

May 2002

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY  
Department of History

Senior Comprehensive Exams

## **MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE EUROPE**

Please answer each question separately. Your answer to each question must not exceed five double-spaced typewritten pages. On the cover of each answer be certain to indicate your name, the appropriate comprehensive field (i.e., The United States, The United Kingdom), as well as the number of the question you have answered. Your answer should be written in your own words and include the correct citations for any sources you use, as in any paper or final exercise. Be sure to include at the end of your essay the statement "This represents my own work in accordance with University regulations" and sign your name.

All answers must be turned in at the History Department office by 3:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, MAY 15th. There will be no extensions. For further explanation of the Grading of Departmental Comprehensive Exams, see page 5 of "Information for Majors."

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Answer **TWO** of the following questions:

1. Why did slavery largely collapse as a social institution in the Central Middle Ages? Where and why did it persist?
2. What do we know about pilgrimage in the period 500-800?
3. How did apologists for or contemporary historians of the Merovingians justify the royal authority of the dynasty and its incumbents?
4. Write a comprehensive critique of Pirenne's Mohammad and Charlemagne.
5. Assess the changing role of the bishop in early medieval society (400-700)?
6. Did Jews have a "Renaissance of the Twelfth Century"? If so, how so? If not, why not?

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7. Describe and assess the importance of the mystical trappings of English and French monarchy in the High Middle Ages.
8. Why did families in the early Middle Ages found, endow, and give lavishly to specific monasteries?
9. “The Crusades were a thinly masked grab for power and possessions. The need for lands for younger sons of noble families and for trade routes for Italian cities did more than piety to initiate and sustain them.” Discuss.
10. Do you find the concept of “marginal groups” congenial? How have scholars defined and used the term? Is there an increasing marginalization of marginal groups over the course of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries? Are any marginal groups “demarginalized” over the same period of time?
11. What features distinguish the Italian Renaissance from the Northern Renaissance?
12. It used to be argued that Christian Humanism was primarily a northern European phenomenon. Do you accept this categorization? If so, why? If not, why not?
13. Sketch the demographic history of northern or southern Europe from 1347 to 1600—general trends in population (including spurs to and inhibitors of growth); sex ratios, infant, child, and young adult mortality; rural /urban contrasts; disease profiles, etc.
14. Describe and try to account for Spanish “imperial” activity in the Mediterranean in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.