

Semester 1 2005-6

**POWER AND AUTHORITY:
RECORDS OF THE
MEDIEVAL WORLD**

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Dr G. Dodd (convenor), Dr R. Goddard

V1D543

15 CREDITS

Introduction

This team-taught module aims to introduce students to sources for the study of the nature and expression of Power and Authority in the Middle Ages. It is a core module for the MA in History (Medieval Pathway) because it draws together conceptually some of the diverse themes encountered on other taught options and explores the original applications of sources such as those studied in their original (or perhaps textual) form on that MA's pathway core module V1D535 Research Skills.

As well as gaining knowledge of the period and its history through specific topics, and the ability to interpret and evaluate a range of sources in translation, students will examine a variety of ways in which historians interpret the often problematic sources available to them and the processes which lay behind their interpretations. Discussion and assessment will therefore also involve reflection on the nature of the subject matter itself and its contemporary relevance and resonances.

The module's exact content will change year by year because students will construct a programme of seminar topics from a selection offered by specialist staff in consultation with those staff. The programme will therefore reflect student choice and interest as well as providing an insight into some of the conceptual issues relating to power and authority in relation to the Middle Ages and its historiography.

Module outcomes:

The module provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas:

1) Knowledge and understanding of:

- major themes in the history of formally and informally expressed power in the Medieval World
- the nature of the sources and the contexts in which they were composed current scholarship on the topic

2) Intellectual skills:

Students should be able to:

- identify and evaluate critically the key problems in the study of sources originating in both the elite and popular spheres in the Middle Ages within an intellectual framework informed by current scholarship
- locate, select and interpret critically a variety of primary and secondary sources in this area
- use the information gained in the module to reflect critically upon the discipline and develop awareness of them as changing and evolving entities.

3) Professional and practical skills:

Students should be able to:

- articulate both knowledge and critical awareness of issues surrounding in particular the political, religious and social processes at work in the Medieval world.
- develop individual analyses and interpretations of data within the broad framework of current scholarship.

4) Transferable skills:

Students should be able to:

- demonstrate initiative and show some evidence of independent thinking in their essays, reviews and presentations.
- Take responsibility for their own learning in the preparation for seminars and coursework.
- Communicate their findings clearly and coherently in both written work and verbally.

Contact Details

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- Dr. Richard Goddard, extn 16043; email Richard.goddard@nottingham.ac.uk

Teaching and Assessment

- **1½-2 hr seminar each week**
- **9.00am-11.00am in room A26 on Thursdays**

Seminar programme:

6 Oct	Introduction (ALL)
13 Oct	Paul the Deacon (RB)
20 Oct	Court Records (RB)
27 Oct	Æthelwold of Winchester (JB)
3 Nov	Wulfstan of Worcester (JB)
10 Nov	Royal Power (RG)
17 Nov	No Seminar – Reading Week move this to the week before essay deadline
24 Nov	Peasant Voices (RG)
1 Dec	Peasants' revolt (GD)
8 Dec	Letters and Petitions (GD)
15 Dec	Essay due in

Method of assessment:

1 x 4,000 word essay – 100% of marks – due **Thurs 15 DECEMBER**

Please post 2 copies of your essay through the history department letter box in an envelope addressed to Dr Gwilym Dodd. Please indicate on the cover sheet which tutor you have consulted over your essay.

The subject of the essay and its title should relate loosely to one of the topics considered in the seminars. When you have identified the area/period that interests you, you should consult the relevant tutor for general advice and reading. However, it is up to you to draw up a detailed reading list and to think of the specific topic/title that you wish to explore. Students should refer to the Notes for Guidance Postgraduate Handbook for instructions on the presentation and layout of essays.

Stress that they ought to be able to choose essay topics once they have had *all* the seminars

Reading week has been incorporated as a result of feedback from students last year

Thursday 13 October Dr Ross Balzaretti

SEMINAR 1: Ideologies of power in Paul the Deacon's 'History of the Lombards'

The purpose of this seminar is to consider a famous early medieval historical narrative - the *Historia Langobardorum* ('History of the Lombards') written by Paul the Deacon at the end of the eighth century. This text is complex and sophisticated. It happens to be the main narrative source for Lombard history, but its veracity has been much criticised.

The seminar is based on the work of Walter Goffart, whose chapter on Paul the Deacon in his book *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton, 1988), has engendered a complete re-reading of Paul.

Students will investigate major issues such as the truthfulness of texts, the nature of early medieval narrative and authorial strategies. Can historians read behind Paul's narrative to find out 'what really happened'? Or is Paul such a clever writer that we can now only understand Lombard history through his eyes.

Thus, the seminar deals with the power of the author and of text to determine how historians deal with history.

Required reading

The bare minimum is:

Paul's *Historia* was translated into English by W.D. Foulke as *History of the Langobards* (Philadelphia, 1906). [DG 511.P2].

It is the only complete English translation. Although serviceable Foulke's language is that of the late nineteenth century and the text is paraphrased at many points. It must be used cautiously. We shall use this as the basis for class discussion, but those with Latin would be advised to compare it with the original. Reprinted in 2003 with a new introduction by E. Peters

W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 329-431.

Influential re-assessment of Paul from a 'textual' perspective. It is essential reading. See the critique of H.H. Anton, "Origo Gentis - Volksgeschichte. Zur Ausieriandersezung mit Walter Goffarts werk 'The Narrators of Barbarian History'", in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, eds. A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (Vienna, 1994), pp. 263-307.

Other reading

D. A. Bullough, 'Ethnic History and the Carolingians: an alternative reading of Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*', in *The Inheritance of Historiography*, ed. C. Holdsworth (Exeter, 1986), pp. 85-105 [reprinted in Bullough's *Carolingian Renewal*, Manchester, 1991]. Important reconsideration of Paul's reasons for writing *HL*

M. Costambeys, 'The Monastic Environment of Paul the Deacon', in P. Chiesa, ed. *Paolo Diacono. Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio* (Udine, 2000), pp. 127-138.

K. Gardiner, 'Paul the Deacon and Secundus of Trento', in B. Croke & A.M. Emmett, eds. *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (1983), pp. 147-154. Does what it claims to.

M. W. Herren, 'Theological Aspects of the Writings of Paul the Deacon', in P. Chiesa, ed. *Paolo Diacono. Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio* (Udine, 2000), pp. 223-236.

R. McKitterick, 'Paul the Deacon and the Franks', *EME* 8, pp. 319-339.

R. McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004). Chapter 3 is a reworked version of her 1999 *EME* article.

W. Pohl, 'Paulus Diaconus und die "Historia Langobardorum": Text und Tradition', *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, eds. A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (Vienna, 1994), pp. 375-406. The best overview of the textual transmission of *HL*.

Thursday 20 October
Dr Ross Balzaretti

SEMINAR 2: Judicial power in records of north Italian court cases (c. 774-c.950)

Records of court proceedings are an important source for early medieval social and political history. Many survive from Italy in the early medieval period and they are generally known as *placita* ('pleas'). *Placita* have been frequently studied by historians. They are interesting because they record societies trying to resolve their disputes formally. In recent years there has been a lot of debate about the nature of authority within the written texts themselves. This raises many issues such as the role of law within society, the powers of judges and the use which the poor may or may not have made of such proceedings.

Required reading

I will provide you with some English translations of selected court cases.

W. Davies and P. Fouracre, ed. *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1986) and W. Davies and P. Fouracre, ed. *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995). These books are the best available sustained discussions of early medieval dispute settlement and the documents which record it.

R. Balzaretti, 'The monastery of Sant'Ambrogio and dispute settlement in early medieval Milan', *Early Medieval Europe* 3 (1994), pp. 1-18

R. Balzaretti, 'Spoken narratives in ninth-century Milanese court records', in R. Balzaretti and E. M. Tyler, eds. *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West* (Turnhout, 2006).

F. Bougard, 'Public power and authority', in *Italy in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. C. La Rocca (Oxford, 2002), pp. 34-58.

C. J. Wickham, 'Land disputes and their social framework in Lombard-Carolingian Italy, 700-900', in W. Davies and P. Fouracre, ed. *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 104-124, reprinted with an additional note in his *Land and Power. Studies in Italian and European Social History, 400-1200* (London, 1994), pp. 229-256.

Other reading

F-J. Arlinghaus, 'From "Improvised Theatre" to Scripted Roles: Literacy and Changes in Communication in North Italian Law Courts (Twelfth-Thirteenth Centuries', in K. Heidecker, ed. *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society* (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 215-238.

A. Bartoli Langeli, 'Private charters', in La Rocca, ed. *Italy in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 205-220 at 212-220

W. Brown, *Unjust Seizure. Conflict, Interest and Authority in an Early Medieval Society* (Ithaca and London, 2001).

W. Brown, 'The Use of Norms in Disputes in Early Medieval Bavaria', *Viator* 30 (1999), pp. 15-40

W. Brown, 'Charters as weapons. On the role played by early medieval dispute records in the disputes they record', *Journal of Medieval History* 28 (2002), pp. 227-248

N. Everett, 'Literacy and the law in Lombard government', *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000), pp. 93-127 is a important reconsideration of these issues for the whole of Lombard Italy, as is his book *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c. 568-774* (Cambridge, 2003).

N. Everett, 'Scribes and charters in Lombard Italy', *Studi Medievali* 3rd series, XLI (2000), pp. 39-83 (63-73 on formulae) and *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c. 568-774* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 197-234.

K. Heidecker, 'Communication by Written Texts in Court Cases: Some Charter Evidence (ca. 800-ca.1100),' in M. Mostert, *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, pp. 101-126.

M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages. The Middle Rhine Valley 400-1000* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 129-139.

J. Martindale, '"His Special Friend"? The Settlement of Disputes and Political Power in the Kingdom of the French, Tenth to Mid-Twelfth Century', *TRHS*, 6th series, V (1995), pp. 21-58

C. M. Radding, *The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence* (Yale, 1987)

S. Reynolds, 'Medieval Law', in P. Linehan and J. L. Nelson, ed. *The Medieval World* (London, 2001), pp. 485-502.

P. Skinner, 'Disputes and Disparity: Women in Court in Medieval Southern Italy', *Reading Medieval Studies* XXII (1996), pp. 85-105

Thursday 27 October Dr Julia Barrow

SEMINAR 3: Æthelwold of Winchester and the Tenth-Century English Benedictine Reform:

By contrast to Wilfrid, Æthelwold (bishop of Winchester 963-84) fully accepted royal authority. Loyal support for King Edgar (king of England 959-75), whose tutor he had been, paid off: Æthelwold was made bishop of Winchester and received military help from Edgar to carry out a purge in his cathedral (Old Minster) in 964, replacing clerks with Benedictine monks from Æthelwold's monastery of Abingdon. In Æthelwold's eyes, clergy were impure (they were often married) and undisciplined (they did not obey a Rule). Instead, he wanted to see communities of monks staffing major churches in England. It was not possible to do this in more than a small number of churches, since Benedictine communities required large endowments, but the abbeys which were established in Edgar's reign mostly became very influential and had an important role in shaping the careers of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Æthelwold was the leading polemicist of the Benedictine movement in tenth-century England, and was the author of *Regularis Concordia*, a text commissioned by Edgar to ensure that all Benedictine houses obeyed the same customs.

Sources by Æthelwold:

Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, I, 871-1214, ed. D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C.N.L. Brooke, 2 parts (1981): in vol 1 of this, look for 'Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries' *Regularis Concordia*, ed. and tr. T. Symons (1953) D1.O9.R4 (Look at Æthelwold's Preface to *Regularis Concordia*)

Source about Æthelwold:

Wulfstan of Winchester, *Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. and tr. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (1991) BR754.A33.W8

Secondary literature on Æthelwold:

Start with the review article by C. Cubitt and then read any of the other items:

B. Yorke, ed. *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence* (1988) BR754.A33.B4:
esp. articles by Wormald and Yorke

The introduction to the Lapidge and Winterbottom edition above

C. Cubitt, 'The tenth-century Benedictine reform in England', *Early Medieval Europe*, 6 (1997), 77-94 PER D

J. Barrow, 'English cathedral communities and reform in the late tenth and the eleventh centuries', in *Anglo-Norman Durham*, ed. D. Rollason, M. Harvey and M. Prestwich (1996), 25-39

M. Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform* (1999) PE273.G7 (also available as an eBook)

Thursday 3 November
Dr Julia Barrow

**SEMINAR 4: Wulfstan of Worcester in William
of Malmesbury's *Life of Wulfstan***

Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester 1062-95, is famous for having been the last Anglo-Saxon bishop, managing to retain his see under the incoming Norman kings William I and William II until his death, even though he had been a close personal friend of King Harold. Here too strict political loyalty paid off (it is not too exaggerated to view Wulfstan as a trimmer). The main source surviving about Wulfstan is his *Life*, written originally in Old English by a Worcester monk called Coleman, and then translated into Latin in the twelfth century by William of Malmesbury, the greatest English historian of his day. In this work Wulfstan is portrayed as a model of holy simplicity, refusing to eat meat or wear expensive fur: nonetheless several of the stories in the *Life* show a more authoritarian streak. We see Wulfstan telling Bristol citizens to stop trading in slaves, ordering the Norman knights in his household to behave at dinner-time, and cursing a nut-tree which overshadowed a new parish church.

Source:

William of Malmesbury, *Saints' Lives*, ed. and tr. M. Winterbottom and R.M. Thomson (2002) BX4659.G7.W4 – you will be provided with some short excerpts.

Commentary:

J.S. Barrow and N.P. Brooks, ed. *St Wulfstan and his World* (2005) BR754.W8.S8, esp. articles by Orchard, Williams and Brooks

R.M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (1987) DA29.3.M37

E. Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester, c.1008-1095* (1990) BR754.W8.M2

See also:

A. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (1995), ch. 6 DA195.W4

N. Baker and R. Holt, *Urban Growth and the Medieval Church: Gloucester and Worcester* (2004) BR765.G58.B2

Thursday 10 November
Dr Richard Goddard

SEMINAR 5: Royal power and the Common Man: the Lay Subsidies of the fourteenth century.

The lay subsidies of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were an attempt by the English monarchy to raise money by taxing communities according to their wealth. What this meant in essence was surveying the movable goods of (in theory) all of the king's lay subjects and taking a percentage of their value. The fact that the English crown was able to contemplate this administrative feat is astounding enough, but these often detailed subsidies left copious records for the medieval social historian. In some cases, like the subsidies of Shrewsbury, every taxable item of each individual is listed and valued. Others list the members of the community and their cash contributions to the tax. These records have been used extensively by historians to understand English society in the early fourteenth century and are a rich vein for students to understand and get close to the people and communities of the later Middle Ages.

➤ **SOURCES:**

- Carter, W. F. (ed.), *The lay subsidy for Warwickshire of 6 Edward III* (Dugdale Society Publications 6, 1926)
- Cromarty, D. and Cromarty, M. (eds), *The wealth of Shrewsbury in the early fourteenth century: six local subsidy rolls 1297 to 1332* (Shrewsbury, 1993)
- Erskine, A. M. (ed.), *The Devonshire lay subsidy of 1332* (Devon and Cornwall Society, 14, 1969)
- Franklin, P. (ed.), *The taxpayers of medieval Gloucestershire* (Stroud, 1993)
- Glascok, R. E. (ed.), *The lay subsidy of 1334* (London, 1975)
- Hudson, W., *The three earliest subsidies for the county of Sussex in the years, 1296, 1327 and 1332* (Sussex Record Society, 10, 1910)
- Mills, A. D., *The Dorset lay subsidy roll of 1332* (Dorset Record Society 1971)
- Public Record Office, *Lay subsidy rolls: Nottinghamshire* (Hallward Library East Midlands Collection Microforms, 1998)
- Raftis, A. and Hogan, M. P. (eds), *Early Huntingdonshire lay subsidy rolls* (Toronto, 1976)
- Rumble, R. (ed.), *The Dorset lay subsidy roll of 1327* (Dorset Record Society, 1980)
- Wilson, W. (ed.), *The lay subsidy roll for Warwickshire 1327* (Transactions of the Midland Record Society 6, 1902)*

➤ READING:

- Beresford, M. W., *The Lay Subsidies and Poll Taxes* (Canterbury, 1963)
- Bridbury, A. R., *Economic growth in the later Middle Ages* (1962), 77-82
- Darby, H. C. (ed.), *New historical geography of England* (1973), chapters 3, 4 and 5
- Dobson, R. B., 'Urban Decline in Late Medieval England', *Trans Royal Hist Soc*, 27 (1977)
- Hadwin, J. F., 'The medieval lay subsidies and economic history', *Economic History Review*, 36 (1983)
- Jenks, S., 'The lay subsidies and the state of the English economy, 1275-1334', *Vierteljahrschrift fur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 85 (1998), 1-39
- Nightingale, P., 'The lay subsidies and the distribution of wealth in medieval England, 1275-1334' *Economic History Review*, 57 (2004)
- Phythian-Adams, C. V., 'Urban Decay in Late Medieval England', in P. Abrams and E. A. Wrigley (eds.), *Towns in Societies* (Cambridge, 1978), 159-85
- Rigby, S. H., 'Urban Decline in the Later Middle Ages: Some Problems in Interpreting the Statistical Data', *Urban History Yearbook*, 6, 1979)
- Rigby, S. H., 'Urban society in the early fourteenth century: the evidence of the lay subsidies', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 62 (1990), 169-84
- Rigby, S., 'Late medieval urban prosperity: the evidence of the lay subsidies', *Economic History Review* 2nd ser. 39 (1986)
- Willard, J. F., *Parliamentary Taxes on personal property, 1290-1334* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934)

NB. Remember there is NO SEMINAR NEXT WEEK

Thursday 24 November
Dr Richard Goddard

SEMINAR 6: Peasant Voices in a Feudal Society? Manorial court rolls in later medieval England.

The manorial court represents the ultimate symbol of seigniorial authority in a feudal society. Or do they? This is where the lord and his officials oversaw and controlled the everyday lives of the peasants in the manor – organising labour services and other feudal obligations. But the manor court was also the place where the peasants themselves brought their grievances to be arbitrated by the community, where they bought and sold property, where community justice was administered, where they advanced their claims of freedom as well as it being the forum for a whole host of other local concerns. Court rolls look at medieval history from a very local, micro-perspective, and that is a rare opportunity. They have been used by historians to understand the workings of peasant society and, notably, in the discussion of lord-peasant relations in the later Middle Ages.

➤ **SOURCES:**

- Fenton, F. H. (ed.), *Court rolls of the manors of Bruces, Dawbeneys, Pembrokes (Tottenham), 1377-1399* (Tottenham, 1961)*
- Field, R. K. (ed.), *Court rolls of Elmley Castle, Worcestershire 1347-1564* (Worcestershire Historical Society, 20, 2004)
- Jewell, H., Sheridan, S. (eds.), *Court Rolls of the manor of Wakefield, 1331-50* (Wakefield court roll series of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 2 and 3, 1981 and 1983)
- Jones, G. P. and Owen, H. (eds), *Caernarvon Court rolls, 1361-1402* (Caernarvonshire Record Society, 1, 1951)
- Lock, R. (ed.), *The court rolls of Walsham le Willows, vol. 1, 1303-50, vol. 2 1350-99* (Suffolk Records Society, 41 and 45, 1998, 2002)
- London County Council (ed.), *Court rolls of Tooting Beck Manor* (London, 1909)*
- Maitland, F. W., *Select pleas in manorial and other seigniorial courts* (Selden society, 2, 1888)
- Massingberd, W. O. (ed.) *Court rolls of the manor of Ingoldmells in the county of Lincoln* (London, 1902)
- Poos, L. R., and Bonfield, L. (eds), *Select cases in manorial courts, 1250-1550: property and family law* (Selden society, 114, 1997)

➤ **READING:**

- Bonfield, L. and Poos, L. R., 'The development of deathbed transfer in medieval English manor courts', *Cambridge Law Journal*, 47 (1988)

- Bonfield, L., 'What did English villagers mean by 'customary law'? in Razi, Z. and Smith, R. (eds), *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996)
- Campbell, 'Population pressure, inheritance and the land market in a fourteenth-century peasant community', in Smith, R. M. (ed.), *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984)
- Clarke, E., 'Charitable bequests, deathbed land sales and the manor court in later medieval England', in Razi, Z. and Smith, R. (eds), *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996)
- Dyer, C., 'Changes in the link between families and land in the west midlands in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries' in Smith, R. M. (ed.), *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984)
- Dyer, C., 'Changes in the size of peasant holdings in some west midland villages, 1400-1540' in Smith, R. M. (ed.), *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984)
- Franklin, P., 'Politics in manorial court rolls: the tactics, social composition and aims of a pre-1381 peasant movement' in Razi, Z. and Smith, R. (eds), *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996)
- Harvey, P. D. A., 'The peasant land market in medieval England – and beyond' in Razi, Z. and Smith, R. (eds), *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996)
- Hilton, R. H., *The English peasantry in the later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1975)
- Poos, L. R., Razi, Z. and Smith, R. M., 'the population history of medieval English villages: a debate on the use of manor court records' in Razi, Z. and Smith, R. (eds), *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996)
- Ravensdale, J., 'Population changes and the transfer of customary land on a Cambridgeshire manor in the fourteenth century' in Smith, R. M. (ed.), *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984)
- Razi, Z. and Smith, R. M., 'The origins of the English manorial court rolls as a written record: a puzzle' in Razi, Z. and Smith, R. (eds), *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996)
- Razi, Z., 'Erosion of the family-land bond in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: a methodological note' in Smith, R. M. (ed.), *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984)
- Razi, Z., 'Family, land and the village community in later medieval England' in Aston, T. (ed.), *Landlords, peasants and politics in medieval England* (Cambridge, 1987)
- Razi, Z., 'Intrafamilial ties and relationships in the medieval village: a quantitative approach employing manor court rolls' in Razi, Z. and Smith, R. (eds), *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996)
- Razi, Z., 'The myth of the immutable English family', *Past and Present*, 140 (1993)
- Razi, Z., *Life marriage and death in a medieval parish: society and demography in Halesowen, 1270-1400* (Cambridge, 1980)

Schofield, P., 'Extranei and the market for customary land on a Westminster Abbey manor in the fifteenth century', *Agricultural History Review*, 49 (2001)

Schofield, P., *Peasant and community in medieval England, 1200-1500* (Basingstoke, 2003)

Smith, R. M., 'Families and their land in an area of partible inheritance: Redgrave, Suffolk, 1260-1320', in Smith, R. M. (ed.), *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984)

* See me for a copy of this.

Thursday 1 December
Dr Gwilym Dodd

Seminar 7: The Peasants' Revolt

Usually regarded as a pivotal moment in the social and political history of the later fourteenth century, the Peasants' Revolt remains in many ways an enigma, partly because positivist historians have sought in vain for a definitive explanation of the causes, events and outcomes of the rising, and partly because the recent application of literary scholarship has opened up a whole new range of issues – and ambiguities – relating to the cultural significance of the events of 1381. Many of you will have studied the peasants' Revolt at undergraduate level: in this seminar I'd like to examine specifically whether you think literary approaches to the sources/texts of the Peasants' Revolt hinder or enhance our historical understanding of this event. Is it possible to reconcile the two approaches? It is important that we question the methods and methodologies used to analyse the sources of the Revolt because the sources themselves are so vital to our understanding of popular perceptions of power and authority in late medieval England.

Structure of seminar: get them each to interpret one of the rebel's letter, then move on to consider what Justice says

SOURCES:

- *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* ed. R.B. Dobson, esp pts III & VII [be more specific – refer to letters, which are in Justice anyway]

MAIN LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP:

- S. Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381* (1994), esp. chpts 1, 4, 5. [you need to specify that this is the principal text, and that you would like them especially to concentrate on chpt 1]
- R. Firth Green, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (1999), pp. 198-205 (please do not borrow this: the library has only one copy!) [delete this: it confuses the issue]

SELECTED BACKGROUND READING:

- *R.H. Hilton and T.H.Aston, eds., *The English Rising of 1381* (1981) [SHORT LOAN] [specify this as key reading – not everyone will have studied the peasants' Revolt before, so they will need an overview – perhaps divide reading between those who need basic background and those who would like to build on what they already know]
- *R. H. Hilton, *Bondmen Made Free* (1973) [SHORT LOAN]

- N. Brooks, 'The Organization and Achievements of the Peasants of Kent and Essex in 1381', in H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore, eds., *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. H. C. Davies* (1985)
- Margaret Aston, 'Corpus Christi and Corpus Regni: Heresy and the Peasants' Revolt', *Past and Present* No. 143 (1994)
- W. E. Flaherty, 'The Great Rebellion in Kent illustrated from the public records', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, iii, pp 65-96, iv pp.67-86: sources in translation
- R. H. Hilton, 'Peasant movements in England before 1381', *Econ. Hist. Rev.* (1949)
- V. H. Galbraith, 'Thoughts about the Peasants' Revolt', in du Boulay ed, *Reign of Richard II*
- N. Richie, 'Labour Conditions in Essex in the Reign of Richard II', in E. M. Carus-Wilson, ed., *Essays in Economic History*, II (London, 1962)
- B. Wilkinson, 'The Peasants' Revolt', *Speculum* (1940)
- W. M. Ormrod, 'The Peasants' Revolt and the Government of England', *Journal of British Studies* 29 (1990)
- Michael Bush, 'The rising of the Commons in England, 1381-1549', in Jeffrey H. Denton, ed, *Hierarchies and Orders in Late Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Toronto UP, 1999)

Thursday 8 December
Dr Gwilym Dodd

Seminar 8: Letters and Petitions

It is no accident that so much late medieval English history is written from the perspective of the crown: the English state was the most centralised in Western Europe and it produced a prodigious quantity of documentation to facilitate royal government. In this seminar I would like to explore two of the main sources which allow us to consider the period from a different perspective: gentry letters and (parliamentary) petitions. Through these sources I would like to explore the priorities, agendas and outlook of 'ordinary' people living in the 14th and 15th centuries. I would like each of you to select at least three examples (ie letters/petitions) from the following sources and come to class prepared to talk about them: what do your extracts tell us about the nature of the source material? What do they tell us about the people who compiled them? **What was their purpose... what was their outcome? Style of writing?** How should we as historians use these sources? What do they tell us about attitudes towards, and the dynamics of, power and authority in late medieval England.

Could you just do a seminar on petitions – this was the view of the 05-06 group? You need to be more explicit about arrangements to photocopy the petitions for pre-distribution

SOURCES:

1) The Paston Letters:

- N. Davis, ed., *Paston letters and papers of the fifteenth century*, 2 vols (1971 & 1976)
- R. Virgoe, ed. *Illustrated letters of the Paston family : private life in the fifteenth century* (1989)

2) Petitions:

- Access The National Archives on-line catalogue (PROCAT) at the following address:

<http://www.catalogue.nationalarchives.gov.uk/default.asp?j=1>

step 1: Click on 'Search the catalogue'

step 2: there are three boxes: 'word or phrase'; 'year range'; and departmental code'. In the box 'departmental code', type **SC 8** – this is the class of record you are searching. You don't have to put dates into the year range, but if you do, choose a range between 1290-1450. You must enter something into the 'word or phrase' box: what word you put in is entirely up to you: it could be a name, a location or theme (eg murder, merchant, manor etc...). Have fun!

BACKGROUND READING:

1) On the Paston Letters see:

- R. Barber, *The Pastons : a family in the Wars of the Roses* (1993)
- C. Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century : the first phase* (1990)
- C. Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century : Fastolf's will* (1996)
- C. Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century : endings* (2000)
- H.S. Bennett, *The Pastons and their England : studies in an age of transition* (repr. 1968)
- A. Bergs, *Social networks and historical sociolinguistics : studies in morphosyntactic variation in the Paston letters, 1421-1503* (2005)

2) There isn't much that has been written on petitions, but for background see:

- A. R. Myers, 'Parliamentary Petitions in the Fifteenth Century', *English Historical Review*, 52 (1937), 385-404, 590-613, esp. Part I (vital!)
- T. Haskett, 'Access to Grace: Bills, Justice and Governance in England, 1300-1500' in *Suppliques et Requetes*, ed. H. Millet (2003) – **HANDOUT**
- A. Harding, *Medieval Law and the Foundations of the State* (2002), pp. 178-90.