ECO. 301Y1

Topic No. 2 [3] Economic and Social History of Later Medieval Europe, 1260 - 1600

[Topics Nos. 2 and 3]:

The Problem of Serfdom in European Economic Development,
14th to 17th Centuries: West and East

READINGS: arranged, by topic section, in the chronological order of original publication. The more important are indicated by asterisks *

A. Serfdom West and East and the Nature of Medieval European Agriculture:

Historical Background, General Studies, and Theoretical Models of Agrarian Change


* (c) Leopold Genicot, ‘Crisis: From the Middle Ages to Modern Times’, pp. 660-742, especially pp. 725-38.


10. D.C. North and R.P. Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World* (Cambridge, 1973), especially chapters 3 (pp. 19-24), 7 (pp. 71-90), and 8 (pp. 91-101).


   b) Margaret Spufford, ‘Peasant Inheritance Customs and Land Distribution in Cambridgeshire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries’, pp. 156 - 76.
   c) Joan Thirsk, ‘The European Debate on Customs of Inheritance, 1500 - 1700’, pp. 177-91.


This seminal article by the then young American Marxist historian attacked the use of
traditional demographic and market (commercial) models to explain the rise and decline of serfdom in various parts of Europe. Brenner's provocative, wide-ranging, sometimes complex and certainly imperfect (and very long) article sparked a fierce controversy, still raging, chiefly in the form of vigorous attacks by other Marxists and non-Marxists alike, as detailed in section B: ‘The Brenner Debate’.


   b) Stanley L. Engerman, ‘Slavery, Serfdom, and Other Forms of Co-erced Labour: Similarities and Differences’, pp. 18-41.

   a) Guy DeJongh and Erik Thoen, ‘Arable Productivity in Flanders and the Former Territory of Belgium in a Long-Term Perspective (from the Middle Ages to the End of the Ancien Régime), pp. 30-64.
   c) Bas J.P. van Bavel, ‘Arable Yields and Total Arable Output in the Netherlands from the Late Middle Ages to the Mid-19th Century’, pp. 85-112.


b) Jean-Pierre Sosson, ‘Some Thoughts on Mediaeval Towns and the Division of Labour during the so-called Pre-Corporative Period’, pp. 19-32.

c) Adriaan Verhulst, ‘On the Preconditions for the Transition from Rural to Urban Industrial Activities (9th-11th Centuries’, pp. 33-41.


t) Martina De Moor, ‘The Occupational and Geographical Mobility of Farm Labourers in Flanders from the End of the 19th Century to the Middle of the 20th Century’, pp. 292-304.


e) Bas van Bavel, ‘The Land Market in the North Sea Area in a Comparative Perspective, 13th -18th Centuries’, pp. 119-46.


l) Bjørn Poulsen, ‘Land Mobility in Late Medieval Denmark’, pp. 623-36.


n) Tim Soens and Erik Thoen, ‘Credit and the Land Market in Late Medieval and Early Modern Flanders’, pp. 703-20.


s) Peter Hoppenbrouwers, ‘Family Affairs: Passing Property under an
Egalitarian System: The Case of the Land van Heusden (the Netherlands) in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period’, pp. 951-78.

t) Joseph Goy, ‘Rapporto tra mercato della terra e trasmissione per via ereditaria e dotale’, pp. 979-84.


c) Vincent Corriol, ‘Nommer les serfs dans la terre de Saint-Claude (Jura: début XIIIe - début XVIe siècle)’, pp. 57-74.


h) Kurt Andermann, ‘Leibeigenschaft in der Markgrafschat Baden an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit’, pp. 197-211.


o) Jeppe Büchert Netterstrøm, ‘Feud, Protection, and Serfdom in Late
Medieval and Early Modern Denmark (c. 1400 - 1600), pp. 369-84.


a) Harry Kitsikopoulos, ‘Introduction’

b) Harry Kitsikopoulos, ‘England’

c) George Grantham, ‘France’

d) Paolo Malanima, ‘Italy’

e) Kostis Smyrlis, ‘Byzantium’

f) Ana Rodriguez, ‘Spain’

g) Janken Myrdal, ‘Scandinavia’

h) Grzegorz Mysliwski, ‘Central Europe’

i) Janet Martin, ‘Russia’

j) Harry Kitsikopoulos, ‘Epilogue’


B. Medieval Manorialism: Landlords, Peasants, and Open or Common Fields: the debate about communal farming and its relationship to serfdom


29. Edmund King, Peterborough Abbey, 1086-1310: A Study in the Land Market (London, 1975). Though not on the origins of the common fields, this study shows how peasant holdings could be re-arranged through purchase, sale, and transfers.


31. William N. Parker and Eric L. Jones, eds., European Peasants and Their Markets: Essays in Agrarian Economic History (Princeton, 1975). See the following essays:


**Development Economics**, 1 (1975), 287-336. Also relevant to the economics of common fields.


(b) H. S. A. Fox, ‘Approaches to the Adoption of the Midland System’, pp. 64 - 111.
* (c) Bruce Campbell, ‘Commonfield Origins: The Regional Dimension’, pp. 112-29.
(d) Robert Dodgshon, ‘The Interpretation of Subdivided Fields: A Study in Private or Communal Interests?’ pp. 130-44.


* 60. Rosemary L. Hopcroft, ‘The Origins of Regular Open-Field Systems in Pre-Industrial


92. Bruce M. S. Campbell, *The Medieval Antecedents of English Agricultural Progress, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS872* (Aldershot, Hampshire; and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2007). This volume contains the following studies, with their original bibliographic information:

   a) Bruce M. S. Campbell, ‘Progressiveness and backwardness in thirteenth- and early


g) Bruce M. S. Campbell, ‘Commercial dairy production on medieval English demesnes: the case of Norfolk’, Anthropozoologica, 16 (1992), 1 - 19.


* 93. Bruce M. S. Campbell, Field Systems and Farming Systems in Late Medieval England, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS 903 (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, Vt: Ashgate Publishing, 2008). The following provides details of the original publications


98. Bruce M. S. Campbell, Land and People in Late Medieval England, Variorum Collected
Studies Series CS 922 (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, Vt: Ashgate Publishing, 2009). The following provides details of the original publications.


103. Paul D. A. Harvey, Manors and Maps in Rural England, from the Tenth Century to the Seventeenth (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010).


Bruce M. S. Campbell, ‘Grain Yields on English Demesnes after the Black Death’, pp. 121-74.


C. The Brenner Debate:

‘Few historical issues have occasioned such discussion since the time of Marx as the transition from feudalism to capitalism in western Europe.’ (From a review of no. 8, below.)


**

(c) Heide Wunder, ‘Peasant Organization and Class Conflict in East and West Germany’, pp. 47-55.


   (b) Guy Blois, ‘Against the Neo-Malthusian Orthodoxy’, pp. 60-69.


   (b) J.P. Cooper, ‘In Search of Agrarian Capitalism’, pp. 20-65.


This collection contains all of the above essays from Past and Present except for no. 6, by Britnell.


   b) Stanley L. Engerman, ‘Slavery, Serfdom, and Other Forms of Coerced Labour: Similarities and Differences’, pp. 18-41.
   **
   f) Michael Limberger, ‘Merchant Capitalism and the Countryside in the West of the Duchy of Brabant (15th - 16th Centuries)’, pp. 158-78.
   g) Bas van Bavel, ‘Elements in the Transition of the Rural Economy: Factors Contributing to the Emergence of Large Farms in the Dutch River Area (15th - 16th Centuries)’, pp. 179-201.

*


D. The Decline of Serfdom and Agrarian Changes in Western Europe

Part I: England


40. Eleanor Searle, Lordship and Community: Battle Abbey and its Banlieu, 1066-1538 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974)
   (a) ‘The Peasantry as a Class’, pp. 3-19.
   (d) ‘Conflict and Collaboration’, pp. 54-75.
   (e) ‘The Small Town as Part of Peasant Society’, pp. 76-94.
   (g) ‘Social Structure of Rural Warwickshire in the Middle Ages’, pp. 113-39.
   (h) ‘Gloucester Abbey Leases of the Late Thirteenth Century’, pp. 139-60.


26


56. R. H. Hilton and T. H. Aston, eds., The English Rising of 1381, Past and Present Publications (Cambridge, 1984.) With essays by Hilton, Dyer, Faith, Cazelles, Butcher, Dobson, Cohn, Harding, and Tuck. See in particular:


(c) A. F. Butcher, ‘English Urban Society and the Revolt of 1381’, pp. 84 - 111.

(d) J. A. Tuck, ‘Nobles, Commons and the Great Revolt of 1381’, pp. 194 - 212.

* 57. Rodney H. Hilton, Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism: Essays in Medieval Social History (London, 1985), especially:


(c) D. W. Robertson, Jr., ‘Chaucer and the Economic and Social Consequences of the Plague’, pp. 49-74.

(d) John B. Friedman, ‘ ‘He Hath a Thousand Slayn This Pestilence’: Iconography of the Plague in the late Middle Ages’, pp. 75-112.


72. Bruce M. S. Campbell, James A. Galloway, Derek Keene, and Margaret Murphy, *A Medieval Capital and Its Grain Supply: Agrarian Production and Distribution in the London Region c. 1300*, Institute of British Geographers, Historical Geography Research Series no. 30 (London, 1993). Difficult to find: but the LC call number is: HD 9041.8 L5 M54 1993 (at York University).


   f) Sherri Olson, ‘“Families Have their Fate and Periods:” Varieties of Family Experience in the Pre-Industrial Village’, pp. 409-48.


g) Richard Goddard, ‘Church Lords and English Urban Investment in the Later Middle Ages’, pp. 148-165.


137. Mark Bailey, Medieval Suffolk: An Economic and Social History, 1200 - 1500 (Boydell Press, 2007).


Part II: France, the Low Countries, Italy, Spain, Western Germany:

Except for the publications of the late Marc Bloch, and the recent books by Guy Bois and William Jordan, the literature here is rather thin and unsatisfactory, certainly in comparison to the literature on both England and eastern Europe. The Bloch, however, is essential reading for any medieval historian.


   a) Tom Scott, ‘Economic Landscapes’,
   c) Werner Rösener, ‘The Agrarian Economy, 1300 - 1600’,
   d) Ulf Dirlmeier and Gerhard Fouquet, ‘Consumption and Demand’,
   e) Tom Scott and Bob Scribner, ‘The Urban Network of Early Modern Germany’,
   f) Rolf Kießling, ‘Markets and Marketing, Town and Country’,
   g) William J. Wright, ‘The Nature of Early Capitalism’,
   h) Merry E. Wiesner, ‘Gender and the Worlds of Work’,
   i) Christopher Friedrichs, ‘German Social Structure, 1300 -1600’,

*
j) Thomas Brady, Jr., ‘The Social and Economic Role of Institutions’,
k) Bob Scribner, ‘Communities and the Nature of Power’,
l) Robert Jütte, ‘Daily Life in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany’,
m) R. Po-Chia Hsia, ‘The Structure of Belief: Confessionalism and Society, 1500 - 1600’,


   c) Vincent Corriol, ‘Nommer les serfs dans la terre de Saint-Claude (Jura: début XIIIe - début XVIe siècle)’, pp. 57-74.


h) Kurt Andermann, ‘Leibeigenschaft in der Markgrafschat Baden an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit’, pp. 197-211.


o) Jeppe Büchert Netterstrom, ‘Feud, Protection, and Serfdom in Late Medieval and Early Modern Denmark (c. 1400 - 1600)’, pp. 369-84.


E. The Expansion of Serfdom in Eastern Europe


6. Peter Lyashchenko, *History of the National Economy of Russia to the 1917 Revolution* (English trans. New York, 1949), Chapter X: ‘Agriculture and the Serf Estate in the Moscow State of the 15th to 17th Centuries’, pp. 179-204; XIV: ‘White Russia and the Ukraine Under the Polish Yoke of Serfdom during the 14th to 17th Centuries,’ pp. 248-64; XV: ‘General Conditions of Development of the Serf Economy during the 18th Century’, pp. 265-82. [When written, this was official and orthodox Soviet Marxist history -- which does not mean, however, that the facts are wrong].


19. Jerome Blum, Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century (Princeton, 1961), Chapters 7-14.


   (b) Jan Rutkowski, ‘Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary’, pp. 487-505.


   (a) ‘L'inégalité du développement économique en Europe au bas Moyen Age’, pp. 39-52. [See No. 21 above.]
   (b) ‘Les produits des pays de la Baltique dans le commerce international au XVIe siècle’, pp. 139-74.
   (c) ‘La politique commerciale de la noblesse des pays de la Baltique aux XVVe et XVIe siècles’, pp. 175-90.


44. Maria Bogucka, ‘The Monetary Crisis of the XVIIth Century and its Social and Psychological


e) Fikret Adanir, ‘Tradition and Change in Southeastern Europe during Ottoman Rule’,
pp. 131-76.


76. Antoni Maczak, Money, Prices and Power in Poland, 16th - 17th Centuries, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS487 (London and Brookfield, 1995).


   b) ‘The Export of Timber and Timber By-Products from the Baltic Region to Western Europe, 1575-1775’, pp. 1-14 [original publication].


  a) Tom Scott, ‘Economic Landscapes’,
  c) Werner Rösener, ‘The Agrarian Economy, 1300 - 1600’,
  d) Ulf Dirlmeier and Gerhard Fouquet, ‘Consumption and Demand’,
  e) Tom Scott and Bob Scribner, ‘The Urban Network of Early Modern Germany’,
  f) Rolf Kießling, ‘Markets and Marketing, Town and Country’,
  g) William J. Wright, ‘The Nature of Early Capitalism’,
  h) Merry E. Wiesner, ‘Gender and the Worlds of Work’,
  i) Christopher Friedrichs, ‘German Social Structure, 1300 -1600’,
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  m) R. Po-Chia Hsia, ‘The Structure of Belief: Confessionalism and Society, 1500 - 1600’,


   b) Stanley L. Engerman, ‘Slavery, Serfdom, and Other Forms of Co-erced Labour: Similarities and Differences’, pp. 18-41.


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<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Tom Scott, <em>Society and Economy in Germany, 1300 - 1600</em> (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002).</td>
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</table>


QUESTIONS for Discussion

1. What is meant by the term ‘serfdom’; and what relationship does the term have with the terms ‘feudalism’ and ‘manorialism’ or ‘seignorialism’?

2. What economic, social, institutional, and legal conditions denoted or indicated servile status, the status of serfdom? What gradations of ‘bondage’ or of ‘servitude’ were there between slavery and freedom in European serfdom, in late medieval and early modern times? How did conditions of serfdom vary across Europe, from England to Russia, from late medieval to modern times?

3. How have western and eastern historians, Marxist and non-Marxist historians, differed in their analysis of ‘feudalism’ and ‘serfdom’?

4. Discuss the validity and usefulness of various theoretical models in explaining the expansion and decline of serfdom, in eastern and western Europe: (a) demographic models, (b) market or trade-oriented models, (c) political-institutional-legal models, (d) Marxian models of class structures.

5. To what extent did serfdom constitute a barrier or impediment to economic development, in western and eastern Europe, from late-medieval to early-modern times? To what extent were servile institutions compatible with agrarian change, rising agricultural productivity, economic expansion?

6. In your own view, what are the chief factors explaining the decline of serfdom in western Europe from the late Middle Ages? What differences can you see between the declines of serfdom in England and in France?

7. In your view, what factors explain the extension and expansion or intensification of serfdom in eastern Europe, east of the Elbe River, from late-medieval or early-modern times? When was the crucial period of change, the rise of the ‘New Serfdom’?: the 14th, the 15th, the 16th, or the 17th century?

8. Explain the apparent paradox of a decline of serfdom in the West and its expansion in the East. What were the differences between Eastern and Western serfdom?

9. When, how, and why did serfdom come to an end in eastern Europe: in Prussia, Poland, Hungary, and Russia?

10. What was the heritage of eastern European serfdom: how long did it continue to impede industrialization in this region?
The Blum-Brenner Model to Explain the Differences between Western and Eastern Feudal-Manorial Power Structures and the Changing Fortunes of Serfdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURES</th>
<th>Western Europe</th>
<th>Eastern Europe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>divided lordships; thickly settled; peasant charters; and manorial court rolls</td>
<td>single lordships; thinly settled; no, few, or weak peasant charters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Systems</td>
<td>Common/Open Fields with scattered interspersed strips and communal village regulations</td>
<td>Common fields with more consolidated family holdings; weak village authority, subject to feudal-manorial lords</td>
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<td>Village governments</td>
<td>peasant villager councils and manorial reeves from the villages govern the village economy.</td>
<td>village government by schultz/schultheiss mayors appointed by feudal lords</td>
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<td>Central governments</td>
<td>strong, more centralized national monarchies; or strong territorial princes.</td>
<td>weak monarchical governments; elected monarchies</td>
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<td>Aristocracies</td>
<td>weak nobilities, especially at the baronial &amp; knight levels</td>
<td>powerful and increasingly stronger feudal nobilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>Royal courts expanding their powers at the expense of manorial/seigniorial courts; manorial courts that entrench customary rights of the peasant tenants, fixing rents &amp; entry fines</td>
<td>weak or non existent royal courts; powerful and independent feudal/manorial courts that do not recognize peasant tenancy rights, or conditions of tenures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rents</td>
<td>customary, fixed rents, increasingly in fixed nominal cash payments</td>
<td>more arbitrary rents, more in labour services and kind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Towns</td>
<td>Strong, independent towns, with vibrant urban economies</td>
<td>Weak and small towns, with dependent economies</td>
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</table>
Official Money Wages for Building Craftsmen for the Kingdom of England and the City of London: by Parliamentary Statute or Ordinance, for the Summer and Winter Seasons, in pence sterling, 1290 - 1495

**Summer Season**: Easter to Michaelmas (29 September), ‘without meat and drink’

**Winter Season**: Michaelmas to Easter, ‘without meat and drink’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>LONDON Summer</th>
<th>LONDON Winter</th>
<th>NATIONAL Summer</th>
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<tr>
<td>c. 1290</td>
<td>5d&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3d&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>4d&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>1349-51</td>
<td>6d</td>
<td>5d</td>
<td>3d&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>1360</td>
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<td>4d&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>1362</td>
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<td>1444</td>
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<td>5½d&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4½d&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>1495</td>
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<td>6d&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5d&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>7d&lt;sup&gt;g&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7d&lt;sup&gt;g&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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</table>

a. 1290: 2d daily in the summer with food in drink; 1d daily in the winter with food and drink
b. 1290: 4d daily or 1.5d with food and drink, from Michaelmas (29 September) to Martinmas (12 November), and from Candlemas (Purificatio: 2 February) to Easter
c. 1350-51: 25 Ed III stat. 2 c. 3: rates of 4d for master free-masons; 3d for other master masons and carpenters; for all, from Michaelmas ‘less according to the rate and discretion of the justices’.
d. For the chief master masons and carpenters; but 3d or 2d for the others ‘according as they be worth’
e. 1444-45: 23 Henry VI c. 12: 4d daily with food and drink in the summer and 3d daily with food and drink in the winter.
g. 7d daily, summer and winter, for those master masons and master carpenters having charge of six or more men; and 5d daily with food and drink.

**Sources:**