



Panel

9.1. Land- and credit-market participation and inequality - a self-sustaining process?

Panel organiser: Limberger, Michael, Ghent University, Belgium // De Vijlder, Nicolas, Ghent University, Belgium

From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, two parallel evolutions gave shape to (new) economic and social structures on the European countryside. First, a redistribution of property between social groups occurred. Although the same general tendencies existed across Europe, this process showed vast regional differences in speed as well as in effect. Second, factor markets for land, credit and labour came into existence. These markets were in part the cause (as for the land and credit market) and the result (as for the labour market) of the aforementioned redistribution. Within the current rural historiography, both evolutions are well researched as illustrated by recently published overviews (B. van Bavel and R. Hoyle 2010 and I. Devos, T. Lambrecht and E. Vanhoute 2011). However, the processes and mechanisms of how asset management and market participation could lead to increased inequality within society remains much less studied. Furthermore a pan-European view on how participation on the land market (either voluntary or through indirect coercion) could fasten the redistribution of property and bolster new interdependency relations is almost absent. In this session we attempt to fill up at least part of this lacuna. We bring together researchers who are working on market participation of economic actors and are revealing the structural mechanisms behind their actions. Both qualitative and quantitative research will be presented and thus both judicial and economic sources and methodologies will be incorporated. Furthermore, a comparative approach in both time and space, will be adopted, both in methodology and case-studies. Therefore, we should be able to uncover recurring mechanisms and patterns across Europe throughout the Ancien Régime. A preparatory workshop was organised at Ghent University in April 2013. Goal of this meeting is to enable the participants of the panel to present preliminary research, compare methodological approaches and (if necessary) refine research questions. This approach will facilitate comparability of the research results during the conference itself. This session will be organised in collaboration with the CORN-research network (<http://www.corn.ugent.be>) and the EED-research (<http://www.eed.ugent.be>) group at Ghent University.

Chair: Limberger, Michael, Ghent University, Belgium

Wednesday, 21 August 2013 // 1400 – 1600 // Session 9 – Room A-126

Paper

9.1.1. Rural credit, peasant land market and inequality in Eastern Spain in the late Middle Ages. The kingdom of Valencia, 14th-15th centuries

Furió, Antoni, University of Valencia, Spain

This paper analyzes the factors behind this transformation of the property relations in the kingdom of Valencia, in the East of Spain between the 13th and the 15th century. The kingdom of Valencia was conquered by Christian kings in the framework of the re-

conquista. Christian settlers were granted landholdings of an average size of 9 ha. By the fifteenth century the average size of the landholdings had decreased however to less than 5 ha and the landed property was distributed on a highly unequal basis. Among the factors of this transition we can count a considerable population growth, the practice of partible inheritance, the rise of land and credit markets and a high mobility of the population.

9.1.2. The “Interessegulden” of 1635 – Styria’s First Tax on Credit Transactions

Khull-Kholwald, Martin, University of Graz, Austria

In 1537 the Styrian assembly of the estates for the first time discussed about imposing a tax on credit transactions. Almost 100 years later the first tax on credit transactions was successfully established in Styria. The intensive political discussion about a tax on credit transactions proves that credit was much more commonly used in Styrian rural areas than expected. Lending money on interest was considered to generate income. The Styrian nobility was engaged in gaining its share in this market. Analyzing Styria’s first tax on credit transactions helped to define the level of market participation of the different acting groups on the credit market. The “Interessegulden” revealed the market shares of single creditors. Being able to lend money offered the chance to grab power. The examples of noblemen lending money on interest to their tenants displayed an important mechanism meant to strengthen the power of the lord over his subjects. Tenants had to pay rent and installments. Due to this fact, the economic inequality between lord and tenants increased. Tax evasion is the reason why the declared amount of credit must be considered to be the minimum amount of money invested into credit transactions in Styria. The legal framework of the “Interessegulden” offered several ways to avoid taxation. Especially taxpayers who negotiated with the Styrian bureaucracy and tried to reduce their dues by using legal means, give us an insight into the structural mechanisms of the Styrian credit market.

9.1.3. Land markets in Early Modern Inland Flanders and Brabant. Two contrasting experiences?

De Vijlder, Nicolas, Ghent University, Belgium

The development of factor markets during the transition from the Middle Ages into the early modern period was of crucial importance for long term economic growth. However, especially in the Southern Low Countries, the land market remains understudied. In this paper I focus on the late sixteenth-century rural land market, using two case-studies each consisting of three parishes. A first case-study is formed by the parishes of Sleidinge and Evergem situated inland-Flanders near the city of Ghent. The second case-study comprises the parishes St-Kathelijne Lombek, Wambeek and Ternat and is located about ten kilometers from Brussels. Our preliminary research garnered several interesting results. Although both case-studies are part of the larger agrosystem of Inland Flanders, market activity (type of plots sold, average acreage sold, yearly turnover etc...) differed greatly between the two regions. Our analysis shows that these contrasting experiences can be explained by a combination of institutional, socio-economic and geographical factors.

9.1.4. Integrated rural economy in Early Modern Western Slovenia

Panjek, Aleksander, University of Primorska, Slovenia

The paper concentrates on the region of western Slovenia, a mountain area comprising Alpine and sub-alpine as well as Karstic environments. A striking characteristic of the region under observation is that the early modern peasant economy structurally integrated agricultural with non-agricultural income sources, especially from trade, transport and smuggling. Research on the market-oriented activities of the rural population in the Eastern Alps clearly show their tight connection with forms of credit based on land as a source of financing. On this basis, the paper proposes the definition of “integrated rural economy” for a system characterized by a structural integration of agricultural and different non-agricultural sources of income (both from the secondary and tertiary sectors) in the rural population as a whole as well as within the peasant households (integrated peasant economy). The paper addresses the following question: What prompted the western Slovenian peasants toward what appears to have been, as I expressed in an earlier work, a “general mobilization on the market”? And, in relation to this: “Which were the forms of market participation? The last part of the paper is dedicated to a systematization of the different activities within an integrated rural economy. In relation to these, some considerations about rural credit practice are made. The next question is: “What is the relation between market-oriented activities and the social stratification within rural society?”

Participants

De Vijlder, Nicolas

Nicolas De Vijlder is a Ph. D. student at Ghent University. He is a bursary in the framework of the research project: A comparative study of the rural land market in the Southern Low Countries from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century

Furió, Antoni

Antoni Furió (Sueca, 1958) is full professor of Medieval History at the University of Valencia and head of the University Publications Service. He is chief editor of the review *L’Espanya*. And member of the editorial boards of several scientific reviews: *Revista d’Història Medieval i Pasajes*, *El Contemporani* (Barcelona), *Recerques* (Barcelona), *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* (CSIC, Barcelona), *Anales de Historia Antigua y Medieval* (Buenos Aires), *Continuity and Change* (Cambridge) and *Hispania* (del CSIC, Madrid). His principal lines of research in medieval history are: rural history and financial and fiscal history of the XIIIth- XVth centuries.

Khull-Kholwald, Martin

Martin Khull-Kholwald made his PhD. in the framework of a research project funded by

the National Bank of Austria on the role of credit in the financial economy of Styria at the beginning of the early modern period. He is now focussing on credit and land markets.

Limberger, Michael

Michael Limberger studied at the University of Vienna, and the European University Institute in Florence. He received his PhD. from Antwerp University with a thesis on sixteenth-century Antwerp and its rural surroundings. He is teaching Economic and World History of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period.

Panjek, Aleksander

Aleksander Panjek graduated in history University of Trieste in 1994 and received his Ph.D. degree in economic history from the University of Bari in 1999. He is currently employed by the University of Primorska, where he has been working as a senior research associate at the Science and Research Centre and as an associate professor at the Faculty of Humanities. Central fields of his research work include Economic and Social History of the Modern Era and Contemporary History.