



Seminar in Early Modern Economic and Social History Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, Lent 2017

The seminar meets Thursdays at 5pm in Room 9 of the History Faculty
We normally have dinner with the speaker afterwards. All welcome.
Convenors: Amy Erickson, Craig Muldrew, Leigh Shaw-Taylor and Paul Warde



19 January : James Shaw (University of Sheffield)

Women as creditors, debtors and intermediaries: the informal economy of credit in seventeenth-century Venice

Despite the laws against usury, Venetian records reveal much about the workings of an informal economy of credit in which women played a prominent role, not just as creditors and debtors but also as intermediaries linking neighbourhoods to broader circuits of exchange.

2 February : Christof Jeggle (University of Würzburg)

Divergences or varieties in European economic development?

The debate over divergence in early modern Europe sees the Dutch Republic and Great Britain as the core of progressive economic development, and considers that the rest of the continent lagged behind. Using qualitative indicators I will question the notion of divergence in a continental perspective, offering case studies and proposing some reassessments in respect of comparing economic development.

16 February : Julie Hardwick (University of Texas at Austin)

Accounting for women: account books, petty commerce and re-thinking the transition to capitalism

In 17th-century France, even small-scale traders used 'account books' as instruments of everyday commercial activity. Wives usually kept accounts in small enterprises, producing perhaps the largest surviving corpus of non-elite women's writing. The 'books' were freighted with legal, commercial, cultural and personal meanings. The gendering of financial record keeping is one of the ways in which women were integral in the intensification of market practices.

2 March : John Morgan (University of Manchester)

Storm surges and state formation in early modern England: coping with flooding in coastal and lowland Lincolnshire

Recurrent flooding was a condition of life in low and wet grounds. Erecting dams, scouring ditches and laying drains consumed significant amounts of labour time and money, as the profitability of agriculture rested on maintaining appropriate water levels. The success of one farmer was reliant on another, requiring complex co-ordination and administration. I will outline how flood protection was provisioned, its costs and their impact.

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