

## MEDIEVAL HISTORY

Prelim examination

Fall, 1989

Please write on four. Read the questions carefully. Bibliographical information should be included in every answer.

1. Evaluate the career of Pope Gregory VII.
2. The traditional view is that the German king-emperors' fascination with Italy was the downfall of the medieval empire and the main reason for the failure of the medieval German state. Discuss this as broadly and critically as possible.
3. Pretend that you are a servile, married woman in a fourteenth century manorial village. Describe your daily life.
4. How do you interpret the cycles of monastic corruption and reform from the beginnings of monasticism through the Middle Ages?
5. It is common to say that medieval culture was a combination of Roman, Germanic and Christian elements. This is to suggest, however, that medieval people created nothing really new. Do you agree? If not, what do you consider the most significant original contribution(s) of the Middle Ages to European civilization.
6. Discuss the role of the bishop in medieval society from the fifth to the fifteenth century.
7. R. W. Southern's *The Making of the Middle Ages* contains a famous chapter entitled "From Epic to Romance." What argument does he present in this chapter? How have his views affected our understanding of the period? How have his views been modified by recent historians?
8. Is it possible to assert that barbarians destroyed the western half of the Roman Empire in the fifth century? How "Roman" were the Romans and how "barbaric" were the barbarians at that time? What difference, if any, did the invasions make?

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Preliminary Examination

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Please write on four of the eight questions. Discussion of bibliography is relevant.

1. Discuss the nature and origins of Christian monasticism and its importance in the Middle Ages.
2. How did the rules of royal succession change over the period, and what impact did they have on practical politics.
3. Discuss the origins and expansion of Islam through the ninth century.
4. Discuss the issue of continuity vs. change with regard to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.
5. Jacques Le Goff wrote an article on "The Town as an Agent of Civilization" on the Middle Ages. What would you write on this topic?
6. What went wrong with the crusades? Why were Western Europeans unable to hold on to what they had won in the Levant?
7. Discuss religious reform in the Middle Ages. What were the goals of the various reform movements? How were those goals related to changing visions of what the church could - and should - be?
8. Discuss the various meanings medieval historians have attributed to the word "feudalism." Would you agree with Elizabeth Brown that the word is no longer useful and should be discarded?

