Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Thursday 23 May 2024 – Morning

A Level History A

Y310/01 The Development of the Nation State: France 1498–1610

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

You must have:
- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS
- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

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

ADVICE
- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

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SECTION A

Read the **two** passages and answer Question 1.

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

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of Henry IV's achievements. **[30]**

Passage A

With the benefit of hindsight, we may conclude that the reappearance of civil strife in the decades after Henry's death was predictable. During his reign, Henry had not sufficiently reformed the state as to remove the potential for violent resistance to the crown. He had not broken the aristocracy, merely bought off its more troublesome leaders. In the Edict of Nantes, the religious question had been addressed, but not solved. Likewise, the government and administration of the realm had been overhauled, but not radically reconstructed. The powers of the *parlements* remained untrimmed, and provincial estates were still able to defy royal instructions. Thus the possibility of rebellion remained and would continue to do so until absolutist rule could be established in full. However, he had neither the opportunity nor the resources to impose absolutist monarchy in full. His achievement could only be a more modest one; to renew rather than reform. There is thus little in the work of either Henry IV or Sully to suggest a major redirection of policy. Impetus was given instead to rebuilding the authority of the crown along the traditional lines of French monarchy. It may well be that by breathing new life into already-existing institutions, Henry revitalised government and made it capable of meeting the challenges of the seventeenth century. His contribution should be seen in narrow terms: restoring to the crown what had been lost in the civil wars.

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

Passage B

Henry IV, the first Bourbon king, takes his place in French history as the monarch who halted the decline which France had experienced since 1562. In the process, he showed great concern for the welfare of his subjects and restored political and social order to the kingdom. Above all else, he put the monarchy on a firm footing economically and enhanced the authority of the crown, paving the way for the absolutism of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. There is little doubt that Henry achieved a great deal in a short period of time, although his reputation was heightened by the fact that he became a royal martyr at the hands of Ravaillac and through the vastly inflated picture of him offered in Sully's memoirs written in 1611.

Unquestionably, the finest achievement of Henry's short reign was the restoration of royal finances. Thanks in large part to Sully, there was a budgetary surplus by the end of Henry's reign. A shift towards indirect taxation, an elimination of past debts and innovative reforms limiting corruption, all contributed to a steady financial base.

There can be little doubt that Henry did much to raise the prestige and status of the monarchy and he should be praised for the way he appeased the League nobles in the 1590s and unified the country in a war against Spain in 1595. Moreover, both the Edict of Nantes and the Peace of Vervins came at the right time and Henry skilfully played a middle line between Huguenot toleration and Catholic desires for unity which brought a sustained period of peace. Few unified aristocratic revolts occurred during Henry's reign.

A. Armstrong, The development of the Nation State: France 1498–1610, published in 2009.

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SECTION B

Answer any **two** questions.

2* ‘The authority of the French monarchy was at its lowest point during the reign of Henry III.’

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1498 to 1610? **[25]**

3* To what extent did religion contribute to the stability of France in the period from 1498 to 1610? **[25]**

4* ‘The Habsburg-Valois wars (1498–1559) had a greater impact on French stability and unification than the Wars of Religion (1562–1598).’

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1498 to 1610? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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