



Doctoral scholarships in medieval legal history

The Maison des sciences de l'Homme Ange Guépin (MSH, Nantes, France) is offering four doctoral scholarships as part of the project “RELMIN: The legal status of religious minorities in the Euro-Mediterranean world (5th-16th centuries)”.

RELMIN is funded for five years (2010-2015) as part of the Ideas programme of the European Research Council's Seventh Framework Programme. It is based at the MSH and is directed by John Tolan, professor of history at the University of Nantes and director of the MSH.

Project summary

European religious diversity has its roots in the practice of medieval societies. Medieval European polities, Christian and Muslim, granted protected and inferior status to selected religious minorities. RELMIN will collect, publish and study legal texts defining the status of religious minorities in pre-modern Europe. The corpus of texts includes Roman law (in particular in the legal codes of Theodosius and Justinian), canon law (*acta* of Church councils, the *Decretum* attributed to Gratian, the *Decretales*), national or royal law (from “barbarian” law codes of the early Middle Ages to national compilations such as the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X of Castile in the thirteenth century), urban law (particularly the *fueros* in the Iberian peninsula and *hisba* manuals in Andalusia), rabbinical *responsa*, and *fatwa* collections. The database will contain texts in their original languages and translations into English and French, as well as an annotated bibliography on the subject. This will become a major reference tool for research in the history of minority law and of interreligious relations.

The project will also hold workshops and a major international conference on Religious diversity in pre-modern Europe. A series of comparative thematic studies on specific aspects of interreligious relations will allow us to compare responses to similar issues in diverse societies, from seventh-century Córdoba to fifteenth-century Krakow. The goal is to encourage collaborative interdisciplinary work by scholars from different countries with varying linguistic skills, to encourage new innovative research that cuts across traditional divides. The project will publish three major works in the field: the proceedings of the international conference, a sourcebook of selected legal texts (with translations, commentaries and annotated bibliography), and a monograph on the legal status of minorities in pre-modern Europe.

Qualifications

Candidates should have a recent master's degree (or equivalent) in history, law, language, religion or literature, with a specialisation related to the themes of RELMIN. She or he should have a high level of competence in several medieval languages (in particular Arabic, Latin, Greek or Hebrew, depending on the thesis topic). Since the project's working languages are English and French, researchers should be conversant in both (or at least in one, with a willingness to quickly learn the second). Each student will be enrolled at the University of Nantes, with the possibility of co-enrollment in another university.

Possible dissertation topics

Each candidate will propose an original dissertation topic related to the themes of RELMIN. The thesis may be written in English, French or Spanish. Possible thesis topics include, for example:

- The status of *dhimmi* according to a fourteenth-century Muslim jurist: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah's *Aḥkāṁ ahl al-dhimmah*.
- Jewish legal status in the Christian Roman Empire (4th-6th centuries)

- Rabbinic *responsa* on relations between Jews and non-Jews
- The perils of commensality: medieval Jewish, Christian and Muslim law on sharing food with the religious other
- Byzantine law and the Jews: 9th-12th centuries
- Jews and Saracens in Latin Canon law in the twelfth century

Scholarship conditions

Each of the doctoral students will receive a four-year full scholarship (French “allocation de thèse”). Starting dates will be negotiated between the project director and the student, but will be no sooner than September 1st, 2010 and no later than March 1st, 2011.

The application should consist of the following documents :

- 1) A 5-10 page thesis proposal (subject, research hypotheses, methodology, summary bibliography, etc.)
- 2) A detailed curriculum vitae of the applicant, with his contact details (name, address, phone numbers, e-mail)
- 3) Copy of grade transcript (master’s degree)
- 4) Copy of master’s diploma
- 5) Title of master’s thesis and name of advisor
- 6) In the case of a proposed dual direction of the dissertation, the name and contact details of the proposed co-director

Application procedures

All documents should be sent in PDF format to: relmin@univ-nantes.fr. Examination of applications will begin on May 15th, 2010 and will continue until the four positions are filled.

Contact and information :

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