

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

BRITISH ISLES TO 1689

Fall, 1988

Hibbard & McLaughlin

The exam consists of four questions, of equal value. Read the questions carefully and do not spend too much time on any one.

MEDIEVAL SECTION

I. Choose A or B.

A. Discuss the nature and extent of commerce in Anglo-Saxon England, and its relationship to other forms of exchange. What is the evidence for commercial activity in this period. What problems of interpretation does this evidence present?

B. What administrative problems did the kings of Wessex face in the tenth century? How did they deal with those problems? Were their efforts successful?

II. Choose A or B.

A. Few English monarchs have been so consistently vilified as "Bad King John." How did he acquire such a nasty reputation? Do you think he deserves it?

B. Discuss the impact of the friars on religious life in thirteenth-century England. Modern historians tend to treat them as an entirely positive force (at least in the beginning). Can there be any justification for those who opposed the friars?

TUDOR-STUART SECTION

Please frame your answers so as to avoid repetition. You should include some discussion of the relevant scholarly literature. The quality of your analysis will be as important as the length or chronological scope of your answer.

III. Choose A or B.

A. It has become conventional to identify the period 1642-1660 as the era when religious pluralism became embedded in English life, so that after the Restoration a truly comprehensive national church was no longer possible. What developments of that period lead to such a conclusion? Looking at the longer range, from the Henrician Reformation onwards, what trends or events prior to 1642 boded ill for long-term religious uniformity?

B. To what extent and how (if at all) is it still possible to speak of a "crisis of the aristocracy", affecting the course of English history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? You may, but need not, include an examination of Lawrence Stone's book in the course of your answer; you are encouraged to go beyond a critique of that work to look generally at the changing role and importance of the aristocracy in this period.

IV. Choose A or B.

A. There have been various recent efforts to "revise" our views of James I and Charles I towards more favorable assessments. Discuss some of these endeavours, and offer your own evaluation of how good a case can be made for each monarch performing relatively well in difficult circumstances.

B. How did Scotland and Ireland significantly affect the course of what used to be called "English history" in the period 1603-1660?

