

4.2 Harilaos Kitsikopoulos – Agrarian change and crisis in Europe, 1200–1500 Room 107

Chair: Bas van Bavel

This paper draws material from the introductory and concluding essays of a volume, currently under review by a publisher, which examines economic growth and the question of the feudal crisis during the period 1200–1500. The eight chapters on which these two essays are based review the empirical evidence and debates on a number of countries or regions covering most of Europe.

There is no doubt that there was a veritable population growth during the thirteenth century. The controversy begins with the question as to whether the regions which reached the highest plateau of the demographic curve were able to raise their food supplies to a proportional degree. If not, then one is justified to talk about a structural crisis and debate its causes. But one may also adopt an optimistic viewpoint in this regard and thus relegate the causes of the crisis on exogenous factors, that is, the gradual decline of temperatures and the plague epidemics which culminated during the fourteenth century.

The paper will outline the debates that took place in the countries reviewed by the volume, synthesise the existing evidence and, in the end, come down on which theoretical model offers the best interpretation.

Harry Kitsikopoulos is a Clinical Professor in the Department of Economics, New York University. He is the author of about a dozen articles on the economy of late feudal England published, among others, in the *Journal of Economic History*, *Economic History Review*, and *Agricultural History Review*. He has recently completed the editing of a collection of essays which examines the controversy on the feudal crisis in a pan-European context.