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978-0-521-40613-0 - Famine, Disease and the Social Order in Early Modern Society

Edited by John Walter and Roger Schofield

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# *Famine, disease and the social order in early modern society*

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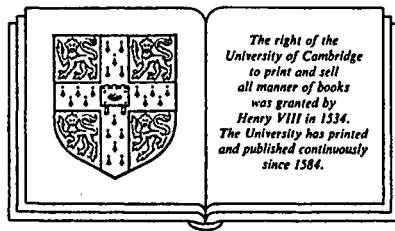
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*and*

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*Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure*



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*This volume is dedicated to the memory of  
Andy Appleby  
friend and colleague*

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## *Andrew Appleby* *A personal appreciation*

PETER LASLETT

Andrew Appleby was a tall, quiet, judicious man – a large figure and a considerable presence. He came late to the writing of history, from a previous career helping to run a newspaper which his family owned in San Diego County, Southern California. The reasons why he changed were at bottom moral reasons, and the same could be said, I think, about his choice of a line of investigation. He felt a personal responsibility for the men and women of the past. He cared about what really weighed upon them much more than he cared about the traditional preoccupations of historians as he found them to be when he took up research.

Hence his settled concern with hunger, disease and death amongst our ancestors and predecessors in pre-industrial times, and his unwavering determination to get at the truth of these matters as far as that could possibly be done. The impression he gave to me was that he could afford to stand aside and wait until others saw things in the light in which he saw them himself. What a sad, sad thing that he should have died before that change had completely come about.

Nevertheless in the seven or eight years during which he cultivated his chosen territory, years when he was fulfilling the burdensome stint of teaching demanded by the State University of California, his output of books, articles and addresses was enormous. He must have worked at a pace and a pressure which his easy, equable bearing and his unwillingness to talk about himself concealed from his friends and associates.

For all his reserved manner – here was a man who was able to leave many things unsaid – Andrew Appleby had it in him to attract an audience and arouse an interest, an interest always more than ephemeral. I have it recorded in my diary that when he addressed the weekly seminar of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population



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and Social Structure on 15 November 1977, our little library was hysterically crowded. I reckon there were forty-two or forty-three people, and in a space which is full when there are twenty. So great was the press that we were fearful for the security of the wooden floor, laid down in the 1840s and never designed for public meetings.

What he said on that occasion came out in a low tone and a rather hesitant manner, but the discussion which succeeded was not like this at all. Most of the issues, the paradoxes, the puzzlements, which have become evident in the study of famine, pestilence and the social structure in the succeeding ten years made their presence felt, especially in Andy's answers and explanations.

Now these are not incidental questions, and they are not to be settled by technical or specialist answers, important as it is that many researchers now dig deeply where Appleby cleared the surface and turned the first furrows. They have had to innovate for the purpose, technically and otherwise. To know how far people did fear illness and premature extinction is to know something of profound importance about any society. Such knowledge is as significant to a society's ideological and political life as it is to its economics, although far and away its greatest significance is for the ordinary, everyday life of ordinary people.

It is turning out to be very difficult to be quite certain whether the peasants really starved, anywhere in Europe before industrial times. It has become a nice problem as to how far famine ever was a direct result of shortage of food and that alone. It is even questionable whether low levels of nourishment do assist the spread of disease, or may actually in some cases reduce its power to kill. Andrew Appleby would have had a good deal to say about all this. It is not going to be easy to get it right without him.

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## *A bibliography of Andrew B. Appleby's principal works in chronological order*

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## *Abbreviations*

<b>AO</b>	<b>Archives Office</b>
<b>APC</b>	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England</i>
<b>Bodl. Lib.</b>	<b>Bodleian Library</b>
<b>Brit. Lib. (BL)</b>	<b>British Library</b>
<b>Cal. S.P. Dom.</b>	<b>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic series</b>
<b>DPD</b>	<b>Durham University Department of Paleography and Diplomatic</b>
<b>DRO</b>	<b>Durham County Record Office</b>
<b>Hants</b>	<b>Hampshire</b>
<b>Harl. MS</b>	<b>Harleian Manuscript</b>
<b>HMC</b>	<b>Historical Manuscripts Commission</b>
<b>PRO</b>	<b>Public Record Office</b>
<b>RO</b>	<b>Record Office</b>
<b>Staffs</b>	<b>Staffordshire</b>