Medieval History 3010: Fall Semester 2004

Scheduled Meetings: Wednesday, Sept. 22, 1-3 and Tuesdays: October 5, November 2, November 23, December 14, 1-3 P.M. The first meeting will take place in my office, Robinson Hall, M04; subsequent meetings will take place in Robinson 205.

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Office Hours: Monday 12-2 or by appt.

The medieval field has two components: a general field comprising basic literature in institutional, economic, social and cultural history of the Middle Ages from its origins to about 1400 A.D. (first semester) and a specialized, topical subfield (second semester).

Candidates who will be writing their dissertations in the late antique, medieval or Renaissance fields should meet with Prof. McCormick at their earliest convenience to discuss more specialized readings, alongside the regular reading program. Candidates with less preparation will wish to devote their efforts to reading widely and generally in medieval history in the first semester to prepare for the close discussions of key works in the general meetings and to lay the groundwork for successful and more specialized reading in the second semester.

The first semester's work for the general field in medieval history entails 3 main elements:

1. a structured program of readings
2. four general sessions devoted to key problems in medieval civilization
3. a required essay

An initial meeting will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 22, 1-3, to review plans and discuss students' individuals interests and aspirations for the field. Subsequently four general meetings will bring together specialists and generalists: they will be held on four Tuesdays, from 1-3 P.M.: October 5, November 2, November 23, December 14, 1-3 P.M. The required essay is due on or before 21 December (see below). It should be accompanied by a full bibliography of works read during the first semester, organized by cluster. That bibliography will supply one component of the general examination. At that time also students should specify in writing how they wish to specialize in the second semester.

Students should understand that readings prepared for common discussion represent a necessary but certainly not sufficient component of work toward satisfying this field. The General Examination in medieval history will probe for depth and critical grasp as well as broad factual knowledge of European history in its various facets from about A.D. 400 to 1500. Students should read extensively and should become familiar with the classic secondary works listed on p. 3, and with the topics listed under "The General Field". Sound preparation in the first semester will make for a profitable subfield preparation in the second semester which will grow naturally out of the basic reading of the first semester.

Students who have never studied medieval history at the college level should begin by reading R.H.C. Davis, A History of medieval Europe from Constantine to Saint Louis 2nd edn, London, 1989. Alternatively, authoritative guidance can be found in the appropriate chapters of the New Cambridge Medieval History or, where it has not yet appeared, the older but still valuable Handbuch der europaischen Geschichte, ed. T. Schieffer 1- (Stuttgart, 1976). Three other general works of great value are R.W. Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages (New Haven, Yale, 1953), Georges Duby, The Early Growth of the European

It is only natural that in the course of critical reading, analytically-minded scholars will encounter unfamiliar terms or themes about which they would like a quick explanation or more detailed information. *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Munich, 1977-98; it provides concise but authoritative articles on persons, places, institutions and some broader topics. The *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, New York, 1982-9 is uneven: articles range from outstanding (particularly the broader, synthetic ones) to much less, and coverage is spotty. *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Vauchez et al., tr. A. Walford, (Chicago, 2000) can provide useful quick reference. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A.P. Kazhdan (Washington, D.C., 1991) is brief but good, although naturally more focused on the eastern Mediterranean. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (3rd edn Oxford, 1997, etc) will help swiftly and accurately with matters of the Church.


1. STRUCTURED READINGS

The following list should serve as the point of departure for each individual’s exploration of medieval civilization. Every student preparing the medieval field should read carefully at least one listed work in each of the following categories and have read in and studied several more, whether listed here or selected in concert with Prof. McCormick. Medievalist candidates will be expected to have read all titles in Cluster A. The categories are tailored to insure a broad and solid preparation for the second semester of topical fields and sufficient medieval expertise to be able to contribute to the general discussions.

Professional medievalists dispose of several excellent tools which allow them rapidly to assemble a bibliography on almost any conceivable subject. Use them yourself to find additional books and articles appropriate to the various clusters; do not fail check with Prof. McCormick about which may be the most fruitful references you will have turned up.

The best running bibliography is *Medioevo latino. Bollettino bibliografico della cultura europea dal secolo VI al XIII*, ed. C. Leonardi, Spoleto, 1980-, now available on CD-ROM. A useful electronic bibliography, but which is limited in coverage (because it covers only articles) is *International Medieval Bibliography* on CD-ROM, Tumhout, 1995 etc., is available through HOLLIS. For more electronic materials, see also the links on the website of the Standing Committee on Medieval Studies: http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~medieval/pages/webref.htm.

A. CLASSICS

F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three essays in the early history of England*, Cambridge, UK, 1897, etc.


M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, tr. L.A. Manyon, Chicago, 1961 etc.

G. Duby, *La société aux XIᵉ et XIIᵉ siècles dans la région mérovingienne*, Paris, 1953, etc.


B. EARLY MIDDLE AGES


P. Riché, *Education et culture dans l’Occident barbare, VIe-VIIe siècles*, Paris, 1966 etc.


C. THE CHURCH


R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, Harmondsworth, 1970 etc.


D. HIGH CULTURE


E. Auerbach, *Literary Language and its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, tr. R. Manheim, New York, 1965 etc.

P. Vinogradoff, *Roman Law in Medieval Europe*, Oxford, 1929 etc.


**E. SOCIETAL PATTERNS AND CHANGE**


**F. THE FOUNDATION OF THE MEDIEVAL ECONOMY**


**G. ARISTOCRACY**


**H. ADMINISTRATION AND KINGSHIP**


**I. THE LATER MIDDLE AGES**


J. EUROPE AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN


K. MIDDLE AGES AND US

E.R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, tr. W.R. Trask, New York, 1953 etc.


L. NEWER DEPARTURES


H. J. Hässler, Ein Graberfeld erzählt Geschichte (Studien zur Sachsenforschung. 5.5), Oldenburg, 1999.

2. THE GENERAL SESSIONS (Fall 2004)

The general sessions will bring together specialized and generalist medievalists for a sustained, analytical comparison and discussion of the works listed as the "Main focus". All participants will be expected to have read and studied them carefully.

Background readings are just that: you should read in these titles to give you the background to appreciate the significance and stakes of the varying theses we shall be debating.

With regard to primary sources listed below, students are required to form some critical sense of the primary materials from which historians have fashioned what we know of the medieval world. It is impossible to grasp the nature and achievements of medieval research without some acquaintance with the evidence on which that research is founded. Read the primary sources as a help to understanding the men and women who made the medieval world, to deepen your own insight and to grasp the achievements of Pirenne, Southern, Duhy, etc.

GENERAL SESSIONS

1. Wednesday, Sept. 22: Organizational meeting: the nature of the medieval field; requirements; suggestions; assignment of background readings.

2. Tuesday, Oct. 5: Early medieval underpinnings: acts and archaeologists (ca. 400-900)


   b. Main focus:
      -Primary sources: all should read R.S. Lopez and I.W. Raymond, Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World. Illustrative Documents... New York, 1955, Docs. nos. 9, 10 and 20.
      -Secondary sources:
      All should read: H. Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, New York, 1939 etc. AND one of the following:

Discussion openers: what are the main strengths of Pirenne's argument? Its weaknesses? What are the main strengths of Hodges and Whitehouse? What aspects of Pirenne's argument do they leave untouched? Do they misunderstand? Do they successfully supplant? What is the logical structure of McCormick's argument? If he were alive today, how would Pirenne respond to Hodges and Whitehouse? To McCormick? How do these works show that our explicit understanding of early medieval society has
changed in the half century between the two works? Implicit? How has our understanding of the problem developed since Hodges and Whitehouse? Based on your general reading and the extracts from the Primary sources listed above and these two works, what kind of research strategy would you devise to address the crucial questions left unanswered by these books?

2. Medieval Church: November 2


b. Main Focus:
   - Primary Sources:
     1. *Rule of St. Benedict*

   - Secondary Sources:


3. Medieval High Culture, Nov. 23


b. Main Focus
   - Primary Sources: 1. *The Song of Roland* or Dante, *Inferno*

   - Secondary Sources

     or B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1952 etc.

4. The King's Two Bodies, December 14


   b. Main Focus
      
      - Primary Sources: Galbert of Bruges, The Murder of Charles the Good; Joinville, The Life of St. Louis, tr. M.R.B. Shaw (Penguin); Dante, On Monarchy.
      
      Secondary Source: E.H. Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology, Princeton, 1957 etc.

3. REQUIRED ESSAY

   Students preparing the medieval field are required to write up one topic in 10 to 15 pages and submit this work not later than December 21. The paper should take the form either of a critical synthesis of standard research on a given topic or of a bibliographical essay, and it should deal with five to ten items. A model of such an essay may be found in F.S. Paxton, "The Peace of God in Modern Historiography: Perspectives and Trends," Historical Reflections 14:3(1987).385-404, L. Genicot, "Un équilibre dans l'histoire médiévale: l'étude du monde rural," Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique 81(1986).501-27, or M. Rubin, "A decade of studying medieval women, 1987-1997," History workshop 46 (1998). 213-39. One way of locating topical items is by reference to the bibliography of a recent synthesis, e.g. those in the New Cambridge Medieval History; David Herlihy, Medieval Households, or R. Fossier, Enfance de l'Europe; subsequent publications can be located with Medioevo latino; articles can be located through the online IMB.

   Choose one of the following topics, or develop your own in concert with Prof. McCormick:

   1. The transition from ancient to medieval civilization has been viewed in a number of ways from Pirenne and Dopsch down to R. Hodges and P. Brown, and beyond. How and why has our understanding of this transition changed?

   2. The problem of aristocracy (or nobility, including knighthood) from the ninth to the twelfth century. How have historians moved beyond the ideas of Bloch (Feudal Society) and Southern (Making of the Middle Ages). Use The Medieval Nobility, ed. Reuter and other works of Genicot, Duby, B. Arnold, John Freed, Jean Flori etc.

   3. Early medieval kingship. Use works of Kern, Kantorowicz, Janet Nelson, McCormick etc.

   4. Women. How have historians dealt with women and with what success? What are the problems, what remains to be done? Begin with studies by Power, Herlihy, Wemple, Bynum, Venarde, etc. and develop your own bibliography.

   5. The Investiture Conflict. This great struggle was a defining moment for medieval law, institutions and culture. Use Tellenbach, Ullmann (Growth), Kantorowicz (Two Bodies), I.A. Robinson, U. Blumenthal,
6. The medieval expansion of Europe was the first step in a long and controversial economic, political and cultural process which has perhaps come to an end only in our own lifetimes. Analyze the historical analysis of this process on the basis of your readings in the various clusters. Use too the *Fontana Economic History of Europe*, vol. 1, ed. C.M. Cipolla (London, 1972 etc); P. Spufford, *Money and Its Use in Medieval Europe*, Cambridge, 1988, or *Power and profit: the merchant in medieval Europe*, New York, 2003, and the survey in Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*.


8. Some medieval historians have challenged the distinctions between popular and high culture. Study this question on the basis of your readings.

9. Historical ecology is emerging as a favorite instrument of analysis in the medieval historian's repertory. Consider this proposition on the basis of recent scholarly debate. Request a first bibliographical orientation according to your interests: animals, plants, climate, etc.

10. Memory and literacy have recently sparked considerable debate among medievalists. How has the topic developed and what are its implications for our understanding of medieval civilization?

11. The history of the Church in the Middle Ages has moved gradually from the Protestant search for the roots of the Reformation or Catholic triumphalism to more historically sophisticated approaches. Consider this development using the works of Duchesne, Leclercq, Grundmann, Vauchez, Constable, Bynum, Van Engen etc.

12. By unearthing utterly new material on all aspects of the material life of medieval people, the explosive growth of archaeology in the last decade is revolutionizing our knowledge of the Middle Ages, from demography to diet, via gender, climate, the rise of towns and shipping networks. Examine a region or a historical problem on the basis of archaeological investigation: request a first bibliographical orientation according to your interests.