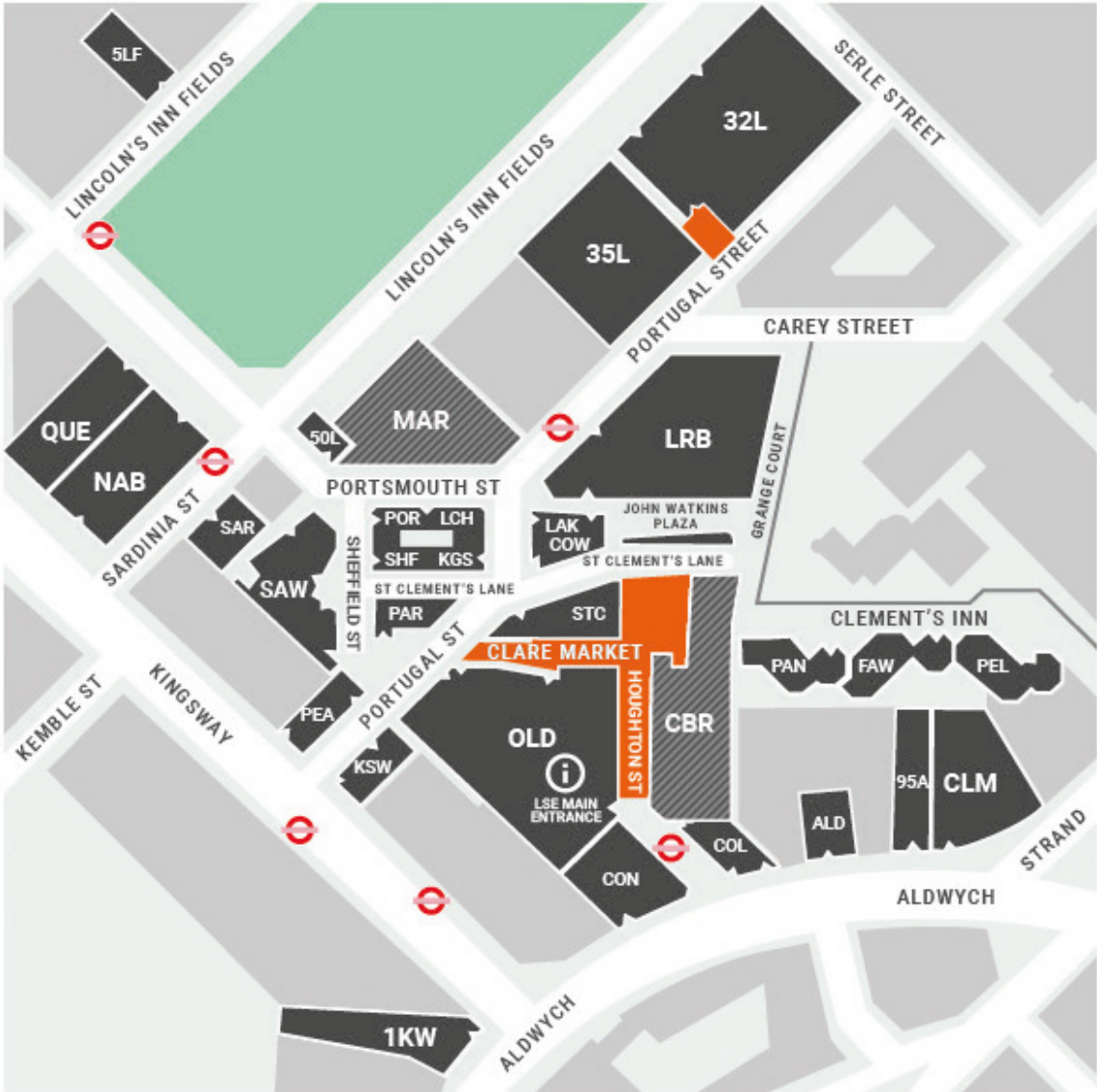




Sowing the Seeds VI
A Workshop for Early Career Medieval Economic
and Social Historians

Book of Abstracts





LSE Campus Map

Programme:

9.30am: Welcome, Registration and coffee

10am: *Felon's Chattels and living standards in the fifteenth century*, Dr. Chris Briggs

11am: Short Break

11.20am: Session 1: Managing the Medieval Economy: Work, Wages and Officials

Manorial Managers and Agricultural Accounts, Ryan Wicklund

The Rewards of Peasant Officialdom in Fourteenth Century England, Grace Owen

Homo Economicus or Homo Ludens? Factoring Festive Culture and Social Distinction into the English Working Year, c. 1260-1500, Taylor Aucoin

12.50am: Lunch

1.50pm: Session 2: Beyond the Cloister: The Economies of Monastic Orders

Ora et Guberna: The Economic Impact of Benedict's Rule in Medieval England, Federico Trombetta

The Integration of the Mendicant Orders in Late Medieval Dublin, Rowena McCallum

Monastic Orders, Feudal Control and Public Goods in Medieval England, Jakob Schneebacher

3.20pm: Coffee

3.40pm: Session 3: Inequality, Human Capital and Crises in the Middle Ages

When 'War Made the State', What Happened to Economic Inequality? Military Conflicts and the Beginning of the Inequality Rise in Premodern Germany (c.1400-1648), Felix Schaff

Managing the Food Shocks of the Great Transition: Flemish Cities and the Food Crises of the Fourteenth Century, Stef Espeel

Reconsidering the Cost of Apprenticeship, Rhiannon Shandy

5.10pm: Session 4: New Directions in Medieval Economic History: A Roundtable

Gregory Clark, Daniel Curtis, Chris Briggs, and Jordan Claridge

7pm: Food and drinks in Economic History Department

Abstracts:

Keynote Lecture:

Felons' Chattels and Living Standards in the Fifteenth Century

Chris Briggs, University of Cambridge

This paper will present and discuss some new evidence on the material wealth of English lower status households in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This material consists of lists of the goods of felons, fugitives and outlaws, which were seized, valued and sold by a royal official called the escheator for the benefit of the crown. The evidence offers some potentially valuable insights into the material world of groups that are normally hard to trace in the documentary record; but how can we best use it? Is this material susceptible to quantitative analysis, and if so, are the qualifications we must apply to our findings so numerous as to invalidate the whole exercise? The aim of this paper - which will end on an optimistic note - is in large part to reflect on the issues involved in constructing quantitative measures using intractable medieval data. As a result it will hopefully raise issues that delegates at the workshop are currently reflecting on in their own research.

Session 1: Managing the Medieval Economy: Work, Wages and Officials

Manorial Managers and Agricultural Accounts

Ryan Wicklund, University of Durham

The role of decision-making in medieval agriculture and estate management is not a new topic of discussion, and has been debated most recently by scholars such as Alexandra Sapoznik, Ben Dodds, David Stone, and Eric Schneider and covering the influence of grain prices, labour markets, and climatic conditions. Despite this, less work has been done on the individuals who managed these estates and manors on the ground, the serjeants and reeves who were familiar with the area and likely took a hands-on approach to the farm in their charge. This paper seeks to address that gap and give a special focus to the individuals who managed the manors of the bursar of Durham Cathedral Priory in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This paper will draw on a variety of documents, including manorial accounts, rentals, and tithe receipts from the late medieval period and covering a geographic region that includes much of County Durham. I will argue that the serjeants and reeves managed both their own affairs and the manors for which they were responsible with a careful eye. These men provided the Durham Cathedral Priory with a key group of individuals whose different management styles can be inferred from the surviving evidence. As such, this paper will, by closely examining extant records from the Durham Cathedral Priory, help us understand better the social and economic roles of the serjeants on the estate of the Durham Cathedral Priory bursar in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The Rewards of Peasant Officialdom in Fourteenth-Century England

Grace Owen, University of Birmingham

Fourteenth century England was dominated by the manorial holdings of both lay and ecclesiastic lords. These estates were not only geographic regions but also legal jurisdictions which granted their owners control over the resident peasantry. Glastonbury Abbey owned over fifty manors of various sizes, populations, and degrees of rurality or urbanity. Effective management of these numerous manors necessitated a nuanced system of delegated administration. This took the form

of a hierarchy of officials, many of whom were elected from the unfree tenantry, whose responsibilities involved managing matters relevant to the lord's economic interests, ensuring that servile obligations were met and appointed works carried out, and other various duties which assisted with manorial operation. As these officials were fiscally culpable for any failings in the executions of their office, rewards, in the form of stipends, quittances of rent and labour services, and the gifting of grain and livestock, were used to make these roles more appealing to the peasantry.

This paper will examine the perks that were awarded to different manorial officials during the period 1250-1400. This analysis assists with the clarification of the hierarchies within manorial peasant officialdom and also allows for an examination of the valuation of labour and goods amongst the wider peasantry. Focussing upon the variations in perks and rewards, caused by differing roles or longer-term trends and fluctuations correlated with events such as the Black Death, provides insight into the dynamics of peasant society.

This study has focused on the manors belonging to the Abbey of Glastonbury and utilised two source types; one custumal, from the 1250s, and 92 accounts from 5 manors, dating from the 1250s-1390s. This paper unifies qualitative historical context with quantitative source data and, using statistical analyses, produces an accurate determination of trends, changes, and norms in manorial peasant officialdom.

***Homo Economicus* or *Homo Ludens*? Factoring Festive Culture and Social Distinction into the English Working Year, c.1260-1500**

Taylor Aucoin, University of Bristol

The length of the working-year remains a central and contentious issue for economic historians of the medieval period and beyond. The number of days wage labourers worked, and how this altered or stayed the same over time, has major implications for projections of real income and economic growth, both short-term and long-term. Indeed, recent competing theories over whether preindustrial England experienced an 'Industrious Revolution' of growth, or remained in a Malthusian state of stasis have largely hinged upon this issue of medieval labour, summarized in three central questions: how many days did casual wage labourers work in a year; was this comparable to the working year of annual contract (stipendiary) labourers; and if data from the two groups can be used together, how can we accurately calculate the annual income of such stipendiary workers to account for payments in-kind and other perquisites? While economic historians have offered innovative solutions to these conundrums, a need remains to merge these approaches with contextualized understandings of the social and cultural issues at play. More precisely, historians must consider how both the work year and stipendiary perquisites were bound to medieval festive custom, how such custom worked in practice, and the extent to which it may have differed depending on the social circumstances and statuses of workers (i.e. casual vs. stipendiary vs. customary tenant). This paper brings such a socio-cultural perspective and approach to the debate, arguing that a deeper understanding of medieval festive cultural mentalities can aid in answering the above questions, or indeed suggest a need for their rephrasing. Using custumals, household records, narrative sources, and a regional survey of English manorial accounts, it first presents the contemporary evidence for working year lengths c.1270-1500. It then examines more closely the festive perquisites given to stipendiary workers at occasions like Christmas, Shrovetide and Easter, positing their social and cultural value and what this means for calculations of annual income and comparisons to day labourer wages.

Session 2: Beyond the Cloister: The Economies of Monastic Orders

Ora et Guberna: The Economic Impact of Benedict's Rule in Medieval England

Federico Trombetta, University of Warwick

Medieval Benedictine monasteries were characterized by the adherence to Benedict's rule, establishing that the Abbot was an elective office, whose powers were constrained by the Rule itself and with an obligation to consult with the community. At the same time, they were feudal landlords, alongside with secular noblemen, owning a wide range of manors. Were those institutional differences having an impact on the productivity of manors? We assembled a new dataset merging information from the Domesday Book, the English Monastic Archive and a variety of geographic controls. We have data for 18000 English manors, including manorial income, geographic location and whether the landlord (in 1066 and in 1086) was a Monastery, a secular nobleman or a bishop. In order to isolate the causal effect of being governed by a monastery vis-à-vis a secular landlord, we use a wide range of statistical techniques. First, we run a fixed effect regression with local district fixed effects and geographic controls, using the manorial income growth rate as outcome variable and a dummy for Benedictine-controlled manors as a "treatment". Being controlled by a Benedictine monastery is associated with a 7% increase in the growth rate of manorial income. Secondly, we exploit the fact that, with the Norman Conquest, the pre-existing Anglo Saxon elite was almost entirely replaced by Norman noblemen (and bishops). We focus our attention on the subsample of manors owned by Anglo-Saxon landlords that changed ownership with the Norman Conquest, using those re-assigned to Benedictine Monasteries as "treatment group" and the rest as "control group". This "diff-in-diff" regression suggests that manors re-assigned to Benedictine monasteries experienced a 11% higher income than those re-assigned to Norman secular landlords. We perform a placebo test using manors re-assigned to bishops (vis-à-vis secular landlords) and we find no significant effect.

The Integration of the Mendicant Orders in Late Medieval Dublin

Rovena McCallum, Queen's University Belfast

The Mendicant Friars arrived in Ireland in the early thirteenth century and quickly established foundations at Dublin, Kilkenny, Drogheda, Waterford and Cork. The Mendicants had to compete with the Church and religious houses, both of which were long-established cornerstones of medieval Irish society, in order to spread their message and increase their popularity. The friars were not helped in this regard by the considerable amount of popular anti-mendicant literature, principally Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in circulation. Yet in spite of fierce competition and critical literature, the Mendicant Friars were not only successful in establishing themselves as an integral aspect of religious life, but they had also fully immersed and integrated themselves into medieval Irish towns by the close of fourteenth century. An analysis of the contents of wills has long been a tried and tested methodology adopted by historians, revealing the family ties, professional networks or contacts, and even the religious beliefs of the deceased. This paper, therefore, examines the large body of wills in which Dubliners bequeathed gifts, goods, money, property or land to the Mendicant Friars in the fifteenth century. Such a study, on the one hand, can shed light on how and when the Friars became fully integrated into Dublin society; but, on the other, can illustrate how medieval Dubliners viewed the Friars and accepted their teachings. A comparison of the goods bequeathed to the Mendicants with those left to the Church or other monastic orders, such as the Benedictines or Cistercians, reveals not only what Dubliners left to ecclesiastics but whether they felt a greater affinity or connection to the worldly practices of the Friars. After all, a considerable number of wealthy Dubliners requested to be buried in friaries. Were the urban-based Friars, therefore, more popular with Dubliners and

subsequently, did townsmen mention the former regularly in their wills? If this was indeed the case, this paper will explore the various reasons for the growing popularity of the Friars.

Yet in contrast to their counterparts in England, Irish women enjoyed considerable legal and commercial benefits in the Middle Ages. It can therefore be no surprise that countless medieval women bequeathed items and property to the Friars in Dublin. An analysis of their wills highlights whether women had a special affiliation with the Friars, with this paper exploring this trend. Such a study can reveal how the Mendicant Friars became fully integrated into urban society in medieval Ireland and, in the process, rose in popularity to challenge the status of the monastic orders. In essence, these wills can illustrate how Dublin-based Friars transformed themselves from outsiders to insiders in the Middle Ages.

Monastic Orders, Feudal Control, and Public Goods in Medieval England

Jakob Schneeberger, University of Oxford

Why did kings and nobles across medieval Europe spend and lobby so heavily to entice monastic orders to build houses in particular locations? This paper argues that monastic orders functioned as centres of fiscal capacity and providers of public goods that offered distinct advantages to the Crown over the available alternatives.

First, I investigate formally why kings might prefer monastic orders over feudal vassals for the performance of such critical duties as infrastructure construction, road safety, or poor relief. I show theoretically in a repeated-game setting that monastic orders have the ability to commit to better public good provision in the presence of asymmetric information in a way that feudal lords do not, and that they can exploit economies of scale in very specialised skills beyond the ability of even large feudal lords. Moreover, I show that if feudal lords are not intrinsically loyal to the king, the potential for coups limits the extent through which the Crown can replicate the advantages of monastic orders through the feudal infrastructure. Finally, I show conditions under which the church hierarchy provides a commitment mechanism even for small or newly-established orders.

Empirically, I first document the extraordinary enticements and payments that the kings and nobles made to monastic orders to attract monasteries, and rule out several alternative explanations for this behaviour. I also show in the aggregate that the introduction of similar monastic orders negatively impacts the expansion of a given order, but that the introduction of less similar ones does not have the same effect. Finally, using GIS techniques I map the location of all English monastic houses, between 500 and 1541, from the UCL Monastic Archives against geo-physical controls and measures of economic and political development. The presence of monastic houses is time-varying, as are many of the controls. This allows me to estimate the determinants of monastery establishments on the panel data. Identification derives from shocks to both the demand side (ruler and vassal deaths, economic shocks, the stock of existing monasteries) and the supply side (the introduction of new monastic orders). The empirical results are used to test the implications of the theory, and to shed light on the gradual decline of monastic houses for public good provision towards the end of the period in question. Ongoing work tries to establish the channels through which institutional know-how is passed from monastic houses to secular local administrators.

Session 3: Inequality, Human Capital and Crises in the Middle Ages

When ‘war made the state’, what happened to economic inequality? Military conflicts and the beginning of the inequality rise in premodern Germany (c. 1400 – 1648)

Felix Schaff, London School of Economics and Political Science

This essay studies the impact of military conflicts on economic inequality in fifteenth to seventeenth century Germany. It uses novel household-level data on the distribution of wealth in 62 localities. Between 1400 and 1618, the analysis finds a significant and robust relationship that runs from conflict exposure to increasing economic inequality. Wealth was transferred from the lower and middle classes of society to the rich. Economic polarization increased as well. It is suggested that conflicts played a key role during the beginning of the late medieval and early modern inequality rise. To understand this process, a conceptual framework is introduced in which warfare triggered an expansion of the administrative, defence and fiscal infrastructures of polities. This state growth was a costly process. It induced political elites to extract more economic resources from their subjects in an un-egalitarian way. During this period, conflicts were economically extractive, but not very destructive. Instead, the ‘Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) represents a radically different conflict-inequality regime, of high destruction but less extraction for the wider population.

Managing the Food Shocks of the Great Transition: Flemish Cities and the Food Crises of the Fourteenth Century

Stef Espeel, University of Antwerp

Recent research once again framed the fourteenth century as the century of environmental shocks and systemic transition, with the 1348 Black Death as the most disruptive episode, though still an episode which is profoundly embedded in a broader context of environmental instability and societal vulnerability.¹ This paper will focus on the rapid succession of urban food shocks before, during and after the 1348 Black Death. The major Flemish Cities provide a unique context to investigate the origins, the impact and the consequences of the Great Shocks of the 14th century. Based on new and exciting price series for the major cities of Bruges, Lille, Douai and Cambrai, I will not only be able to reconstruct divergences in the impact of the food shocks, but also to question the role of large urban landowners in the management and production of these food crises.²

To understand the complex ways in which food crises were managed by urban landowners, we should also question the interaction of food crises with A) food supply policies and B) agricultural policies of these institutions.³ In order to do so, I aim to compare the grain economy of urban hospitals and ecclesiastical institutions from 1300 up until 1370. This timeframe includes periods of relative price stability and instability, both before and after the Black Death. Such enquiry will allow a better understanding of both the causal mechanisms behind these food crises and the way major urban institutions handled and sometimes co-produced these crises.

Reconsidering the Cost of Apprenticeship

Rhiannon Sandy, Swansea University

Many historians have dismissed apprentices as ‘cheap labour’, but this is not an accurate description and proper consideration of the costs is overdue.¹ Apprenticeship indentures almost

¹ See, for example, Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social change in England c. 1200-1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 232; Elspeth M. Veale, *The English Fur Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 93. See also Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 233; S.R. Epstein, ‘Craft Guilds, Apprenticeship and Technological Change in

always included clauses obliging the master to provide food, clothing and bedding, sometimes alongside gifts of cash or goods at the end of the term. This paper demonstrates that, in many cases, providing for an apprentice was at least as costly as paying a journeyman a daily wage. Therefore apprenticeship was not a system which guaranteed masters 'cheap labour', and was in fact a means of providing guaranteed labour in periods where waged workers were harder to retain.

This paper uses a sample of 71 English apprenticeship indentures from 1255 to 1500 as a starting point for calculating low side and high side estimates of the cost of apprenticeship, using values drawn from various legal and administrative sources (each with their own benefits and disadvantages). A cost-benefit analysis of apprenticeship in comparison to employing waged labour shows that it was often more cost-effective for a master to employ a journeyman than to take on an apprentice for a fixed term. This was especially true in the early stages of an apprenticeship, when the apprentice would require more supervision in return for a lower output of high-quality work. The indentures also show a clear change in the expected level of provision before and after c.1400, when it became necessary to offer incentives to apprentices. This demonstrates that the continued prevalence of apprenticeship, despite associated costs, was less to do with the provision of 'cheap labour' and more because it bound a worker in a long-term, legally enforceable work agreement with associated financial penalties; this was especially important as wages rose and workers became more mobile.

Pre-industrial Europe', in *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400-1800*, ed. by S.R. Epstein and Maarten Prak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 52-80, p. 61; Ulrich Pfister, 'Craft Guilds, the Theory of the Firm, and Early Modern Proto-industry', in *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400-1800*, ed. by S.R. Epstein and Maarten Prak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 25-51, p. 27; William F. Kahl, *The Development of London Livery Companies: An historical essay and a select bibliography* (Harvard, MA: The Kress Library of Business and Economics, 1960), p. 1; George Clune, *The Medieval Guild System* (Dublin: Browne & Nolan Ltd., 1943), p. 88; Patrick Wallis, 'Apprenticeship and Training in Premodern England', *Working Papers on the Nature of Evidence: How Well Do 'Facts' Travel?*, 22/07 (2007), p. 19 <<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/22515/1/2207Wallis.pdf>>.

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