

**History**  
**Prelims 2022**  
**Examiners' Report**

## PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION IN HISTORY 2022

### REPORT OF THE EXAMINERS

#### I: Statistical overview

Table 1: Performance of candidates by gender

Year	All HIST candS	No + % of Ds, all	No + % of Ps, all	F	No + % of Ds, F	No + % of Ps, F	M	No + % of Ds, M	No + % of Ps, M
2022	228	70 30.7%	158 69.3%	114	23 20.2%	91 79.8%	114	47 41.2%	67 58.8%
2021	252	71 30.5%	181 71.82%	146	37 25.34%	109 74.65%	106	34 32.07%	72 67.92%
2019	227	64 28.2%	163 71.81%	109	18 16.52%	91 83.49%	119	46 47.46%	73 61.34%
2018	215	64 29.8%	151 70.23%	114	26 22.80%	87 76.32%	101	38 37.62%	63 62.37%

Table 2: Number of candidates for each paper in 2022

Paper	Main School	Joint Schools	Total
BIP 1 (History of the British Isles - c.300-1100)	30	4	34
BIP 2 (History of the British Isles – 1000-1330)	50	1	51
BIP 3 (History of the British Isles - 1330-1550)	24	3	27
BIP 4 (History of the British Isles – 1500-1700)	51	9	60
BIP 5 (History of the British Isles V– 1688-1848)	30	9	39
BIP 6 (History of the British Isles – 1830-1951)	39	11	50
EWP 1: The Transformation of the Ancient World, 370-900	49	20	69

Paper	Main School	Joint Schools	Total
EWP 2: Medieval Christendom & its Neighbours, 1000-1300	56	16	72
EWP 3: Renaissance, Recovery & Reform, 1400-1650	62	26	88
EWP 4: Society, Nation & Empire, 1815-1914	55	27	82
OS 1 – Theories of the State (Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx)	24	29	53
OS 2 – Alfred and the Vikings’ (new)	3	2	5
OS 3 – Early Gothic France c.1100-c.1150	6	4	10
OS 4. The Mongols	15	5	20
OS 5 – Conquest & Frontiers: England & the Celtic Peoples 1150-1220	-	-	-
OS 6 – English Chivalry & the French War c.1330-c.1400	5	2	7
OS 7 – Crime and Punishment in England c.1280-c.1450	9	4	13
OS 8 – Nature and Art in the Renaissance	11	4	15
OS 9– Witch-craft & Witch-hunting in early modern Europe	12	4	16
OS 10 – Making England Protestant 1558-1642	6	2	8
OS 11 – Conquest & Colonization: Spain & America in the 16 <sup>th</sup> Century	31	2	33
OS 12 – Revolution and Empire in France 1789-1815	12	10	24
OS 13 – Women, gender and the nation: Britain, 1789-1825	4	3	7
OS 14. The Romance of the People: The Folk Revival from 1760 to 1914	3	2	5
OS 15 – Haiti and Louisiana: The problem of Revolution in the Age of Slavery	15	4	19
OS 16 – Imperial Republic: The US and Global Imperialism, 1867-1914	10	2	12
OS 17. The New Women in Britain & Ireland, c.1880-1920	5	3	8
OS 18 - The Rise and Crises of European Socialisms: 1881-1921 (old and New regs)	4	4	8

Paper	Main School	Joint Schools	Total
OS 19. 1919: Remaking the World	20	4	24
OS 20 – Living with the Enemy: The Experience of the Second World War in Europe	11	-	11
OS 21 – Viewing Communism: Cinema and Everyday Life in Eastern Europe, 1944-1989	9	-	9
OS 22 – Radicalism in Britain 1965-75 (suspended in 2021-22)	-	-	-
OS 23 – The World of Homer and Hesiod (AMH)	3	4	7
OS 24 – Augustan Rome (AMH)	4	7	11
OS [25] – Industrialization in Britain & France 1750-1870 (HECO only) (suspended in 2021-22)	-	-	-
Approaches to History	118	42	160
Historiography: Tacitus to Weber	74	20	94
Herodotus	-	-	-
Einhard and Asser	4	1	5
Tocqueville	13	4	17
Meinecke and Kehr	4	3	7
Machiavelli	1	1	2
Vicens Vives	8	3	11
Trotsky	1	-	1
Quantification	3	3	6

History of the British Isles (Sex/paper by paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
D	69	26.43	40	31.01	29	21.97	
Pass	191	73.19	89	68.99	102	77.28	
Fail	1	0.38	-		1	0.75	
Total	211	100	129	100	132	100	

\*Some candidates have their marks disregarded

European & World History (Sex/paper by paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
D	65	20.90	39	26.53	26	15.86	40.0
Pass	243	78.14	107	72.79	136	82.92	55.96
Fail	3	0.96	1	0.68	2	1.22	66.66
Total	311	100	147	100	164	100	

\*Some candidates have their marks disregarded

Optional Subjects (Sex/paper by paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
D	96	29.53	48	30.58	48	28.57	50.0
Pass	229	70.7	109	69.2	120	71.43	52.40
Fail							
Total	325	100	157	100	168	100	

Approaches to History (Sex/paper by paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
D	42	26.25	24	30.38	18	22.22	42.85
Pass	116	72.50	55	69.62	61	75.30	52.8
Fail	2	1.25	-	-	2	2.48	100
Total	160	100	79	100	81	100	

\*Some candidates have their marks disregarded

### Historiography (Sex/paper by paper)

Class	Nos (both sexes)	%	Men		Women		Women as % of total in each class
			Nos	%	Nos	%	
D	19	20.22	13	28.89	6	12.25	31.57
Pass	75	79.78	32	71.11	43	87.75	57.33
Fail							
Total	94	100	45	100	49	100	

#### GENDER STATS BY PAPER Prelims 2022

Paper	F Avrg	M Avrg	DIFF	F High	M High	114M 114F		Main School Only			
						F Low	M Low	F 70 +	M 70 +	F < 60	M < 60
ALL	65.09	66.66	1.57					7 (6.3)	17 (14.9)	6 (5.4)	3 (2.6)
BH	65.33	67	1.67	33	28	27	24	21 (18.8)	35 (30.7)	8 (7.1)	4 (3.5)
EWH	64.2	65.6	1.4	19	14	44	33	14 (12.5)	29 (25.4)	16 (14.3)	9 (7.9)
OS	66.1	67.06	0.96	44	40	14	29	28 (25)	37 (32.5)	8 (7.1)	7 (6.1)
IV	64.68	66.7	2.02	25	31	32	27	21 (18.8)	37 (32.5)	14 (12.5)	12 (10.5)

#### Distinctions

Women	23	20.54%
Men	47	41.23%

#### GENDER STATS BY PAPER Prelims 2021

Paper	F Avrg	M Avrg	DIFF	F High	M High	108M 150F		Main School Only			
						F Low	M Low	F 70 +	M 70 +	F < 60	M < 60
ALL	65.56	66.23	0.67					11 (7.3)	17 (15.7)	5 (3.3)	3 (2.8)
BH	64.91	65.36	0.45	44	19	54	48	33 (22)	21 (19.4)	19 (12.7)	10 (9.3)
EWH	65.59	66.57	0.98	42	32	39	26	31 (20.7)	32 (29.6)	19 (12.7)	8 (7.4)
OS	66.07	66.5	0.43	43	34	35	19	34 (22.7)	35 (32.4)	10 (6.7)	7 (6.5)
IV	65.63	66.44	0.81	46	34	41	31	31 (20.7)	34 (31.5)	10 (6.7)	12 (11.1)

#### Distinctions

Women	37	24.67%
Men	34	31.48%

**GENDER STATS BY PAPER Prelims  
2019**

119 M      108 F

Main School Only

Paper	F Avrg	M Avrg	DIFF	F High	M High	F Low	M Low	F 70 +	M 70 +	F < 60	M < 60
<b>ALL</b>	64.71	66.46	1.75					3 (2.8)	15 (12.6)	12 (11.1)	5 (4.2)
<b>BH</b>	63.16	65.35	2.19	16	25	46	48	14 (13)	34 (28.6)	18 (16.7)	14 (11.8)
<b>EWH</b>	64.44	66.76	2.32	18	28	31	24	14 (13)	39 (32.8)	18 (16.7)	9 (7.6)
<b>OS</b>	66.21	66.99	0.78	44	42	11	23	26 (24.1)	40 (33.6)	7 (6.5)	6 (5)
<b>IV</b>	65.01	66.77	1.76	30	24	20	24	23 (21.3)	33 (27.7)	15 (13.9)	4 (3.4)

**Distinctions**

**Women**    18    16.67%  
**Men**        47    39.49%

**Prelims 2022 by Gender and School Type**

School type			2022	M=114	W=114						
	Total	Total	D	D	D%	D%	P	P	P%	P%	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
State	59	69	21	11	35.6%	15.9%	38	58	64.4%	84.1%	
Independent	44	28	23	7	52.3%	30.4%	21	21	47.7%	75%	
Overseas/Unknown	11	17	3	5	27.3%	29.4%	8	12	72.7%	70.6%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>58.8%</b>	<b>79.8%</b>	
State breakdown:											
6 <sup>th</sup> Form College	19	10	4	3			15	7			
Comprehensive	6	19	3	0			3	19			
Tertiary college	4	0	0	0			4	0			
Academy	28	38	13	8			15	30			
Grammar	2	2	1	0			1	2			



## **II Marking & Classification**

### **A. General Comments on the Examination**

228 candidates sat the examination (114 F, 114 M). 70 candidates (23 F, 47 M) achieved a Distinction. 158 candidates achieved a Pass (91 F, 67 M). Five candidates were awarded partial passes with papers to be sat or resat in September (now all P). The overall percentage of Distinctions and passes awarded was in line with previous years. As is evident from these figures, there was a marked differential in the number of distinctions awarded by gender (greater than, for example, 2021).

#### **Administration**

Main school Prelims was overseen by a Board consisting of a Chair and five members. The Board is hugely grateful to Andrea Hopkins, Vicky Anderton, Isabelle Moriceau, Alex Vickers, Callum Kelly and all the other Faculty Administrative staff for their work on these exams. Prelims 2022 took place in difficult circumstances, with significant levels of staff and student sickness due to Covid. This presented a severe challenge to the examination process. It took tremendous efforts from everyone involved to ensure that we reached the finish line and were able to issue Prelims results according to the usual timetable. The Board determined that this year's grades were in line with previous exams and did not rescale any marks.

#### **Medical Certificates and Mitigating Circumstances**

This year the Board considered a large number of Mitigating Circumstances requests from candidates, a reflection of the difficult circumstances in which many candidates found themselves due to Covid. Following the usual procedure, a subcommittee of the Board met to band these applications according to their severity and presented their recommendations to the whole Board at their first meeting. In a separate process, several other candidates were excused by the Proctors from sitting specific papers due to ill-health or for other compelling reasons outside of their control. Where possible, the Board classified candidates with severe mitigating circumstances or Proctorial excusals on the basis of three rather than four papers.

### **B. Equality and Diversity Issues and Breakdown of the Results by Gender**

20.2% of female candidates achieved a Distinction, compared to 41.2% of male candidates. This is a larger differential than in 2021, though not as large as in 2019. It is not possible in a report of this type to offer a systematic analysis or diagnosis of this issue. But looking at the raw figures for each paper does show some marked differences between paper types that deserve further investigation. In particular, optional subjects had a much narrower gender differential than the outline papers (both BH and EWH) and Historiography. Approaches to History fell somewhere in between these two groups.

### III Comments on Papers: General

#### **BIP 1- History of the British Isles, c. 300-1100**

Thirty-four candidates sat HBI 1 for Prelims, of whom seven obtained distinctions, twelve marks between 65 and 69, twelve marks between 60 and 64, and three marks of 59 are lower. It should be noted that only two of the distinctions achieved marks above 70. In other words, stellar performances were very rare and much solid, respectable work was on display.

The questions on the end of Roman Britain and Scandinavian settlement received thirteen takers each, while conversion and the role of migration and conquest in the formation of national identity both received twelve takers; the latter question was reasonably evenly split between candidates who chose to answer on Scottish and English identity. Considering that there were two questions on matters 'viking', this was by far the most popular topic, with twenty-one candidates writing such an essay. A number of questions received no takers: regions outside the Roman Empire; Ireland; non-elite Christians; trade and the economy. One brave soul each chose to answer the questions on Wales and the Britons, fifth- and sixth-century Britain, and peasants. The Anglocentric nature of scripts will be clear from this survey: Scotland/Pictland is essentially the only topic outside English history that any noticeable number of candidates feel comfortable with, and even there the quality of answer was variable. When given the opportunity, most candidates avoid comparing different regions of the British Isles, even when the question might be crying out for such analysis, as in the case of the question on Scandinavian settlement. Discussion of the role of women was pleasingly not ghettoized into questions 10 and 11, but it was regrettable that two-thirds of the essays on the latter were about women and not gender.

The clumping of marks around the low-to-mid 60s is very noticeable, and can be explained both by the great similarity in material that most people cover and by a general lack of independent thought or argument. For some questions in particular (end of Roman Britain; eleventh-century England) it was obvious that almost all answers stuck close to the arguments of the lecture or a particular work of secondary literature; knowledge tended to be quite high in these cases, but arguments showed little evidence of independence of thought. On a few occasions candidates seemed to argue past the question asked to provide generic answers, presumably derived from tutorial essays. Most people knew the basic history they were discussing, but few had a real richness of detail and evidence at their fingertips. A number of odd misapprehensions seem to be quite common. Where do students get the idea that Bede (essentially THE source for everything we know about Ionan missions to England) sought to downplay the importance of Irish missionaries?

It would be nice to see more evidence of comparative thinking, and indeed more evidence of thinking full stop, in this paper. It is to be hoped that the revisions to the paper will help candidates take a more varied and adventurous approach to the paper. There are two basic routes to success: detailed knowledge of primary evidence and a willingness to think critically and independently about the questions asked. The routes to mediocre performance are well known: an unwillingness to answer the question on the exam paper and a lack of sufficient knowledge.

(C. O'Brien)

#### **BIP 2 - History of the British Isles, 1000-1330**

The standard of the BIP 2 papers was generally good, with some excellent responses. All but two questions were attempted by at least one candidate, the exceptions being 16a (French and Scandinavian cultural influence) and 20 (regional studies of Ireland). Political history was

well represented, and the most popular topics were baronial criticisms of the crown, succession and political crises, and minority communities. Pleasingly, many of the essays eschewed an Anglocentric focus, and knowledge of Wales and Scotland was deftly deployed in answers on cultural, social, political, religious, and economic topics. That said, the absence of essays willing to discuss Ireland in any detail was disappointing.

Distinction-quality answers were marked by a willingness to be precise and to differentiate. Rather than discussing non-specific groups of barons or bishops or peasants or saints, they were able to identify individuals within those groups and weigh differing interests and motivations. Strong essays also recognised that the Church played an important role in politics, that bishops exercised lordship, and that discussions of political authority could be examined in an ecclesiastical sphere.

Candidates are reminded of the need to address all parts of the question: for example, a response to question on 'men and women' ought to consider the experiences of both sexes. A question on changes to authority after the Conquest of 1066 needs to consider the pre-Conquest period in order to engage meaningfully with a narrative of either transformation or continuity.

There was one unfortunate—and recurring—case of mistaken identity, whereby a twentieth-century Irish playwright (Beckett) frequently stood in for the twelfth-century Archbishop of Canterbury (Becket). No marks were deducted for this common problem, but future BIP 2 candidates are exhorted to note the difference.

(P Byrne)

### **BIP 3 - History of the British Isles, 1330-1550**

Of the 30 students who took the paper this year, 6 were awarded first class marks, and none received 2.2s. The quality overall was high, although there were some rather low borderline marks. The most popular questions, with over a third of candidates writing, were those on women and rebellion. As ever, there was significant bunching around questions on epidemic disease, kingship, and lordship. Pleasingly, the explicit invitation to answer the latter on any region in the British Isles was taken seriously, with a good showing of responses on Ireland and Wales, though less on Scotland. Although England still looms large, with over half of candidates failing to write about Ireland, Wales, or Scotland in any part of their paper, those that did choose to do so tended to have detailed and nuanced ideas. Questions about national identity and poverty had no uptake, but overall, there was a good spread of responses across the paper. Some of the less well-trodden paths, such as resident aliens and the experience of aging, produced critically engaged and interesting essays.

The weakest responses were less-than-attentive to the question at hand, and at times, gave the impression of going through the motions. Lists of factors with little sense of prioritisation or why they mattered were especially common around epidemic disease and the reformation. The highest performing candidates demonstrated awareness of recent historiography, coupled with confidence in considering alternative points of view in order to come to a better understanding of their own position. Sophisticated responses were able to cross the 69-70 threshold by showing their working. It was clear why the candidates were bringing a particular issue or example, what it added, issues it raised, and how it related to the wider picture.

(A Raw)

#### **BIP 4 - History of the British Isles, 1500-1700**

60 candidates took this paper (of which 9 were joint schools). The standard was generally high, with 14 candidates achieving marks of 70 or above, 40 achieving marks between 60 and 69, and 6 obtaining marks below 60. Candidates ranged commendably widely in their responses, although there was still a disproportionate emphasis on the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, with post-Restoration developments often overlooked. Some candidates showed a good awareness of events in Scotland and Ireland, and to a lesser extent Wales, which gave those answers added depth and detail; future candidates should be encouraged to consider experiences across the British Isles and not just limit their answers to England. It was encouraging to see strong answers on visual arts, material culture, poverty, print culture and popular protest. Answers on gender were sometimes effective, but several lacked the proper conceptual depth, and deployed modern assumptions about gender without engaging with the historiography. Some candidates showed limited understanding of key concepts like theology (essential to answering Q.3), or failed to address the terms of the question. In answering Q.13, for example, it was essential to identify the obstacles to the implementation of the reformation, rather than writing the standard essay about reformation success or failure. Just occasionally a candidate made use of what looked like A level material, which diminished the effectiveness of their argument; students should remember that they cannot always rely on what they may have been taught at school. The strongest answers often showed a thoughtful understanding of the historiography and were able to deploy some primary source material, whilst arguing an imaginative and persuasive case. As ever, candidates should be reminded that whilst a thorough knowledge of the subject is essential, it is equally essential to respond directly to the question, and craft an argument which is both consistent and clear.

(IWA and LW)

#### **BIP 5 - History of the British Isles, 1688-1848**

Thirty-nine candidates sat this paper this year, and the general performance was again encouraging. Seven candidates scored 70 or over, and a further 12 scored 67 or 68. Only two candidates scored below 60. These standards were achieved through good engagement with the set question, and a willingness to frame answers within broad, productive parameters. At the higher end of the scale, the best candidates were prepared to define key terms or concepts precisely, which served as a solid foundation for a disciplined, wide-ranging discussion. Conversely, weaker scripts did not provide such clarity, and their illustrations did not always support the arguments advanced convincingly. In all cases, the position advanced by candidates would have been strengthened by direct engagement with counter-arguments, and students should look to clarify the pace and scale of change over time. More positively, the range of topics attempted was encouraging, with all questions yielding at least one answer. Abolitionism (Qu. 7), Gender (Qu. 14), and Parliamentary Reform (Qu. 3) were very popular with the cohort and elicited some very good answers. There was also a good mix of topics in most scripts, suggesting no obvious bifurcation between political and socio-cultural studies. There was no reason for the examiner to lament the neglect of British and Irish perspectives either, and it is clear that the paper has provided students with a wide range of challenging themes to fire their early studies at Oxford.

(P Gauci)

### **BIP 6 - History of the British Isles, 1830-1951**

50 candidates took this paper. Overall, the standard of answers was high, with only a few candidates receiving marks below 60. Candidates answered a wide range of questions, tackling political, social and cultural topics – though the economic side of the paper was neglected. There were no answers to Q17; it was perhaps also telling that few of the answers to Q1 on the importance of the state's role in reducing poverty mentioned (even if only to reject it) the argument that it is economic growth, rather than the state, that has been critical in poverty reduction. There could also have been more attention paid to the 'four nations' dimension of the paper. Overall, though, there was a pleasing diversity to the topics tackled. By far the most popular topics were the Conservative Party (Q5), the Labour Party (Q7), gender (Qs 10 and 12), and imperialism (Qs 4 and 20), with a strong showing also from questions on poverty and social inequality (Qs 1 and 16) and religion (Q3). The best answers engaged closely with the question and relevant historiography but also backed up their arguments with evidence in the form of telling examples, case studies, statistics or other illustrative material that conveyed to the reader a detailed understanding of the topic under discussion. Weaker answers often lacked the necessary evidence to back up the claims that the essay was advancing or made very general arguments that lacked nuance. The candidates should be congratulated for all the work they put in during a difficult year.

(B Jackson)

### **EUROPEAN AND WORLD HISTORY PAPERS**

#### **EWP 1: 370-900 (The Transformation of the Ancient World)**

This paper was taken by 69 candidates (49 in the Main School and 20 in Joint Schools). The marks ranged widely. 11 students attained a mark of 70 or above; 44 received marks between 60 and 69; and 11 acquired marks between 50 and 59. A further three scripts scored less than 50 marks, with two of these scoring less than 40 (this was largely due to incomplete work). Though there were some very strong scripts, the wider run suggested that students find the paper challenging.

The most popular questions were perennial favourites: the fall of Rome, religious conversion, Viking raiding. (Interestingly, however, the second part of the question on Vikings, 'How diverse were Viking groups?', was the only to attract no responses whatsoever). Both parts of the two-part question on gender attracted considerable interest, including some very strong answers. The best answers across the paper balanced wide-ranging historiographical interests with close attention to particular sources, whether textual or material. Weaker answers relied on assertion, or became bogged down in unsourced narrative detail.

Many students showed an admirable willingness to engage with the historiography, though the frame of reference within which students did so was curiously old-fashioned: Henri Pirenne (d. 1935) was the most referenced author by some distance, followed by Edward Gibbon (d. 1794) and Peter Brown. Stronger candidates showed closer awareness of developments in the twenty-first century, but this was by no means the norm. It is regrettable, for example, that only one candidate answered on the history of the environment or disease. The use of primary sources was patchy: on the one hand, candidates showed a strong willingness to incorporate archaeological, numismatic, and art

historical evidence alongside texts; on the other, source-critical work was often lacking, particularly on texts. Some candidates ranged widely but sacrificed depth and conceptual rigour to do so. The mark of the very best candidates was to adduce a range of evidence from different contexts, while keeping a tight hold on argumentative structure and conceptual clarity.

It is a shame that the questions which focussed specifically on Islamic or Persian history received few answers. That said, stronger candidates frequently discussed Islamic and (to a lesser extent) Persian evidence in their wider, comparative answers. Some students also discussed China, though India was almost never mentioned. Overall, despite these caveats, the geographical range was encouraging and impressive, suggesting that the 'global' elements of the paper are growing in strength.

(David Addison)

### **EWP 2: 1000-1300 (Medieval Christendom and its Neighbours)**

Seventy-two candidates sat this paper (56 single honours school and 16 joint school), of whom 16 produced distinction-level performances. The percentage of distinctions (22%) is roughly in line with last year's profile of marks. As was the case last year, there was also a great deal of mid- to high-2:1 level achievement (30 marks in the range 65-69, 18 in the range 60-64). Just over 10% of aggregate marks fell below 60% (8). As was the case last year, the overall impression gained by the markers was that of a demanding and ambitious paper to which a clear majority candidates of responded with energy and commitment. The markers enjoyed assessing the scripts.

As has been the case in recent years, many students proved very capable of using the specific evidence bases and historiographies they have examined in tutorials and lectures to engage thoughtfully and carefully with the broad terms which are characteristic of the examination questions. The best answers were, for example, willing to unpack what 'bureaucracy' might mean within a medieval polity (q. 8), or how 'authority' (q. 18) could be defined in this period. In general, stronger answers noted that the terms of the question might sometimes be ambiguous, or that source material could be interpreted in multiple ways. It was pleasing to see that students are capable of analysing a wide range of polities and societies across medieval Eurasia and North Africa. Candidates showed themselves able to discuss Capetian France, the Holy Roman Empire, Byzantium, the Almohads, the Seljuk empire, Sicily, the Song dynasty, and others, with precision.

Crusading and heresy proved particularly popular topics. Strong answers on heresy (q.12) were able to distinguish between different heretical groups and discussed questions of geographical spread and variation, as well as – crucially – examining what might constitute a 'threat' and why. The answers on crusading were generally competent, but candidates seemed much more confident in dealing with the First Crusade than later crusades. They should in future be encouraged to think about change (or continuity) in crusading across the period. It was somewhat surprising to see how few candidates took advantage of their knowledge of the papacy to approach a question on ideology.

More generally, candidates are advised to think carefully about their exam essay introductions: length does not necessarily equate to quality; more important is the need to

address the terms of the essay question directly. It is wise to avoid the setting up of strawmen.

This is the final year in which this EWP2 paper will be examined under the title: 'Medieval Christendom and its Neighbours, 1000-1300'. However, this report should be of use for candidates who will be taking the newly titled paper ['Communities, Connections and Confrontations, 1000-1300'] from TT2023 onwards. In recent years 'Medieval Christendom and its Neighbours' has evolved into a paper which allows for both a World and a European approach. The same will be true of the new paper. So from 2023 onwards, candidates can expect questions to continue be framed in broad terms, so that the majority are potentially answerable in either European or World terms.

All this means that in the retitled version as in the existing paper candidates will be successful if they can bring their own specific knowledge, interpretations and evidence bases into nuanced and close conversation with the questions set. This nuanced and close engagement can be achieved in a variety of ways, including astute use of comparison between and within different medieval societies. However, as the markers made clear in last year's report, they are not expecting the impossible. Candidates should not feel obliged to discuss multiple societies in a single essay, unless the question demands it. It is important to remember that an essay which (for example) discusses a state or bureaucracy in one given region can achieve breadth through its chronological range across the 1000-1300 period without introducing other polities. Indeed, trying to address more than one or two polities in a single answer can sometimes make the material unmanageable or obscure the principal argument. Whether approached comparatively or with a focus on a single example, the crucial skill remains that of demonstrating how precise and well-chosen evidence and historiographical interpretation can be deployed to answer the question set.

(Catherine Holmes)

### **EWP 3: 1400-1650 (Renaissance, Recovery and Reform)**

Eighty eight candidates took this paper. The most popular question was 1 (gender and family roles), which attracted answers from 37 candidates. Otherwise, the questions that received the most interest were 6 (art), 2 (seaborne imperialism), 13 (Catholic Reformation), 12 (Protestantism), 7 (printing), 8 (warfare), 9 (humanism), and 8 (encounters and identities), each of which attracted at least 15 answers. Questions 11 (medieval church), 14 (toleration), 15 (deviance), 16 (growth of the state), 18 (rebellion), and 19 (political theory) all received at least 6 answers. Otherwise, all questions were attempted at least once. The general distribution of answers was overwhelmingly focused on Sections A, B, and C, each of which had about 75 answers attempted with only 40 or so answers attempted for Section D.

The best answers to question 1 on gender were those that really engaged with the prompt on 'family roles' and thereby offered something more than a basic account of gender, patriarchy, and the roles of women in the early modern world. Likewise, candidates who performed well on core topics in the paper – printing, deviance, humanism – were able to convey specificity and nuance within larger historical trends. Those who took on conceptual questions for example about the growth of the state or how historians study rebellion tended to show real sophistication in their analysis of the evidence. The very best answers to the question on Protestant theology and Catholic reform showed a sophisticated handling of theological differences between the reformers alongside an ability to differentiate between

the complicated aims and goals of different actors. In some cases, candidates who answered the question about the persecution of deviance managed to construct wide-ranging and incisive arguments that connected the matter of confessional diversity within Christianity to contemporary attitudes about non-Christians including Muslims and Jews.

Candidates appeared to shy away from questions on traditional topics that required them to think differently about the subject, for example the question that incorporated ideas of masculinity into the study of monarchy. Similarly, question 8's invitation to consider 'racial, ethnic and religious identity' in early modern Europe was treated by many candidates as a forum for a general discussion of the European discovery of the New World. Other limits on the performance of candidates were due to their not having engaged closely with the precise terms of the question. The strongest answers to question 15, for example, recognized that the question's invitation to consider whether deviance was driven from above or below invoked vague notions of 'elites' or 'governments' which consequently prevented their arguments from achieving clarity. Similarly, the weakest answers to question 20 tended to talk around the idea of how 'revolutionary' was the military revolution instead of presenting a purposeful account of change over time in the area of warfare in this period.

Across the scripts, there was a sense of candidates working out good answers to questions on the spot, rather than recycling prepared answers. The overall impression was of a very good range of topics tackled and strength across the general field of answers.

(J-P Ghobrial)

#### **EWP 4: (Society, Nation, and Empire 1815-1914)**

EWP 4, being at present the most modern history paper available at prelims, remains the most popular EWP paper. 85 students wrote an exam paper for EWP4 in 2022, roughly 1/3 of the total number of EWP exams sat. As such, this paper should stand as a decent proxy for the performance of each year group as a whole, relative to other year groups. In 2022 students who sat EWP4 earned a median and mean score of 64, with roughly 15% of students earning over a 70. Fewer than 10% of students scored below a 60, and all of them scored in the upper 50s. These figures are broadly in line with historical norms, which hopefully points to a successful readjustment by both tutors and students after the upheaval of Covid.

Many students, as is often the case, struggled to pull essays up from a solid 2:1 to a 1<sup>st</sup>. Above all else this usually came down to how students handled the use of case studies, how they framed the question, and how they structured their response. Anything tutors can do in future to further emphasise these technical skills over rote memorization of historical facts and historiography should lead to higher exam scores, all other things being equal. In particular, students should be firmly directed to justify their framing of the question and their case studies (if they chose to use any). The thought process and technique of creating and expressing these justifications will sharpen students' historical reasoning, which should lead to them producing more refined pieces of work.

Every essay question asked on the exam was answered at least once, which is a credit to the wide range of tuition offered across the Faculty this past year. The top three questions answered were on migration (24), industrialisation (26), and the Scramble for Africa (24). That students seemed to flock towards questions that cut to the core themes of the paper is also, to my mind, a good indication of how well-rounded this paper is. This year I set more questions on imperialism than were set in previous years. Two of the three questions (one on the Scramble for Africa and the other on the popularity of imperial expansion) were



popular, with 24 and 17 answers, respectively. The question on the response of subject populations to empire was not as popular, with only 6 responses. This may show a need for more subaltern perspectives in the paper (looking from imperial peripheries in rather than from imperial capitals out), and also likely underscores a persistent challenge the paper has with incorporating more Central and Eastern European history. The least-answered question ('How and why did different political ideologies use gendered symbolism?') perhaps suffered from requiring a response that needed to be both intensely specific and detailed while also covering a broad geographic and ideological scope. Receiving only one response it was out of line with other questions that explicitly touched on gender, which tended to be more popular (questions about feminism and women's emancipation received 20 and 14 responses, respectively).

In my view the challenge for EWP4 moving forward is two-fold: 1) how to expand its geographical remit, thus providing a richer and more accurate view of the long 19<sup>th</sup> century, without sacrificing time or attention given to its core themes and 2) what role to play when a 'global history' prelims paper is introduced in the coming years. To some extent whether EWP4 becomes a more global paper, including more Americas, African, and Asian history, or shrinks down and becomes a more specialist 'European' paper will depend on the specific tack that any proposed 'global history' prelims paper may take. For now, I hope that the paper will continue to expand its remit. It is very difficult, and sometimes feels ahistorical, to try to discuss social, political, and economic evolution in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries without expressly coming to grips with not only empire, but the broader global social, political, and economic context that shaped European development in this period. (Jonathan Krause)

### **Optional Subject 1: Theories of the State**

Fifty three candidates took this paper. In the main the answers were well done and there were only a few marks below 60. Most candidates focused on single author questions and one of the questions on Hobbes (Q4) was particularly popular. The comparative question Q9 (how far the authors based their theories on an analysis of existing social and economic question) also attracted a number of answers. The best answers were closely engaged with the assigned texts and showed a detailed understanding of the authors' arguments. Some strong answers also related the texts to their intellectual and political contexts in order to illuminate the distinctive contribution made by each author. Weaker answers were more schematic in their knowledge of the texts, giving fairly general outlines of the arguments rather than delving into the more subtle, detailed points. Finally, as with last year, some candidates used the terms 'man' and 'human being' as if they were interchangeable for all four authors, despite their very different views on gender and political participation.

(B Jackson & S Mortimer)

### **Optional Subject 2: Alfred and the Vikings' (new)**

This paper was examined for the first time in 2022. Five candidates sat the paper: one achieved a distinction, three marks between 65 and 69 and no candidate received a marked below 60. The general picture was of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable group of students who engaged well with a fair range of different topics. I was pleased to see nine out of fourteen questions answered, with two receiving three takers each: the archaeology of Viking armies and Alfred's illness. The popularity of these topics reflects the general focus of

candidates' knowledge: people knew a lot about winter camp archaeology and about Asser. The Mercian Register was also familiar to many, but the use of it tended to be a lot less sophisticated than candidates' reading of Asser – it too is a source with aims, biases and perspectives worthy of consideration, not just a mine of factual information. For future years it would be good to see students become proficient with a wider range of the sources; æstel, the Alfred Jewel, the letters of Fulk of Rheims and Pope John, coinage, as well as the Alfredian translations, were all mentioned but in far less detail. Most students were clearly enthused by using material culture as well as textual sources and both political and cultural topics (insofar as such a distinction is meaningful for early medieval history!) were well dealt with. (C O'Brien)

### **Optional Subject 3: Early Gothic France**

Eleven students sat the Early Gothic France paper, with four candidates obtaining a mark of 70 or more. There was a satisfying variety in the choice of questions answered, and only two questions were not attempted by any candidate: q.3 on the difference between Cistercian and Benedictine orders, and q.11 on anxieties about sexual conduct. The most popular questions—by some degree—were those on Gothic architecture (q.1) and the comparison of Peter Abelard and Guibert of Nogent (q.2). As ever, Abbot Suger got a good outing, and proved himself conformable to many situations.

Essays were largely of a good standard. All candidates showed detailed knowledge of the set texts, and noted the debts owed by twelfth-century authors to late antique and patristic figures. The most successful answers were marked by an engagement with questions of genre and audience. In other words, they did not simply mine the set texts for evidence, but considered how those texts were constructed and the intended effect on their readers (or listeners). This is a point of particular importance when discussing a work like *Raoul de Cambrai*, which raises difficult questions of authorship and codification. Several answers rightly emphasised the moral didactic qualities of the set texts; sometimes this commentary would have benefited from greater specificity about what kinds of moral behaviour or virtues were being encouraged or endorsed.

Stronger answers also showed a clear sense of organisation and development across the essay. None of the essays lacked knowledge of the period and authors, but some did suffer from a lack of structure, and paragraphs could be additive rather than essential. Longer essays did not always achieve the highest marks, and shorter answers often proved more effective in answering the question and maintaining control of the discussion. The temptation to bolt on supplementary paragraphs once an argument has already been established is to be avoided.

(P Byrne)

### **Optional Subject 4: The Mongols**

This is now the paper's third running. Twenty candidates sat the exam, five of whom achieved marks of 70 and above, while none were below 60. This examiner was seriously impressed by the range of material and nuance in understanding that candidates displayed, in addressing this large and wide-ranging topic, sources from an array of different historiographical and linguistic traditions and time-periods in relation to the events under discussion. It was pleasing to see that all but one of the fourteen questions had been attempted by at least one candidate. The one question not attempted concerned Master Roger and Kirakos Gandzakets'i, although both sources – especially Master Roger – were

used with relative frequency by candidates in answering other questions. The same applied to two of the three questions that were least answered. Only one person attempted the source-based question on *The Secret History* and two answered the question on Juvaini's *History of the World Conquerors*, but again, both sources were used in the majority of exam papers, suggesting that they had been read and understood by candidates. This suggests a possible lack of confidence when it comes to handling direct questions on sources, given that sources were in fact deployed with considerable skill and convincing knowledge in answering more general questions. It might be worth both tutors and students reflecting on how to prepare for source-based questions, since handling primary sources is one of the key skills that the Optional Subjects hope to develop, in anticipation of Further and Special Subjects at Finals. The most popular question (attempted by nine candidates) concerned the roles of Mongol women in expanding or stabilising imperial hegemony, with the preoccupations of travel writers following a close second with eight attempts, and Mongol attitudes to religion at seven answers. This suggests that candidates were most comfortable with, or most interested, or both, in questions that enabled discussion of Mongol culture – whether directly (women), as something that shaped their actions (religion) or perceived by outsiders (travel narratives).

(A. L. Power)

### **Optional Subject 6: English Chivalry and the French War**

Rowena Archer – AH emailed 9.9.22 and 4.10.22

### **Optional Subject 7: Crime and Punishment in England**

Thirteen students took the paper this year, five of whom achieved distinctions. All candidates answered on a good range of topics, deploying their knowledge of different categories of evidence to good effect across their three answers. The candidates who did best were able to combine discussion of judicial records, chronicles, letters, and literary texts within individual answers, using insights from one genre to question the conclusions we might draw from another. The answers that received lower marks tended to simplify the evidence a little too much, making their inferences and analyses too one dimensional. Many of the exam questions contained evaluative terms or propositions that were open to interpretation. Candidates who justified their interpretations of questions on the basis of knowledge of the sources, or of the secondary literature, or of a theoretical debate in criminology or gender theory (for example) were able to create sharp tools for analysis. If candidates interpreted questions in a particular way without explaining the value or utility of what they were doing, this felt like more of a blunt instrument.

Ian Forrest

### **Optional Subject 8: Nature and Art in the Renaissance**

The Optional Subject Nature and Art in the Renaissance had 16 students this academic year (2021-2022), out of which one was an external exchange student who did not sit the exam. The marks included two first class, seven upper 2:1, five lower 2:1 and one upper 2:2. A range of questions were attempted, with one (on the comparison between cabinets of curiosities and modern museums) being particularly popular: 8 students addressed that. At the other end no one attempted the question on automata, which is something to consider in regards to the secondary bibliography. Popular questions included those on cartography

(5) and on Palissy (5), with the questions on catalogues of discovery (4), reverence toward the past (4), the demise of the Aristotelian worldview (4) and alchemy as science (4) coming right after. Only two picked up the purely history of art question on Francesca's Flagellation, and the Leonardo Da Vinci question attracted only 1 answer, as did the one on medicine and on views of nature. This will be taken into account in revising the paper.

Most students seem to have embraced the broad view of the arts taught in the paper and in their responses tried to address more than the visual arts angle. The answers display vivid interest in cabinets of curiosities, Palissy's lifecasting technique, cartography and alchemy. At the other end there were no outstanding answers on the Alberti quote on architecture, painting and mathematics, and the question on the reverence toward the past seemed to lack truly insightful responses. The outstanding answers seem to come from cartography, Palissy, the demise of the Aristotelian worldview and alchemy.

There were some signs that seem to bode well for the future of the optional subject. One was the openness to other arts than the traditional post-Enlightenment ones (painting, architecture, sculpture). Another was that students seem to have interacted well with some of the overall themes of the paper (naturalism, empiricism, discovery, social mobility). Most importantly, there was positive and thoughtful engagement with historiography by a good number of students, who manifested true interest in problems of classifying the arts, defining the Renaissance and understanding the evolving relationship between art and science in the era.

(Georgiana Hedesan)

#### **Optional Subject 9: Witch-craft and Witch-hunting in Early Modern Europe**

18 candidates took this paper. The standard was high, with four distinctions, and fourteen in the range 62-69. Candidates for the most part attended closely to the questions asked, and gave thoughtful and well-supported answers. The strongest candidates were able to draw extensively from the set texts to support their arguments, and future candidates should be encouraged to become as closely acquainted as possible with the details of these set texts. Less successful questions were those which did not pay sufficient attention to the terms of the question, or gave a disorganized or unclear response, or failed to provide supporting evidence for their assertions. An awareness of the full geographical scope of this paper was helpful, and the stronger candidates were able to bring in evidence from places like Muscovy, Ireland and Spain as well as focusing on the more commonly cited developments in England, Scotland, France and the Empire.

(Lucy Wooding)

#### **Optional Subject 10: Making England Protestant, 1558-1642**

8 candidates took the paper, of which 3 (37.5%) were awarded Distinctions. 2 candidates received marks below 60. The 24 essays were pleasingly widely spread across the paper: only 2 of the 14 questions received no responses (printed sermons; relations with other European churches). The most popular questions were 12 (uniformity) with 5 takers and 13 (the crisis of 1640-2) with four takers. Almost all candidates worked hard to establish strong and clear arguments. The best answers displayed a consistent and detailed engagement with the set texts. Less impressive ones tended merely to name-check set texts without really showing why they mattered, or opening up fruitful areas of ambiguity and interpretation. Overall, this run of scripts was long on solid basic competence, and short on really high-end performance, though of course the sample size is very small.

(Grant Tapsell)

### **Optional Subject 11: Conquest and Colonization: Spain and America in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century**

Conquest and Colonization: Spain and America in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century was taken by 33 candidates. Seven of these were awarded marks of 70 or above, while three received marks of under 60. Two questions attracted very large numbers of answers: almost two-thirds of scripts answered question 10 on intellectual debates, and over half answered question 7 on religious conversion. There was a reasonable spread of answers across the rest of the paper, although questions on Diego de Landa, women and race received no answers. The latter were intended, in part, as indicating dimensions to the field that teachers and convenors of the paper may wish to address in the future. The final question, on indigenous resistance, produced only one response. It was good to see some in-depth engagement and critique of particular sources, especially perhaps in essays on the Florentine Codex. Here, and more significantly in question 1, hard thinking about what counts as an 'indigenous source' was rewarded. In general, a greater awareness of recent historiography and debates would have enhanced the quality of some answers, for example around the role of indigenous agency (for Q 3 on 'wars of liberation'), on the scale of human sacrifice ( Q 2), interpretations of the encounter between Pizarro and Atahualpa (Q 4), the impact of disease and both for and against the hypothesis of supernatural associations surrounding the Spanish. Most scripts showed rather strong engagement with the paper and there were some outstanding and creative answers.

(Alan Strathern)

### **Optional Subject 12: Revolution and Empire in France, 1789-1815**

There were 24 takers for the paper. It was encouraging to see all 14 of the questions on the paper tackled by at least one student, showing the rich range of interests of the students taking this paper. The most popular questions reflect the nature of the set sources and tutorial teaching no doubt: **Q9 Was the Terror driven by fear?** was taken by 22 students; **Q1 Did Sieyès's *What is the Third Estate?* contain a 'rhetoric of bourgeois revolution' (SEWELL)?** was taken by 15; and **Q. 6 How responsible was Louis XVI for his own downfall?** by 8. There were also four less popular topics with only one student taking them, which may offer suggestions for future revisions to the teaching or set text provision: these were Q. 2 on Burke, Q. 7 on the federalist revolts and Paris-province relations, Q. 8 on the Constitution of 1793, and Q. 13 on the Napoleonic Empire.

There was a range in quality in responses: three students were marked between 55-59; eight between 60-64; seven between 65-69; and six between 70-75. What distinguished stronger scripts from weaker scripts was (1) the close, analytical engagement with the set sources to support the argument, rather than no mention of sources or simply 'name-dropping' sources for illustration without enough analysis; (2) integration of key historiography, particularly on the question regarding the Terror, to show how the stakes of the question have been vividly debated; (3) covering a broad chronological and thematic range in responses (particularly in questions with a stipulated date range in the title) rather than focusing on a narrow range of points or narrow date range in the period 1789-1815.

(William Clement)

### **Optional Subject 13: Women, Gender and the Nation: Britain 1789-1825**

Seven students sat this paper at the end of Trinity term 2022, three of whom received distinctions. No candidates received below a 60. There was good engagement across the paper: all but three of the fourteen questions (6, 7 and 8) were attempted, and candidates explored a wide range of topics. The most popular questions related to domesticity (middle-class domesticity and missionary domesticity) and to the public's relationship to monarchy. Most answers were driven by clear and independent lines of argument. All showed a good awareness of and engaged critically with the primary sources (novels, caricatures, autobiographies, political tracts, moralising tales, memoirs, parliamentary debates etc) discussed in this course. The strongest answers drew creatively and thoughtfully from across the various primary sources to illustrate and bolster nuanced, sophisticated arguments; engaged critically with secondary sources; and showed a good awareness of historiographical debate. The weakest answers failed to stay focused on the question at hand, required greater conceptual precision, had little to say about historiography and/or were lacking in detailed evidence to support their claims.

(Kiran Mehta)

**Optional Subject 14: The Romance of the People: the Folk Revival, 1760-1814**

5 students took this paper in 2022. Of these, 1 received a first-class mark, 3 obtained a 2:1, and 1 got a 2:2. Candidates chose widely from the questions available. The best answers were wide-ranging yet precise, and frequently discussed the relevant topic from different perspectives or on different analytical levels. These answers also made effective use of source texts, and some showed awareness of the methodological challenges of using folklore as a historical source. Among the slightly less successful but still good answers, a number made valid general points, but provided little concrete evidence; others confused representation with experience. The weaker answers advanced wrong or irrelevant facts, were sometimes based on (mistaken) guessing, and they often were ineffectively organized.

(Julia Mannherz)

**Optional Subject 15: Haiti and Louisiana: the Problem of Revolution in an Age of Slavery**

Twenty-three candidates sat this paper, with one of them taking a re-written paper at the end of the summer vacation having missed the original examination. Seven scripts were awarded marks of 70 or above, and two scripts marks under 60. Candidates offered answers to a wide range of questions on the paper, covering all aspects of a broad syllabus, though in general candidates had focused more on 'Haiti' than 'Louisiana', and sometimes detailed knowledge of developments in the United States and its territories lagged behind knowledge shown elsewhere on the paper. Some candidates were able to integrate a sound knowledge of recent historical writing with their understanding of the primary source material, and offered substantive and convincing answers. Candidates that did not have this historiographical depth, or who had only a superficial understanding of the source material, struggled to offer convincing answers across all three questions. Relatively few candidates engaged with the set texts in depth, preferring to make more general observations, but the very best candidates impressed with their knowledge of detail. Slightly disappointing was the fact that candidates struggled to set the Haitian Revolution into its Atlantic context (though a small number of candidates, well versed in the relevant recent works did do so).

(Nicholas Cole)

**Optional Subject 16: Imperial Republic: The United States and Global Imperialism, 1867-1914**

12 candidates took the paper, of which 2 were awarded distinctions, but the majority of candidates (10) achieved marks of 65 and above. I was impressed that most scripts showed signs of distinction-level work on at least one answer and with the high level of invention and engagement with primary texts throughout. Candidates again tended toward cultural topics, which reflects the breadth of visual, literary, and popular printed sources on the course and the results were often impressive, especially when candidates made use of material they had researched for class presentations. The best answer took on thematic questions and drew lateral connections between texts. Answers were weakest when candidates overlooked the diversity of imperial experience across the United States imperial archipelago, quoted sources without considering provenance, or did not consider the views of historians in otherwise sound analysis. Nevertheless, I found this an impressive and engaging set of scripts, demonstrating the considerable investment and preparation of the candidates.

(S Tuffnell)

**Optional Subject 17: The New Woman in Britain and Ireland, c. 1880-1920**

Eight students took this paper in 2021-22. Unusually, there was only one distinction this year, but the other candidates generally produced good essays. All candidates worked well with the set texts: the best answers used the sources to outline a number of contemporary views as well as to reinforce their own arguments. There was a pleasing absence of long quotations for the sake of it and essays were sharper as a result. Candidates tended to favour social and cultural questions over political ones, though the best essay I read was on women's political rights. The candidates who understood their indivisibility tended to write the strongest essays. Few candidates engaged in much detail with Ireland, but a number wrote suggestively about race and empire. Those students who could range more broadly across the geographical and chronological range of the paper tended to produce the best essays.

(S Paseta)

**Optional Subject 18: The Rise and Crises of European Socialisms, 1883-1921**

Eight candidates sat the Socialisms Optional, four of whom scored Distinction level marks. There was no mark below 65. As there was no mark awarded above 70, this represents a high level of knowledge and understanding though not, this year, a paper that really maximised the available mark range. Candidates did well in integrating the set texts with contextual information drawn from secondary sources to produce convincing analyses. To push higher in the Distinction range a greater attentiveness to the various types of Set Texts and discussion of their nature would be useful. Equally, discussion of problems seen at the level of the International should be mixed with specific national and regional case studies.

(M. Mulholland)

**Optional Subject 19: 1919: Remaking the World**

Overall the performance of students on this paper was very pleasing. Of the 23 Candidates eight received distinction marks and no candidate received a mark below 59, an indicator of

high competence all around. All but one of the questions was tackled by at least one candidate and the answers generally showed an excellent grasp of the primary documents and a good understanding of most of the key historiographical debates. But there was one question on the paper which apparently caused students significant problems – the question that asked about whether minority rights were compatible with self-determination. This seemed to be universally misunderstood as a question principally about control of Mandates and/or the thwarted Racial Equality Clause which although not entirely irrelevant to the question missed what should have been the obvious focus of contemporary controversy which was the European minority treaties (and to some extent exploitation of Middle Eastern minority issues such as in Syria). Part of this might be down to students applying the contemporary meaning on the definition of ‘minority’ rather than the historical one of 1919. It may also be a problem with the way we structure our classes and tutorials. Candidates were not heavily penalised as this appeared to be a systemic problem which the convenors should try to address, particularly making sure that students are aware of Caroline Fink, Mark Mazower and other important historiography on this. Set against this there were some really very good answers covering a full range of other subjects from women’s activism to deep technical discussion of high diplomacy. The lack of answers on humanitarianism this year was sad and again something we may want to consider in our teaching.

(Adrian Gregory)

### **Optional Subject 20: Living with the Enemy: the Experience of the Second World War in Europe**

This course was taught and examined for the second time in Trinity 2022. The course, which was taught for the first time in 2021, went through a light touch revision in the light of that experience. It has continued to be popular with students, who responded very positively to the opportunity to engage with the primary texts which draw them directly into a variety of subjective experiences of Europeans during the Second World War, almost all of them new, unfamiliar and thought-provoking. The experience of teaching the paper continues to be a very positive one, and it feels like a good addition to our provision of Optional Subjects. Numbers of students were capped at 12 (because of the limited number of postholders available to teach it), and students generally performed well in the exams, with 2 Distinctions, and 9 Passes of 60 or above (one student withdrew for personal reasons before the term).

Nick Stargardt

### **Optional Subject 21: Viewing Communism: Cinema and Everyday Life in Eastern Europe, 1944-89**

8 students sat the exam, with three getting marks of 70 or above (70, 70, 74). None had results below 60. I found the overall quality of essays considerably improved over last year measured against the key issues raised in last year’s examiner’s report. Specifically, students showed a better ability to articulate the value of films as historical sources and all essays referenced one or more films along with other set texts from the reading list. The essays also showed a better grasp of key historical events, problems, and interpretations related to the topic. I suspect this improvement reflects, at least in part, the implementation of a conscious teaching strategy based on last year’s report.

(Katherine Lebow)



### **Approaches to History**

Approaches to History is a big paper, both in terms of the number of students who take it (160 this year) and in terms of the range of subjects that it covers. It is a challenging paper for first year students and this was reflected in the range of marks awarded by the examiners. Nonetheless, the general standard of answers was high. The examiners were impressed by the quality of work that students were able to produce across a wide range of topics and methods. Strong Approaches answers showed a firm theoretical or conceptual grasp of the topic under discussion and were then able to examine in detail some specific historical cases that illuminated this theoretical framework. Weaker answers lacked sufficient theoretical framing or detailed investigation of case studies or both.

This was the first year in which the new Approaches section Histories of Race was examined. The examiners were impressed by the standard of answers to this new section, which at their best added fresh and innovative perspectives to the Approaches scripts. Students and tutors are to be congratulated for the hard work they have put into this new section of the paper, which on this showing should be judged a great success.

(B. Jackson on behalf of the Approaches markers)

### **Historiography: Tacitus to Weber**

96 candidates took the paper: 76 main school and 20 joint school. Marks of 70 or above: 17; marks of 60-69: 70; marks below 60: 7. Papers were largely good, and a pleasingly high number were very good to outstanding; happily, very few were weak. The whole array of authors covered by the paper attracted candidates to write lucidly and to the point, although Ranke remains the least favoured author in turns of responses. It remains the case that some candidates actively choose to reheat tutorial essays, and this was especially clear in answers to the questions on Tacitus. The majority of candidates did answer the question that was actually raised rather than the one they wanted to be there, but there is still a habit of mind that leads candidates to tweak the questions into the territory where they feel most comfortable. The strongest answers were often those concerning Augustine and Weber, although some original and sharp thinking was evident in responses to the questions on Machiavelli. There was a tendency to deliver pat answers on Gibbon with surprisingly more originality being given to answers on Macaulay, which were generally better than they have been of late. Answers on Gibbon and Macaulay were often seemingly less aware of the secondary literature than those devoted to Tacitus, Augustine, Machiavelli, and Weber. The best candidates were attentive to issues of style and argumentation as well as to the more conventional aspects of historiography. There was a good sense of the need to read texts in their contexts in play across the majority of answers. The comparative questions sorted out the sheep from the goats; they need to be thought about properly and deeply rather than used as a means of avoiding writing a dedicated answer to a third specific historian.

(Brian Young)

### **Quantification in History**

In 2021/2022 seven students sat Quantification in History; 4 from History and Politics and 3 from History main school. As last year, History and Economics students were excluded from

the course because of overlap with their Economics curriculum. The results were generally good, with 2 students achieving distinction grades and 4 awarded 65 or above. The average was 67.5 and the median was 67 which is a very strong overall performance. One student had a weaker performance but still passed. Attendance at classes was very consistent as we returned to in-person teaching. Students were able to ask questions and contribute to discussion more easily than during the online teaching years. As in previous years, the exam paper included a mixture of definitional questions, practical application of statistical tests to historical data and short essays on sources and methods. There was a substantial appendix with the required formulae.

As always, there were some arithmetic errors but most students had a very good grasp of how to organise the data into a format that allowed the application of a range of statistical tests. They were also asked to interpret regression results from journal articles and SPSS output and this was generally well done. The weaker performances on individual questions usually arose from too brief interpretation, not showing all the steps in the work (so that arithmetic errors could not be distinguished and they didn't demonstrate understanding of the nature of the test) or errors in accepting/rejecting the null hypothesis. The strongest answers demonstrated a deep understanding of the nature of the test and its significance, the strengths and weaknesses of particular sources of quantified historical evidence and were able to interpret the results and suggest extensions to further research.

(Catherine Schenk)

#### **Foreign Texts: Einhard and Asser**

5 candidates sat this paper. A majority demonstrated a very good balance of close textual analysis and broader historical contextualization. The weakest script suffered from over-generalization, the strongest (and the one marked as first-class) appreciated how individual terms and phrases can be used to open up broader and more complex historiographical debates. A wide range of gobbets and essays were attempted, with no obvious preferences or omissions.

(M. Kempshall)

#### **Foreign Texts: Machiavelli**

(Not requested)

#### **Foreign Texts: Meinecke and Kehr**

Seven candidates took this paper across Michaelmas 2021 and Hilary 2022. (Note: two other students left the paper at the end of Michaelmas and decided not to sit the prelims examination.) Of these, four took the paper for History and three for Joint Schools. The overall quality was very good. The spread of final marks was as follows: 70-79: 3; 60-69: 4.

All students commented on gobbet 1-(f), and four students chose to comment on both gobbets 1-(c) and 1-(g). Each gobbet was commented on at least twice. Cumulatively, the gobbets section was good, and the students all exhibited a strong understanding of the German language. All students were able to identify and discuss pertinent themes, and to contextualise the gobbets effectively. Strong students were moreover able to offer detailed analysis alongside the in-depth discussion of a passage's historical relevance, and to link it to the historiography.

Questions 2 (on Meinecke's discussion of post-WWI Germany) received no answers. The most popular questions were Question 3 and Question 6. Five students opted to answer Question 3, which was about the significance Meinecke attributes to the *Bürgertum*. Four students chose to comment on Question 6, which compared the ways Friedrich Meinecke and Eckart Kehr each take class into account in their work. Two students answered Question 4, about dualities in Kehr's argument, taking very different approaches. Question 5, about Kehr's analysis of German naval expansion, also received two answers, both of which thematised the social and political parameters Kehr engages with in this regard. Finally, one student commented on the extent to which Meinecke's and Kehr's historical perspectives each reflect broader anxieties dominating their present, which was Question 7.

In general, the 'Meinecke and Kehr' exams demonstrate a very good foundation in the two core texts. For the most part, the students were able to showcase detailed analysis of the texts, their historical context, and the historiography surrounding the German 'Sonderweg' theory. Tutors and lecturers teaching this paper might pay particular attention to how all of these various elements connect. I think what makes this paper challenging and interesting is the multi-levelled connections students are asked to draw between the core Meinecke and Kehr texts, and between pre- and post-WWII German history and historiography, and then also between diverging ideas related to 'Sonderweg', specifically.

(K. Friege)

#### **Foreign Texts: Tocqueville: *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*.**

This examination was competently treated by the seventeen candidates who sat this exam. No candidate failed the examination, while three candidates obtained clear first-class marks. Eleven candidates obtained 2.1 while three candidates obtained 2.2. Candidates answered a narrow range of gobbets in question 1, with most candidates answering 1a), 1c), and 1f). A small number of candidates offered commentaries on 1d) and 1f). Most commentaries were competent, though an important number of candidates failed in their commentaries to engage with the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> C historiography on questions raised in the gobbets. Some candidates devoted too much time to analysing Tocqueville's vocabulary rather than engage directly with the questions raised by the gobbets. On the whole, the gobbets might have been treated more rigorously.

Of the remaining questions, most candidates answered questions 2, 3, and 5. Some candidates answered question 4 with very few treating either question 6 or 7. Answers to questions 2 and 3 were generally competent, whereas most candidates were unable to think imaginatively about question 5, choosing instead to argue that *L'Ancien Régime* was either a political work or an historical one, with some arguing that it was both. The question of whether history might itself be political was not raised by any candidate.

On balance, the marks for this paper fell within what one would normally expect.

(Michael Drolet)

#### **Foreign Texts: Trotsky**

(Not requested)

#### **Foreign Texts: Vicens Vives**

Eleven candidates took the paper (8 for History and 3 for Joint Schools). The overall quality was impressive. The spread of final marks was as follows: 70-79: 5; 60-69: 6.

There were no final marks below 65. Candidates were generally able to locate the gobbets, while the quality and focus of their comments were more variable. However, the average mark that students got for their gobbets was in line with their general performance. Candidates answered four questions out of six. The two systematically avoided were about Vicens Vives's critique of institutional history (q. 5) and his attitudes towards Salazarism (q. 6). Most of the students attempted the question about Vicens Vives's interaction with foreign scholars (q. 2) and that about Vicens Vives's legacy (q. 7). Of the two remaining questions, one concerning the place of Catalonia in Vicens Vives's historiography (q. 4) was attempted by two candidates, and the other about the treatment of modern Spain's political crisis in the *Aproximación a la historia de España* (q. 3) by one. (Giuseppe Marcocci)

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