3.9 The Ridolfi, Throckmorton and Babington Plots, 1571-86: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Give the year in which the Babington Plot was discovered in England.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Name the English conspirator whose arrest and interrogation in November 1583 exposed the Throckmorton Plot, revealing plans for a French-backed invasion to free Mary, Queen of Scots.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

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3 Explain why Catholic and Spanish support was important for attempts to overthrow Elizabeth I in the period 1571-1586.

You may use the following in your answer:
- the financial and military resources Spain could provide
- the Pope's authority and the support of continental Catholics

You must also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 3 is 12 marks)

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4 'Walsingham's intelligence work, rather than Mary's own behaviour, was the decisive factor in ending the major Catholic plots against Elizabeth between 1571 and 1586.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:
- the role of intercepted ciphers and double agents in the Babington Plot
- the way Mary served as a focus for conspirators despite being under house arrest

You must also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 4 is 16 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.9 The Ridolfi, Throckmorton and Babington Plots, 1571-86: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

1586 **B1**

Answer: 1586

Question 2

Francis Throckmorton **B1**

Answer: Francis Throckmorton

Question 3

Level 1 Identifies one or two basic reasons why foreign Catholic support mattered, with little or no supporting detail or explanation. **1-3**

Level 2 Identifies and begins to explain some reasons, supported by relevant detail. **4-6**

Level 3 Explains several reasons clearly, supported by accurate and relevant detail and some analysis of consequences. **7-9**

Level 4 Explains in a well-developed and analytical way why foreign Catholic and Spanish support was important, with precise and accurate detail and clear links between reasons and consequences. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- Spain under Philip II could provide money and the promise of military invasion forces, and conspirators such as Ridolfi sought Spanish troops to land in England as part of a plan to seize key positions and place Mary on the throne.
- The Pope's authority and endorsement could legitimise the conspirators and encourage Catholics in England and on the Continent to commit resources, giving plots a wider religious and political framework beyond a few isolated conspirators.
- Spanish naval and diplomatic pressure could deter English responses and coordinate landings or diversions elsewhere, making a plot more than a domestic uprising and raising the stakes for Elizabeth's government.
- Foreign support also allowed conspirators to imagine sustaining a new regime, paying troops and rewarding supporters, rather than relying only on uncertain homegrown backing, which made plots more dangerous in intent even if they often failed in practice.
- However, relying on foreign help also increased conspirators' dependence on continental timetables and on the goodwill of foreign rulers whose priorities were not identical to English Catholics, a factor that sometimes limited conspirators' effectiveness.

Question 4

Level 1 Shows limited relevant knowledge and offers only a simple, unsupported judgement on the statement. **1-4**

Level 2 Shows some relevant knowledge and explains a few factors, but the argument is limited and the judgement is only partly supported. **5-8**

Level 3 Shows good knowledge and explains a range of factors on both sides, reaching a supported judgement with some analysis of connections. **9-12**

Level 4 Shows precise, well-selected knowledge and analyses a range of factors in a balanced way, reaching a sustained and fully supported judgement with clear analytical links and accurate use of specialist terms. **13-16**

Indicative content:

- For Walsingham decisive: his interception and deciphering of ciphers, the use of double agents such as Gilbert Gifford, and careful entrapment led directly to clear documentary evidence in the Babington Plot which made prosecution possible.
- For Walsingham decisive: his network uncovered the Ridolfi and Throckmorton conspiracies early, allowing the government to act before plots could gain momentum, showing systematic intelligence as the common factor in foiling these attempts.
- For Mary decisive: Mary Queen of Scots provided a dynastic and religious focus that motivated conspirators and attracted foreign support, so her presence in England kept the threat alive and had to be addressed politically and legally.
- Against Mary decisive: Mary was often under strict control and limited in her capacity to coordinate; it was her correspondence and willingness or carelessness in communication that allowed Walsingham to gather the evidence used against conspirators, meaning her behaviour mattered but only in combination with intelligence work.
- Balanced points: both factors interacted, since Mary as a figurehead made plots meaningful and Walsingham's methods turned that meaning into prosecutable treason, and other factors such as international politics and the weakness of conspiratorial support in England also shaped outcomes.
- Judgement: a strong answer argues that Walsingham's intelligence was the most immediately decisive practical factor in exposing and stopping plots, but that without Mary as a focus the plots would have lacked coherence and international appeal, so both were important in different ways.

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