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978-0-521-55036-9 - Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller

Edited by Richard Britnell and John Hatcher

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The contributors to this collection of essays in honour of the distinguished medieval historian Edward Miller pay tribute by writing on the society and economy of England between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries. They address many of the most important themes in an era which experienced profound change in rural, commercial, urban and industrial life, and they focus in particular on the progress which was achieved and the problems which were encountered.

Each of the essays is original and contains the fruits of new research. The subjects covered include the growth of London, the commercial and urban development of the north, Italian merchants and banking, overseas trade, taxation, farm servants, hunting and poaching, changing relations between landlords and tenants, the expansion of the economy in the twelfth century and the great slump of the fifteenth. The book has been written by leading experts, and is a major contribution to English medieval economic and social history.

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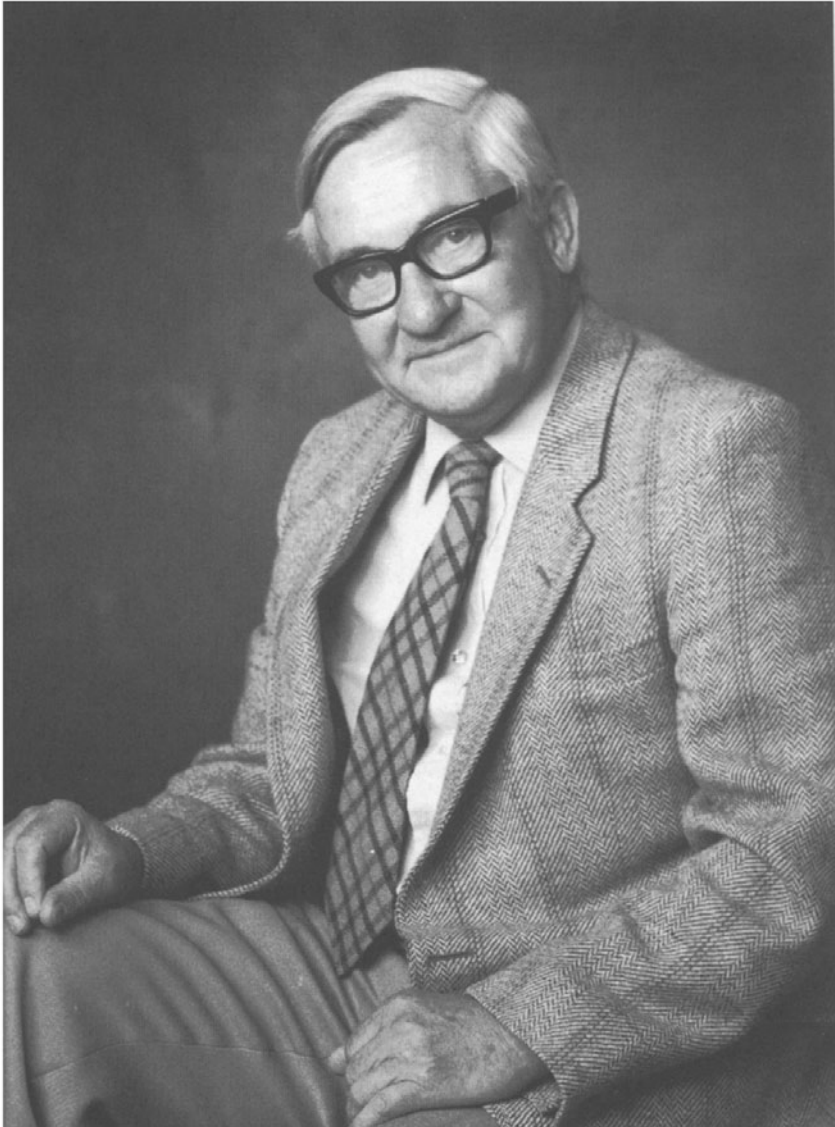
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ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF
EDWARD MILLER

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Edward Miller: an appreciation

EDWARD MILLER came from a background in the north of England which inclined him to an interest in the land and agriculture. It was not surprising therefore that his first book, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely* (1951), was a substantial study of a great medieval landowner, which investigated the economic and social history of the English countryside. That was published after he had been for some years a Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge (that position interrupted by five years of war service), and Director of Studies in History, a role which allowed him to begin to encourage the careers of younger historians. The work on Ely also sprang, of course, partly from the strong Cambridge tradition of medieval economic and social history recently enlivened by M.M. Postan, to which Ted was to contribute so much.

Those who were his pupils in those days (the present writer first saw him crossing second court in uniform; would that have been in 1946?) remember him as the liveliest and most invigorating of teachers, who fired their enthusiasm for the study of medieval economy and society. They remember his wife Fanny's kindness to them, and those who have become professional historians will remember also their young son, John, now also a professor of history. Much of the research for Ely must have been done before 1939, but Ted's enthusiasm both for research and for stimulating the young has remained undiminished in the 1990s as his bibliography shows.

In 1961, when he had just published a history of the college, *Portrait of a College: A History of the College of St John the Evangelist, Cambridge*, he left St John's to become Warden of Madingley Hall, just outside Cambridge, and then, from 1965 to 1971, Professor of Medieval History at the University of Sheffield. Willingness to undertake demanding administrative positions has been a feature of his life. But historical research was not interrupted, though its geographical centre, which had begun to move earlier, was re-

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directed to some extent by his move to Yorkshire. The *Victoria County History* of the City of York (1961) contains an important chapter on 'Medieval York', his second major piece of research and a change from country to city. In 1963 came the third volume of the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, dealing with *Economic Policies and Organization in the Middle Ages*, part of a series of volumes with which Postan had been much concerned. In this case Ted was joint editor and also author of a section on the economic policies of the governments of England and France, marking a new interest in government as well as in society.

From 1971 to 1981 he was Master of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, the summit of his career in academic administration. But in 1978 he published, jointly with John Hatcher, the book which has probably made him most widely known to students – Ely and York being more appropriate to the specialist – *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change, 1086–1348*, added by all of us to reading lists and recommended to the young.

Ted has been the author of many important articles, well known to the *cognoscenti* of medieval economic, social and political history. Medieval economic history is a field of study in which an article can be revolutionary and no account of Ted's work should underestimate the influence of 'The English Economy in the Thirteenth Century' (1964), 'The Fortunes of the English Textile Industry during the Thirteenth Century' (1965) and 'England in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries: an Economic Contrast?' (1971). He has also been a generous contributor of time and energy to the organisation of the *Victoria County Histories* and the *History of Parliament*, and his editorial skills secured the publication of a substantially revised second edition of volume II of the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* in 1987. If anything the flow of Ted's scholarship has swelled in recent years. In 1991 the third volume of the *Agrarian History of England and Wales* appeared under his editorship, containing wide-ranging and perceptive contributions by him on agriculture and rural society in the later Middle Ages, particularly relating to Lancashire and Yorkshire and to the southern counties of England; just a few months ago we welcomed the publication of *Medieval England: Towns, Commerce and Crafts, 1086–1348*; and in the near future the Cambridgeshire Record Society will publish his calendar of the Ely Coucher Book of 1251. It is difficult to think of anyone whose career has involved more fruitful and enduring work in the history of medieval English society. His friends and colleagues, who have contributed to this volume, salute him as one who has been for so long in the creative forefront of their field of study and look forward to the further illuminations he will give them.

GEORGE HOLMES

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<i>AHEW</i> , II	H.E. Hallam (ed.), <i>Agrarian History of England and Wales, II: 1042–1350</i> (Cambridge, 1988)
<i>AHEW</i> , III	E. Miller (ed.), <i>Agrarian History of England and Wales, III: 1348–1500</i> (Cambridge, 1991)
<i>AHEW</i> , IV	J. Thirsk (ed.), <i>Agrarian History of England and Wales, IV: 1500–1640</i> (Cambridge, 1987)
<i>Cal. Chart. Rolls</i>	<i>Calendar of Charter Rolls</i> , 6 vols. (HMSO, London, 1903–27)
<i>Cal. Close Rolls</i>	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i> , 46 vols. (HMSO, London, 1892–1963)
<i>Cal. Fine Rolls</i>	<i>Calendar of Fine Rolls</i> , 20 vols. (HMSO, London, 1911–49)
<i>Cal. Inq. Post Mortem</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i> , 16 vols. (HMSO, London, 1904–75)
<i>Cal. Pat. Rolls</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i> , 54 vols. (HMSO, London, 1891–1916)
<i>Pipe Roll</i>	<i>The Great Roll of the Pipe</i> , 5 Henry II to 5 Henry III, Pipe Roll Society, 58 vols. (London, 1884–1990)
<i>VCH</i>	<i>The Victoria History of the Counties of England</i> (London, 1900 – in progress)