(Real) Wages in Late Medieval England: Evidence from Agriculture

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Introduction

Recent years have seen a resurgence in debates over wages and standards of living in Europe. This is especially topical with current research on long-run economic growth and inequality. For the medieval period, most of our understanding of wages and standards of living is based on well-known indices compiled by Phelps, Brown and Hopkins, and, more recently Gregory Clark and Bob Allen. Recent work by Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf has also provided both new analysis of wage data for women in England from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries as well as a methodological foundation to calculate real wages in the long run.[1] This research has posited that, for the medieval period, women's wages were not only less than that of men, but also that 'casual' day-wage labour was often more lucrative than more secure annual contracts. However, these arguments are based upon a relatively small sample of medieval data and rely upon consumer price indices to convert wages paid in kind to a common cash denominator. Claridge and Langdon have recently used a large dataset derived from a distinct population of *famuli* agricultural workers on seigniorial demesnes (the farms of medieval English lords as opposed to the lands of their peasant tenants) to explore the character and structure of agricultural labour in medieval England, [2] and the aim of this paper is to apply explore this

[1] Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf, "The Wages of Women in England, 1250-1860" *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 75 No. 2 (2015), 405-447; Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf, *Unreal Wages? A New Empirical Foundation for the Study of Living Standards and Economic Growth in England, 1260-1860*, University of Oxford Discussion Papers in Economic and Social History 147 (September 2016).

[2] Jordan Claridge and John Langdon, "The Composition of *famuli* labour on English Demesnes, c.1300" *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol.63, Part II, 187-220.

3. A good, if indeed cautious, summary of the potential number and geographical extent of manorial accounts that provide information from demesnes operated 'directly', with their rich trove of farming details, is provided in Bruce M. S. Campbell, *English Seigniorial Agriculture 1250-1450* (Cambridge, 2000), 26-37.

4. This involved virtually all the record offices with manorial accounts in England, from the National Archives (hereafter TNA), London, Public Record Office to the various county, cathedral, abbey and palace record offices spread throughout the country. Many of these record offices will be indicated in the following notes.

[2] Jordan Claridge and John Langdon, "The Composition of *famuli* labour on English Demesnes, c.1300" *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 63, Part II, 187-220.

dataset in a way that facilitates comparison with other medieval wage series, and particularly the work of Humphries and Wiesdorf. Rather than relying on Consumer Price Index 'baskets', the paper proposes a different method of calculating, comparing and reconciling total wage packages for both males and females. This paper presents and contextualizes the data sample, which focuses on a relatively narrow span of twenty years around 1300. In the presentation itself, I will present some early results comparing this data with recent work on wages in medieval England.

Manorial Account Data

The manorial accounts providing the sort of detailed information required by this study survive in the tens of thousands across England from the early thirteenth century to about the middle of the fifteenth.[3] To make this examination of the *famuli* more manageable, this paper concentrates on a relatively narrow range of years around 1300, effectively encompassing the entire decades of the 1290s and the 1300s.[4] Since accounts normally ran from Michaelmas (29 September - the traditional end of the harvest) to Michaelmas of the following year, this meant examining accounts in the range from 1289-90 to 1310-11, resulting in a total span of twenty-two years. Only one account was taken per manor, normally that closest to the year 1300 (1299-1300 was the account-year that we normally preferred, if it survived).[5] The end result was a sample of 434 accounts, and hence manors, found in 428 different communities (Map 1).[6] As the map shows, the coverage of the sampled manors across the country is

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4. This involved virtually all the record offices with manorial accounts in England, from the National Archives (hereafter TNA), London, Public Record Office to the various county, cathedral, abbey and palace record offices spread throughout the country. Many of these record offices will be indicated in the following notes.

5. Some exceptions were made if the nearest surviving account to 1300 was in obviously poorer shape than one a little further away in time, or if there was a convenient printed edition available for an alternate year, as in the excellent edition of the 1301-2 bishopric of Winchester pipe roll: *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester 1301-2*, edited Mark Page (Winchester; Hampshire Record Series, vol. 14, 1996).

6. The map shows 426 of these communities. Two communities could not be identified exactly: 'Clopton' in Suffolk, which could be Clopton near Woodbridge or Clopton in Wickhambrook (TNA SC 6/994/19), and 'Beurepeyr', a manor of Glastonbury Abbey, for which no certain location could be found, but a reference in its account to two men paid for collecting bent pieces of wood (*cheverones*) in *Hertimora* suggests that the manor was near to Hartmoor in northern Dorset

uneven, being heavily skewed to the south and east of the country with notable 'empty' areas such as the Weald south of London, the extreme southwest (Devon and Cornwall) and the northern and western areas of the country generally. Some counties have a remarkably rich representation, especially Hampshire (including the Isle of Wight) where the survival of material principally from the bishop of Winchester, Winchester Cathedral Priory and an assortment of lay estates yielded fifty-three accounts for the county (or 12.2 per cent of the entire sample). On the other extreme, six of the thirty-nine counties in the country at the time - Cornwall, Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Lancashire, Northumberland and Westmorland - are totally unrepresented, while a further eight - Cheshire, Devon, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire - only have one or two accounts in the sample. This lopsidedness not only reflects the survival of suitable accounts across the country as a whole,[7] but also the narrow time-frame used here.

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and either in that county or south-eastern Somerset: Glastonbury Abbey Documents (at Longleat House: hereafter GAD; these are available on microfilm, which was used for this study) 11246, ms. 3^{r}-3^{d}.

7. For example, see John Langdon, *Horses, Oxen and Technological Innovation: The Use of Draught Animals in English Farming from 1066 to 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 82-5; Campbell, *English Seigniorial Agriculture*, pp. 36-7.

Map 1: Location of demesnes in account sample, c.1300

Famuli Labour

To set the *famuli* in context, they cannot be considered typical of all agricultural labour in England at the time, particularly the likely much more family-oriented labour on peasant farms, but they seemingly encompassed a full range of personnel from supervisors through to the most junior of workers and likely comprised a total working population of 105,000 or so in England by the end of the thirteenth century.[8] However, as we shall see, female *famuli*, tended to earn less than their male counterparts. Critically, this labour was very richly documented in manorial accounts,[9] which, as part of monitoring agricultural operations as a whole on demesnes, tracked wages in kind and cash paid to each of the *famuli* workers,[10] as well indicating what that worker did, whether it was ploughing, carting, dairying, shepherding, or scaring away crows and rooks from newly seeded land (a particular duty of the young).

Although the *famuli* can only be considered the nucleus of the workforce needed for a typical demesne, since the customary working services of tenants and occasional 'spot' hiring of workers for particular tasks (especially weeding and, after the harvest, threshing) were also extensive, they likely comprised at least a third to a half of the demesne labour requirement.[11] The *famuli* were particularly oriented towards soil preparation, especially ploughing, perhaps because it was felt that this early stage of crop production would be better served by a relatively stable workforce.[12] As a result, more

[8] Claridge and Langdon, Appendix A, 212-3.

[9] The latest (and very thorough) tally of manorial demesne accounts giving the sort of information used in this article puts the number at over 20,000, covering at least 2,023 demesnes (a few of these are in Wales and Scotland, but the vast majority come from England): Philip Slavin, 'The Sources for Manorial and Rural History', in Joel Rosenthal (ed.), *Understanding Medieval Primary Sources: Using Historical Sources to Discover Medieval Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 131-48 (esp. pp. 132-6). Slavin estimates that there are an average seven surviving accounts per demesne (p. 135), and that there are many demesnes that have exceptional runs over decades and even centuries (pp. 132-3).

[10] There were also other perquisites often given to the *famuli*, such as daily portions of oats/peas pottage and celebratory 'feasts' at Christmas and Easter: see Appendix B.

[11] Eona Karakacili provides a detailed example for Elton, Huntingdonshire, in 1323-4, where the *famuli* contribution was 43 per cent of the total labour needed for the demesne: 'English labor productivity rates before the Black Death: A case study', *J. Economic Hist.* 64 (2004), pp. 24-60 (esp. p. 55). Christopher Thornton has also calculated that the proportional contribution of *famuli* labour was 42 per cent for the demesne at Rimpton, Somerset, around 1300: 'The determinants of land productivity on the bishop of Winchester's demesne of Rimpton, 1208 to 1403', in Bruce M. S. Campbell and Mark Overton (eds), *Land, labour and livestock: Historical studies in European agricultural productivity* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 183-210 (esp. p. 205).

[12] In part resonating with David Stone's argument that hired labour was more productive on a per person basis than that supplied by tenant labour services: 'The productivity of hired and customary labour: Evidence from Wisbech Barton in the fourteenth century', *Economic Hist. Rev.* 50 (1997), pp. 640-56.

seasonally restricted activities like the harvest and haymaking do not appear strongly in the *famuli* documentation, although they were clearly expected to help out.[13] Even with these exceptions, the range of work carried out by the *famuli* was nonetheless extensive enough across the arable and pastoral operations of demesnes to provide a useful labour profile.

Evidence for the *Famuli*: Strengths and Weaknesses

The two foundational studies on the English *famuli* are those of Michael Postan and David Farmer,[14] and the *famuli* still remain the object of attention for other scholars looking for sets of consistently recorded labour.[15] Both Postan and Farmer noted a key complication about the group in distinguishing between 'service' and 'stipendiary' *famuli*.[16] The former worked for the relief of rents and/or labour services on lands that they held, while the latter worked for grain and cash wages. It seems likely, based upon Postan's and Farmer's views, that most of the *famuli* were originally of the service type but that gradually stipendiary *famuli* became more common.[17] As Farmer observed, the economic rationale for this is not entirely clear, since service *famuli* seem to have been the far better option for lords in not requiring cash and grain outlays, but *famuli* work performance might have improved under a wage regime.[18] Indeed, it is important to note that both Postan and Farmer were examining demesnes from estates, principally those of the abbot of Glastonbury and the bishop of Winchester, where, by 1300, the proportion of service *famuli* was still significant. Demesnes in the rest of the country, in fact, had by then swung mostly to using stipendiary *famuli*, so that – overall across England – these waged

[13] As indicated by references to (probably young) people guarding working animals while the *famuli* went to the harvest (discussed below). For the *famuli* involvement in haymaking, see Stone, 'Productivity', p. 647n.

[14] M. M. Postan, *The Famulus: The estate labourer in the XIIth and XIIIth centuries*, *Economic Hist. Rev.* Supplements, 2 (London, 1954); David Farmer, 'The *Famuli* in the later Middle Ages', in Richard Britnell and John Hatcher (eds), *Progress and problems in medieval England: Essays in honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 207-36.

[15] E.g., Ian Rush: 'The impact of commercialization in early fourteenth-century England: some evidence from the manors of Glastonbury Abbey', *Agricultural Hist. Rev.* 49 (2001), pp. 123-39.

[16] The terminology is that coined by Farmer ('The *Famuli*', p. 208); Postan was more vague about the distinction (e.g., *The Famulus*, p. 4).

[17] Postan, *The Famulus*, p. 27; Farmer, 'The *Famuli*', pp. 208-9.

[18] Farmer, 'The *Famuli*', p. 208; see also note 6 above.

personnel comprised around ninety per cent of the 105,000 total *famuli* workers by *c*.1300, a fact which makes this study particularly feasible.[19]

The accounts were, for the most part, also remarkably uniform country-wide in how they recorded the information about these stipendiary servants. In particular, the payment in kind made to a *famulus/famula*, usually called a 'livery' (*liberatio*), was largely recorded in terms of the number of weeks' work needed to earn a quarter (= eight bushels) of grain and/or legumes, which allows a close comparison from worker to worker. The grains given to the *famuli* may have been of a single kind, rye or barley being popular on many manors, in which case the liveries given out were recorded in the section of the document that accounted for that particular grain, but more often it was a mixture of grains that were disbursed, often given a section of its own headed 'mixture' (*mixtura*) or more generally as 'liveries of the *famuli*' (*liberationes famulorum*). In these latter cases, manorial officials brought together whatever grains were convenient, sometimes multure from a demesne mill (or mills),[20] but often a wide mixture ranging from wheat to legumes like peas, beans and vetches. The grain payment rates were mostly expressed in terms of the number of weeks that a particular *famulus/famula* had to work for a quarter of grain,[21] and even when the rate was not expressed directly in the document it could often be calculated for a worker by dividing the number of weeks s/he worked by the quarters of grains received for that period. In a little less than a fifth of the cases neither the rate

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[19] Service *famuli* are difficult to factor into the detailed statistical analysis, so no attempt was made to do so in this study, in effect treating them like tenants supplying labour services. Indeed, the only estate with similar proportions of service *famuli* working on its demesnes as for the bishopric of Winchester and Glastonbury Abbey was that for the Priory of Winchester Cathedral, also in the same region. For the rest of the estates in our database - e.g., those of the earl of Lincoln, Westminster Abbey, Canterbury Cathedral Priory, etc. - stipendiary *famuli* were overwhelmingly predominant. For more comparing service (or '*famuli* in serjeanty', as Farmer calls it here) with stipendiary *famuli* over geography and time, see David L. Farmer, 'Prices and wages', in H. E. Hallam (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, II, *1042-1350* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 731.

20. For some indication of the grains that mill multures could supply for this purpose, see John Langdon, *Mills in the Medieval Economy: England 1300-1540* (Oxford, 2004), esp.147-52.

21. For the database created from the sample all grain measurements were converted to quarters (with one quarter equalling eight bushels, so that, for example, four bushels equalled 0.5 quarters). In some regions and estates different units of measurement were employed, such as 'seams' (*summae*) in Kent, which, like quarters, were comprised of eight bushels (as evident on many of the manors of Canterbury Cathedral Priory), or 'rings' (*ringae*) on the estates of Ramsay Abbey, where each ring was equivalent to four bushels (or a half quarter): J. Ambrose Raftis, *The Estates of Ramsey Abbey: A Study in Economic Growth and Organization* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1957), 159.

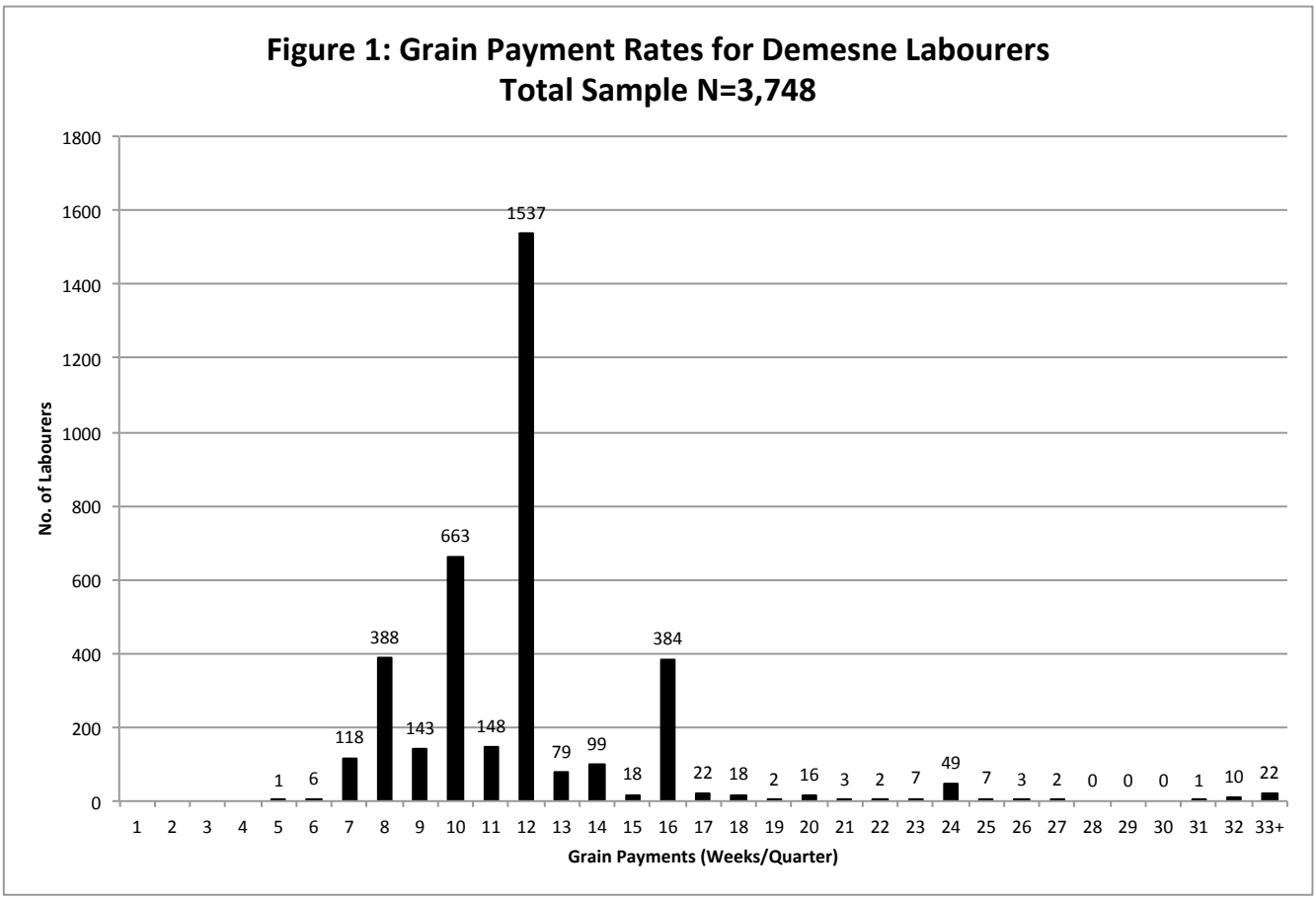
nor the length of time worked was given, but only an amount of grain received by the worker involved, so that a rate of payment could not be ascertained, a feature particularly associated with more junior workers. Because it was not possible to do this in a consistent fashion, this paper does not take into account the type of grains that each worker received, as much as this would be useful in order to estimate, say, caloric equivalents received per worker. Many manorial accounts did indicate the type of grain given to each worker (and this data is supplied in illustrative examples when available), but most often the entire *famuli* were collectively given a 'mixture' (*mixtura*) of grains, ranging from wheat to peas or beans as recorded at the beginning of the section dealing with the *famuli*'s grain liveries, but without differentiating who got what beyond the amount of this 'mixture' each received. Even murkier were the cases where the grains making up the liveries were partly or wholly comprised of multure from manorial mills, where the types of grain were not indicated at all but simply expressed as quarters received 'from the mill(s)'. This methodology focuses upon that most consistently and clearly supplied metric, the number of weeks that a *famulus/famula* was required to work to earn a quarter (regardless of what kind of grain/legumes this was). This provides the most uncluttered source of information in deciphering status levels among these *famuli*, as well as, critically, revealing something of their gender (and age) composition. Most of the *famuli*, particularly the more established ones, were also given a cash payment as well.

Altogether data was gathered for 4,581 stipendiary *famuli* from the 434 accounts, which were entered into an Excel database. Of these, the grain livery rate in number of weeks required to earn a quarter of grain was directly stated in the account or could be calculated - by dividing the number of weeks worked by the number of quarters paid - for 3,748 (81.8 per cent of the 4,581 total) of these workers, while the remaining 833 (18.2 per cent) only recorded the amount of grain given to the worker without specifying the time required to earn it. Figure 1 consequently shows the distribution of livery rates for the 3,748 workers for which the more specific information is known, with the x-axis showing the

number of weeks a *famulus*/*famula* worked to earn a quarter of grain, the better paid being to the left of the histogram and the poorer paid to the right, while the y-axis indicates the number of workers at each particular payment rate. The distribution for the 'first-tier' workers is clear enough, with a very notable peak at twelve weeks required per quarter for 1,537 of them (or 41.0 per cent of the total 3,748). There was a wide variation around this mode value for first-tier workers, ranging from the single case of only five weeks required per quarter for a 'seeder' at Ickham, Kent, in 1294-5,[22] to eighteen cases at fifteen weeks per quarter, which seems to have existed as a sort of transition zone between the first-tier and second-tier workforces. There were also notable concentrations at the eight and ten weeks per quarter levels (10.4 and 17.7 per cent of the total 3,748 respectively), which relate to traditional rates on particular estates.[23]

[22] Canterbury Cathedral Archives (hereafter CCA) DCc Ickham 12. This rate is not implausible, since considerable skill was needed to ensure a uniform spread of seed over ploughed soil: e.g., Christopher Dyer, 'Documentary evidence', in Grenville Astill and Annie Grant (eds), *The countryside of medieval England* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1988), pp. 12-35 (esp. pp. 26-7); John Langdon, 'Agricultural equipment', in idem, pp. 86-107 (esp. p. 99).

[23] For example, a rate of eight weeks per quarter (and sometimes better) seems to have been the case for ploughmen, carters, and the like on the Kentish manors of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, while ten weeks per quarter was common for such workers on many Westminster Abbey manors.



In Figure 1, the start of the 'second-tier' ranks is signalled by the significant number of cases at sixteen weeks per quarter (384 or 10.2 per cent of the 3,748 sample). When combined with the long tail of even lower rates (that is, the 164 cases from seventeen to thirty-two and more weeks' work required per quarter), the total second-tier personnel in the sample comes to 548, or 14.6 per cent of the total 3,748, indicating that roughly one in seven workers was of this station. It is likely that this proportion is an underestimate, since the *famuli* for whom we could not ascertain the number of weeks per quarter likely had an even greater percentage in the second-tier ranks. On the other hand, second-tier personnel in the sample tended to work less often, on average only 30.5 weeks per year compared to 44.1 weeks per year for their 'first-tier' colleagues. As a result, the 3,200 first-tier workers among the 3,748 total for whom grain payment rates were known were employed for a total of 141,271.8 weeks (89.4 per cent) compared to 16,702.6 weeks (10.6 per cent) for the 548 persons in the second-tier category. The difference in the payment of grains for the two groups was even more striking, with first-tier workers

receiving 13,363.5 quarters (or 93.6 per cent) compared to 920.5 quarters (or 6.4 per cent) given to the second-tier group.

First-tier Workers

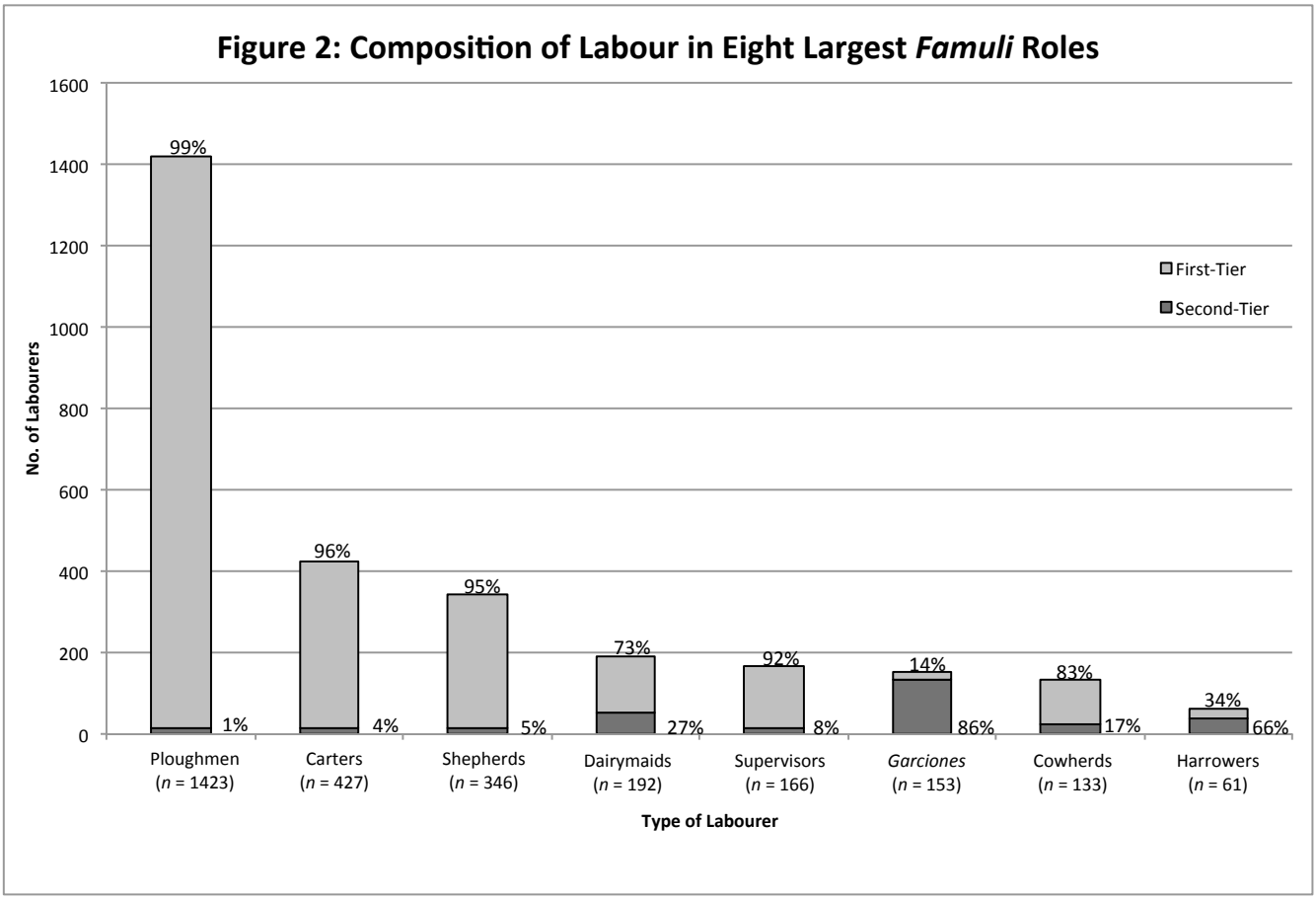
Here we have a quick summary of 'first-tier' workers and the volatile first- versus second-tier split that could occur within various worker categories. Figure 2 shows this for the eight most numerous types of workers in the sample. As the figure demonstrates, the demesne work force was clearly centered around the three most frequently recorded of the 'first-tier' *famuli* - ploughmen (*carucarii*, *famuli carucarii*, *tentores*, or *fugatores*), carters (*carectarii*), and shepherds (*bercarii*). In all three of these categories, the proportion of personnel paid at second-tier rates comprised five per cent or less.

Ploughmen were predominant in number at 1,423 (or 38.0 per cent) of the 3,748 *famuli* with specified grain livery rates.[24] They themselves were usually divided into 'holders' (*tentores*), those who held the plough-handles and managed the tricky job of guiding the plough at a constant depth through the earth, and 'drivers' (*fugatores*), those who drove on the plough-animals, usually oxen, with a goad or whip, as shown in the famous Luttrell Psalter ploughing illustration. The holder was the more senior and experienced of the two, but this was generally not reflected in a greater amount of grain received, since both holder and driver normally received the same livery, but in a slightly higher cash payment given to the holder.[25] However, when new recruits entered the ploughmens' ranks it was generally as a *fugator* first, as shown in a 1299-1300 Bewley, Durham, account, where, among a very large contingent of plough-people, there were also ten 'pages driving the ploughs' on the manor, who

[24] This should be considered as a minimum, since some ambiguous terms were not included among the 1,423 'ploughmen', such as *bovarius* (literally 'ox-herd', but probably ploughmen - there are 116 cases of them in the sample) or just *famulus* (also in many contexts probably a ploughman - 77 of them in the sample).

[25] As one example among many, all ploughmen on the Westminster Abbey manor of Knowle, Warwickshire, both *tentores* and *fugatores*, worked twelve weeks for a quarter of grain, but the former received 5s. cash for the year (1298-9) while the latter only got 4s.: Westminster Abbey Muniments (hereafter WAM) 27695.

seemed to have been trainee labour coming into the ranks of the *fugatores*. Occasionally, if there were numerous ploughs and ploughmen on a manor, a 'master ploughman' would be designated.[26]



Carters (427, or 11.4 per cent, of the 3,748 sample) were less hierarchical. Generally there was only one on a manor, but two or more might be found on larger enterprises, say on manors with over 300 sown acres. Occasionally 'second' carters were named and might be included in the second-tier ranks,[27] but carters were almost always 'first-tier' members in the *famuli* work force. In contrast, shepherds (*bercarii*: 346, or 9.2 per cent, of the 3,748 total) were arranged much more by status and experience, as seen in the Peterborough Abbey manor of (North) Collingham, Nottinghamshire, in

[26] This was particularly the case on the Kentish manors of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, where 'master' ploughmen were found at Barksore in 1298-9 (CCA DCc Barksore 14), Copton (in Preston) in 1291-2 (Copton 1), Elverton (in Stone, near Faversham) in 1297-8 (Elverton 9), etc., although they were not paid anything more in grain and cash than other ploughmen.

[27] As at Milton Hall (in Prittlewell), Essex, where a 'second carter' worked for ten weeks at a rate of one quarter per sixteen weeks' work: CCA DCc Middleton 16, m. 1[d].

1300-1, with a 'shepherd', 'second shepherd, 'third shepherd', and a 'boy shepherd' (*garcio bercarius*) being recorded. The first three were all given a 'full livery', which, for this manor, required each of them to work ten weeks to receive a quarter of mixed grains (mostly rye plus grains received from the manorial windmill), while the *garcio bercarius* was given a 'half livery' requiring twenty weeks work per quarter.[28] Indeed, as we shall see again below in a fuller assessment of the total 'sheep carer' population, many working with sheep were not labelled specifically as 'shepherds' (that is, the *bercarii* represented in Figure 2), but rather as 'keepers' (*custodes*), being responsible for particular segments of the manorial flocks, such as the ewes, 'hoggs' (*hoggastri*; young castrated males), lambs, and sometimes even rams.

The final group from Figure 2 indisputedly in the 'first-tier' category are those we have categorized as 'supervisors', which were called variously in the accounts, in order of their number as stipendiary *famuli*, reap-reeves (*messores*), haywards (*haywardi*), serjeants (*servientes*), reeves (*prepositi*), beadles (*bedelli*), and bailiffs (*ballivi*).[29] They were usually recruited from the ranks of experienced landholders,[30] and indeed, more than any other group in the first-tier ranks, they were often service *famuli* or paid cash only, especially reeves and bailiffs. Of the 166 supervisors who were stipendiary *famuli* and thus included in Figure 2, the median payment required them to work twelve weeks per quarter of grain, but there were very significant levels of higher payments, especially at the eight weeks per quarter level (51 or 30.7 per cent), and they could sometimes be given superior grains.[31] Yet, curiously, thirteen of these supervisory personnel (or 7.8 per cent of the total 166) in Figure 2 were paid at 'second-tier' rates requiring sixteen weeks of work or more per quarter (and for whom there was no seeming additional compensation such as relief of rents or labour services). Ten of

[28] Northamptonshire RO [hereafter NRO] F(M) Charter/2388, ms. 18^{r} and 18^{d}.

[29] The surprisingly low numbers of reeves and bailiffs in particular are because most existed as service *famuli* in the accounts.

[30] E.g., David Stone, *Decision-making in medieval agriculture* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 13-14.

[31] As at Milton Hall (note 25 above), where the 'serjeant' was given wheat at a rate of a quarter per eight weeks' work, in comparison to the rye given to the other first-tier workers at rates of a quarter per ten weeks (for a carter and a shepherd) or per twelve weeks (four ploughmen).

these thirteen were designated as *messores*, generally associated with overseeing the harvest, but often called on for other duties,[32] and occasionally these lowly paid *messores* were lumped in with other patently second-tier workers, as at Ketton, Durham, in 1299-1300, when the *messor* was grouped with two pages, one swineherd, and the dairymaid, each getting one quarter per sixteen weeks.[33] As we shall discuss later, one explanation might be that these 'second-tier' *messores* were elderly people whose physical capabilities no longer commanded a first-tier livery, but whose age provided sufficient authority for supervisory work.

Female *Famuli*

We move now to those workers who gravitate more to the second-tier side of the spectrum. Here the picture becomes more complicated and gender issues start to play a considerable role. The two groups in Figure 2 most involved here are the 'cowherds' (*vaccarii*) and the 'dairymaids' (*dayae* or *daiae*). The term *vaccarius* for the cowherd seems to stamp the position as one for males, and less of them - 17.3 per cent - were at the second-tier level compared to 26.6 per cent for the dairymaids. As might be expected, though, the position was connected to that of the dairymaid and at times was clearly interchangeable and may have been seasonal, so that, on the manor of (Old) Bolingbroke, Lincolnshire, in 1295-6, the dairymaid there was the *vaccarius* in winter.[34] But cowherds could double as other types of (seemingly male) workers, as at Sedgebrook, Lincolnshire, in 1295-6, when the cowherd also drove ploughs on occasion.[35] This may simply underline that cowherds tended to be of a lesser rank among the *famuli*, but in a trend that foreshadowed later times, some were also becoming entrepreneurial, as in the case of the cowherd at Little Chart, Kent, who was given one seam (the Kentish version of a

[32] E.g., Mark Page (ed.), *The pipe roll of the bishopric of Winchester 1301-2*, Hampshire Record Series 14 (Winchester: Hampshire RO, 1996), p. 375.

[33] *In liberatione duorum pagiorum unius porcarii unius messoris unius daye dictum tempus* [i.e., one year] *quarterio dato per xvj ebdomadas, xvj quarteria j rasarium*: Durham University Library, Dean and Chapter of Durham (henceforward DUL, DCD) Enrolled Manors, 1299-1303, m. 3^{r}.

[34] *...in stipendiis...j daie qui est vaccarius in yeme*: TNA DL 29/1/1, m. 8^{r}.

[35] *Et de iij quarteriis ij bussellis in liberatione j qui fuit vaccarius in yemale & fugans carucam per vices*: TNA DL 29/1/1, m. 1^{d}.

quarter) per eight weeks for thirty-one weeks during 1301-2 for a total of three seams and seven bushels, clearly a 'first-tier' rate, but only one seam and two and a half bushels for the remaining twenty-one weeks of the year (a rate of just over sixteen weeks' work required to earn a quarter) 'because he had the dairy at farm [that is, the herd was leased to him]'.[36]

The interchangeability of cowherds and dairymaids inevitably throws up the question: what (or who) was a 'dairymaid'? Since the Latin *daya* or *daia* is feminine and milking was clearly associated with women,[37] it might be easy - somewhat reflexively - to consider them all as female. The distribution of grain payments for them certainly indicates a less generous remuneration for them as against, say, the profile for all workers in Figure 1. This might well support the findings evident in so many other forms of remuneration between the sexes that medieval women were paid less than male contemporaries when doing similar types of work.[38] However, muddying this conclusion is the fact that some at least of the 'dairymaids' were seemingly males.[39] Examples include 'the man (*homo*) making the dairy [work] and the pottage for the *famuli* and winnowing all the corn of the manor' at Kings Langley, Hertfordshire, in 1305-6 for the year at a livery of one quarter of grain per twelve weeks, or the man (again *homo*) making 'the office of *vaccarius* and *daya*' at Laleham, Middlesex, in 1304-5, this time at one quarter for every nine weeks.[40] To these can be added occasional references to 'dairymaids' sporting male names,[41] which should make us wary of assuming that all such designated dairy personnel were necessarily female.

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[36] *...quia habuit daeriam ad firmam...*: CCA DCc Little Chart 6. Farmer noted this trend of leasing the demesne herd as becoming common in the later fourteenth century: 'The *Famuli*', p. 224.

[37] E.g., the women milking a cow with calf in MS Bodley 764 (as shown in *English Rural Life in the Middle Ages*, Bodleian Picture Book 14 (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1965), plate 5a), and the women in the sheep-milking scene in the Luttrell Psalter: British Library Add. MS. 42130, fo. 163 (shown, for example, in Janet Backhouse, *Medieval rural life in the Luttrell Psalter* (London: BL, 2000), p. 30).

[38] Bardsley, 'Women's work reconsidered: Gender and wage differentiation in late medieval England', *Past and Present* 165 (1999), pp. 3-29 (esp. pp. 11-12); Langdon, 'Minimum wages', esp. pp. 28-36.

[39] Farmer also made this point: 'The *Famuli*', p. 224.

[40] TNA SC 6/866/16, m. 1^{d}; WAM 27114, m. 1^{d}. It is assumed that *homo* means 'man' here rather than, say, the ambivalently gendered 'human being', which could include a woman or girl. Indeed, using *homo* to indicate a female in a job that was largely considered female anyway would seem an unnecessary ambiguity.

[41] Thus the references to Richard 'le Daye' at Chesterton, Essex, in 1301-2 (TNA SC 6/837/24, m. 1^{r}) and Nicholas Daye at Popenhoe, Norfolk, in 1291-2 (TNA SC 6/942/13, m. 1^{d}). Similarly there is a reference to a reasonably

There are plenty of other references, however, that indicate that the 'dairymaid' was normally female. In a 1300-1 account for Castor, Northamptonshire, it stated that a *daya* was given a livery at a rate of one quarter per twelve weeks except for four weeks in the harvest and two weeks *in quibus nulla erat daya* ('in which no-one was the dairymaid'), the *nulla* in Latin indicating that the dairymaid was indeed a female here (unless the scribe was more interested in making the Latin agree than in reflecting gender reality).[42] Similarly, if the person was a male some scribes felt they had to indicate this, as in the 1301-2 Bishops Sutton, Hampshire, account reference to a livery of one quarter per ten weeks given to '1 man who is in place of the dairymaid',[43] suggesting the position was normally one for a female. The agricultural treatises of the time also seem to have leaned toward the dairymaid as being female. The *Seneschaucy*, seemingly written between 1260 and 1276, used the pronoun 'she' (*ele*) throughout when considering the 'office' of dairymaid.[44] The anonymous *Husbandry*, written closer to 1300, took a more cautious line, indicating that the 'dairymaid' could be a man but also in the process referring mostly to the dairy-person as a female:

> And you ought to have in every place where there is a dairy some person in charge [*ou daerye est une daye*], be it a man or a woman. And if it were a man he ought to do the same things a dairymaid would do. And, because of the benefits which he has from milk he ought to take one quarter of corn every sixteen weeks where other servants have one quarter for every twelve weeks.
> And the dairymaid ought [*E ele deyt*] to winnow all the corn, and half of her pay shall be for paying the woman [*femme*] who will help her.[45]

The last sentence in this excerpt, and a slightly later reference to the dairymaid (in the feminine) also being required to look after 'small stock', including poultry and eggs,[46] as well as the statement

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generous grain livery of one quarter per twelve weeks given to 'le dey' (rather than 'la dey') in the Fornham St. Martin, Suffolk, account of 1300-1: Suffolk RO, Bury St. Edmunds branch, E3/15.9/2.11, m. 1^{d}.

[42] NRO F(M) Charter/2388, m. 5^{d}.

[43] Page (ed.), *Pipe roll of...1301-2*, p. 308; see also p. 307.

[44] *Seneschaucy*, cc. 66-69, in Dorothea Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley and other treatises on estate management and accounting* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 287-8. For the dating of this treatise, see idem, p. 89.

[45] *Husbandry*, c. 13, in Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, p. 425. For the dating of the treatise, see idem, pp. 200-1.

[46] Ibid., c. 16 (p. 425). For an example of a 'dairymaid' also being expected to take care of poultry from our

that her wages should be shared by her helper, suggest a lower individual pay and status for females in the 'dairymaid' position. From this, it might follow that a larger proportion of male 'dairymaids' would occupy the higher grain payment group (that is, getting more than one quarter per sixteen weeks despite what the *Husbandry* advised), while women would more often be found in the lower-paid group getting one quarter per sixteen weeks or less. Consequently, when only those people in the sample who were undisputedly women - labelled as *mulieres* (likely adult women), *ancillae* (that is, maidservants, likely young women or adolescent girls[47]) or *feminae* - are considered, they mostly fell within the 'second-tier' group. Although the sample is small - at forty-six individuals - forty of them (or 87.0 per cent) had to work sixteen weeks or more for a quarter of grain. The descriptions of what work these particular women performed indicated that a good deal of it centred around the manorial complex of buildings, the *curia* as it was often called, so that fourteen of these women (or 29.8 per cent) were described as *ancilla domus*, *mulier custodiens domum curiae*, or something similar.[48] They also did jobs like making the oats pottage for the *famuli*, winnowing grain, milking ewes, and drying malt.[49] At Caistor cum Markshall, Norfolk, in 1299-1300 (or possibly 1300-1) one of them seems likely to have started out as an *ancilla* for twenty-five weeks before being promoted to a *daya* for another twenty-three weeks.[50]

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account sample, see Page (ed.), *Pipe roll of...1301-2*, p. 257 (Bishops Waltham, Hampshire).

[47] We do not go as far as Susan Mosher Stuard in considering *ancillae* as some form of slave labour ('Ancillary evidence for the decline of medieval Slavery', *Past and Present* 149 (November, 1995), pp. 3-28), since they seem often to have been considered the equal of, say, *mulieres* in such situations. In this, our position follows that of Jean-Pierre Devroey, 'Men and women in early medieval serfdom: The ninth-century north Frankish evidence', *Past and Present* 166 (2000), pp. 3-30 (esp. pp. 29-30), in seeing a fundamental legal equality between these (girls?) and other men and women in peasant society, although their generally low status is abundantly clear.

[48] For example, taking two examples from the extremes of payments to these women, an *ancilla domus* at Chaddington, Buckinghamshire, in 1302-3, worked twelve weeks for each quarter of grain she received (Merton College Library, Oxford [hereafter MCL] 5537), while a *mulier* keeping the 'house(s) of the court and making the pottage of the *famuli*' at Hurcot, Somerset, in 1300-1 only received five bushels for what was claimed to be an entire year's work, a rate requiring over eighty-two weeks' work per quarter of grain: TNA SC 6/1090/6, m. 3^{d}.

[49] As, respectively, at Upton, Northamptonshire, in 1300-1 (NRO F(M) Charter/2388, m. 22^{d}); Thorpe (in Peterborough), Northamptonshire, again in 1300-1 (ibid., m. 22^{r}); see also similar cases at Pittington, Durham, in 1299-1300 (DUL, DCD Enrolled Manors, 1299-1300, m. 2^{r}); and Therfield, Hertfordshire, in 1306-7 (TNA SC 6/872/17, m. 4^{r}).

[50] *In liberatione unius ancillae a festo sancti Michaelis* [29 September] *usque festum Annunciationis beatae Mariae* [25 March] *per xxv septimanas, iiij busselli. In liberatione unius dayae a festo Annunciationis beatae Mariae usque festum sancti Michaelis praeter iiij septimanas in autumpno per xxiij septimanas, j quarterium iij bussellis dimidium*: TNA SC 6/932/26, m. 1^{d}.

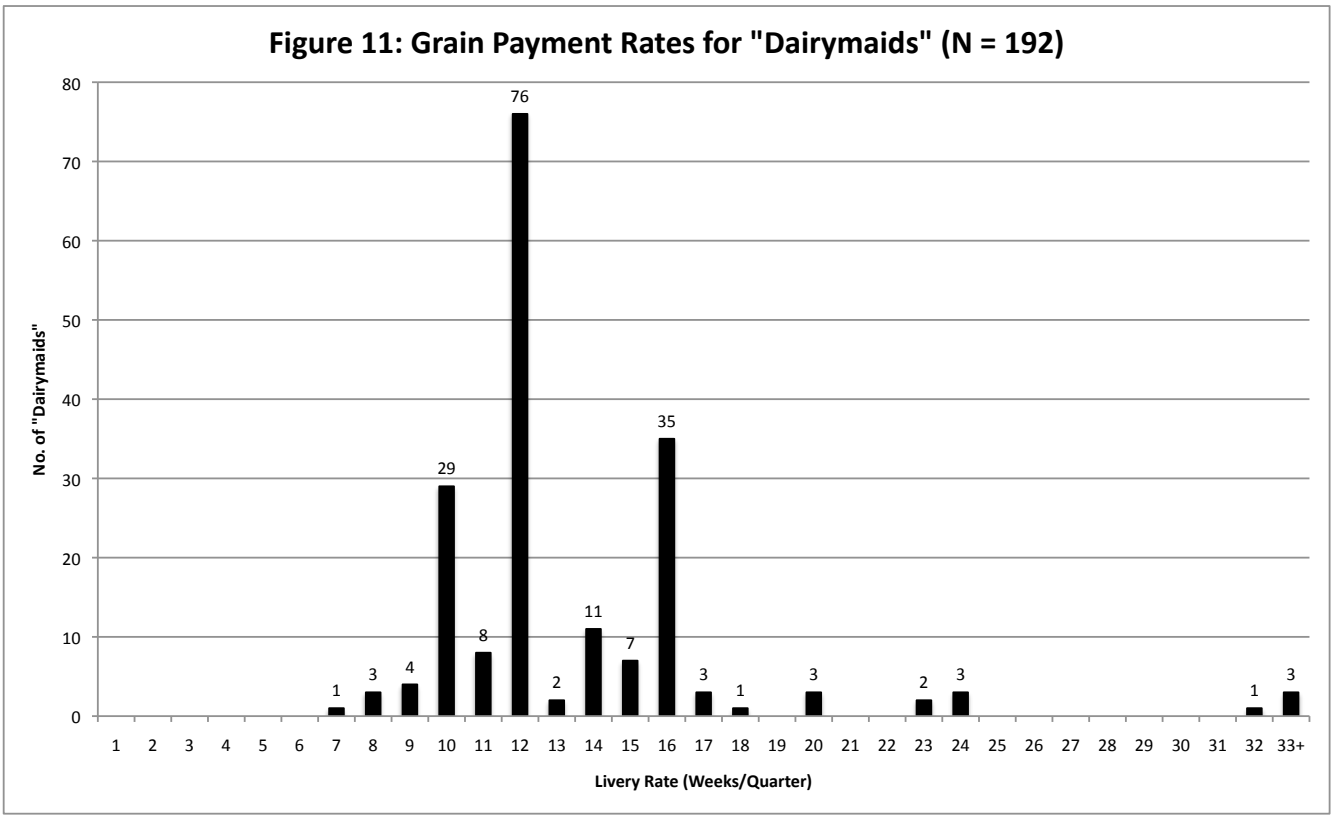
Figure 11: Grain Payment Rates for "Dairymaids" (N = 192)
No. of "Dairymaids"
Livery Rate (Weeks/Quarter)
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33+
1 3 4 29 8 76 2 11 7 35 3 1 3 2 3 1 3

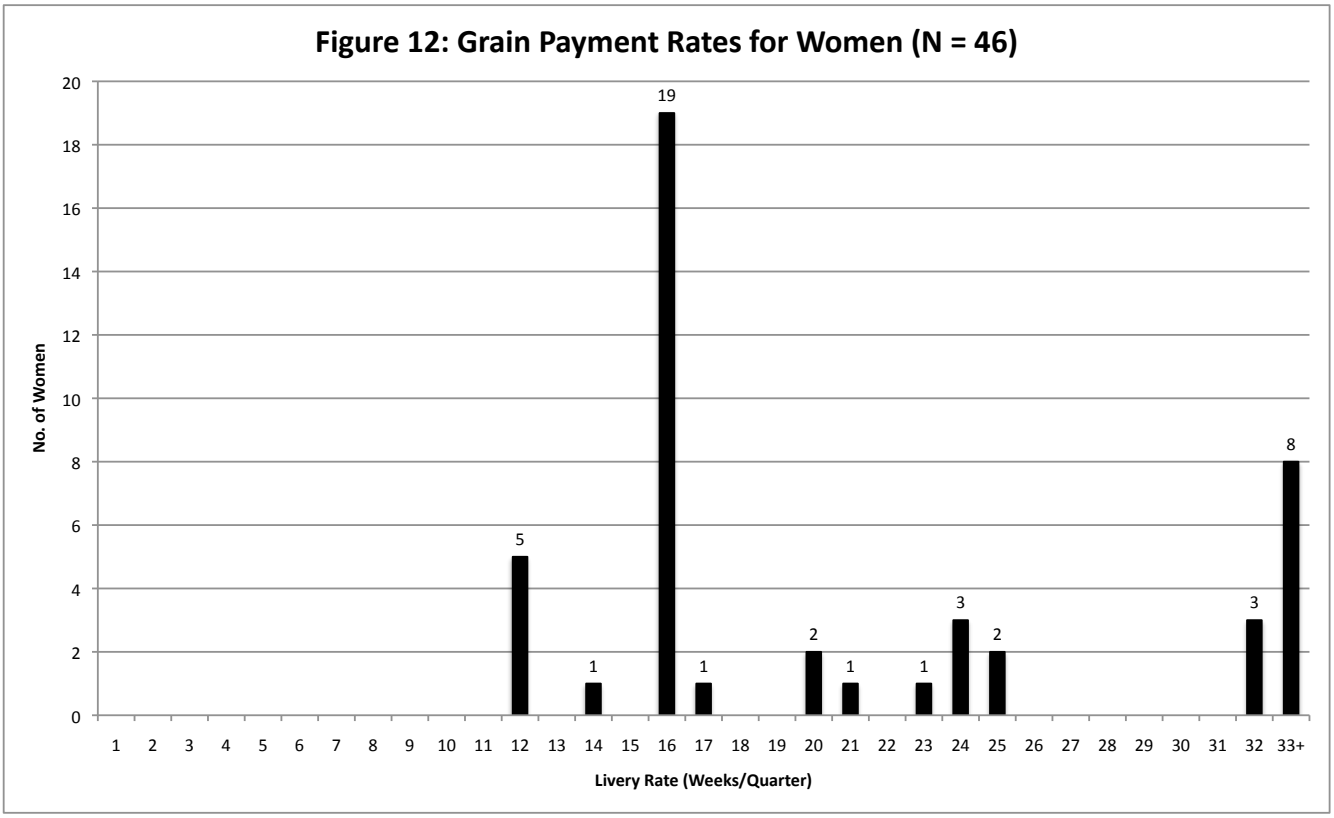
Figure 12: Grain Payment Rates for Women (N = 46)
No. of Women
Livery Rate (Weeks/Quarter)
0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33+
5 1 19 1 2 1 1 3 2 3 8

However, despite the possibility that many women might have been in the better-paid group of *dayae*, female dairymaids were clearly in a more liminal position than more well-established, continuously employed *famuli* like ploughmen and carters, particularly if some of the dairymaids, and especially the better-paid ones, were in fact males. In short, the gender makeup of so-called 'dairymaids' seems to have become increasingly fluid, particularly with the leasing of demesne herds, although the term *daya* or some form of it was still associated with women even in Chaucer's day with his reference in the Nun's Priest's Tale to a poor widow who made her living as a 'deye'.[51] Dairying as a consequence seems alive with the sort of gender complications that Judith Bennett highlighted in her study on late medieval and early modern brewing.[52]

Grain Liveries

In terms of assessing the generosity (or not) of the grain liveries for a first-tier worker, we will use the median livery rate for first-tier *famuli* of one quarter (= eight bushels) per twelve weeks' work (Figure 1), which gives an annual grain payment of 4.33 quarters, or 34.6 bushels. To assess kcal equivalents, we propose a range, based on, first, rye, as the upper bound, and second, a mixture of barley and oats, as the lower one. The caloric equivalents of a bushel of these two options would be 77,520 and 63,564 kcals respectively,[53] so that 34.6 bushels would yield a range of 2.68 million (rye) to 2.20m (barley and oats) kcals. Campbell put the kcal extraction rate writ large for all grains *c*.1300 at 58 per cent (including the use to which it was put, from pottage through to brewing, as well as loss through vermin and rotting).[54] If we apply this to the kcal equivalent range above, then the net result would be 1.55m (rye) to 1.28m (barley and oats) kcals. Campbell also put the daily grain kcal requirement at 1,500 per person, balancing the differences between male and female, young and old, and the fact some protein

[51] Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn. (Oxford, 2008), p. 253, line 2846.
[52] Judith M. Bennett, *Ale, beer, and brewsters in England: Women's work in a changing world, 1300-1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[53] Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, Table 5.04 (p. 215).
[54] Ibid., esp. pp. 397-9.

from meat and/or dairy products would be added for a reasonably healthy diet.[55] Thus, a rate of one quarter per twelve weeks' work at 1,500 kcals could support 2.8 (rye) to 2.3 (barley and oats) persons over a year.[56] If a more generous grain kcal per person per day was felt to be necessary, say at 2,000,[57] then the range would be reduced to 2.1 to 1.7 persons. This indicates that the most common grain livery rate was, in terms of sustenance (and overlooking cash wages for the moment), might just be able to support an adult couple if that.

Not surprisingly the outlook was even gloomier for second-tier *famuli*. From Figure 1 the median figure for the second-tier personnel was at the one quarter per sixteen weeks' work level (3.25 quarters, or 26.0 bushels, per year). Working from the assumptions above, the grain liveries for this group would have supported from 2.1 to 1.8 persons at the 1,500 kcals per person per day requirement and 1.6 to 1.3 people at 2,000 kcals per person per day.

Cash Stipends

The money wages that *famuli* received could ameliorate this situation, of course. Limiting ourselves to those for whom cash payments per year were stated or could be calculated in the sample - 1,638 for the first-tier group and 115 in the second-tier - the median annual cash payments for both groups were 4s. and 2s. 6d. respectively. If these payments were converted into grain, using Farmer's prices for the first decade of the fourteenth century,[58] 4s. if spent on, say, rye would raise the amount of grain for consumption by 7.7 bushels (or 22.2 per cent by volume over the 34.6 bushels that a *famulus/famula* would get at a rate of one quarter per twelve weeks' work). If spent on the barley/oats alternative, it would raise the livery by 10.1 bushels (or 29.2 per cent), an improvement over rye that was also reflected in kcal terms (by 7.6 per cent: 641,996 for versus 596,904 kcals). Indeed, in purely sustenance

[55] Ibid., pp. 401-2.
[56] For example, for rye the calculation was 1,550,000/(1,500 x 365) = 2.8311.
[57] Along the lines of, say, Dyer, *Standards of living*, pp. 134-5.
[58] Farmer, 'Prices and wages', p. 733, where the price of rye over the decade is given as 4s. 2d. per qr, barley at 4s. per qr, and oats at 2s. 4d. per qr. A 50-50 barley-oats mixture would theoretically be 3s. 2d., which was used here.

terms, the optimal strategy for a first-tier *famulus/famula* receiving rye for their livery would be to spend their 4s. cash stipend on something like a barley/oats mixture (as long as the grains were not used for less efficient purposes like making ale), which, at a total of 3.32m kcals (2.68 + 0.64) and following the calculations above (including an extraction rate of 0.58), would support a range from 3.5 (@ 1,500 kcals per day per person) to 2.6 persons (@ 2,000 kcals per day per person).

Applying the same calculations to a second-tier *famulus/famula* receiving one quarter of rye per sixteen weeks' work - thus setting an upper bound for this category of worker - 2s. 6d. at Farmer's prices for the first decade of the fourteenth century would buy 6.3 bushels of a barley/oats or an extra 400,453 kcals, making 2.41m kcals in all (that is, added to 2.01m kcals from 3.25 quarters of rye), supporting a range from 2.5 (@ 1,500 per person per day) to 1.9 persons (@ 2,000 kcals per person per day).

In short, even the most optimistic conditions above only gave sustenance for an equivalent of 3.5 people, perhaps a couple and three children, assuming the latter combined amounted to 1.5 'persons'. Such a fixation on food would, moreover, leave nothing for clothing, shoes, housing, or utensils (or, even if they made some of these themselves, cloth, leather, wood, and metal). Indeed, if one views *famuli* wages from another perspective, converting all grain payments to cash, even a first-tier *famulus/famula* would receive barely 1d. per day, while second-tier workers would be around ¾d. per day,[59] very much endorsing Dyer's pessimistic view of the *famuli* existence.[60]

[59] Assuming rye, the likely best grain to be given to the *famuli*, the 4.33 quarters that a worker at one quarter per twelve weeks' work when converted to cash (based upon Farmer's prices for rye in the previous note) would be 4.33 x 50d. [4s. 2d.] = 216.5d. Adding to this the median 4s. (48d.) cash payment received by such a worker, this would come to an annual 'wage' of 264.5d. If we assume 260 days of work per year, around the average used by Dyer for his construction of medieval English wage-earning budgets (*Standards of living*, p. 226), this would come to an equivalent of slightly more than a penny per day, which at the beginning of the fourteenth century was a remuneration more consistent with that for women and the young (e.g., Langdon, 'Minimum wages'). For second-tier workers, even with the supposition that they would be receiving rye for the 3.25 quarters (= 26 bushels) per year they earned at a livery at one quarter per sixteen weeks' work, which would be worth 162.5d. at Farmer's prices, plus a second-tier median annual cash payment of 2s. 6d. (30d.), this would only amount to a total of 192.5d., or ¾d. per day, at a 260-day work year.

[60] Dyer, *Standards of living*, p. 133.

Perquisites

There were, however, perquisites offered by *famuli* employment that would help to soften these realities or at least provide insight as to how life at these remuneration levels could be sustained. One was the likelihood that the *famuli* received a portion of 'pottage', or porridge, made of oats and/or peas, possibly to start the day or as snacks to support their exertions thereafter. As the numerous references to second-tier men and women making pottage for the *famuli* in the main text suggests, the practice was reasonably common and perhaps even ubiquitous, even if it did not always make it into the record.[61] with each *famuli* being allocated an equivalent of 1-1½ bushels of oats/peas over the year.[62] Such pottage was likely seasoned with salt,[63] and, in one instance, it was indicated that it was prepared in an earthenware pot or bowl held over a fire by a tripod.[64] This pottage, if shared equally, could add around five percent to the sustenance for a first-tier worker and perhaps something around seven per cent for a second-tier one.[65]

The second common benefit beyond grain liveries and cash stipends for the *famuli* were feasts to celebrate important holidays, for which expenses were paid by the lord, at about 1½d. per feast per *famuli* member, as well as often a tip or gratuity (*oblatio*) of a half-penny or a penny per person per feast. These relations-improving feasts were particularly common on the estates of Westminster Abbey,

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[61] Only seven of the 57 manors of the bishopric of Winchester, for instance, gave very clear indication of it: Page (ed.), *Pipe roll…of 1301-2*, pp. 52, 141, 274, 280, 341 (oats pottage) and 75, 199 (peas pottage). A likely eighth case (of oats pottage) was recorded for Adderbury, Oxfordshire, where an entry in the oats section noted, 'In making meal, 1 qr', which seems likely to have been bound for the *famuli* (ibid., 150) and shows how easily such pottage might elude detection in the records.

[62] The eight cases above (including Adderbury) indicated that 73.5 bushels of oats/peas were given to 52 identifiable stipendiary *famuli*, for a portion of 1.41 bushels each.

[63] As at Turweston, Buckinghamshire, in 1299-1300, where three bushels of salt was bought for 12d. for 'the pottage of the *famuli* and the dairy': WAM 7761, m. 1^{r}.

[64] As at Witney, Oxfordshire, in 1301-2, where the purchase of a pot and tripod was recorded for making the *famuli*'s pottage for work they were doing 'in the park': Page (ed.), *Pipe roll…of 1301-2*, p. 137 (under 'Small Expenses').

[65] Assuming the 1-1½ bushels were oats and a ninety per cent extraction rate – since, even though this oats was given as pottage, some would likely be lost through milling or wastage - this would give a range of 54,302 to 81,454 kcals (using the kcal per bushel figure for oats in Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture*, p. 215). At the 1.55m to 1.28m kcal range for the liveries after overall extraction at 58 per cent above, depending upon the grain (rye versus barley/oats mixture), for the livery of a *famulus/famula* at the one quarter per twelve weeks' work rate, then the extra kcal percentage of this pottage would range from a minimum of 3.5 [(54,302/1,550,000) x 100] to a maximum of 6.4 [(81,454/1,280,000) x 100] per cent. For those at one quarter per sixteen weeks, receiving annual liveries comprising, after 58 per cent extraction, 1.17m kcals (rye) and 0.90m kcals (barley/oats), the improvement would range from 4.6 to 9.1 per cent.

where two-thirds of manors – usually the larger ones – had at least one per year, particularly at Christmas, but often at Easter and occasionally at other times as well, such as St. Michael (29 September) and All Saints (1 November).[66] It is difficult to say how important these feasts were in a nutritional sense, because, among other things, it is not certain how many meals they entailed. A Battersea, Surrey, account for 1299-1300 indicates that the Christmas expenses for the *famuli* stretched over three days, and the reasonably generous 'expenses' of 12s. (itself written over 14s. crossed out) for the 20 or more *famuli*, which, over three days, would yield around 2.0-2.5d. per day per person, gives credence to what might have been a lengthier spell of banqueting and carousing,[67] but the more normal 1½d. per feast per person mentioned above suggests that usually only a single day's feasting was involved. In terms of total sustenance over a year, these relations-improving exercises between lord and employees likely only represented a few days' nutrition, even if the *famuli* gorged themselves and took away food for future consumption. They might also, however, have been enhanced by food provided for harvest and other customary 'boons' that *famuli*/*famulae* attended.

Where the information about holiday feasts is sometimes particularly useful, however, is in revealing more fully the working groups that comprised the *famuli*, often involving otherwise unrecorded members. Thus, in our sample, in a 1298-9 account for the Abbey's manor at Aldenham, Hertfordshire, those attending the Christmas and Easter feasts were recorded as 'the reeve, the beadle, one carter, four famuli ploughmen, their helper (*garcio*), one cowherd, his helper, one shepherd, his helper, one smith, his helper, [&] a dairymaid [and] her [female: *ancilla*] helper'.[68] None of the 'helpers' in this passage seemingly appeared elsewhere in the account and suggests broader family involvement among these

[66] At Hampstead, Middlesex, in 1289-90, there appears to have been such feasts at Christmas, Easter, and Michaelmas (WAM 32405, m. 1^{r}), while at Oakham, Rutland, in 1299-1300 the feasts were at Easter and All Saints (WAM 20228, m. 2^{r}). These references are to be found in the 'Small Expenses' (*Minutae Expensae*) part of the accounts, as are the references to various feasts below.

[67] WAM 27504, m. 2^{r}.

[68] *In expensis prepositi Bedelli j carectarii iiij famulorum carucarorum garcionis eorundem j vaccarii garcionis sui j bercarii garcionis sui j fabri garcionis sui daye ancillae suae diebus Nativi domini & Paschae iijs. iiijd.* [this amount was written over *iiijs.* crossed out]. *In oblationibus eorundem xd.*: WAM 26046, m. 1^{d}. For an equally detailed example for Launton, Oxfordshire, in 1289-90, see Bailey et al., 'Coming of age', p. 51.

famuli that might impart economies of scale that would help ameliorate difficult economic conditions.[69] Never in our study was it clearly indicated that members of the *famuli* received housing benefits as part of their remuneration. Some seem to have lived nearby, often on a smallholding,[70] although Harvey indicates a substantial proportion at least may have had lodgings within the *curia*, the manorial range of buildings.[71] It might be, too, that *famuli* could have benefits from, in effect, leasing or loaning the livestock and equipment held in the *curia*,[72] as Harvey has argued for Cuxham, Oxfordshire.[73]

Conclusions

In short, the value of *famuli* employment should not be judged solely on the grain and cash payments that they received. Even if, *c.*1300, individual employment as a *famuli* might be short-term, as Richard Britnell has suggested for the later fourteenth century,[74] *famuli* positions, particularly at the first-tier level, seem to have been very solid and attractive jobs that lords' officials could easily fill when vacancies arose. The attractiveness of such positions would increase even more if second-tier jobs could be filled by other family members, as Dyer suggests.[75] The intensity - or seasonality - of employment might a factor here. If ploughmen really did plough less than 120 sown acres a year, it

[69] For an indication of how this might work see the case of a *famuli* miller running the double watermill at Feering, Essex, where intense family involvement could certainly have altered what appeared from the perspective of a single employee an insupportable, not to mention exploitative, situation: Langdon and Masschaele, 'Commercial activity', pp. 69-70; the case is also discussed in John Langdon, *Mills in the medieval economy: England 1300-1540* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 238-40.

[70] See note 146 below; also P. D. A. Harvey, *A medieval Oxfordshire village: Cuxham, 1240-1400* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 77-8.

[71] Harvey, *Medieval Oxfordshire village*, p. 77. The care in which the buildings were kept might also suggest a permanent community of workers resided there: see the discussion of *mulieres*, *ancillae*, etc., doing housekeeping for the *curia* above.

[72] Livestock holdings were extensive on demesnes, as any perusal of manorial accounts will reveal: e.g., Page (ed.), *Pipe roll of...1301-2*, esp. pp. 20-1, 24, 28, 32, 37-8, 45, etc. Equipment is often revealed in 'utensils' or 'dead stock' sections at the end of accounts: e.g., ibid., pp. 15, 46, 54, 57, 61, 71, etc.

[73] Harvey, for instance, cites a 1356 case where the *famuli* were allowed to use the demesne ploughs to plough their own lands before they attended to the demesne itself: *Medieval Oxfordshire village*, p. 77. The flexibility of the cowherd's access to the milk of the animals points in the same direction (see the *Husbandry* excerpt above in the section discussing dairymaids).

[74] Where employment at Houghall, Durham, about a century later was normally on six-month contracts: see note 16 above.

[75] *Standards of living*, p. 133.

might leave much time to attend to other personal business while still enjoying an annual 'salary'. The seasonal interplay between dairymaids and cowherds, with the former seemingly more active in the summer and the latter in the winter, might suggest the same, although this alternation of slack and busy periods was not something that would necessarily apply across the *famuli* as a whole – shepherds in particular were likely busy with their sheep all year round.

Nevertheless the possibility of creating little 'family businesses' from *famuli* positions was certainly an option, as perhaps most obvious in the case of cowherds who leased demesne herds. We are only at the beginning of working out the mechanics of such 'enterprises', but they can certainly alter our perception of periods that are often characterized as being increasingly wretched for the great majority of people.[76] These accommodations are easiest to perceive with stipendiary *famuli*, where clues as to supplementary income both on an individual and family level can at least be discerned.[77] Indeed, the hardest to explain are the 'service' *famuli*, whose rent reductions of only a few shillings seem very difficult to square with the amount of work they were expected to do on demesnes.[78] If the customary right to hold their land was involved, then their demesne ploughing would be little more than another form of labour service (albeit using demesne livestock and ploughs) with the efficiency issues that involved: see note 6 above. In any case, this conundrum will have to remain a topic of future research and consideration.

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[76] E.g., see Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages*, pp. 43-8; a more optimistic, family-oriented view is in Langdon and Masschaele, 'Commercial Activity'.

[77] In a few cases parcels of land held by *famuli* are revealed: Harvey, *Medieval Oxfordshire village*, pp. 77-8; see also the following note.

[78] It may be little wonder that such 'service' personnel would prefer a shift to stipendiary status, as happened to a ploughman at Milton Podmore, Somerset, in 1302-3, who had 2s. 6d. relief from the rent of a 'ferdell' (a quarter-virgate, likely of around 7-8 acres) during the thirty weeks from St. Michael to Hockday, that is, 29 September 1302 to 16 April 1303, in which case the relief was worth 1d. per week. From then to the following Michaelmas he was put 'to a livery and stipend', which yielded him 1.8 quarters of wheat and rye (at a rate of one quarter per twelve weeks' work) and a stipend of 2s. 4d. over these remaining twenty-two weeks. Pricing an assumed 50-50 split of the wheat and rye using Farmer's data for the early fourteenth century (Farmer, 'Prices and wages', p. 733) and adding the result to the 2s. 4d. cash payment, gives a rate of 6d. per week, in this case an apparent and very impressive six-fold advantage for the stipendiary over the service option: GAD 11246, m. 21^{r}-21^{d}. In this case it might be possible that the 'ploughman' surrendered his holding *in toto* for his stipendiary *famulus* position.