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978-0-521-74516-1 - *Renaissances: The One or the Many?*

Jack Goody

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Renaissances

One of the most distinguished social scientists in the world addresses one of the central historical questions of the past millennium: does the European Renaissance deserve its unique status at the very heart of our notions of modernity? Jack Goody scrutinizes the European model in relation to parallel renaissances that have taken place in other cultural areas, primarily Islam and China, and emphasizes what Europe owed to non-European influences. *Renaissances* continues that strand of historical analysis critical of Eurocentrism that Goody has developed in recent works such as *The East and the West* (1996) or *The Theft of History* (2006). This book is wide-ranging, powerful and deftly argued, and draws upon the author's long experience of working in Africa and elsewhere. Not since Toynbee in *The Study of History* has anybody attempted quite what Jack Goody is undertaking in *Renaissances*, and the result is as accessible as it is ambitious. This book will be of interest to students of the Renaissance and of the history of western civilization more generally, to anthropologists, sociologists and all those with an interest in the construction of modernity.

JACK GOODY is Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of St John's College. Recently knighted by Her Majesty The Queen for services to anthropology, Professor Goody has researched and taught all over the world, is a Fellow of the British Academy, and in 1980 was made a Foreign Honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2004 he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences and he was elected Commandeur des Arts et Lettres in 2006.

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To Eric Hobsbawm, historian extraordinary,
for his ninetieth birthday

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‘In my end is my beginning’ (T. S. Eliot)

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