Agrarian crises provoked significant and important historical works for 50 years. Their effects on demography, migration, productive systems, land market, etc. were studied in various contexts over times and places. Furthermore, the different national historiographies studied shifts of commercial networks during agrarian crisis. But, even though they did not ignore the shift of international commercial networks during agrarian crises, these networks seemed to be only a kind of adjustment tools which could solve, or could not, temporary crisis. From another point of view, the different European and non-European historiographies are very concerned by normal international commercial networks. If agrarian crisis caused massive shifts in agrarian systems, it is likely they sometimes caused long-term shifts in international commercial networks for consumer countries but also for producer countries. It is often supposed that the technological improvements in transportation and political decisions (the repeal of the Corn Law for example) were the first and foremost causes for the emergence of a new organisation for provisioning Europe in wheat and livestock from the middle of the nineteenth century on. But it would be possible that agrarian crisis during this period had led to the emergence of new networks and speed up technological improvements. In some cases, it is not possible to invoke technological improvements or political choices to explain the emergence of new commercial networks but only aagrarian crisis which disrupted the former commercial networks. Phylioula, for example, determined the growth of production of grapes in Greece. From another point of view, long-term depression seemed to be also turning point and sparked new opportunities for some areas or on the contrary lead to the backwardness of production. For example, the League of Nations (SDN, 1931) agrarian crisis had in the early 30’s a generalised negative influence in the European economies, highlighted by the considerable fall of agricultural products’ prices. It is to be noted that Great Depression initially appeared in Europe as a severe agrarian crisis. This paper will focus on the Greek interwar rural economy, as interwar Greece was primarily a rural country. The crisis affected its foreign trade balance. Commercialised products (mainly olive oil and tobacco) faced a considerable decrease of their prices. In general, between the years 1929-1931 a significant decline of the Greek agricultural production took place, primarily in terms of value and secondly of volume. In terms of everyday life, the agrarian crisis has a great influence on the rural population, as it is described by State’s sources. The international context, and the financial crisis, forced the Greek State to re-orientate its agricultural policy: in the framework of an increasing protectionism, agricultural production was orientated to the internal market, while wheat cultivation was supported by technical and institutional interventions. On the other hand, export trade was based on clearing agreements. In the late 30’s an increase was achieved in agricultural output, according to the official statistical data. Nevertheless, the growing lending of the farmers and the “bankruptcy” of the cooperative movement give a different picture of the situation in Greek rural areas.

### 9.6.2. Harvest crises and dearths crises: a comparison of the causes and effects of the food crises of the 1840s and 1850s in Belgium

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The 1840s and 1850s were both decades of food crisis in Belgium. Judging from grain price developments, the crises of the 1840s and 1850s, together with that of 1817, were among the worst of the entire nineteenth century. However, looking at developments in harvest output in both decades, the 1850s appear much less as a decade of food crisis. High prices and poor harvests clearly co-occurred in the 1840s, but not in the 1850s. The causes and effects of the food crisis of 1845-1847 in Belgium are well understood, while the food crisis of the 1850s has received much less attention up to now. It seems that the food crisis of the 1850s was more a dearth crisis than a harvest crisis, where market disturbances provide a better explanation for the high grain prices than harvest results. The aim of this paper is twofold: first, to understand the differences in causes and effects of the crises of the 1840s and 1850s, and secondly, to use these different crises as a point of departure to reflect upon long-term transformations in the grain trade in Belgium in the nineteenth century.

### 9.6.3. What about subsistence crisis in the middle of nineteenth century in England?

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The aim of this work is to investigate the wheat market in England during the period 1853-1857. This period is characterised by a very deep crisis in Europe (Sweden, France, Belgium and Spain). For example, in France the harvest shortfall was about 20% in 1853. It seems that this crisis did not affect England. As Bruce Campbell and Cormac O’Grada quoted recently “by the eve of the Industrial Revolution, England had become effectively famine-free”. In fact there was no famine at all in France during this period but a very high level of price of all staple foodstuffs (wheat, meat, vines, etc.). If countries so different as France and Sweden were affected by a very deep harvest crisis it is very unlikely that this crisis did not affect England at all. At the moment, I am looking for some information in Hereford and Kent archives about the wheat, barley and oats markets during this period. The aim of this work is not to produce a new price data series but to investigate the trend of transactions on local British market and to examine the perception of foreign trade over the year 1853-1856 during the Crimean war which disturbed the international market for wheat.

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