

THE ENGLISH EXPERIENCE OF FEUDALISM

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English scholarship has never been comfortable with feudalism. Anglo-Saxon distrust of all grand theorising is well-established, and so protean a concept as feudalism inevitably gives grounds for such diffidence. Almost a hundred years ago the redoubtable J.H. Round lent his authority to the narrow, institutional definition of the term.¹ Even F.W. Maitland, elsewhere rather more adventurous, at one stage claimed rather whimsically that 'the feudal system' was simply an early 'essay in comparative jurisprudence', which attained 'its most perfect development' in the middle of the nineteenth century.² Despite the convenience of the term in titles of books and courses, subsequent generations of English medievalists have tended to heed his advice, for the most part limiting the use of the term 'feudal' to describe the institutions and arrangements associated with the *feudum* or fief. It is presumably significant that the *ancien regime* in England never experienced the sort of revolutionary challenge which elsewhere gave ideological force to a more broadly conceived notion of feudalism. Thus while English Marxist historians have persevered with theoretical formulations, by comparison with their continental counterparts they have remained remarkably down to earth.³ For their 'feudalism' other historians can usually read 'manorialism' with no loss of clarity. Neither the traditions of scholarship nor the needs of politics have served to promote a large vision of English feudalism. F.M. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism* is a very different book from M. Bloch's *Feudal Society*, and J.M.W. Bean's *Decline of English Feudalism* has little or nothing to do with the rise of capitalist society.⁴

It is not pure perversity which has led English historians to be so suspicious of grandiose visions of feudalism. Rigorous empiricism and a rich archival heritage have made medieval England one of the best studied traditional societies, past or present, and detailed scholarship is a great solvent of glib formulations. For

the most part this work has served to underline how uneasily England is placed in schemata which use the term 'feudal Europe'. In the strict sense favoured by medievalists, feudalism was an alien imposition in England. Whatever trends might be hypothesised for Anglo-Saxon society, England on the eve of the Norman Conquest was not a land of knights and castles, vassalage and parcelled sovereignty.⁵ The nature of English feudalism is even more problematic, in that what elsewhere developed in the context of the collapse of central authority was established there by a powerful monarchy. In making sense of the English experience, empiricism is a valid ideal, insularity a fact of life, and grand theory is dismissed as simplistic if not wholly misinformed. Even English historians willing to engage in large-scale theoretical and comparative ventures find such models as feudalism more a hindrance than a help. The evolution of English society, so eccentric in its developmental path, has long defied even the most sophisticated schemes of classification and theories of change.

Dissatisfaction with broad conceptions of feudalism is not confined to historians of England. Even though he was writing about the Carolingian heartland and the 'classical age' of feudalism, F.L. Ganshof was every bit as cautious as his English counterparts. He dismissed in a footnote the usage of 'historians in Soviet Russia and in other countries behind the Iron Curtain' as 'absolutely irrelevant', and suggested that the term 'feudal society' would be a more appropriate rendering of the larger Blochian vision.⁶ In his view feudalism was 'a body of institutions creating and regulating the obligations of obedience and service - mainly military service - on the part of a free man (the vassal) towards another free man (the lord), and the obligations of protection and maintenance on the part of the lord', which typically involved a grant 'to his vassal of a unit of real property known as fief'.⁷ Over the last quarter of a century Ganshof's 'narrow, technical, legal' feudalism has become the dominant usage among European as well as English historians. Indeed later generations of medievalists probably wish that he had gone further. The progress of historical research has rendered suspect Ganshof's notion of a uniform feudalism even in the Carolingian heartland, and new interests and interpretations have revealed how feudal constructs have often blinkered a proper understanding of medieval society and culture. Elizabeth Brown has given powerful voice to such discontents, and few readers of her paper could remain unstirred by her clarion call that 'the tyrant feudalism must be declared once and for all deposed and its influence over students of the Middle Ages finally ended'.⁸

Yet it is at this stage that the concerned scholar might begin to take exception. It might well be that feudalism has outlived its usefulness in medieval studies, but it is worth asking whether the fault lies with the tool or the workman. The terms of E. Brown's indictment of feudalism are telling. For the most part it is a wide-ranging critique of historians of European feudalism. Her

attack on the term itself is double-pronged. The basic charge, as always, is that feudalism is too flabby a concept. It is used to refer to such a range of institutions and ideas that it has become merely a synonym for 'medieval', another vacuous hold-all term. The secondary set of charges, applied to the more rigorous definition of term, is more interesting. Even when stripped to its etymological core, feudalism should still be banned from scholarly discourse, because to apply it to the fief-system itself is mere tautology, and to apply it to other aspects of medieval society and culture makes unwarrantable assumptions about the centrality of the fief. What is clear from this indictment is that in the study of medieval European society the concept of feudalism has become a source of confusion and distortion.⁹ Leaving aside the mischievous thought that the term is less a tyrant than a *roi fainéant*, manipulated by a succession of 'mayors of the palace', it needs to be asked what is the proper role of a term like feudalism. If its *raison d'être* lies in comparative analysis, it must be seriously questioned whether historians of particular societies are the best judges of its fate. It might be true that at the moment feudalism, emasculated as it has been, has lost its potency in medieval Europe, but it might still serve well in larger-scale analysis.

It is then valid to ask not which definition of feudalism is most true etymologically, but which definition of feudalism most justifies its retention in historical discourse. If 'feudalism' has a future, it must first prove itself in terms of its utility and explanatory power in comparative studies. Though a medievalist himself, M.M. Postan was appreciative of the larger significance of feudalism as an abstract category, as is apparent from his posthumous paper on the decline of feudalism.¹⁰ For him, as for others, the fundamental problem, even apart from the many loose and emotive ways in which the term is used in everyday language, is the very multiplicity of models of feudalism. He groups them under four headings, ranging from the fairly particular systems associated with the fief and the manor to the larger configurations associated with the facts of natural economy and political decentralisation. His despair that such models tend to be either too general to be properly discriminatory or too restrictive for large-scale analysis is well taken. Yet such conclusions must be overly pessimistic. First of all, it must be stressed that the vast majority of definitions revealed in a survey of the historiography of European feudalism are not analytical models. For the most part they are nothing more than a defining of terms preparatory to a description of some aspect of medieval European society. Only with M. Bloch's definition does the enterprise become more ambitious, but his vision of feudal society must be regarded more as an 'ideal-typical' than an analytical model. Needless to say, in being generous to the historians whose views of feudalism are narrowly descriptive, Postan has capitulated too readily to what he terms the antiquarian style of historical writing.

The pressing problem, therefore, is to establish models of

feudalism that will serve the purposes of elucidation and comparison across space and time. It might well be that the various definitions of feudalism could all be reshaped as analytical models. Obviously it is possible to devise paradigms of vassalage and military service, of landlordism and great estate organisation, or of 'compromises with anarchy', which can usefully form the basis for all sorts of intellectual enquiries.¹¹ Claims could be made that each of these paradigms represent models of feudalism. Yet there are grounds for reserving the term for the most ambitious model possible, that is one which allows for the classification and analysis of whole social systems. The etymologists insist that feudalism refers to the *feudum*, but the term was not coined and given currency to dignify a defunct form of military tenure. In the Enlightenment feudalism was used to describe whole societies and types of societies. It was an abstraction developed to allow scholars to conceptualise stages in the evolution of their own and other societies, and to understand patterns of development and non-development. It is this tradition that Marxist scholars have doggedly maintained, and their experience cannot be ignored. It is also the tradition which inspired Bloch, and remains influential among the *Annales* school.

'Feudalism' began its life, then, as a model of pre-modern European society. While it was not sharply defined, it was, generally speaking, a shared construct. When Marx used the term to refer to 'a whole social order whose principal feature was the domination of the rest of society, mainly peasants, by a military, landowning aristocracy', he could expect his contemporaries to understand him, even if he could only trust that they would follow him in his formulations about a feudal mode of production. Time has not diminished the need for terms which describe and help to conceptualise the old European order. Indeed issues of economic development and modernisation lend a real urgency to the task in many parts of the world. The concept of feudalism as a stage of European development has at least the merit of focusing attention on one of the key problems in human history, the origins of modern capitalist society. The old debate about the transition from feudalism to capitalism is ample testimony to the fruitfulness of thinking in such terms. Despite its frequent slippage into Marxist polemic or Marxian scholasticism, the 'transition' debate has engaged the interests of scholars of various political and disciplinary persuasions, and has stimulated empirical research of a high order. In this sort of discourse feudalism becomes at the very least a useful shorthand in alluding to traditional European society, or aspects of it. In comparative work, whether intra-European or cross-cultural, feudalism seems to offer a useful analytical model, or at least a serviceable conceptual category. Of course, there are confusions and misconceptions: some scholars anchor themselves firmly in the Marxian 'feudal mode of production', while others have in mind a blander 'agriculturally-based traditional society of orders'. Yet there is a degree of consensus, if only for the

purposes of debate, on the basic form of the modelling, and some of the models at least are beginning to show themselves capable of not only making fact serve theory but theory inform fact.

The most promising models have been developed by neo-Marxian scholars, most notably P. Anderson and more recently R. Brenner in the *Past and Present* symposium on 'Agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe'.¹² Though not explicitly offering a new definition of feudalism, Brenner has presented what amounts to a general 'feudal' model of traditional European society. Its strength is that it not only incorporates the realms of both the manor and the fief, but also transcends them in an instructive fashion. In essence, feudal societies are 'social-property systems characterized by peasant possession and surplus extraction by extra-economic compulsion'.¹³ In western Europe at least this pattern was established through the diffusion of political power, thus associating Marx's 'feudal mode of production' with the more classically 'feudal' political, legal and military institutions. Yet feudalism was not necessarily destroyed by the development of the so-called feudal monarchies, nor even later by the rise of the so-called 'new monarchies' of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Typically such polities functioned after all to allow the noble class to cream off the surplus product more efficiently, by minimising intra-class feuding and offering in taxation a new form of exploitation. Brenner calls this trend 'political accumulation'. It achieved its consummate form in the absolutist state of the *ancien régime*, which Anderson has appropriately characterised as 'a redeployed and recharged apparatus of feudal domination'.¹⁴

At one level this model of feudalism merely draws into a single construct key components of a traditional society built upon peasant agriculture and with political power in the hands of a landed aristocracy. Though many historians would be unhappy about the simplifications and emphases, most would recognise this general pattern in the European past. Broadly similar models seem to be implicit in the writings of members of the *Annales* school.¹⁵ Brenner's construct goes beyond mere description, however, and its larger claims would be far more contentious. It is a dynamic model, developed from Marxian historical materialism. It offers a model of the long-term development of feudal society, which is at odds with the neo-Malthusian and neo-Ricardian models favoured by E. Le Roy Ladurie and other *Annalistes*.¹⁶ Basically it is a pattern of economic, social and political evolution in which peasant communities entrenched themselves on the land, and the lords responded with various forms of surplus extraction, ranging from labour services and food levies to money rents and government taxes. The natural tendency of this system is held to be towards 'economic stagnation and involution ... because it imposed upon the members of the major social classes - feudal lords and possessing peasants - strategies for reproducing themselves which ... were incompatible with the requirements of growth. In particular,

reproduction by the lords through surplus extraction by means of extra-economic compulsion and by peasants through production for subsistence precluded ... widespread ... specialization of productive units, systematic reinvestment of surpluses, or ... regular technical innovation'.¹⁷ It provides, in other words, a model of what might be termed the 'feudal syndrome' from which parts of western Europe began to emerge in early modern times, and offers a framework within which to approach systematically the problem of the genesis of modern capitalist society.

The application of this model to England reveals some of its potential. It cuts across a great deal of the traditional controversy about the English experience of feudalism. The debate over the origins of feudalism has been particularly heated, but has been remarkably unproductive. Secure in their own definitions of the term, some historians have felt their opponents criminally perverse in entertaining the possibility that the feudal system was not introduced by William the Conqueror.¹⁸ The obsession with the existence or non-existence of the knight's fee before 1066 has provided a few secure footholds, but has diverted energy from an exploration of more fundamental changes taking place in England in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in particular long-term trends towards manorialisation and the enserfment of the peasantry.¹⁹ The neo-Marxian model at least has the merit of focusing attention on the underlying structures rather than the outward forms of Anglo-Saxon and Norman society. It would be valuable, for example, to consider in more detail Anderson's view that Anglo-Saxon England represents a 'potentially "spontaneous" transition of a Germanic society to a feudal social formation'.²⁰ Of course, a great deal of interest will continue to focus on the place of 1066 in the history of English feudalism. At least the neo-Marxists are not troubled by the apparent paradox that in England the spread of the manor and the fief occurred at a time not of political decentralisation but of strong central authority. In their view the crucial developments associated with the Norman Conquest were the generalisation and systematisation of feudal property relations, and the establishment of a new and cohesive landed elite with considerable capacity for class-organisation.

There has been a similar interest in the decline of feudalism in England. In historical literature this problem is usually treated in terms of either 'the decline of knightly service' or 'the decline of the manor', and M.M. Postan is right in his mordant observation that is unfortunate that these two declines happen to be separated by several centuries'.²¹ Again, Brenner's model is not vulnerable to this sort of confusion. Even though from some vantage-points they might seem the principles of feudal society, the particular institutions associated with the knight's fee must be regarded as epiphenomena of feudalism. At the same time what is often regarded as classical manorialism, with its combination of demesne, peasant holdings and labour services, must be seen as only the

most consummate form of a mode of production which took many shapes in different places and times. Essentially a consideration of the decline of feudalism in England would more usefully involve a consideration of the attenuation of the feudal system of property relations in the face of capitalist development. The transition would involve most basically the processes by which 'peasant agriculture and artisan industry gave place to large concentrations of capital and of wage labourers, profit by rent to profit drawn from the value given to the finished product by the worker'.²² It would be naive to imagine that such a complex set of developments can be assigned to any single factor. What Brenner argues is that the key variable in the distinctive development of English society did not lie in patterns of population movement or commercialisation but in the dynamism of a particular set of class relations. At the same time such developments span many centuries, though differences become more marked from the later middle ages onwards. Certainly by the eighteenth century, when intellectuals first began to apply the term 'feudal' to the old European order, English society seemed to be set on an entirely different developmental path.

The significance of the English experience, therefore, appears to lie in its emergence, even 'escape', from the syndrome of economic stagnation and involution, which seems to have been the ultimate fate of feudal societies. The distinctiveness of English development, its capitalist agriculture, industrialisation and 'autonomous' modernisation, was naturally a key point at issue in the *Past and Present* debate on 'Agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe'.²³ Within western Europe itself the contrasting experiences of England and France have long been a focus of interest, but a remarkable trend apparent in the debate was the pushing back in time of the divergence of their destinies, not merely from the eighteenth to the sixteenth century, but to the middle ages.²⁴ In a number of papers there was implicit agreement that the seeds of later differences had established themselves as early as the thirteenth century and had consolidated themselves before the expansion of the sixteenth century. To simplify the equation, from the thirteenth century there is an observable contrast between seignorial exploitation in England and peasant entrenchment in France, which can be taken to prefigure later patterns of capitalist agriculture in England and centralised legal-economic coercion in France.

To explain this divergence between English and French societies is the major test of Brenner's thesis. In his model of feudalism, of course, the great motor of development is the conflict, implicit or explicit, between the material needs of the lords and peasants to reproduce themselves as social classes. While his account of feudal class relations leading ultimately to economic stagnation and involution might well fit the experience of France and some other European countries, however, it must also accommodate the experience of England. The crucial problem is to explain

the divergence in the thirteenth century when English lords seem to have intensified seignorial exploitation, while French peasants seem to have materially improved their tenurial position. Brenner is able to show the limitations of traditional neo-Malthusian approaches to this problem, which have sought to explain increasing levels of rent and service in England in terms of population growth.²⁵ After all, French lords do not seem to have been able to take advantage of comparable demographic conditions in their country. For Brenner the critical difference is in the class-structure: class-cohesion within a centralised feudal state for the English nobility, as compared with intra-class rivalry and political division for the French nobility. It was this pattern which explains the different strategies of surplus-extraction. In England there was an orderly framework within which lords were better able to realise the economic value of their estates, shifting their styles of surplus-extraction in response to changing conditions. In France a politically divided nobility faced an increasingly entrenched peasantry, and moved more and more towards a centralised system of surplus-extraction, an essentially non-developmental path.

A rather interesting point of discord within the neo-Marxian paradigm is the evolutionary status of English feudalism. The traditional Marxist view would be that capitalism developed out of the ruins of a reasonably mature or advanced form of feudalism. On the whole Brenner seems to support this line. He points to 'England's relative advance in terms of feudal "political" ruling-class organization ... the superiority of English lords ... as feudal centralizers and feudal accumulators'.²⁶ According to his view, this advanced form of feudal exploitation was most apt for capitalist development. Guy Bois, in contrast, argued that English distinctiveness arose from the less evolved nature of its feudalism. It was in northern France, where the feudal system had its origins, that it can be seen 'in its purest and most advanced forms: small-scale production ... at the expense of seigneurial demesnes, and the erosion of seigneurial levies...'. At the same time England exhibits an evident backwardness. In England, where feudalism had come later (and was partly imported), there are numerous archaic elements: 'the larger role of forced labour and the manorial economy; the more recent and weaker assertion of the rights of landholders; finally backwardness at the level of growth itself'.²⁷ Perhaps Bois has in mind a sort of 'failed transition to feudalism' in England.

The point at issue between Brenner and Bois might appear a scholastic quibble, though one with a real political charge for Marxists, but it does have the merit of further testing the model in instructive ways and drawing out some more of its possibilities. A source of some confusion, almost a perennial source of confusion, is the concept of 'advancement' when applied to the evolution of societies. The phrase 'an advanced feudal society' could connote an unusually dynamic and adaptive system, ripe for capitalist

development, or alternatively one whose feudal institutions were unusually evolved and embellished. In some respects Brenner and Bois would both agree that English feudalism approximates most to the former type, and in this regard their dispute is purely semantic. Brenner emphasises the relative sophistication of the apparatus of feudal extraction in England, while Bois affirms the deeper entrenchment of more classically feudal structures in France. Brenner is not entirely fair in chiding his critic for his tendency toward 'unilineal evolutionary conceptions, whereby each region is *bound*, sooner or later, to experience the same development pattern as its neighbours (declining rate of rent), unaffected either directly or indirectly by previous evolution elsewhere'.²⁸ Yet the point is well made that patterns of feudal development were far from autonomous. Developments in England and France influenced each other throughout the pre-industrial period, and the growth of 'mechanisms of "feudal accumulation" tended to be not only "uneven" but also "combined", in the sense that later developers could build on previous advances made elsewhere in feudal class organization'.²⁹

The neo-Marxian model of pre-industrial Europe must be commended for its analytical rigour and its explanatory power. It has made considerable progress towards an understanding of some of the most crucial developments in the making of the modern world, and has proved itself most resilient to empirical challenge. More significant, it seems capable of considerable elaboration. In terms of the dynamism of European society it seems possible to incorporate more of the cultural factors associated with the build-up of seigniorial pressure in feudal Europe. The drive on the part of lay and ecclesiastical landlords to recreate in an originally unpromising environment some of the patterns of life associated with *Romanitas* and Christianity perhaps need to be given greater recognition. Indeed the whole concept of the pillage economy as explored by G. Duby needs to be incorporated, and probably not simply as a proto-feudal system.³⁰ The corporate capacity of the English nobility to rake off the surpluses of other societies, so obvious from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was of some significance from at least the time of the Hundred Years War. It might well be that Brenner's model could be further developed to incorporate not only his own ideas about interactive systems, but also some of the insights of I. Wallerstein and other 'world system' theorists.³¹ Perhaps the notion of a 'feudal syndrome', which after all brings together polities as diverse as eighth century castellanies and eighteenth century absolutist states, could even be extended to incorporate non-European societies, in which case some of the major Asian civilizations might well be found to be highly evolved feudal social formations rather than generically different systems.

In conclusion, a number of historians are in the process of developing a dynamic model of pre-industrial European society which has the capacity for refinement and variation. A major

problem, if extensive circumlocation is to be avoided, is its name. 'Feudalism' is the natural term to refer to the type of society that the model presents, and, through its Marxian associations, directs attention to its materialist foundations and class relations dynamic. Etymological arguments to limit the meaning of 'feudalism' have little validity, especially when the term owes its existence not to the luxury of deriving an abstract noun from *feudum* but to the need to typify whole social systems. Narrow definitions might be more rigorous than broad conceptualisations, but as R.H. Hilton observed 'rigour may be wasted when devoted to categories of analysis of limited significance'.³² In any case many medievalists feel they no longer have any use for the concept that their fellows have been responsible for emasculating. Let feudalism pass with good grace, therefore, to scholars dealing with problems of historical development in longer chronological and wider geographical perspective!

NOTES

1. J.H. Round, *Feudal England*, London, 1895.
2. F.W. Maitland, *The Constitutional History of England*, Cambridge, 1908.
3. See the works of R.H. Hilton, the foremost Marxist scholar working on medieval England, which combine outstanding empirical research with a fairly flexible theoretical orientation, e.g. *A Medieval Society. The West Midlands at the End of the Thirteenth Century*, London, 1966; *Bond Men Made Free. Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381*, London, 1973; *The English Peasantry of the Later Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1975. For his own thoughts on the use of the term feudalism see R.H. Hilton (ed.) *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, London, 1976, p. 30.
4. F.M. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism (1066-1166)*, Oxford, 1932. M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, transl. L.A. Manyon, 2 vols. London, 1965; J.M.W. Bean, *The Decline of English Feudalism. 1250-1540*, Manchester, 1968.
5. R.A. Brown, *Origins of English Feudalism*, London, 1973, p. 83.
6. F.L. Ganshof, *Feudalism*, 3rd English edn, London, 1964, pp.xv-xvi.
7. Ganshof, *Feudalism*, p. xvi.
8. Elizabeth A.R. Brown, 'The tyranny of a construct: feudalism and historians of medieval Europe', *American Historical Review* 79 (1974), 1088.
9. Note the tendency of many medievalists to avoid the term entirely, both in detailed regional studies and in large syntheses. Brown's own examples are G. Duby, *La Société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise*, Paris, 1953, and R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*,

- Oxford, 1953 ('Tyranny of a construct', 1080-4).
10. M.M. Postan, 'Feudalism and its decline: a semantic exercise' in T.H. Aston, P.R. Coss, C. Dyer and J. Thirsk (eds.), *Social Relations and Ideas. Essays in Honour of R.H. Hilton*, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 73-87. Note also the positive sentiments expressed in his foreword to Bloch's *Feudal Society*, pp. xiii-xv.
 11. See the various foci identified in J.O. Ward, 'Feudalism: Interpretative category or framework of life in the medieval west?'
 12. P. Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, London, 1974; *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London, 1974; R. Brenner, 'Agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe', *Past and Present* 70 (1976), 30-75; 'The agrarian roots of European capitalism', *Past and Present* 97 (1982), 16-113.
 13. Brenner, 'Agrarian roots of capitalism', 18.
 14. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, p. 18.
 15. In particular see E. Le Roy Ladurie: *Les Paysans de Languedoc*, Paris, 1969; 'L'histoire immobile', *Annales. Economies, Sociétés et Civilisations* 29 (1974), 673-92.
 16. For the important points at issue, see E. Le Roy Ladurie, 'A reply to Professor Brenner', *Past and Present* 79 (1978), 55-9.
 17. Brenner, 'Agrarian roots of capitalism', 17.
 18. Brown, *Origins of English Feudalism*, p. 17.
 19. See, for example, Brown's statement: 'the facts that manorialization was proceeding apace in many parts of pre-Conquest England, and that the Anglo-Saxon free peasant, the ceorl, was losing his freedom in practice if not in law, are largely irrelevant to the issue of the origins of English feudalism' (*Origins of English Feudalism*, p. 23).
 20. Anderson, *Antiquity to Feudalism*, p. 158.
 21. Postan, 'Feudalism and its decline', p. 87.
 22. R.H. Hilton, 'Capitalism - what's in a name?' in *Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, pp. 153-4.
 23. M.M. Postan and J. Hatcher, 'Population and class relations in feudal society', *Past and Present* 78 (1978), 24-37; P. Croot and D. Parker, 'Agrarian class structure and economic development', *Past and Present* 78 (1978), 37-47; J.P. Cooper, 'In search of agrarian capitalism', *Past and Present* 80 (1978), 20-65.
 24. Most obviously apparent in Brenner, 'Agrarian roots of capitalism', esp. 41-60, where thirteenth-century developments are debated at length, in response to the important interventions of Postan and Hatcher ('Population and class relations') and G. Bois, 'Against the neo-Malthusian orthodoxy', *Past and Present* 79 (1978), 60-9. For a similar tendency, through from a different theoretical vantage-point, see A. Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism*, Oxford, 1978.

25. Brenner, 'Agrarian class structure and economic development', esp. 32-42; Postan and Hatcher, 'Population and class relations'; Brenner, 'Agrarian roots of capitalism', esp. 45-50.
26. Brenner, 'Agrarian roots of capitalism', 51.
27. Bois, 'Against neo-Malthusian orthodoxy', 65.
28. Brenner, 'Agrarian roots of capitalism', 52.
29. Brenner, 'Agrarian roots of capitalism', 52.
30. G. Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy. Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, transl. H.B. Clarke, London, 1974.
31. I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York, 1974.
32. Hilton, *Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, 30.