ECO 2210Y:

Topics in the Economic and Social History of Later Medieval and Renaissance Europe, 1250 - 1600

Topics nos. 1 - 3:

1. Medieval Demography and the Late-Medieval Demographic Crises, ca. 1280-1500: European Population Changes Before and After the Black Death


   (2) Medieval European Demography and the Economy: Did Late-Medieval Population Growth Produce a Malthusian Crisis?

   (3) Medieval European Demography and Disease: The Great Famine, the Black Death, Later Plagues, and Economic Conjoncture in Late-Medieval European Society.

For each section, the readings are listed in the chronological order of original publication. Items of exceptional importance -- including those denounced by later historians -- are indicated by an asterisk (*).

READINGS:

A. General and Methodological


* 5. Carlo Cipolla, Jan Dhondt, Michael Postan, and Philippe Wolff, ‘Rapports collectif,’ IXe congrès international des sciences historiques, Paris août - septembre 1950, 1 (1950), 225-41. Michael Postan's contribution was revised and subsequently published as the following:

** 6. Michael Postan, ‘The Economic Foundations of Medieval Society,’ Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie, 161 (1951); and:

both reprinted in his Essays on Medieval Agriculture and General Problems of the Medieval Economy (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 3 - 27; and 186 - 213 (the latter, with the revised title of ‘Some Agrarian Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages.’)


** (b) J. Hajnal, ‘European Marriage Patterns in Perspective,’ pp. 101-46.


29. Frederick Cartwright, Disease and History (New York, 1972).


34. Robert Fossier, ‘Peuplement de la France du Nord entre le 10e et le 16e siècles,’ Annales
de demographie historique (1979), 59 - 99.


46. Gregory Clark, ‘The Economics of Exhaustion, the Postan Thesis, and the Agricultural


B. The ‘European Marriage Pattern?’: Family Structures, Marriages, and Medieval Fertility


22. David Weir, ‘Rather Never than Late: Celibacy and Age at Marriage,’ Journal of Family History, 9:4 (Winter 1984), 340-54. Chiefly for the subsequent period; but important for this era.


25. David Herlihy, Medieval Households (Cambridge, Mass. 1985), chapters 4, 5, and 6 (pp. 79 -156), for the later Middle Ages (on marriages, parenthood, childhood, etc.).


37. Walter Prevenier, ed., *Marriage and Social Mobility in the Late Middle Ages/ Mariage et mobilité sociale au bas moyen âge*, Studia Historica Gandensia no. 274 (Ghent, 1989).


on the European Marriage Pattern.


56. David Nicholas, ‘Child and Adolescent Labour in the Late Medieval City: A Flemish Model in Regional Perspective,’ English Historical Review, 110 (November 1995), 1103-1131.


59. Richard Adair, Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage in Early Modern England (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996). Although this study concerns the following period (and will appear in the bibliography on early-modern demography), its methodology is useful for this medieval topic.


C. Demographic Crises in the Late Middle Ages: Famines and Plagues: General Features


** 4. Michael Postan, ‘Some Economic Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages,’ Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 2 (1950), 130-67; and:

Michael Postan, ‘The Economic Foundations of Medieval Society,’ Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie, 161 (1951);

Both are reprinted in his Essays on Medieval Agriculture and General Problems of the
Medieval Economy (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 186 - 213 (the former, with the revised title of ‘Some Agrarian Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages’), and the latter on pp. 3 - 27.


* 12. David Herlihy, Medieval and Renaissance Pistoia, 1200-1430 (New Haven, 1967), chapters 3 - 5, pp. 55 - 120; see also pp. 271-82. See also below, section E. nos 3-4.


D. Bubonic Plagues and Disease in Late-Medieval Europe


* 36. Michael Flinn, ‘Plague in Europe and the Mediterranean Countries,’ *Journal of European Economic History*, 8 (1979), 131-48. Largely a review of Biraben's two volume study (no. 17); but also a fascinating review of the general European literature on the plague, much of it beyond the period of this topic.


* 40. Andrew Appleby, ‘The Disappearance of Plague: A Continuing Puzzle,’ *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. 33 (1980), 161-73. Also chiefly beyond the period of this topic; but it raises very important issues on the biological nature of the late-medieval plagues; and should be read in conjunction with Flinn, Biraben, Davis, and Slack.


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

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


Sauerländer, 1993).


   b) Jim Bolton, ‘‘The World Upside Down’: Plague as an Agent of Economic and Social Change,’ pp. 17-78.
   c) Christopher Harper-Bill, ‘The English Church and English Religion after the Black Death,’ pp. 79-123.


E. **Particular Demographic Studies on England**


3. Michael Postan, ‘The Economic Foundations of Medieval Society,’ *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie*, 161 (1951); and:


   both reprinted in his *Essays on Medieval Agriculture and General Problems of the Medieval Economy* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 3 - 27; and 186 - 213 (the latter, with the revised title of ‘Some Agrarian Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages.’


14. Barbara Harvey, ‘The Population Trend in England Between 1300 and 1348,’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 16 (1966), 23-42. Opposes Postan's thesis of a pre-plague population decline (implicitly supporting Russell); but see her later essay on this
theme, in no. 57 below.


See especially the following:


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

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


* 54. H. E. Hallam, ‘Population Movements in England, 1086 - 1350,’ and ‘Rural England and
Wales, 1042 - 1350,’ in H. E. Hallam, ed., The Agrarian History of England and Wales, II: 1042 - 1350 (Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 508 - 93, and 966 - 1008. Important; but unfortunately rather outdated by the time it was finally published.


* 60. Nils Hybel, Crisis or Change? The Concept of Crisis in the Light of Agrarian Structural Reorganization in Late Medieval England (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1989). For discussions of the literature on demographic changes, see: Chapter I.1-8, pp. 1-14; Chapter IV.1-5, pp. 105-17; Chapter VI.1-6, pp. 178-90; Chapter VII.6, pp. 228-30; and especially Chapter VIII.4-15, pp. 261-97.


b) Jim Bolton, ‘‘The World Upside Down’: Plague as an Agent of Economic and Social Change,’ pp. 17-78.

c) Christopher Harper-Bill, ‘The English Church and English Religion after the Black Death,’ pp. 79-123.


F. Demographic Changes in Continental Western Europe: Italy, France, Spain, and the Low Countries


13. Philippe Dollinger, ‘La chiffre de population de Paris au XIVe siècle: 210,000 ou 80,000?’ Revue historique, 216 (1956), 35-44.


34. M.V. Amasuno Sarraga, *La peste en la Corona de Castilla durante la segunda mitad del siglo XIV* (Junta de Castilla y León, Consejeria de Educación y Cultura, 1996).


G. **Population, Labour, and Real Wages: The Standard of Living Controversy, Before and After the Black Death, 1300-1500**

i. **On the Continent (and General)**


* 2. Robert Lopez, ‘Hard Times and Investment in Culture,’ in:


ii. **On England:**


23. Christopher Dyer, ‘Changes in the Size of Peasant Holdings in Some West Midland Villages, 1400 - 1540,’ and

Christopher Dyer, ‘Changes in the Link between Families and Land in the West Midlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,’ and also:

Bruce Campbell, ‘Population Pressure, Inheritance, and the Land Market in a Fourteenth-Century Peasant Community,’


iii. On Wages, Prices, and Income Distributions (Statistical)


* 6. E. H. Phelps Brown and Sheila Hopkins, ‘Seven Centuries of Building Wages,’ *Economica*, 22 (1955); and

E. H. Phelps Brown and Sheila Hopkins, ‘Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, Compared with Builders' Wage Rates,’ *Economica*, 23 (1956):


A republication in translation (with graphs, but without the long statistical appendices of the original): ‘Prijzen en lonen als ontwikkelingsvariabelen: Een vergelijkend onderzoek tussen Engeland en de zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1400 - 1700,’ in *Album aangeboden aan Charles Verlinden ter gelegenheid van derig jaar professoraat* (Ghent, 1975), pp. 413 - 47.


QUESTIONS ON DEMOGRAPHY

1. When did the general growth of European population, the demographic upswing that commenced in the 10th-11th centuries, cease? In the later 13th century? In the early 14th century? Not until the Black Death of 1348? Or later? WHY and HOW?

2. What brought about the drastic demographic declines in 14th and 15th century Europe? Did a ‘Malthusian Crisis’ trigger that population decline? Or was the demographic decline chiefly the result of Plague? Were the causes of European population decline essentially endogenous or exogenous to the functioning of the European economy?

3. What relationships were there, in the 14th and 15th centuries, between/among: famine, warfare, and disease?

4. What was the Black Death? What forms did it take? How was it introduced into Europe? How did it spread? What determined or influenced the mortality rates from the Black Death and succeeding plagues?

5. What other factors determined high death rates in late-medieval Europe, in rural and urban areas?

6. What factors influenced changes in birth rates? What was the more powerful factor in determining demographic changes and population levels: the birth rate or the death rate? How were the two related?

7. What is the ‘European marriage pattern’? What influence did it come to have on European birth and death rates? When did it commence -- in the Middle Ages, or later, in the early-modern era? Is there any evidence for a European marriage pattern anywhere in medieval Europe?

8. Why did the population decline continue for so long, into the 15th century? When, where, how, and why did that population decline come to a halt? What brought about the beginnings of population recovery?

9. What were the general economic and social consequences of population decline in late medieval Europe?

10. Discuss the relationships between living standards and population levels, demographic change.

11. Did demographic decline produce economic decline, or stagnation; or did it foster change and new economic growth?