Champion and Woodland Norfolk: the Development of Regional Differences [1]

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I

Since the sixteenth century a number of writers have called attention to the differences between agricultural regions in Norfolk. Above all, contemporary agriculturalists emphasized the contrast between the Eastern and Western parts of the county. Thus, while Arthur Young lauded practice in west Norfolk where « is found the agriculture to which the general epithet of Norfolk husbandry peculiarly belongs », William Marshall found in the East « that regular and long-established system of practice which has raised, deservedly, the name of Norfolk Husbandem ». Nathaniel Kent followed Marshall in praising the small farms characteristic of East Norfolk.[2]

This contrast had already been noticed by one of the most distinguished historians of the seventeenth century. H. Spelman headed a group of gentlemen who left a document in 1631 which stated that « The parte of it [i.e. the county of Norfolk] toward the Sea & mtch of the reste Westwarde is Champian: the other parte toward Suffolk, Woodland & Pasture grounde ». According to this description « The Champian part may be drawne from the east syde of Holt Hundred, & so to strike by the east side of Galehowe &

[1] The framework of this paper is based on the author's Ph. D. thesis written in Japanese in 1961, with some additional references drawn from works published up to 1972. He is much indebted to Dr. J. Thirsk of Oxford and Professor C. Wilson of Cambridge who advised him to write a short essay in English, Dr. K. J. Allison, who answered his questions at the early stage of his research, and Dr. A. R. Bridbury who criticized the manuscript in draft. However, he is responsible for the views expressed in this essay. He regrets that he has had to omit many references which would have made his description clearer and more persuasive.

through the midst of Landich & so to Swaffham, & then turn up againe S. E. to Watton & so to Herlinge ».[3]

This strikes me as a very suggestive passage. It was Dr. Joan Thirsk who first postulated on the basis of the various agricultural regions in the country that two types of communities were to be found in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England.[4] In her view these two types of communities showed remarkable contrasts with respects to village pattern, agricultural and industrial pursuits, and the diffusion of wealth. The social and economic contrasts mentioned in the Spelman document in relation to Norfolk bear out what Dr. Thirsk has written, though the boundary which she has tentatively suggested for that county does not exactly coincide with that of the record. Needless to say, it is a difficult, not to say impossible, task to divide a county with such varieties of cultivation into two clearcut regions. The appropriateness of such a division must be judged in part from its analytical usefulness. In the following pages, I apply such analysis to indicate that the division made by Spelman is reliable as an indicator of contrasts in social and economic structures in the county. These contrasts will be traced in this short essay from the eleventh up to the seventeenth century.

II

A glance at the Ordnance map is enough to demonstrate the two types of settlement, the hamlet and the nucleated village.[5] This distinction fits the county of Norfolk. A clear difference can be observed between West Norfolk, characterized by nucleated villages, and East Norfolk, closely dotted with hamlets.

On the evidence of the Domesday survey, Norfolk was one of the most densely settled counties in the country in the eleventh century.[6] If one believes Arthur Young's description, West Norfolk had in earlier times been

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[2] A. YOUNG, *General View of the Agriculture of Norfolk*, 1804, pp. 3, 31. Young specifically referred to north-west Norfolk; as regards south-west Norfolk he said that « much has been broken up in the last 20 years », thus recognizing recent improvements in the region; W. MARSHALL, *Rural Economy of Norfolk*, 1795, vol. I, p. 2; N. KENT, *General View of the Agriculture of Norfolk*, 1796, pp. 129-31.

[3] « Reason agst a General Sending a Corne to ye marketts in ye Champion Parte of Norfolke », *Norfolk Archaelogy*, vol. XX, pp. 15 ff. In this context "Champion" and "Woodland"" respectively mean "non-enclosed land" "and "enclosed land. Cf. T. TUSSER, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry, as well for champion or open country as the woodland or several*, 1614.

[4] J. THIRSK, *The Farming Regions of England*, in « Agrarian History of England and Wales, IV, 1500-1640 », 1967.

[5] G. A. J. HODGETT, *Agrarian England in the Later Middle Ages*, 1966, p. 3.

[6] For the analysis of Domesday in East Anglia, see H. C. DARBY, *The Domesday Geography of Eastern England*, 1952.

rather notorious for its barren lands. It should be emphasized, however, that according to Domesday, it was a fairly densely populated region as compared with other parts of the country. Its average population density was probably no lower than the average for all counties. On the other hand, East Norfolk had the highest density of population in England. And its increase in population from that moment on seems to have been considerable.[7] By the end of the thirteenth century, the population of Norfolk had reached a saturation point. At the beginning of the next century thirty-four villages, which had been mentioned in Domesday, were recorded as deserted, and the majority of these were situated in West rather than East Norfolk.[8] The Black Death thereafter severely hit East Norfolk,[9] with the result that its rate of population increase over a period of three centuries after Domesday ranked it among the lowest counties despite the fact that it had highest density.[10]

From careful observation of the Domesday maps so far published an interesting correlation can be discovered. The map of Domesday woodland, shows an obvious correspondence between the woodland region of Domesday and the so-called "Woodland" of the seventeenth century. The distribution of sheep was inverse to that of population. In other words, West Norfolk showed a higher density of sheep than the East, even though Domesday Book only recorded sheep on the demesne lands.

The next point to notice is the configuration of estates. The King's lands occupied nearly as much territory as the lands held by the church in Norfolk, and they were distributed fairly evenly throughout the county. As for ecclesiastical land, both the Bishop of Thetford and the local house of St. Benet of Holme had large estates. The lands of the former were situated in the northern and central parts of the county, while the estates of the latter were consolidated to some degree in the north-eastern region of the county. The famous ecclesiastical lords of Bury St. Edmund, Ely, and Ramsey also had several large estates in Norfolk, respectively in the south, the south-west, and the west. On the other hand, two large lay tenants-in-chief, William de Warren and Roger Bigot, also had a number of estates in this county. The lands held by the former were scattered about West Norfolk, while the latter had his lands in south-east Norfolk. Further observation points to the conclusion that ecclesiastical lords held more of their estates in demesne in Norfolk than did lay lords.

The foregoing description of estates might at first sight suggest that

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[7] Records of St. Benet of Holme demonstrate the rapid increase in population during the two centuie after Domesday. - J. R. WEST (ed.), *St. Benet of Holme, 1020-1210*, vol. II, pp. 244-5.

[8] K. J. ALLISON, *Lost Villages of Norfolk*, « Norf. Arch. » XXXI, p. 125.

[9] J. C. RUSSELL, *British Medieval Population*, 1948, pp. 248, 313.

[10] K. J. ALLISON, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-31.

Table I

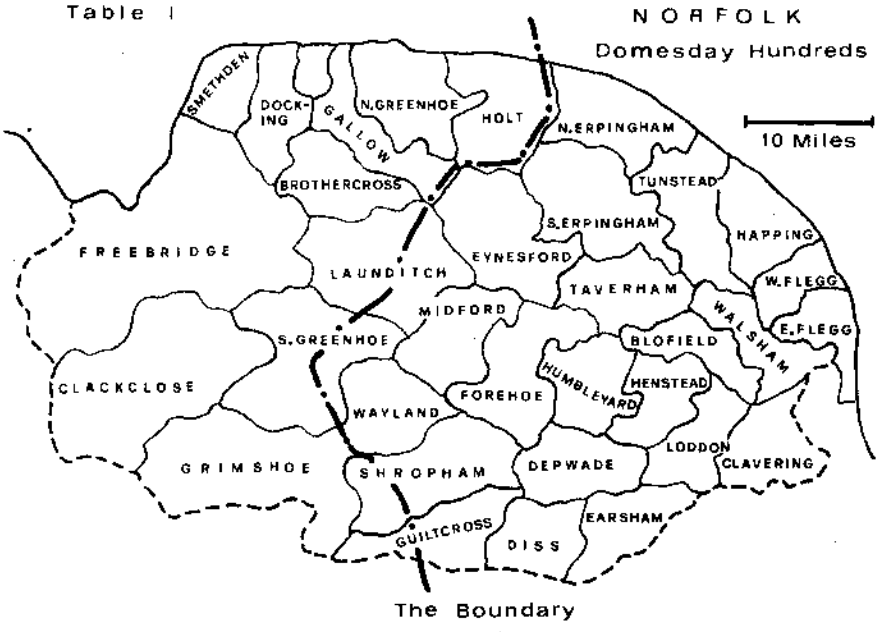

Table II

Weekly Markets in Norfolk at the End of the Fourteenth Century

the lands of influential lords were distributed all over Norfolk without any special concentration. In fact, however, the map of monastic houses in medieval Norfolk shows that without doubt they tended to be concentrated in the western region. Moreover, the manors of St. Benet of Holm, the most influential lord in the East, were relatively small. They were generally estimated at no more than two ploughlands at most. But this information still does not give a clear picture of the pattern of estates in the two regions. So our next step is to analyze estates from the standpoint of tenure.

It is common knowledge that the free peasantry, that is, the *liberi homines* and *sockemanni*, constituted a remarkably high percentage of the tenants in this county. My concern in this paper, however, is with their regional diffusion. It has been said that the Hundreds where more than 40 per cent of households consisted of free peasantry were all situated in Eastern Norfolk except for Clacklose Hundred. This is a very significant finding.[11] What is more, my own investigation has revealed that the free peasantry occupied a high percentage of the land in East Norfolk as compared with West Norfolk.[12] This indicates that in the eastern Hundreds only a part of the lands of the vills were organized into *maneria*. There were considerable lands, occupied by *liberi homines* and *sockemanni*, living (jacere) outside the *manerium*. In addition to these, it should be said that a number of free peasants lived *in manerio* in the East.[13]

The third step in the analysis is to investigate the relationship between villages and manors. From my calculations it becomes obvious that a number of villages in West Norfolk consisted of only one or two manors, and contained no lands held by free peasants living outside manors.[14] In contrast the reverse was true in East Norfolk, that is, the villages there were partitioned into plots belonging to many manors, and, in addition, considerable lands were held by free peasants, which were not annexed to manors.[15] This is confirmed by the more detailed study of villages composed of one or two manors: almost all of them contained a remarkably small percentage of the free peasants of the county, and *vice versa*.

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[11] B. DODWELL, *The Free Peasantry of East Anglia in Domesday*, « Norf. Arch. », vol. XXVII, maps facing pp. 149 and 156. The author confirmed her figures by calculations based on eight Hundreds she carefully selected. The following figures are based on his calculations from these Hundreds.

[12] The discussion of many methodological problems concerning the counting of the figures has had to be omitted here. The highest figure is 52% for E. W. Fleggs, and the lowest 28% for Freebridge.

[13] The highest is 42% for Henstead, and the lowest 16% for Freebridge.

[14] F. M. STENTON, *Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw*, 1910, pp. 46-7. Stenton drew a sharp line between manorial sokemen and intermanorial sokemen.

[15] Only 23% of villages in Henstead were occupied by one or two lords, while this figure for Smethden and Docking amounted to 67%.

A corollary of this was that the size of demesne holdings differed considerably between the Western and Eastern parts of this county. For example, many of the lands of St. Benet of Holme situated in the north-eastern part of the county, consisted of not more than two ploughlands, as previously mentioned, while the estates of Ramsey and Ely were noticeably larger. In the south-east many landholdings, even that of the most substantial lay lord, Roger Bigot, were as small as one ploughland.

On the basis of this evidence, it may be argued that seigneurial pressure on the peasant classes was stronger in West than in East Norfolk. In the east, where more than forty per cent of households were designated as free peasants, much of whose lands was not organized in manors, the manor as a tenurial unit does not appear to have been as significant as in the west. D. C. Douglas once asserted that in East Anglia the village did not coincide with the manor. His statement was particularly relevant to the East, not, in the same degree, to the West of Norfolk.[16]

III

Did this basic structure change during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries? R. Hilton once argued that persistent differences in social class structure between the southern and northern parts of Warwickshire had continued from Domesday to the Hundred Rolls.[17] Unfortunately, this later, and most reliable historical document for the regional study of thirteenth-century England is not available for Norfolk. However, E. A. Kosminsky has tried to show that there need have been no fundamental change during the period so far as land tenure was concerned,[18] and it is not unreasonable that his argument is applicable to Norfolk. For the purposes of this paper it will be sufficient to give one example for each of the regions in Norfolk. In the thirteenth century Forncett manor, which was located in Depwade Hundred and belonged to Roger Bigot, had its centre in Forncett St. Mary and Forncett St. Peter, but a part of the manorial lands were scattered in seventeen other villages of south-west Norfolk. On the other hand, both of these villages contained lands belonging to other lords. This manor covered in all an area of 2,700 acres, but the demesne land in Forncett St. Mary amounted to only 300 acres in all, to which, according to the Domesday survey, three *villani* and seventeen *bordarii* had belonged; and in the late thirteenth century the lands burdened with week-work amounted to no more than 125 acreas.[19]

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16 D. C. Douglas, *Social Structure of Medieval East Anglia*, 1927, p. 3, 209 etc.

17 R. H. Hilton, *Social Structure of Rural Warwickshire in the Middle Ages*, 1950, p. 10 ff.

18 E. A. Kosminsky, *Studies in the Agrarian History of England in the Thirteenth Century*, 1956, pp. 75, 86-7, 116, 120-3, etc.

Brancaster and Ringsted manors of Ramsey Abbey situated in the Hundred of Smethden present a striking contrast. The Abbey held the whole village of Brancaster and a part of the adjacent village of Depdale, as Brancaster manor, and the larger part of Ringstead and Holm-next-the-sea, as Ringstead manor. We find 46 *villani*, 47 *bordarii* and eight *servi* in addition to only one *liber homo* and 22 *sockemanni* in the Domesday survey of these manors. More than a century later a number of villeins still held their lands *in ladsetagio*, performing their weekly labour work on the lord's demesne.[20]

Finally, the estates of Norwich Priory, which was founded after the time of the Domesday survey, were distributed over East Norfolk in the thirteenth century. Nevertheless almost all of the manors with large demesnes, the manors of Gnadington, Sedgeford, Great Cressingham, Hindringham, to name a few, were located in West Norfolk as the theory predicts.[21]

One can find standardized tenements of small size held by villeins throughout manors all over thirteenth-century Norfolk. Nevertheless, small holdings were more conspicuous among the holdings of the free peasantry, partly because of partible inheritance, and partly because such peasants could dispose of their lands at will.[22] At any rate, whether they were freeholders or villeins, some occupiers could not subsist on their holdings. In manorial areas they used to work on the lord's demesne as *famuli*. It should be emphasized that the worsted industry of Norfolk originated in the hamlets of the North-east of this county, probably in the thirteenth century at the latest.[23] Moreover, the worsted industry did not spread into West Norfolk before the nineteenth century,[24] and its boundaries coincided fairly exactly with those of the regions we have described. Some features, including the ready access to wool and the predominance of pasture farming and early enclosure, contributed to the emergence of this industry. Moreover, the

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[19] F. G. DAVENPORT, *The Economic Development of a Norfolk Manor*, 1906, pp. 11 ff, pp. 68 ff; W. HUDSON, *Three Manorial Extents of the Thirteenth Century*, « Norf. Arch. », Vol. XIV; IDEM, *The Prior of Norwich's Manor of Hindolveston*, « Norf. Arch. », Vol. XX; IDEM, *Traces of Primitive Agricultural Organization*, « Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc. », 4th ser., Vol. 1.

[20] *Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia*, Vol. 1, pp. 404 ff; II, pp. 261 ff.

[21] H. W. SAUNDERS, *An Introduction to the Obendientiary & Manor Rolls of Norwich Cathedral Priory*, 1930, pp. 34-5; E. STONE, *The Estates of Norwich Cathedral Priory in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, Ph. D. Thesis, Oxford University, 1956, pp. 331-42.

[22] Needless to say, it would be extremely difficult to find the size of peasant holdings of villagers who held land under diverse titles and from different lords. How many such there were it is impossible to say, but it should not be concluded because of our ignorance on this matter, that a village survey or manorial record is useless.

[23] W. HUDSON and J. C. TINGEY, eds., *The Records of Norwich*, 1910, Vol. II, pp. lxxii ff.

[24] K. J. ALLISON, *The Norfolk Worsted Industry in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, « Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research », Vol. XII, p. 75.

difficulty in enforcing village by-laws made it easy for people in West Norfolk to move and settle on large commons. Once the industry had emerged in East Norfolk, its tendency to concentration and localization was maintained in parallel with the widening of marketing area.

In spite of the great number of published articles on the chronology of the commutation of labour services, no one has been able to describe how villagers in medieval England sold their products and bought daily necessities. How did the small holders who were engaged in weaving sell their products? They did so at nearby markets which were held weekly. The villages of Worsted, Aylesham, and Cawston, whose people supported themselves partly from the worsted industry, each held a weekly market. The existing fragmentary records, above all, the Poll Tax returns for East Anglia, tell us that many artisans of various occupations inhabited these market towns.[25] From the second half of the thirteenth century, both ecclesiastical and lay lords became anxious to obtain royal charters for markets in their estates. Their main motive was to satisfy their increasing demand for money by collecting tolls. The simultaneous appearance of weekly markets and commutation means that these developments were eventually reflected in the marketing activities of peasants.

So far as one can tell from existing records, Norfolk was the county second only to Kent, where weekly markets emerged in greatest density. Approximately ninety local markets were permitted all over Norfolk. As a consequence, villagers could reach, and return from, a nearby market in a day at least once every week. Some weekly markets had been held in West Norfolk from very early times. This may be not only because West Norfolk and its neighbourhood became conspicuous for exporting corn at an early date, probably quite exceptionally in medieval England, but also because many monastic houses constituted local consuming markets at that time. As shown in Map II, Norwich had a wide *bannmilen* over the neighbouring villages.

The emergence of local markets within one day's walk made it easier for craftsmen and peasants to sell their products. From that point onwards their mental horizons expanded. The weekly market, where people of various occupations and status came together, was a place where they met and communicated with each other. To the extent that they were involved in the market sector, they may have wanted to be freed from feudal restraint upon their economic activities; and it became difficult to keep manorial

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[25] S. YONEKAWA. *The Emergence of Weekly Markets in Later Medieval England* (written in Japanese), « Shakai Keizai Shigaku », Vol. XXII, 1956, pp. 50-80. In this article the author showed, with the aid of maps, that weekly markets set up by royal charter in England increased noticeably after the middle of the thirteenth century, and amounted to nearly one thousand by the end of the next century. The records used were mainly Charter, Patent, and Close Rolls.

rules strictly in rural areas. Records disclosing some degree of social disorder are far from rare in Norfolk for the period before 1381.[26]

With reference to the rising of 1381 in this country, the author of the Anglican chronicle described « nullus pene locus tutus ab his esse poterat ». However, when one traces surviving details about the movements one finds that a distinct contrast reveals itself. At the outset, a gang came up from Suffolk through Thetford and went into the north-west, a number of sporadic riots taking place in this region. However, according to Andre Réville's elaborate descriptions, these were spontaneous and not organized. In the Eastern part of Norfolk the rising took a different form. Here it originated in a riot in North Walsham, a market town around which the worsted industry was most prosperous at that time. In contrast with the west, many discontented people came together, with the result that they can be said to have constituted an organized demonstration, led by Geoffrey Litster in a march toward Norwich.[27] On the way, the ecclesiastical estates located in the east and belonging to Bury St. Edmunds, Carrow Priory, and especially St. Benet de Holm, were fiercely attacked, and their manorial rolls burnt. Resentment, not merely against feudal burdens, but against the differentiation of the classes in terms of status and economic condition, lay behind this organized rebellion. Some scholars have rightly argued that but for the presence of many artificers such an organized rebellion would have been impossible.[28] In the four Hundreds of north-eastern Norfolk where the worsted industry was prevalent the organized movement raged furiously.

IV

In spite of the remarkable contrast between the two farming regions of Norfolk, the change towards money rent seems to have spread throughout Norfolk by the end of the fourteenth century. In this respect conditions in England were very different from those in Prussia after the sixteenth century, where landlords participating in production for the market depended upon semi-feudal labour services. At the same time it was natural that this regional contrast should have great influence on the subsequent economic and social development of this county.

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[26] F. G. DAVENPORT, *op. cit.*, pp. 73 ff.: B. P. PUTNAM, *Proceedings before Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, 1938, pp. 113-21: *Statutes of the Realm*, Vol. II, pp. 2-3.

[27] A. RÉVILLE, *Le Soulèvement des Travailleurs d'Angleterre en 1381*, 1898, p. 99; Ch. PETIT-DUTAILLIS and G. LEFEBVRE, *Studies and Notes Supplementary to Stubbs' Constitutional History*, 1908, p. 298.

[28] M. POSTAN, *Medieval Agrarian Society in its Prime*, in « Cambridge Economic History », Vol. II, 1966, pp. 608-10: R. B. DOBSON, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, 1970, pp. 15 ff.

Above all in the villages of West Norfolk, a few former villeins, many of whom had once been reeves of the manor, were lucky enough to be able to lease a large demesne, sometimes with foldcourses. They could claim superiority over their fellows in agricultural management. Another response to changing economic conditions in West Norfolk came from the landlords. They consistently clung to, and extended, their right of foldcourse by which they fed their sheep not only on their demesne but also on their tenants' holdings.[29] This right originated in the medieval period when landlords and peasants both had the right to feed sheep. However, in West Norfolk where seigneurial power was strong, the landlord gradually deprived his tenants of the right, thereby extending the area of land over which he could feed his sheep at a time when the price of wool was steadily rising.

To achieve this, landlords together with rich tenant farmers destroyed village by-laws, and violated traditional peasant rights. Thus, a by-law, validated by the jury of Cressingham manor, was suppressed because of the landlord's opposition.[30] In some cases action of this kind resulted in deserted villages.[31] These were more noticeable in West Norfolk than in the East. All except one of the six Hundreds where lost villages amounted to more than 15% of all townships, belonged to the "Champion region", while all six Hundreds having no deserted villages were situated in the "Woodland region".[32]

West Wretham is an excellent example.[33] Located in the Breckland, this village recorded twenty-one persons in Domesday Book. It had some thirty taxpayers in the fourteenth century. However, in the course of the following centuries the Bacons, then tenant farmers, took over the land held by small tenants piece by piece until they became the sole lessee. This may be not a typical case. However, the stratification of peasant holdings proceeded remarkably in this region. A record of Gaywood village shows that in 1487 more than 40% of tenants, holding in all less than 10% of the peasant land, held less than five acres each.[34] George Elmden of Weasenham held 282 acres in this region.[35] In Breckland « the whole region was dominated by large estates, divided into one or two tenant farms ».[36]

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29 K. J. ALLISON, *The Sheep-Corn Husbandry of Norfolk in the Sixteenth and Seventeeth Centuries*, « Agric. Hist. Rev. », Vol. V.

30 H. W. CHANDLER, *Five Manorial Court Rolls*, 1885, p. 51.

31 K. J. ALLISON, *Lost Villages in Norfolk*, « Norfolk Arch. », Vol. XXXI, pp. 122-5.

32 An exception is Shropham which spans the boundary between East and West Norfolk.

33 J. SALTMARSH and H. C. DARBY, *The Infield-Outfield System on a Norfolk Manor*, « Econ. Hist. », Vol. III.

34 H. C. BRADFER-LAWRENCE, ed., *Gaywood Dragge 1486-7*, « Norfolk Arch. », Vol. XXIV.

35 H. L. GRAY, *English Field Systems*, 1915, pp. 318 ff.

36 M. R. POSTGATE, *The Field Systems of Breckland*, « Agric. Hist. Rev. », Vol. X. p. 99.

The East followed a different course of economic development. Many elements, already mentioned, made it possible to develop the worsted industry from at least the thirteenth century when the population was increasing. The clothing industry originated in rural areas. Small and middling tenants were a stable class here, having stood firm for a long period. They and their families could engage in some process of this industry whenever they had time to spare. The worsted industry played the role of a shock-absorber in times of bad harvests. Small enclosures on arable land are referred to in many records after the thirteenth century.[37] The emergence of small urban centres created a steady demand for dairy products, with which small holders supplied nearby markets. The existence of spacious commons in this district made it possible for them to live on dairy farming to a considerable extent. But in the course of time the commons became more essential to their livelihood, and troubles about intercommoning were not rare among adjacent villages after the Tudor period. The people of Tibenham took action against the villagers of Banham, demanding commons in Banham Outwood, a part of the large Banham Heath, with the result that they lost their case in 1618.[38] At no time did the size of holding necessarily reveal much about its economic condition. Economic activity was diversified in many pursuits.

Thus the inventory of Thomas Colke, a tenant-at-will on Gimmingham manor, records that he owned six cows besides his holding of 28 acres, while that of John King mentions three looms and yarn in addition to his two tenements. The inventory of Thomas Hilling of Forncett manor suggests that he was engaged in weaving as well as dairy farming in 1536.[39] The prevalence of freeholds erected a barrier against aggressive, evicting landlords. It depended largely upon their economic performance whether they were promoted to rich farmers or turned into part-time artificers holding small lands.[40] This might mean a comparatively stable class structure in terms of land holding, which was very clear in many villages of this district where people were engaged in the worsted industry. The description is certainly applicable to Forncett and Gimmingham . A survey of the two small villages of Hemstead and Lessingham records that much of the arable was occupied by middle-sized tenant farmers holding 20 to 40 acres.[41] It might be said

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[37] C. M. Hoare, *History of an East Anglian Soke*, 1918, pp. 137, 145, 159, etc.; F. G. Davenport, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-1.

[38] F. Blomefield, *A History of Norfolk*, Vol. I, p. 351.

[39] C. M. Hoare, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-7: F. Davenport, *op. cit.*, LXXXIII-IV.

[40] Rich weavers tended generally also to be rich farmers in the seventeenth century. The scale of their operations in both sectors was not supplementary but proportional.

[41] W. J. Corbett, *Elizabethan Village Surveys*, « Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc. », New ser., Vol. IX, pp. 76-7.

that the eviction and agglomeration of copyholds made stratification more conspicuous in West Norfolk.

In spite of the repeated prohibition upon the activities of middlemen, they became more and more important at local weekly markets during the early Tudor period. As their activities extended and the marketing area expanded, they settled in certain villages with markets, which eventually grew up into prosperous market towns.[42] Necessarily many other village markets fell into decay. Dr. A. Everitt enumerated market towns all over Norfolk but especially near the boundary of both regions. Local specialization in products for the market proceeded remarkably. Camden remarked in *Britannia* on the market town of Walsingham which « is noted at present for producing the best saffron ».[43] Many different sorts of artificers frequented the weekly markets in the later Middle Ages. But in due course specialized groups inclined to concentrate in some market towns rather than in others. This explains why the worsted industry was pursued to a small extent in the districts round Lynn and Thetford in the fifteenth century, but declined afterwards.[44]

When these regional developments are appreciated, there may be something more to be said about Ket's revolt, supplementing the work already done.[45] Apart from political and religious factors, among which the suppression of the monasteries in 1536 and the Duke of Norfolk's failure in 1546 were the most momentous, it seems to be of importance that the prices of grain and wool suddenly rose one or two years before the Rebellion.[46] Involved in the market economy, villagers, including landlords, could not free themselves from its influence. Many prominent gentry owning their estates in this county had begun to engage in sheep farming from the end of the fifteenth century. Some discontented peasants in Norfolk attributed rising prices to landlords who abused their rights of foldcourse. The reserve may be true.[47] The revolt was triggered by trouble about the commons in a village having a very complicated tenurial history. The villagers of Harsham, Attleborough, and Wilby had commons that shared common boundaries.[48]

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[42] A. Everitt, *The Marketing of Agricultural Produce*, in « Agrarian History », vol. IV, op. cit., 473-4.

[43] W. Camden, *Britannia*, 1722, p. 467.

[44] G. E. Morey, *East Anglian Society in the Fifteenth Century*, Ph. D. Thesis, London University, pp. 301-11.

[45] R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 331 ff. S. T. Bindoff, *Ket's Rebellion, 1549*, 1949: R. J. Hammond, *The Social and Economic Circumstances of Ket's Rebellion*, M. A. Thesis, University London, 1933.

[46] K. J. Allison, *Wool Supply and the Worsted Industry of Norfolk*, Ph. D. Thesis, Leeds University, 1956, pp. v; P. J. Bowden, *Movements in Wool Prices, 1490-1610*, « Yorks, Bull. of Econ. and Soc. Research », Vol. IV, pp. 112-6.

[47] K. J. Allison, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-72.

[48] F. Blomefield, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 223.

The landlord of Backhall manor in Wilby enclosed a part of this common and incurred the villagers' anger, with the result that they in turn took out the fences. About two weeks after this event was organized, it had developed into a "popular demonstration".[49] Each Hundred except those on the south-eastern border sent two representatives.[50] At the beginning they had no intention at all of disturbing the social order.[51] On the contrary they participated in the demonstration, expecting the protection promised by a proclamation of the Duke of Somerset, which granted an amnesty to offenders who broke down enclosures.

It is said that one centre of the rebels was directly on the road connecting these villages with Norwich. Another was the area triangulated by Burnham, Castle Rising, and East Dereham — a central part of champion region. The notable contrast with the rising of 1381 was that the people associated with the worsted industry and the worsted-oriented region did not take any active part in this event. It does not necessarily mean that the rural worsted industry was in decay.[52] Rather it suggests that the rebellion was defensive and conservative in essence. The peasants' demands, consisting of twenty-nine items, had two different purposes. The one was directed toward the abolition of feudal survivals, and the other was directed against the new economic activity motivated by the market economy. The former had some historical grounds. Rents of copyholds in more than half of all Norfolk manors described by some contemporary writer were considered as "arbitrable" in the sixteenth century. Many leaseholds in Forncett and Horstead manors had been converted to copyholds in the fifteenth century.[53] In Gimingham soke more than twenty bondmen were made free by purchase, based on an Act of 1575.[54] Nevertheless, their direct motivation, as suggested, stemmed from the situation that made the latter Act inevitable. The Rebellion had its economic background in the increasing business of dairy and sheep farming which, being accompanied by the increase of population, had resulted in the shortage of commons.

The document described earlier and compiled by H. Spelman described the people living in the "Champion" as three sorts of men, that is, "tilth Masters", "laborers", and the "poor". It was in this region that the typical

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[49] S. T. BINDOFF, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[50] F. W. RUSSELL, *Kett's Rebellion*, 1859, pp. 203-4.

[51] Two of them were manorial lords, and there is every probability that this was the case with the other three. F. BLOMEFIELD, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 167; VI, pp. 144, 486; VIII, p. 59; X, p. 106.

[52] Even in Norwich the register book marked high figures of the worsted weavers at that time. K. J. ALLISON, *Wool Supply and Worsted Industry*, Appendix VII; R. J. HAMMOND, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[53] Compiled from C. M. HOOD, ed., *Chorography of Norfolk*, 1938; F. G. DAVENPORT, *op. cit.*, p. 76, n. 4; W. J. CORBETT, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

[54] C. M. HOARE, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-4.

class structure of capitalistic society had made its appearance. On the other hand people in the "Woodland" were "Graziers" and "handicrafte men which lyve by dressinge, combinge of woolle, carding, spinning, weavinge, etc.". The Norfolk Husbandry, which later became prevalent in the west, is not yet mentioned in this record. Nevertheless, the Sessions Records of Norwich, which was under the direct influence of the Continent, mentions the cultivation of turnips in 1652.[55] West Norfolk with relatively poor soils and large farms was the most suitable place for this husbandry. It is likely, therefore, that the cultivation of roots was settled in West Norfolk and through the north-east region by the eighteenth century. About that time East Norfolk's worsted industry was in its prime. After the arrival of Flemish and Walloon immigrants, the New Draperies had spread into the Woodland region of Suffolk,[56] but never into the Champion Country of Norfolk. The textile industry of the county continued with ups and downs up to the nineteenth century.[57] However, when W. Marshall talked about the absorption of small lands into large estates, this implied that the industry was losing its foothold.[58] It has been often mentioned that the textile industry in northern England depended upon the family labour of small-holders even after the Industrial Revolution.*

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55 D. E. Howell James, ed., *Norfolk Quarter Sessions Order Book, 1650-1657*, 1955, p. 50.

56 J. Kirby, *The Suffolk Traveller*, 1735, pp. 1-3; R. Reyce, *The Breviary of Suffolk*, 1921, pp. 21-3; J. E. Pilgrim, *The Rise of the "New Draperies" in Essex*, « Birmingham Hist. Journal », Vol. VII, pp. 36-59.

57 J. K. Edwards, *The Decline of the Norwich Textile Industries*, « Yorks. Bull. of Econ. and Soc. Research », Vol. XVI, p. 37.

58 W. Marshall, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

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