

ECO 2210Y

Topic 5: Agrarian Changes in Western Europe, ca. 1260 - ca. 1450: Land Organization and Farming Techniques

Late Medieval Europe: General Surveys

1. B.H. Slicher Van Bath, Agrarian History of Western Europe, A.D. 500-1850 (1963); pp. 77-131, 137-43, 160-94; and Wilhelm Abel, Agricultural Fluctuations in Europe (1966), chapter 3.
2. Léopold Genicot, 'Crisis: From the Middle Ages to Modern Times,' in M. Postan, ed., Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol. I (2nd rev. edn. 1966), pp. 700-42. See also the essays by Ganshof and Verhulst (pp. 290-339); Jones (pp. 395-431), and especially on England by Postan (pp. 577-632).
3. Thomas W. Robisheaux, 'The World of the Village,' in Brady, Oberman, and Tracy, eds., Handbook of European History, 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation, Vol. I: Structures and Assertions (Leiden, 1994), pp. 79-112.
4. Harry Miskimin, Economy of Early Renaissance Europe, 1300-1460 (1975), chapter 2, 'The Agrarian Economy,' p. 14-72. [Not entirely reliable, but important the 'Miskimin thesis', to be examined later, in the topic on monetary changes.]

France, the Low Countries, Italy:

- *5. Marc Bloch, French Rural History (1966), pp. 77-125 (chapters 3-4). The classic study.
6. Adriaan Verhulst, 'L'économie rurale de la Flandre et la dépression économique du bas moyen âge,' Etudes rurales, 10 (1963), 68-80.
7. Guy Bois, The Crisis of Feudalism: Economy and Society in Eastern Normandy, c. 1300 - 1550 (1984); Part III: 'The Stages of the Crisis,' pp. 261-368.
- *8. David Herlihy, Medieval and Renaissance Pistoia (New Haven, 1967), pp. 121-47.
9. Karl Gunnar Persson, 'Was There a Productivity Gap between Fourteenth-Century Italy and England?' Economic History Review, 2nd ser., 46:1 (February 1993), 105-114. See also Persson in Campbell and Overton, below, no.

England

10. J. L. Bolton, Medieval English Economy, 1150-1500 (1980), pp. 207-45. Good general survey.
11. Nils Hybel, Crisis or Change: The Concept of Crisis in the Light of Agrarian Structural Reorganization in Late-Medieval England (1989), chapters 7-8, pp. 217-96.
12. Bruce Campbell, 'Arable Progress in Medieval England: Some Evidence from Eastern Norfolk,' Economic History Review, 2nd, 36 (1983), 26-47; B.M. Campbell, 'Arable Productivity in Medieval England: Some Evidence from Norfolk,' Journal of Economic History, 43 (June 1983), 379-404.
13. Bruce M. S. Campbell and Mark Overton, eds., Land, Labour and Livestock: Historical Studies in European Agricultural Productivity (Manchester, 1991). Essays by Overton & Campbell, Shiel, Biddick & Bijleveld, Campbell, Thornton, Clark, Persson.

14. Bruce M. S. Campbell and Mark Overton, 'A New Perspective on Medieval and Early Modern Agriculture: Six Centuries of Norfolk Farming, c.1250 - c.1850,' Past & Present, no. 141 (November 1993), 38 - 105.
15. Richard Smith, Land, Kinship, and Life-Cycle (1984). Essays by Campbell (pp. 87-134), Blanchard (pp. 227-76), Dyer (pp. 277-94).
16. Gregory Clark, 'The Economics of Exhaustion, the Postan Thesis, and the Agricultural Revolution,' The Journal of Economic History, 52 (March 1992), 61 - 84. See also the essay by Shiel in Campbell and Overton, in no. 13 above.
17. Edward Miller, ed., Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. III: 1348-1500 (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 175-323 ('Farming Practice and Techniques', by various authors.)
18. Kathleen Biddick, The Other Economy: Pastoral Husbandry on a Medieval Estate (1989), pp. 50-78.
19. Mavis Mate, 'Medieval Agrarian Practices: The Determining Factors?' Agricultural History Review, 33 (1985), 22-32.
20. Patricia Hogan, 'Clays, *Culturae*, and the Cultivator's Wisdom: Management Efficiency at Fourteenth-Century Wistow,' Agricultural History Review, 36:2 (1988), 117-31.
21. Barry Harrison, 'Field Systems and Demesne Farming on the Wiltshire Estates of Saint Swithun's Priory, Winchester, 1248 - 1340,' Agricultural History Review, 43:i (1995), 1-18.
22. Christopher Dyer, 'Deserted Villages in the West Midlands,' Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 35 (1982), 19-34.
23. Jan Titow, 'Lost Rents, Vacant Holdings and the Contraction of Peasant Cultivation after the Black Death,' Agricultural History Review, 42:ii (1994), 97-114.
24. B.M.. Campbell, 'Matching Supply to Demand: Crop Production and Disposal by English Demesnes in the Century of the Black Death,' Journal of Economic History, 57:4 (December 1997), 827-58.

QUESTIONS:

1. Did western Europe suffer an 'agrarian depression' in the late Middle Ages? What were the basic causes and consequences? What agrarian sectors were chiefly affected?
2. How did both landlords and peasants react to such agrarian, demographic, market or other economic changes: before and after the Black Death? Discuss specific reactions by country or regions, by agrarian sectors, by time periods. How did changes in northern Europe differ from those in Mediterranean Europe?
3. What changes occurred in tenurial relationships, in manorial demesnes and tenancies, in late-medieval western Europe? Explain the rise and expansion of lease-holding and sharecropping (*mezzadria*, *metayage*). For what types of agriculture were share-cropping contracts best suited? Why?
4. What changes occurred in agrarian land-use in late-medieval western Europe: shifts from arable to pasture or to other land-uses; changes in crop rotations and agricultural techniques. Explain causes & consequences. Did land management improve or 'regress' between the 13th and 15th centuries?
5. What groups of peasants gained and which ones lost, in terms of economic and social status -- in terms landholdings, wealth, incomes, taxes, rents, and fiscal burdens -- in later-medieval Europe, north and south.