the ability to shape and develop an argument, and to reach conclusions which constitute clear and direct answers to the question; sustained use of relevant examples and case studies to develop the argument; sharp and specific use of evidence, and attentiveness to the quality of evidence; and clarity of expression.

Conversely, examiners are less enthusiastic about answers which lack clarity of understanding of key conceptual issues; which do not answer the question directly; appear to rework material prepared to answer different questions (especially questions set in recent years); lack precision in explaining case studies; offer insufficient commentary on sources, archives, or categories of evidence; and which end without a offering a clear and specific answer to the question.

For the making historical comparisons side of the paper, examiners tend to reward candidates who select productive comparisons, and make a sustained attempt to explain their choice of them. Essays that develop case studies relating to two different societies in broadly similar epoch are often the most effective. The best essays pay attention to difference as well as similarity, especially in conclusions. Candidates should be aware that, in order to be as fair as possible to a large cohort of candidates who have studied an vast range of historical periods, questions tend to be pitched at a high level of abstraction, or seem to imply the existence of universal historical truths. Candidates should however answer these questions with suitable caution, drawing specific conclusions from their case studies without trying to make exaggerated claims for them. Answers that conclude by destabilising the question, or by finding an interesting way to engage with its specific terms, are often rewarded by examiners.

For the making historical comparisons side of the paper, examiners tend to reward answers that manifest a good understanding of the development of the profession, and of the evolution of history's history. Candidates who resist the temptation to assume that the most recent history is the best or most authoritative often impress. Examiners also tend to be impressed by candidates who successfully pinpoint what is distinctive about specific historians, and who pay attention to some of the mundane realities of historical research and writing: how historians have approach particular categories of sources, where and when they are writing, who influenced them, and so forth. It follows that essays which develop a small number of well developed case studies, consisting of analyses of specific examples of historical writing, tend to be more effective than essays that attempt sweeping surveys.

APPENDIX A. REPORT ON FHS RESULTS AND GENDER (Main School only)

GENDER STATS BY PAPER FHS 2024

117 M 116W

Main School Only

Paper	F Avg	M Avg	DIFF	F High	M High	F Low	M Low	F 70 +	M 70 +	F < 60	M < 60
ALL	66.95	67.94	1.0					18 (15.8)	30 (26.3)	3 (2.6)	2 (1.8)
BH	65.64	66.7	1.06	16	9	36	35	25 (21.9)	31 (27.2)	15 (13.2)	4 (3.5)
EWH	66.22	67.46	1.24	12	16	28	18	27 (23.7)	39 (34.2)	5 (4.4)	6 (5.3)
FS	66.66	67.74	1.08	15	18	17	15	28 (24.6)	38 (33.3)	7 (6.1)	2 (1.8)
SSg	67.05	67.75	0.7	9	11	14	21	26 (22.8)	38 (33.3)	2 (1.8)	4 (3.5)
SSEE	67.8	69.14	1.34	20	35	19	10	46 (40.4)	54 (47.4)	4 (3.5)	3 (2.6)
DH	66.82	67.31	0.49	25	9	19	24	34 (29.8)	34 (29.8)	4 (3.5)	4 (3.5)
TH *	69.16	69.09	0.07	44	37	9	12	52 (45.6)	52 (45.6)	3 (2.6)	6 (5.3)

GENDER STATS BY PAPER FHS 2023

M 106 W 154

Main School Only

Paper	F Avg	M Avg	DIFF	F High	M High	F Low	M Low	F 70 +	M 70 +	F < 60	M < 60
ALL	66.9	67.6	0.7					20 (13)	25 (23.6)	4	2
BH	66.4	66.6	0.2	16	8	29	30	37 (24)	24 (22.6)	10	4
EWH	65.9	67.5	1.6	13	24	36	17	33 (21.4)	36 (34)	12	4
FS	67.1	67	0.1	26	17	24	15	49 (31.8)	33 (31.1)	7	3
SSg	66	67.1	1.1	17	8	27	17	39 (25.3)	33 (31.1)	11	6
SSEE	68.1	69.5	1.4	48	32	11	8	55 (35.7)	53 (50%)	5	6
DH	66.2	66.4	0.2	21	11	33	27	42 (27.3)	29 (27.4)	13	7
TH *	68	68.5	0.5	45	30	17	12	70 (45.5)	46 (43.4)	12	5

GENDER STATS BY PAPER FHS 2022

79 M 127 W

Main School Only

Paper	F Avg	M Avg	DIFF	F High	M High	F Low	M Low	F 70 +	M 70 +	F < 60	M < 60
ALL	67.31	67.86	0.55					20 (15.9)	13 (16.9)	1 (0.8)	0
BH	67.4	66.9	0.5	25	6	22	17	39 (30.1)	18 (23.4)	4 (3.2)	3 (3.9)
EWH	65.29	67.57	2.28	9	12	42	12	17 (13.5)	27 (35.1)	8 (6.4)	2 (2.6)
FS	67.38	67.86	0.48	23	17	19	11	41 (32.5)	28 (36.4)	6 (4.8)	2 (2.6)
SSg	67.21	68.32	1.11	14	17	14	5	29 (23)	37 (48.1)	1 (0.8)	1 (1.3)
SSEE	68.27	68.47	0.2	31	20	14	13	46 (35.7)	32 (41.6)	3 (2.4)	1 (1.3)
DH	66.23	66.69	0.46	11	13	34	23	29 (23)	19 (24.7)	8 (6.4)	4 (5.2)
TH *	68.83	67.9	0.93	42	19	11	11	60 (47.6)	29 (37.7)	4 (3.2)	4 (5.2)

GENDER STATS BY PAPER FHS 2021

117 M 107W

Main School Only

Paper	F Avg	M Avg	DIFF	F High	M High	F Low	M Low	F 70 +	M 70 +	F < 60	M < 60
ALL	68	68.8	0.8					28 (26.1)	43 (36.8)	1 (0.9)	1 (0.9)
BH	67.1	67.73	0.63	12	17	21	29	25 (23.4)	37 (31.6)	1 (0.9)	3 (2.6)
EWH	66.64	67.17	0.53	16	16	22	22	27 (25.2)	39 (33.3)	7 (6.5)	5 (4.3)
FS	66.96	67.35	0.39	16	16	19	23	34 (31.8)	37 (31.6)	8 (7.5)	5 (4.3)
SSg	67.02	68.59	1.57	11	14	11	9	25 (23.4)	52 (44.4)	8 (7.5)	3 (2.6)
SSEE	68.35	69.23	0.88	35	35	12	8	45 (42.1)	57 (48.7)	2 (1.9)	5 (4.3)
DH	65.74	66.66	0.92	14	12	35	31	24 (22.4)	34 (29.1)	9 (8.4)	8 (6.8)
TH *	68.21	68.85	0.64	27	32	14	13	43 (40.2)	45 (38.5)	3 (2.8)	3 (2.6)

APPENDIX B

FHS RESULTS AND STATISTICS

Note: Tables (i) – (ii) relate to the Final Honour School of History only. Statistics for the joint schools are included in tables in (iii), (iv) and (v).

(i) Numbers and percentages in each class

Class	Number			
	2024	2023	2022	2021
I	95	95	84	113
II.1	130	162	122	19
II.2	3	2	0	2
III	0	0	0	0
Pass	1	0	0	0
DDH	2	0	0	0
Incomplete	2	(1)	2	0
Fail	2	0	0	0
PN	0	0		
Total	233*	260	202	224

*The two Incomplete results will not complete their FHS exams till 2025; one of the DDHs was from a previous year.

Class	Percentage			
	2024	2023	2022	2021
I	40.8	36.7	40.8	50.5
II.1	55.8	62.3	59.2	48.7
II.2	1.3	0.8	0	0.9
III	-	0	0	0
Pass	0.4	0	0	0
DDH	0.9	5.38	0	0
Incomplete	0.9	0.38	1.0	1.33

Fail	0.9	0	0	0
PN				

(i) Numbers and percentages of men and women in each class

(a) 2024

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men 117		Women 116		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	95	40.9	49	41.9	46	39.7	48.4
II.1	130	56	64	54.7	66	56.9	50.8
II.2	3	1.3	1	0.9	2	1.7	66.7
III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pass	1	0.4	-	-	1	0.9	100
DDH	2	0.9	1	0.9	1	0.9	50
Incomplete	2	0.9	1	0.9	1	0.9	50
Fail	2	0.9	2	1.7	0	0	0
PN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	233	100	114	100	119	100	-

(b) 2023

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men 106		Women 154		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	95	36.7	44	41.5	51	33.1	53.7
II.1	162	63.5	100	53.8	100	64.9	60.6
II.2	2	0.77	-	-	2	1.3	100
III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pass	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DDH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Incomplete	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fail	1	0.38	-	-	1	0.65	100.

Total	260	100	106	100	154	100	-
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(c) 2022

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	84	40.7	39	50.7	44	34.9	53%
II.1	121	59.3	39	50.7	82	65.1	67.8%
II.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
III	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pass	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DDH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Incomplete	4	1.9	3	3.9	1	0.8	25%
Fail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	208	100	81		127		

(d) 2021

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	113	50.5	66	56.4	47	43.9	41.6
II.1	109	48.7	50	42.7	59	55.1	54.1
II.2	2	0.9	1	0.9	1	0.9	50
III							
Pass							
DDH							
Incomplete	0						
Fail							
Total	225	100	117	100	108	100	

(iii) Performance of candidates by paper

a) Thesis (Sex/Paper showing marks for that paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
70+	121	41.44	61	20.89	60	20.55	49.59
60-69	155	53.08	70	23.97	85	29.11	54.84
50-59	16	5.48	9	3.08	7	2.40	43.75
40-49							
30-39							
Incomplete							
Under 30							
Total	29.20	100	140	47.94	152	52.06	

**Some candidates have their marks disregarded*

b) Special Subject Extended Essay (sex paper showing marks for that paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	115	42.12	58	44.62	57	39.86	49.56
II.1	150	54.95	69	53.08	81	56.64	54.0
II.2	7	2.56	3	2.30	4	2.80	57.14
III	1	0.37	-	-	1	0.70	100
Pass	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	273	100	130	100	143	100	-

**Some candidates have their marks disregarded*

c) Disciplines of History (Sex/Paper showing marks for that paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	76	29.93	38	30.40	38	29.46	50.0
II.1	169	66.54	83	66.40	86	66.66	50.88
II.2	8	3.15	4	3.20	4	3.10	50.0
III	1	0.38	-	-	1	0.78	100
Pass	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	254	100	125	100	129	100	-

d) BIF History of the British Isles *Essays* and *Portfolio* (Sex/Paper showing marks for that paper)
(includes BIF Theme Papers)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	70	26.93	35	29.92	35	24.48	50.0
II.1	169	65.0	77	65.82	92	64.33	54.44
II.2	21	8.07	5	4.26	16	11.19	76.20
III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pass	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	260	100	117	100	143	100	-

*Some candidates have their marks disregarded

e) European and World History (Sex/Paper showing marks for that paper)
Includes EWT theme papers (a) (b) (c)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	91	28.18	49	32.02	42	24.70	46.15
II.1	213	65.94	94	61.44	119	70.0	55.86
II.2	18	5.58	9	5.88	9	5.30	50.0
III	1	0.30	1	0.66	-	-	-
Pass	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	323	100	153	100	170	100	-

**Some candidates have their marks disregarded*

f) Further Subjects (Sex/Paper showing marks for that paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	85	27.78	44	14.38	41	13.40	48.24
II.1	205	67.00	90	29.41	115	37.58	56.10
II.2	14	4.57	6	1.96	8	2.62	57.14
III	2	0.65	2	0.65	0	0	0
Pass							
Fail							
Total	306	100	142	46.40	164	53.60	

**Some candidates have their marks disregarded*

g) Special Subjects Gobbets (sex paper showing marks for that paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
I	78	28.16	42	15.16	36	13	46.15
II.1	190	68.59	87	31.41	103	37.18	54.21
II.2	9	3.25	6	2.17	3	1.08	33.33
III							
Pass							
Fail							
Total	277	100	135	48.74	142	51.26	

**Some candidates have their marks disregarded*

Examiners:

Prof. S. Baxter (Chair)
 Prof. J. Belich
 Prof. P. Betts (Secretary)
 Prof. M. Mulholland
 Dr. N. Nowakowska
 Dr. K. Paugh
 Dr. A. Smith
 Dr. G. Tapsell
 Prof. J. Watts

External Examiners:

Prof. M. Braddick, University of Sheffield
 Dr H. Doherty, University of East Anglia
 Prof. C. Griffiths, University of Cardiff
 Prof. J. Wilson, King's College London

NB: No report needed for paper if fewer than five candidates, unless it was a new paper.