

DRAFT-DRAFT-DRAFT: 1st Revision

History 2056 Prof. M. McCormick

Pro-Seminar: Medieval societies, institutions, environments and cultures.

Monday, 3-5:30 Spring Semester 2024

Robinson Hall 222

sohpchair@fas.harvard.edu

A. Preliminaries

N.B. This is very much a draft syllabus, prepared well in advance of the usual Harvard academic customs. Our knowledge of the human past is undergoing a revolution, right now. The readings will undergo a first revision late in the fall semester, and a second one in conversation with participants around the beginning of the spring semester. But the work in progress will give you a good idea of the kind of themes we expect to study together, and some of the classics studies we will be reading and discussing together.

The pro-seminar introduces the study of medieval history broadly construed. Reading and discussion of essential secondary studies in the social, environmental, economic, institutional and cultural history of western Afro-Eurasia from the 4th to the 15th century introduce rising scholars to classic monographs as well as new departures from the Science of the Human Past, e.g., in archaeological, environmental or molecular history; the Pro-Seminar presumes a reading knowledge of French and/or German for graduate students but not for undergraduates; two medieval Latin texts will be analyzed in class by specialists; non-specialists will have alternative assignments in those weeks. This draft syllabus will be improved and fleshed out in concert with the students who choose to take the Pro-Seminar to take into account their interests, differing levels of knowledge, and fast-developing investigations.

The course is intended for students with serious interests in medieval history, including undergraduate scholars eager to learn what happened and what is now happening in the study of western Afro-Eurasia's deeper historical past, particularly that of western Europe. For graduate students, it can be most useful in preparing for the General Examination in medieval history, for it will stress the problems and literature that will figure in that Examination. Some may find that John Arnold, *What is medieval history?* (Cambridge, 2008) offers a stimulating and readable short introduction to medieval history.

Those who are unaccustomed to working in a 300-year old tradition of scholarship may find interesting reading in D. Knowles, *Great Historical Enterprises*, London, 1964, chapters 1-4. Participants without advanced undergraduate study of medieval history will benefit by equipping themselves by reading a standard history of Middle Ages, such as R.H.C. Davis, *A History of medieval Europe from Constantine to Saint Louis*, 2nd ed. (London, 1989). One fun way to fill in your background knowledge is to read lively descriptive narratives of life in medieval society. Classic examples I would commend to you include Eileen E. Power, *Medieval people* (New York, 1963) and David A. Howarth, *1066: the year of the Conquest* (New York, 1978); I would be happy to hear your ideas about other titles. Detailed authoritative guidance can be found in the appropriate chapters of the *New Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 1996-2005) or, the older but still valuable *Handbuch der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. T. Schieffer 1- (Stuttgart, 1976). Two fine general works are R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven, 1953) and R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton, 1993).

In the course of critical reading, analytically-minded scholars will often encounter unfamiliar terms or themes about which they would like a quick explanation or more detailed information. Generally better than Wikipedia are concise scholarly "dictionaries," mostly available online through Hollis, such as *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Vauchez et al., tr. A. Walford, (Chicago, 2000) or *The Oxford dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. R.E. Bjork (Oxford, 2010), can provide 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. E.A. Livingstone (3rd edn,

Oxford, 2005) will help swiftly and accurately with matters of the Church. The Oxford dictionary of late Antiquity, ed. O. Nicholson (Oxford, 2018) is also very useful for the early Middle Ages. Lexikon des Mittelalters (Munich, 1977-98), 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.

Our knowledge of the whole of the human past, including the Middle Ages in western Afro-Eurasia, is undergoing revolutionary change through the applications of new technologies and new approaches to new and old primary source materials, ranging from fossilized pollen to great literary masterpieces. The readings and perhaps a few of the topics suggested here will be revised in light of the most recent advances late in 2023.

Required work: In addition to assigned readings (usually several per week) and oral reports, there are three related tasks:

1. Each graduate student is to read or renew acquaintance with basic secondary works listed on pp. 9-10. Undergraduates will choose from among them or perhaps other titles with Prof. McCormick's guidance. For graduate students, time will not allow detailed discussion of all of these works, but increasing familiarity with them will be expected, and they will figure in the general examination.
2. Each student is required to write two papers. The first is a book review of ca. 5-8 pp., due on Friday March 1. See further below. The second, of ca. 15 typewritten pages, is due on Friday May 3. Instructions below on p. 10.
3. Each week, students will make oral presentations on the readings. We will work on the techniques of oral presentation together, as well as the content of the readings.

Meetings 5 and 9:

“Students with Latin will prepare two medieval texts for close philological and historical analysis in class.

“Non-Latinists will not have class those weeks, but will prepare short (3 pages, double-spaced) papers on medieval sources in translation on the same subjects. They can sit in, ask questions, and watch how we analyze the texts!

In many weeks, I will list multiple alternative titles. If you prompt me, I'll be happy to characterize them to help you select. Finally, some weeks have readings listed as “extras.” These are very interesting works that all should take a look at. Anyone who is inspired and chooses to study them more closely may introduce them into our discussion and will receive praise and honor for the additional light they will shed on our subject.

For the second meeting: read, compare and come prepared to discuss some of the titles, esp. Brown, Kazhdan-Constable (“Indirect Information”), McCormick, Ward-Perkins (listed under Topics: Meeting 2).

B. Topics (the detailed lists below are proposed topics and partial selection of reading choices which can be adapted to our various interests)

1. Welcome, organizational matters, designing this year's course, choosing our focuses.
Monday, January 22

2. Mediterranean Matrix, Monday, January 29

a. Context: Stephen Mitchell, A history of the later Roman Empire, AD 284-641: the transformation of the ancient world, 2nd edn Oxford, 2015 or A.H.M. Jones, The Decline of the Ancient World, London, 1966, etc.

b. Discussion Focus:

1. P. Brown, The World of Late Antiquity. A.D. 150-750, London, 1971, etc. OR K. Harper, The fate of Rome: climate, disease, and the end of an empire. Princeton, 2017.
2. Bryan Ward-Perkins, The fall of Rome and the end of civilization, Oxford, 2005.
3. M. McCormick, Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900, Cambridge, 2001, Part I
4. Walter Scheidel, Escape from Rome: the failure of empire and the road to prosperity, Princeton, 2019.

*Extra: A.P. Kazhdan-G. Constable, People and Power in Byzantium, Washington, D.C., 1982.

Discussion openers: comparison of Brown, Harper, Kazhdan, McCormick, Ward-Perkins, Olalde et al.. How do their visions of the period differ? How do their understandings of

what is essential to a society differ from those of Jones? From Mitchell? Among themselves? How do these differences affect our understanding of the Middle Ages? How do the studies differ from the point of view of the historian's craft?

3. The Long Morning, Monday February 5

a. Background: 1. R. McKitterick, ed., *The Early Middle Ages* (Short Oxford History of Europe), Oxford, 2001.

2. J. R. Davis and M. McCormick, "The early Middle Ages: Europe's long morning," in *The long morning of medieval Europe: new directions in early medieval studies*, eds. J. R. Davis and M. McCormick (Aldershot, 2008), 1-10; McCormick, *ibid.*, 13-18; 107-110; 163-166; 219-222; 275-276.

b. Main Focus: Identities, Ethnogenesis, Migrations and Continuity

1. Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung; das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes*, Cologne, 1961 or Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: the creation and transformation of the Merovingian world*, Oxford, 1988; AND Carlos Amorim et al., "Understanding 6th-century barbarian social organization and migration through paleogenomics." *Nature communications* 9, no. 1 (2018): 3547*.

2. C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: a social and economic study*, Baltimore, 1994 AND Iñigo Olalde et al., "A genetic history of the Balkans from Roman frontier to Slavic migrations." *Cell* 186, no. 25 (2023): 5472-85/e9.

3. Catherine Hills, "Overview: Anglo-Saxon identity," *The Oxford handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology* ed. Helena A. Hamerow. David A. Hinton, and Sally Crawford (Oxford, 2011), 3-12; Birte Brugman, "Migration and endogenous change," *ibid.*, 30-45 AND Joscha Gretzinger et al. 2022. "The Anglo-Saxon migration and the formation of the early English gene pool." *Nature* 610: 112-119.

4. P. Classen, *Kaiserreskript und Königsurkunde. Diplomatische Studien zum Problem der Kontinuität zwischen Antertum und Mittelalter* 2nd ed. Thessalonica 1977.

5. W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*, Oxford, 1946 or McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West*, Cambridge, 1986.

6. Compare Robin Fleming, "Writing biography at the edge of history," *The American Historical Review* 114 (2009): 606-14, to its source: Tim Malim, John Hines, and Corinne Duhig, eds. *The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Edix Hill (Barrington A), Cambridgeshire: excavations, 1989-1991 and a summary catalogue of material from 19th century interventions*. York, 1998.

4. The First Medieval Economy: Acts and Archaeologists, February 12

a. Context: Either M. Carver, *Sutton Hoo: Burial Ground of Kings?* London, 1998 or R. Cowie, "English wics: problems with discovery and interpretation," in *Wics: the early mediaeval trading centres of northern Europe*, eds. D. Hill and R. Cowie, *Sheffield archaeological monographs* 14 (Sheffield, 2001), 14-21, and McCormick, "Comparing and connecting: Comacchio and the early medieval trading towns." In *From one sea to another: trading places in the European and Mediterranean early Middle Ages. Proceedings of the International Conference, Comacchio, 27th-29th March 2009*, ed. S. Gelichi and R. Hodges (Turnhout, 2012), 477-502, and A. Ervynck, W. Van Neer, H. Häster-Plogmann, et al., "Beyond affluence: the zooarchaeology of luxury," *World Archaeology* 34 (2003): 428-41.

b. Main Focus: 1. H. Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, New York, 1939, etc. AND M. McCormick, "Introduction," in *Henri Pirenne, Medieval cities. Their origins and the revival of trade*, ed. (Princeton, 2014), pp. ix-xxxi.

2. R. Hodges and D. Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe*, Ithaca, 1983 etc. (those who can should also read the update in the superior French edition: *Mahomet, Charlemagne et les origines de l'Europe*, tr. C. Morrisson et al., Paris, 1996, pp. 163-76).

3. McCormick, *Origins*, Parts II-V.

4. SoHP articles to be specified.

February 19: Presidents' Day

5. Analyzing the written record I: Monday February 26

A. Specialists' preparation: Royal diploma for Corbie, April 29, 716

a. Introduction: L. Boyle, "Diplomatics," *Medieval Studies: An Introduction*, ed. J.M. Powell, 2nd ed., Syracuse, 1992, 82-113; D. Norberg, *Manuel pratique du latin médiéval*, Paris, 1968, 13-49; H. Peltier, "Corbie," *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* 13(1959).809-24.

b. Main Focus: Prepare to translate this document and analyze its diplomatic structure and testimony in the context of the discussion of meeting 3.

(attached below)

B. Generalists' preparation (no class meeting): Discovering the early medieval economy through the texts:

Prepare a 3-page paper, due for this date, analyzing the evidence on the early medieval economy in: R.S. Lopez and I.W. Raymond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World. Illustrative Documents....* New York, 1955, Docs. nos. 1-3, 5-6, 8-15 in chronological order AND one of the following: Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, tr. L. Thorpe (Penguin); *Beowulf*; *The Heliand. The Saxon Gospel*, tr. G. R. Murphy, New York, 1992; *Two Lives of Charlemagne* tr. Thorpe, Penguin; *Paul the Deacon, History of the Lombards*, tr. W. D. Foulke; ed. E. Peters, Philadelphia, [1974]; *The letters of Saint Boniface*, tr. E. Emerton, New York, 1940.

Book Review Assignment Due Friday March 1

6. From the Ground Up, Monday March 4

1. Context: G. Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, tr. C. Postan, Columbia, S.C., 1968 (only scan the translated documents at the end of the book)
2. From Villas to Villages: 1. P. Ouzoulias, "Les campagnes gallo-romaines: quelle place pour la villa?," in *Comment les Gaules devinrent romaines*, eds. P. Ouzoulias and L. Tranoy (Paris, 2010), pp. 189-211; and L. Schneider, 2005. "Dynamiques spatiales et transformations de l'habitat en Languedoc mÃ©diterranÃ©en durant le haut Moyen Ã¢ge (VIe-IXe s.)," in G. P. Brogiolo et al. (edd.), *Dopo la fine delle ville: le campagne dal VI al IX secolo*. 11. seminario sul tardo antico e l'alto Medioevo (Mantova, 2005), 287-312; and R. Francovich, "The beginnings of hilltop villages in early medieval Tuscany," in *The long morning of medieval Europe. New directions in early medieval studies*, eds. J. R. Davis and M. McCormick (Aldershot, 2008), 55-82.
3. Means and ends: J. Henning, "Revolution or relapse? Technology, agriculture and early medieval archaeology in Germanic Central Europe," in *The Langobards before the Frankish conquest: an ethnographic perspective*, eds. Giorgio Ausenda, et al. (Woodbridge, 2009), 149-64; 165-73, and S. Lepetz et al. "Culture et Ã©Ã©vage en France septentrionale de l'Ã¢ge du Fer Ã l'an mil: approche carpologique et archÃ©ozoologique." In *Autour d'Olivier de Serres: pratiques agricoles et pensÃ©e agronomique du NÃ©olithique aux enjeux actuels*, ed. A. Belmont (Rennes, 2002), 77-108; and N. Koepke and J. Baten, "The biological standard of living in Europe during the last two millennia," *European Review of Economic History* 9 (2005): 61-95.
4. Syntheses: C. Loveluck, *Northwest Europe in the early Middle Ages, c. AD 600-1150: a comparative archaeology* (Cambridge, 2013) OR T. Williamson, *Environment, society and landscape in early medieval England: time and topography* (Woodbridge, 2013) OR R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350*, Princeton, 1993, OR L. Genicot, *Rural Communities in the Medieval West*, Baltimore, 1990 OR B.H. Slicher van Bath, *The agrarian history of western Europe, A.D. 500-1850*. Tr. Olive Ordish (London, 1963).
5. SoHP articles to be specified.
Extra : Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 Ã 1324*. Rev. ed. [Paris], 1982. English translation acceptable.

March 5-17, Spring break

7. Medieval Religion and the Church, Monday, March 18

- a. context: TBA
- b. focus 3. R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, Harmondsworth, 1970, etc.
4. H. Grundmann, *ReligiÃ¶se Bewegungen im Mittelalter*, 2nd edn, Darmstadt, 1972 or G. Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, Cambridge, 1996 or H. M. Thomas, *The secular clergy in England, 1066-1216* (Oxford, 2014) or J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God. A Study of Monastic Culture*, tr. C. Misrahi, New York, 1961, etc.
5. SoHP articles to be specified.
Extra: E. E. Power, *Medieval English nunneries c. 1275 to 1535*, Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought (Cambridge, 1922)

8. Papacy, Monday, March 25

1. P. Meyvaert, "Gregory I," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade, 6, New York, 1987, 118-21; and Benedict, *Gregory, Bede and Others*, London, 1977, articles V-VI.
2. J. Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages, 476-752*, London, 1979 or C. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy. The Western Church from 1050 to 1250*, Oxford, 1989 or B. Schimmelpfennig, *The Papacy*, tr. J. Siever, New York, 1992.
3. W. Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, London, 1955, etc.

9. Gregorian Reform, Monday, April 1

- A. Specialists' preparation: *Dictatus papae* (Latin text to be distributed)
 - a. Context: C. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*, 109-21.
 - b. Main Focus: Prepare to translate the *Dictatus papae* and analyze its testimony

in the context of the discussion of the previous meeting.

B. Generalists' preparation (no class meeting): Discovering the Gregorian Reform through the texts:

a. Context: same as above.

b. Main focus: Prepare a 3-page paper (due on this date) on any aspect of the Gregorian movement on the basis of: The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII, selected letters from the Registrum, tr. E. Emerton, New York, 1932, etc

10. Medieval High Culture, Monday, April 8

a. Context: 1. C. H. Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century, Cambridge, MA, 1927; compare R. Benson-G. Constable, ed., Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century, Cambridge, MA, 1982.

2. TBD

A. Murray, Reason and Society in the Middle Ages, Oxford, 1978, etc.

11. Late medieval system change: economies, ecology, disease, culture Monday, April 15

a. context:

1. L. Genicot, "Crisis: From the Middle Ages to Modern Times," Cambridge Economic History of Europe 2nd edn, 1 (Cambridge, 1971), 660-741 and TBA.

2. J. Huizinga, The Autumn of the Middle Ages, tr. R.J. Payton and U. Mammitzsch, Chicago, 1996.

b. focus:

3. D. L. Smail, Imaginary cartographies: possession and identity in late medieval Marseille (Ithaca, 2000) or TBA.

4. B. M. S. Campbell, The Great Transition: Climate, disease and society in the late medieval world (Cambridge, 2016).

5. articles TBA

13. Medieval Monarchy Monday, April 22

a. Context: R.W. Southern, Making of the Middle Ages...; J.R. Strayer, On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State, Princeton, 1970, etc.

b. Focus: E.H. Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology, Princeton, 1957, etc.

C. Classics

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

Peter Brown, Augustine of Hippo: a biography. 2nd ed., Berkeley, 2000.

R. Bartlett (above)

T. N. Bisson, The crisis of the twelfth century: power, lordship, and the origins of European government, Princeton, 2009

M. T. Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1993

Giles Constable (above).

E.R. Curtius (above)

F.L. Ganshof, Feudalism, tr. P. Grierson, 2nd ed., New York, 1961 etc.

H. Grundmann (above)

C.H. Haskins (above)

J.C. Holt, Magna Carta, Cambridge, 1965, etc.

G. Duby, La société aux XI^e et XII^e siècles dans la région marseillaise, Paris, 1953 etc.

F. Kern, Gottesgnadentum und Widerstandsrecht im frühen Mittelalter. Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Monarchie, 2nd edn. Münster, 1954; (abridged): Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages, ed. and tr. S.B. Chrimes, New York, 1956 etc.

F.W. Maitland, Domesday Book and Beyond: three essays in the early history of England, Cambridge, U.K., 1987 etc.

H. Pirenne (above)

P.E. Schramm, Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio. Studien zur Geschichte des römischen Erneuerungsgedankens vom Ende des karolingischen Reiches bis zum Investiturstreit, Leipzig, 1929.

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

G. Tellenbach, Church, State and Christian Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest, tr. R.F. Bennett, Oxford 1939 etc.

P. Toubert, Les structures du Latium médiéval, Rome, 1973

M. Mollat, Les pauvres au Moyen Âge, Paris, 1978 etc.

D. Book Report

A book review of any of the Classics listed above should be prepared according to the Medieval Academy's style sheet, as if for publication in Speculum

http://www.medievalacademy.org/speculum/speculum_submissions.htm.

E. Course Paper

The required paper for the pro-seminar may do one of three things: (1) deal critically and methodically with the development of the secondary literature on a problem raised by the course or by other reading in the broad field of our discussions; (2) examine critically the writings of a

major historian; (3) extend and develop the analysis of one of the primary sources studied together in the light of secondary literature on a historical problem which that source illuminates. For a good example of option 1, see F.S. Paxton, "The Peace of God in Modern Historiography: Perspectives and Trends," *Historical Reflections* 14(1987).385-404 or L. Genicot, "Un Ã©quilibre dans l'histoire mÃ©diÃ©vale: l'Ã©tude du monde rural," *Revue d'histoire ecclÃ©siastique* 81(1986).501-27. For Option 2, it would be instructive to write on any of the following: F.W. Maitland; Eileen Power; R.W. Southern (U.K.); Marc Bloch; Georges Duby; Jean Leclercq; History 2050 McCormick 2024 p. 10 Robert Fossier (France); H. Pirenne; LÃ©opold Genicot (Belgium); Herbert Grundmann; Percy Ernst Schramm; Peter Classen; Gerd Tellenbach (Germany); C.H. Haskins; E.H. Kantorowicz; G. Constable; C.W. Bynum (U.S.A.). Students should in any case consult with Prof. McCormick when selecting their subject and bibliography. Follow the style sheet of *Speculum*, and prepare as if for submission to that journal.

The paper is due on Friday May 3.

E. Accommodations for students with disabilities Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.