

**OXFORD UNIVERSITY HISTORY APTITUDE TEST 2019**  
**MARKING SCHEME**

*The challenge*

The challenge is to read the text sensitively and perceptively, and to write a relevant, well-organised response.

*General remarks*

Markers should allow for the fact that this document contains a considerable amount of matter and should not expect candidates' answers to be comprehensive in coverage. (The 'supplementary notes for markers' refer to some of the areas that candidates may choose to focus on, but should not be treated as a checklist of points they are expected to cover.) Markers should also allow for the fact that this is a complex document, reflecting forms of power relations that candidates are unlikely to have encountered before, and which are not readily decoded in any case. Markers should therefore reward candidates who are prepared to engage with the document's ambiguities and gaps and draw reasonable inferences from the text within a broad spectrum of possibility, without drawing conclusions that are overly rigid. Candidates who draw on external knowledge or make assumptions based on such knowledge should not be penalized for doing so, but equally should not be rewarded for this.

*Higher level indicators*

- historical insight and perceptiveness
  - o displays sensitivity to the general circumstances in which the document was made and transmitted
  - o registers that it represents a limited, partisan account of Portuguese rule in Ceylon
  - o therefore expresses conclusions with suitable caution
  - o grasps that the document nevertheless has the potential to illuminate power relationships
  - o sees that power is contested, manifested and enacted in complex ways, and at different levels
  - o contains evidence of close engagement with the text and a willingness to draw plausible historical inferences from it
  - o displays willingness to probe problems and to raise questions about the complexities of power relations
- coverage and use of evidence
  - o covers a reasonable range of material efficiently
  - o uses well-chosen example to illustrate argument and analysis
  - o successfully identifies the principal contenders for power and describes their relationships with close reference to the text
  - o differentiates clearly between what the text says and what may reasonably be deduced from it
  - o captures and epitomises material independently using their own words
- shape, structure and style
  - o answers the question directly
  - o maintains a close analytical focus on power relationships
  - o organises the material coherently into thematically-arranged paragraphs
  - o selects material from different parts of the passage to illustrate themes
  - o makes selective and pertinent use of quotation

- writes lucidly and precisely

*Lower level indicators*

- historical insight and perceptiveness
  - fails to reflect on the circumstances in which the document was written and transmitted, or the implications of this for interpreting it
  - is overly negative about the text's potential to generate historical insight
  - tends to be more descriptive than analytical
  - argues too inflexibly, failing to register uncertainty or to detect complexity or nuance in the text
- coverage and use of evidence
  - is narrowly focussed, either devoting too much time to a small number of points or part of the document
  - consistently fails to use well-chosen, specific examples to illustrate the argument
  - fails to identify the principal contenders for power or to provide a sustained analysis of power relationships between them
  - treats the text uncritically, accepting its claims as truths or objective statements of fact
  - fails to differentiate clearly between what the text says and how it may be interpreted
  - spends too much time expressing moral judgment or indignation (e.g. about colonial oppression or the practice of slavery)
- shape, structure and style
  - fails to engage with the specific terms of the question
  - depends too heavily on the shape of the passage to structure an answer
  - makes excessive and unreflective use of direct quotation from the passage
  - does not write clearly

*Marking scheme*

**33-40 marks:** An impressive, well-organised, balanced answer that engages intelligently and perceptively with the passage, hitting a predominance of the higher-level indicators and few if any of the lower level indicators.

**23-32 marks:** A good to very good answer, which answers the question in a critically engaged way, but which hits some of the lower level indicators as well as some higher-level indicators.

**13-22 marks:** A less sophisticated answer, which hits more of the lower- than higher-level indicators.

**0-12 marks:** A basic answer, which hits a predominance of lower-level indicators.

## OXFORD UNIVERSITY HISTORY APTITUDE TEST 2019

### SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES FOR MARKERS

#### *The text*

The rubrics tell us that the document was drafted by a Portuguese man named Duarte Teixeira who was in the service of King Bhuvaneka Bahu, and that it was intended to be carried to King João in Lisbon by Duarte Teixeira himself, together with a Sri Lankan ambassador, Sri Ramaraksa Pandita. The document generally refers to Bhuvaneka Bahu in the third person, but in paragraph 10 the king appears to speak in the first person. This suggests that Duarte Teixeira and Bhuvaneka Bahu worked closely together to formulate the text. The extract concludes by asking João to appoint Duarte Teixeira to the main Portuguese official post on the island. His involvement therefore went beyond the role of a messenger and translator, for he also had a significant personal interest in the letter's content. The document may therefore faithfully articulate some of Bhuvaneka Bahu's concerns and grievances, but it remains a partisan description of affairs in Ceylon, not least because both of its authors had something to gain from listing their perceptions of the problems with local Portuguese activity.

#### *Long-distance communication and law-making*

Bhuvaneka Bahu repeatedly asks João to issue decrees for promulgation in Ceylon. We are not told how long it took to travel from Ceylon to Portugal but we may safely assume that it was a long journey, and that communication was therefore punctuated by lengthy time-lags. The document also assumes that the men responsible for taking it to Lisbon would supply additional information verbally (paragraphs 1, 12). It follows that the king believed that power relationships could be regulated by laws that were pronounced in Portugal, and which were the product of long-distance communication involving written and oral elements. However, it is therefore legitimate to wonder how far João's decrees were implemented in practice.

#### *The main contenders for power*

The document reveals several layers of power and authority in Ceylon. The principal actors were King Bhuvaneka Bahu, his brother Mayadunne Bandara, King João III of Portugal, and his small group of officials on the island. The rubrics describe Bhuvaneka Bahu as a king 'in' Ceylon, but paragraph 2 refers him as king 'of' Ceylon, and that distinction may be significant. Mayadunne Bandara is not styled king in the document, but he certainly had his own lands and

exercised power in certain parts of the island (paragraphs 1, 9, 10), so we should hold open the possibility that he was, or at least considered himself to be a legitimate king. The relationship between the brothers was clearly tense and sometimes violent, for the document says that Mayadunne Bandara had ‘seized’ land and ports (paragraph 1) and refers to the risk of ‘rebellions, intrigues, wars’ when their people came into contact (paragraph 9). The document makes an ambiguous reference to the factor communicating with Mayadunne Bandara, leading to some disturbances there (paragraph 10).

#### *The economic bases of power*

The document reveals that these actors competed for various forms of revenue. The production and sale of cinnamon was clearly an important element in the economy and the bulk of this was controlled by João and his officials. It may be inferred that cinnamon was a principal reason for Portuguese involvement in the island. Trade in betel nut is also mentioned though without any indication of its scale or importance. The island’s nine sea-ports generated revenue from toll (a tax on merchants’ trade) (paragraphs 1, 4, 8); indeed, Bhuvaneka Bahu described this as his ‘best source of revenue’ (paragraph 8). We also learn that landholders rendered unspecified services and paid taxes in respect of their lands (paragraph 5, 7); and that some form of slavery was practised on the island (paragraph 7).

#### *The relationship between King Bhuvaneka Bahu and King João*

The power relations described in this document are complex. Bhuvaneka Bahu clearly concedes to João authority over the Portuguese. He also appears to accept the legitimate presence of João’s officials in conducting Portuguese affairs (though he clearly disapproves of their behaviour), and he paid João an annual tribute of at least 300 bahars (50,000 kilograms or 50 tonnes) of cinnamon – and more if requested by the factors. The document also states that Bhuvaneka Bahu was only ‘allowed’ to keep 20 bahars for himself each year, and that he requested that this allowance be increased to 50 bahars (paragraph 11). Bhuvaneka Bahu therefore claimed that he enjoyed only about one fifteenth of the cinnamon revenues when the document was written. The document does not say so explicitly, but it seems a reasonable inference that Portuguese influence in Ceylon had at some point depended upon a show of military force, though the text does not say the island had been conquered by the Portuguese.

Indeed, Bhuvaneka Bahu presents himself as a royal authority in his own right. He is the king of Ceylon even if he pays tribute to another king. He is sending his own ambassador to Lisbon. The bulk of the requested decrees relate to regulating the behaviour of the Portuguese, and

Bhuvaneka Bahu does not specifically concede to João authority over the non-Portuguese inhabitants. Where there seems to be a grey area between these two jurisdictions, Bhuvaneka Bahu is pressing for his own authority to become paramount. (Where reference is made, in paragraphs 5 and 6, to the need for permission, this refers to the permission of Bhuvaneka Bahu rather than João, though the sentence construction would also allow for the opposite interpretation.)

At the same time, Bhuvaneka Bahu's own authority on the island seems to be contested by other local rulers, principally Mayadunne. Bhuvaneka Bahu seems to want to obstruct any communication developing between Mayadunne and the Portuguese (paragraph 9). It may therefore be inferred that Bhuvaneka Bahu is concerned about an alliance developing between them.

#### *Some problems with disorder*

The document appears to be an attempt to resolve tensions in the relationship between Bhuvaneka Bahu and various Portuguese parties based in the island. The principal targets of complaint are João's officials. The letter claims that factors often ordered substantial quantities of left-over or lower quality cinnamon to be destroyed, which prevented Bhuvaneka Bahu from generating revenue by selling it locally (paragraph 2). It also complains that the factors had stolen the best cinnamon from João and kept it for themselves (paragraph 3); and that the factors and their servants had colluded with merchants to prevent Bhuvaneka Bahu from collecting toll from the sea-ports (paragraph 8).

The document also refers to 'Portuguese merchants' presumably operating in a more private capacity (paragraph 4). These merchants were refusing to pay toll at his ports (paragraphs 4, 6), and are accused of kidnapping children and adults, and of taking criminals from the island, presumably for the slave trade (paragraph 6). Paragraph 5 refers to 'Portuguese Christians' who appear to have settled on the island but whose relationship to Portuguese lines of authority is not stated. All these agents seem to be operating with impunity, disregarding local law and in some respects are colluding. The letter claims that they are also damaging João's interests.

Some attempts may have been made to make factors more accountable (for example, a royal 'servant' as well as a factor held the key to the cinnamon storehouse (paragraph 3)); but if so, these were perceived to be ineffective. Bhuvaneka Bahu therefore requested João to send fifty men who would 'guard his revenue', keep the peace, and operate independently of the factors, limiting their capacity to abuse their authority (paragraph 10). Bhuvaneka Bahu also offered to

give these men comfortable accommodation, presumably at his court, and to pay them himself. The document does not say so explicitly, but it seems probable that Bhuvaneka Bahu was requesting a contingent of heavily armed soldiers (i.e mercenaries). It is clear that Bhuvaneka Bahu coveted the services of such men, for the document explicitly states that it would be ‘a great gain if Your Highness sends them’. This sentence, at the point where the letter seems to shift to expressing the king’s viewpoint in the first person, seems important: ‘And those men will not be obliged to do what your factor commands them but only what I command them in what regards the service of Your Highness.’ This suggests that Bhuvaneka Bahu intended to use these men to strengthen his own power over the local Portuguese and other rivals.

The document also concludes by requesting that Duarte Teixeira be appointed as ‘factor of these lands’ promising that, unlike the incumbent factor, he would carry out his role in a more appropriate manner, collecting what was legitimately due to João without interfering in Bhuvaneka Bahu’s ports. The cumulative impression is that power relationships were contested and did not follow a clearly-defined hierarchy.

#### *The role of religion*

The introduction of Christianity to the island appears to have created a further source of tension between the Portuguese and local rulers. Bhuvaneka Bahu complained that ‘thirty Christians’ had acquired land ‘fraudulently and by force’ without his permission, and implies that they had subsequently refused to render service in respect of that land (paragraph 5). He also complained that slaves had become Christians ‘in order to free themselves from slavery’, and that their former masters had not been compensated for this. (The document does not state or imply that Bhuvaneka Bahu or anyone else was opposed to slavery as a matter of principle.) Bhuvaneka Bahu also noted that free men who had become Christians were refusing to pay taxation or to honour their debts (paragraph 7). This evidence can be connected with the note in the introduction that the Portuguese tended to assume that converts to Christianity should be subject to Portuguese law. Evidently conversion was seen as a means of escaping existing legal statuses and customary dues and obligations owed to Bhuvaneka Bahu.