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Main content

Article Preview :

by John Hatcher and Mark Bailey (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2001; pp. 254. 30 [pounds sterling]).

In this lucid, learned, and at times passionate, book, the authors discuss the role of models in the study of the economic history of the Middle Ages and, in particular, the role of three `supermodels' which have been more influential than any others. These are, first, the neo-Malthusian model, in which population change determined economic change through its effects on the availability of resources; secondly, the Marxist model, in which class structures and class conflicts, and (crucially in the Middle Ages) the relationship between lords and peasants, are the prime mover; and, finally, the model deriving ultimately from the work of Adam Smith, but fashioned to some extent by Johan von Thunin, which places the growth of markets, assisted by the growth of towns, at the centre of change. The authors, each a distinguished empiricist in these matters, argue cogently that under the constraints of time and place no model is viable in this field of studies. Though at times a little repetitive and strident in tone, the...

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In the course of their investigations they provide not only detailed reconstructions of the economic history of England in the middle ages and sustained critical commentaries on the work of leading historians, but also discussions of the philosophy and methods of history and the social sciences. The result is a short and readily intelligible introduction to medieval economic history, an up-to-date critique of established models, and a succinct treatise on historiographical method. @article{Hatcher2001ModellingTM, title={Modelling the Middle Ages: The History and Theory of England's Economic Development}, author={J. Hatcher and M. Bailey}, journal={OUP Catalogue}, year={2001} }. J. Hatcher, M. Bailey. Published 2001. Sociology. OUP Catalogue. The whole economic development of the country from the 11th to the 14th century illustrates the increasing degree of exploitation of the peasant by the feudal lords, as well as by the church.

Trade was increasing throughout the country with merchants and middlemen who travelled from manor to manor and market to market. Henry II (1154—89), became King of England. He came from France and his family name was Angevin, but he was called Henry Plantagenet, because that was the name of Henry's father, the Count of Anjou. The name Plantagenet was taken from their badge, which was a sprig of *planta genista*, the Latin name for broom. His domain included large possessions in France.' In the course of their investigations they provide not only detailed reconstructions of the economic history of England in the middle ages and sustained critical commentaries on the work of leading historians, but also discussions of the philosophy and methods of history and the social sciences. The result is a short and readily intelligible introduction to medieval economic history, an up-to-date critique of established models, and a succinct treatise on historiographical method. Most of what has been written on the economy of the middle ages is deeply influenced by abstract concepts and theories.