

ECO 2210Y

Topic No. 27: Agrarian Changes in France, 1450 - 1700: The 'Feudal Crises,' Rural 'Embourgeoisement,' The Seigniorial Reaction, and the Beginnings of an Agricultural Revolution

1. Guy Bois, The Crisis of Feudalism: Economy and Society in Eastern Normandy, c. 1300 - 1550 (1984). Chapters 6 - 9, pp. 135 - 260.
2. Marc Bloch, French Rural History: An Essay on its Basic Characteristics, trans. by Janet Sondheimer (Berkeley, Calif. 1966)(1966), chapters 4-6.
3. T.H. Aston and C.H.E. Philpin, eds., The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe (Cambridge, 1987):
 - a) Patricia Croot & David Parker, 'Agrarian Class Structure: England and France Compared,' pp. 79-90;
 - b) Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, 'A Reply to Robert Brenner', pp. 101-106;
 - c) Guy Bois, 'Against the Neo-Malthusian Orthodoxy,' pp. 119-37.
 - d) J.P. Cooper, 'In Search of Agrarian Capitalism,' pp. 138-91.
 - e) Robert Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe', pp. 46-63; and his 'The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism,' pp. 284-323.
4. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, The French Peasantry, 1450 - 1660 (1987); and/or his The Peasants of Languedoc (1974), pp. 51-97, 219-311.
5. Peter Earle, ed., Essays in European Economic History, 1500-1800 (1974):
 - (a) Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, 'A Long Agrarian Cycle: Languedoc, 1500-1700,' pp. 143-64.
 - (b) Jean Jacquart, 'French Agriculture in the Seventeenth Century,' pp. 164-84.
6. Philip T. Hoffman, Growth in a Traditional Society: The French Countryside, 1450 - 1815 (Princeton, 1996), pp. 1-34, 193-205.
7. Philip T. Hoffman, 'Sharecropping and Investment in Agriculture in Early Modern France,' Journal of Economic History, 42 (March 1982), 155-60. And also his 'The Economic Theory of Sharecropping in Early Modern France,' Journal of Economic History, 44 (June 1984), 309-20.
8. Philip Hoffman, 'Taxes and Agrarian Lands in Early Modern France: Land Sales, 1550-1730,' Journal of Economic History, 46 (March 1986), 37-56.
9. Philip T. Hoffman, 'Land Rents and Agricultural Productivity: The Paris Basin, 1450 - 1789,' The Journal of Economic History, 51 (December 1991), 771 - 806.
10. Patrick K. O'Brien, 'Path Dependency: Or Why Britain Became an Industrialized and Urbanized Economy Long Before France,' The Economic History Review, 2nd ser., 49:2 (May 1996), 213-49.

11. Andrew Appleby, 'Grain Prices and Subsistence Crises in England and France, 1590-1740,' Journal of Economic History, 39 (December 1979), 865-87.
12. Pierre Goubert, 'The French Peasantry of the Seventeenth Century: A Regional Example,' Past and Present, no. 10 (Nov. 1956), 55-77; reprinted in T. Aston, ed., Crisis in Europe, 1560-1660 (London, 1965), pp. 141-66.
13. Tom Kemp, Economic Forces in French History (London, 1971), chapter 1: 'French Agriculture before the Revolution,' pp. 9-29.
14. Michel Morineau, 'An Agricultural Revolution in 18th Century France?' in Rondo Cameron, ed., Essays in French Economic History (1970), pp. 170-82.
15. Robert Forster, 'Obstacles to Agricultural Growth in Eighteenth-Century France,' American Historical Review, 75 (1970).
16. A. Davies, 'The New Agriculture in Lower Normandy, 1750-1789,' Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 8 (1958), 129-46.
17. George W. Grantham, 'Divisions of Labour: Agricultural Productivity and Occupational Specialization in Pre-Industrial France,' Economic History Review, 2nd ser., 46:3 (August 1993), 478-502.

QUESTIONS:

1. What changes occurred in French seigneurialism (seigniorialism, manorialism) from the 15th to the late 18th centuries? To what extent was there an 'embourgeoisment' of seigneurial properties in the early modern era? To what extent was there a 'seigniorial reaction' in the 16th and 17th centuries? What forms did it take? Discuss the similarities and differences between French and English landholding in the 17th century.
2. What changes occurred in the social and economic status of the French peasantry from the 15th to 18th centuries? Did they become more or less secure in their land tenures than their English rural counterparts?
3. Was there an 'agricultural revolution' in early-modern France? When and where did such agrarian changes occur, and why?
4. Do regional variations in French agriculture -- especially in comparing regions north and south of the Loire -- prevent us from generalizing about trends in early-modern French agriculture? Which became the most advanced and which were the least advanced regions by the eve of the French Revolution?