Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Thursday 23 May 2024 – Morning

A Level History A

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

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

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

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 the reasons for the Salem witch trials. **[30]**

Passage A

Why did this one episode of witchcraft trials in Salem attain such massive proportions? For example, in the sheer quantity of persons involved. The early 1690s seem to have been a time of extreme anxiety in New England. The difficulties experienced during the preceding fifteen years had added up to an almost intolerable sum. The wars were more devastating, the epidemic illnesses more prevalent and the constitutional changes more unsettling than in any earlier period of the region's history. It was not hard to see in all this a general movement of God's will against New England.

There were also powerful undercurrents of social change. The growth of commerce, the signs of a more cosmopolitan spirit and the increasing strength of a merchant class: these were key elements in a process of transformation.

So it was that the history of Salem in the closing decades of the seventeenth century expressed a deep clash of interests. Both civil and religious experience were infected by faction and the witchcraft trials of the 1690s were simply the climax in a long drama of local disagreement. Almost without exception it was the Villagers who played the roles of 'accuser' and/or 'victim' and the Townspeople who were cast as 'witches'.

John P. Demos, Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England, published in 1982.

Passage B

Social and economic tensions within Salem Village resulted in the witch hunt of 1692. There was a deep rift in Salem Village between those who supported the ministry of Samuel Parris as well as the witch hunt, and those who objected to or withheld support from Parris and the pursuit of witches. Salem Village's factional strains were rooted in religious tensions.

There was a sharp division between church members, strongly associated with their minister, Samuel Parris, and non-church members, who dominated the anti-Parris committees of 1691–1693 and signed the petition requesting Parris be removed from his position.

Although Salem Village's turmoil over its church might not account for events elsewhere in the region, Salem Village's long standing religious tensions seem likely to have contributed to the initial afflictions in Parris' own household and to the conclusion they were caused by agents of the Devil. Once evidence came to light that the Devil's agency was not limited to Parris' household or to Salem, but was designed to destroy the whole Puritan community, some religious and secular leaders became determined to root out the Devil's servants, and the witch hunt became widespread.

Richard B Latner, The Salem Witchcraft Site, published after 2009.

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SECTION B

Answer any **two** questions.

2* ‘Economic causes were always more important than religious ones in the growth in persecution of witches in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.’

How far do you agree? **[25]**

3* To what extent did the geography of the witchcraze remain the same in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? **[25]**

4* ‘Torture was the most frequent response of the authorities to witchcraft in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.’

How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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