

The Economic History of Late-Medieval and Early-Modern Europe

(The Development of the European Economy, 1300 - 1750)

Mid Year Test: January 1999

Answer **one** of the following questions, avoiding any topics related to your term essays, for either term, in about 1500-1800 words, or about 7 pages in typed form, and no more than 10 pages, using double-spacing with 11- or 12-point fonts. Put your **name** (printed), **student number**, and the **question number** at the top of the first page or on the title page of your paper. **Make sure that you clearly identify the question being answered, providing both the title and the question number.**

**Your take-home exam is due on Wednesday 13 January 1999, with no extensions permitted. If you do not submit the exam by this date, you must instead do another and more formal term essay, which will be due on the last day of classes in April. Thus you certainly may choose to do another essay instead of this take-home exam. Nevertheless, you should attempt to do this take-home exam, as a relatively painless rehearsal for the final examination; for all of the questions on this take-home exam use the same format as that on the final exam. Try to compress your answer into one hour's worth of writing.**

Please prepare your answer on a word-processor (using 11 or 12 point fonts) or a typewriter. If you must handwrite your essay, write or print your answer legibly, using double-spacing, in no more than 12 pages. Illegible answers will be returned unread for rewriting. The answer submitted must be *uniquely* your own work. Similar answers that appear to be the result of collaboration with other students will be returned with a zero grade, which may be appealed only with convincing evidence to the contrary. Beware also the other pitfalls of **plagiarism**: copying or transcribing with minimal changes the work of another.

**Your answer should not be a repetition of lecture notes and must show some evidence that you have read some of the recommended texts, books, essays, or articles for this course (on the reading lists to the major topics, especially). Footnotes and bibliography are not, however, required, though you may, if you wish, place the names of authors used in parentheses within the text.**

**QUESTIONS:**

- 1 (a). Explain how, when, where, and why the medieval institutions of feudalism, manorialism, and serfdom rose, flourished, and then ultimately declined in western Europe -- especially Europe between the Loire and Rhine rivers. In your answer discuss the meanings of these terms, the relationships among and the differences between these socio-economic institutions. **OR:**
- 1 (b). Analyse the economic and social causes and consequences of the *decline* of serfdom in western Europe and of the *rise* of serfdom in eastern Europe, from the 14th to the 16th centuries. In particular discuss the validity of commercial or market-oriented, demographic, and institutional models that various historians have utilized to explain these two contrasting phenomena.
2. Analyse the roles, positive and negative, of demographic forces in the development of the European economy from the 13th to early 16th centuries -- their causes and consequences. Did population growth inevitably lead to the demographic catastrophes of the 14th century; and if so, *or whatever your answer*, explain why the European economy took so long to recover from those disasters.

3. Why did the European economic and demographic expansion of the Commercial Revolution era, during the 12th and 13th centuries, not continue directly, without interruption, into the 16th-century era of the Price Revolution? What happened, how, and why in the intervening late-medieval era of the 14th and 15th centuries: did Europe then experience a 'Great Depression'?
4. Analyse the role of towns, in particular the urban institutions of town governments, craft and mercantile guilds, as positive and/or negative forces in the economic development of western Europe, from the 13th to 16th centuries. In your answer, explain why, for example, the role of merchant guilds differed from those of craft guilds, and why, in the latter, textile guilds differed from those of, say, butchers' guilds.
5. Analyse the role of money, monetary instruments, and monetary factors, in the economic development of western Europe from the 13th to early 16th century, in particular their role in secular price trends of inflation and deflation, explaining the economic consequences of those price-movements.
6. Discuss the interrelationships between demographic and agrarian changes, explaining where, how, and why agricultural innovations and transformations promoted economic growth in later-medieval western Europe. Compare and contrast the agricultural changes in at least two countries or regions in western Europe.
7. Compare and contrast the changes in the forms of landholding and land tenures in later medieval Europe, west and East; and explain why those changes more readily led to Enclosures in Tudor England than anywhere else in Europe during this era.
8. Analyse the changes that occurred in the forms and patterns of commerce in the Mediterranean basin and the Iberian peninsula, from the 13th to early 16th century, explaining in particular *both* the supremacy of Venice and the beginnings of Portuguese overseas commerce, explorations, and colonizations during the 15th century.
9. Analyse, compare, and contrast, the struggle for economic power in the Baltic-North Sea regions during the later Middle Ages, explaining why the maritime towns of Holland-Zealand proved more successful than those of England or the German towns of the Hanseatic League in dominating that commerce by the end of the 15th century.
10. Analyse and compare the role of wool and of wool-based textiles in the economic development of at least three of the following from the 13th to early 16th centuries: England, the Low Countries (Flanders, Brabant, Holland), France, Spain, and Italy. In your answer, discuss how such textiles promoted economic linkages between and among the agricultural, industrial, commercial and financial sectors.
11. In terms of the Van der Wee thesis, explain the economic impact, for western Europe, of the structural changes in international trade that involved overland continental and maritime routes; and in particular the role of warfare in influencing those changes, from the 13th to 16th centuries. Thus in your answer discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of overland trade vs. maritime trade, including technological innovations in shipping and navigation.
12. Analyse the evolution of banking and financial institutions in western Europe, from the 13th to early 16th centuries, explaining in particular: (a) why and how *some* regions that gained commercial supremacy and also gained financial supremacy; (b) why and how the Church and its usury doctrines

helped shape the evolution of those medieval financial institutions.