
ECO 2210Y

Topic 3: Medieval European Demography and Disease (3): The Black Death, Later Plagues, and Economic Conjecture in Late-Medieval European Society.

A. For Medieval Europe in General, and especially Continental Europe: General Surveys:

- * 1. Karl Helleiner, 'The Population of Europe, from the Black Death to the Eve of the Vital Revolution,' in E.E. Rich and Charles Wilson, eds., Cambridge Economic History, Vol. IV: The Economy of Expanding Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 1-95, esp. pp. 5-19, 68-95.
- * 2. Jan de Vries, 'Population,' in Thomas A. Brady, jr., Heiko O. Oberman, and James D. Tracy, eds., Handbook of European History, 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation, Vol. I: Structures and Assertions (Leiden/New York/Cologne: E.J. Brill, 1994), pp. 1 - 50. More on the subsequent era; but still a fundamental study of major importance for this topic as well.
- * 3. J. C. Russell, 'Population in Europe, 500 - 1500,' in Carlo Cipolla, ed., Fontana Economic History of Europe, Vol. I: Middle Ages (1972), 25-70. With some useful information on plagues.
- 4. Wilhelm Abel, Agricultural Fluctuations in Europe from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Centuries, 3rd edn. (Berlin, 1978); trans. Olive Ordish (London, 1980), chapter 1-3, especially pp. 35-48.
- 5. Léopold Genicot, 'Crisis: From the Middle Ages to Modern Times,' in M.M. Postan, ed., The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol. I: Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages, 2nd edn. (1966), pp. 660-700. Important for the agrarian consequences of plague and depopulation.
- 6. E. A. Wrigley, 'Mortality and the European Marriage Pattern System,' in Catherine Geissler and Derek Oddy, eds., Food, Diet, and Economic Change, Past and Present (Leicester, 1993), pp. 35-49.

B. Some Examples of Regional Studies: Italy, Low Countries, Iceland

- * 1. David Herlihy, Medieval and Renaissance Pistoia, 1200 - 1430 (1967), chapters 3 - 5 (on population), pp. 55-120; and pp. 271-82. See also David Herlihy and Christiane Klapsich-Zuber, Tuscans and Their Families (1985), chapter 3, pp. 60-92. A major study whose analyses apply to late-medieval Europe in general.
- * 2. Willem Blockmans, 'The Social and Economic Effects of Plague in the Low Countries, 1349 - 1500,' Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire, 58 (1980), 833 - 63. A critique of traditional views contending that the Low Countries had escaped the Black Death.
- * 3. Gunnar Karlsson, 'Plague Without Rats: The Case of Fifteenth-Century Iceland,' Journal of Medieval History, 22:3 (1996), 263-84. How was plague bacillus transmitted -- if not by rat fleas?

C. On Late-Medieval England:

1. Colin Platt, King Death: The Black Death and Its Aftermath in Late-Medieval England (London and Toronto: 1996), chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-47) and 10 (pp. 177-92). More of a popular survey
- * 2. John Hatcher, Plague, Population, and the English Economy, 1348 - 1530 (London, 1977), pp. 11 - 73. The next most recent and perhaps still the best academic survey.
- * 3. Jim Bolton, 'The World Upside Down': Plague as an Agent of Economic and Social Change,' in Mark Ormrod and Phillip Lindley, eds., The Black Death in England, Paul Watkins Medieval Studies (Stamford, 1996), pp. 17-78
- * 4. A.R. Bridbury, 'The Black Death,' Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 26 (1973), 557 - 92. See also A. R. Bridbury 'Before the Black Death,' Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 30 (1977), 393-410.
- * 5. John Hatcher, 'England in the Aftermath of the Black Death,' Past & Present, no. 144 (August 1994), pp. 3 - 35.
6. John Hatcher, 'Mortality in the Fifteenth Century: Some New Evidence,' Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 39 (Feb. 1986), 19 - 38.
- * 7. Mark Bailey, 'Demographic Decline in Late-Medieval England: Some Thoughts on Recent Research,' The Economic History Review, 2nd ser., 49:1 (February 1996), 1-19.
8. Sylvia Thrupp, 'The Problem of Replacement Rates in Late Medieval English Population,' Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 18 (1965), 101-19.
9. E. D. Jones, 'Going Round in Circles: Some New Evidence for Population in the Later Middle Ages,' Journal of Medieval History, 15 (1989), 329-45.
10. Zvi Razi, Life, Marriage and Death in a Medieval Parish: Economy, Society, and Demography in Halesowen, 1270-1400 (1980): chapter 3, 'The Black Death,' pp. 99-113; and chapter 4, 'The Population of Halesowen 1350-1400,' pp. 114-51.
11. L. R. Poos, A Rural Society after the Black Death: Essex, 1350 - 1525 (1991), chapters 5 & 6.
12. Michael Postan, The Medieval Economy and Society: An Economic History of Britain, 1100-1500 (Cambridge, 1972), chapter 3, pp. 27-40.
- * 13. J.L. Bolton, The Medieval English Economy, 1150-1500 (London, 1980), chapter 3: 'The Overcrowded Island,' pp. 82-118; chapter 6: 'Towards a Crisis,' pp. 180-206; chapter 7: 'Crisis and Change in the Agrarian Economy,' pp. 207-45.
14. Nils Hybel, Crisis or Change? The Concept of Crisis in the Light of Agrarian Structural Reorganization in Late Medieval England (1989): Chapter VI.1-6, pp. 178-90; Chapter VII.6, pp. 228-30; and especially Chapter VIII.4-15, pp. 261-97. Surveys of the literature on late-medieval demography and the English economy.

QUESTIONS:

1. Were the essential causes of population decline *endogenous* or *exogenous* to the European economy? In particular, was European society the victim of a Malthusian crisis of overpopulation from the early 14th century? Did such conditions increase the Black Death's mortality?
2. What havoc did the Black Death inflict? How did it spread? What were the particular economic and social consequences of the Black Death and subsequent bubonic plagues: what were the regional differences?
3. Did plague and depopulation lead to a rise in real wages and living standards in late-medieval Europe. If so, whose living standards in particular? If not, why not?
4. Why was demographic decline and/or stagnation so prolonged in late-medieval Europe: why did it last until the later 15th century?
5. Why did the plague ultimately diminish in its impact; when and why did population decline come to an end -- finally? How did demographic recovery recommence?