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KARL GUNNAR PERSSON is Emeritus Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Copenhagen, where he has been teaching comparative economic history and the history of globalization over the last five decades. He is the author of *Pre-Industrial Economic Growth: Social Organization and Technological Progress in Europe* (1988) and *Grain Markets in Europe 1500–1900: Integration and Deregulation* (1999).

PAUL SHARP is Professor in the Department of Business and Economics at the University of Southern Denmark, where he lectures in economic history. He has worked on a variety of topics, but his recent focus has been on agriculture in economic history. He has published widely in the leading economic history journals such as the *Journal of Economic History*, and the *Economic History Review*, in leading economics journals in growth and development, as well as in history journals. He is currently working on a book on the economic history of the Danish dairy industry.

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Knowledge, Institutions and Growth, 600 to the Present

Second Edition

KARL GUNNAR PERSSON
University of Copenhagen

in collaboration with

PAUL SHARP
University of Southern Denmark

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Preface to the second edition

This edition has been thoroughly revised and a large amount of new material has been added reflecting new research results and the recent development of the European economy. Paul Sharp, my former PhD student and now Professor at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense, has assisted me in this work and he has the principal responsibility for Chapters 8 and 9.

We thank Marc Klemp for revising the Glossary and for his comments and suggestions on Chapter 3.

Claudia Riani has contributed to the development of the companion website and we thank Martin Lundrup Ingerslev for research assistance.

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Preface to the first edition

This book evolved over the years from the lectures I have given and give to my students at the Department of Economics in Copenhagen. I have, however, attempted to write a book for a wider audience who are searching for a very concise introduction to European economic history which is in tune with recent research. I make use of a few basic and simple economic tools which turn out to be very effective in the interpretation of history. The book offers a panoramic view rather than close-ups. However, the analytical framework will be useful in further studies of the specialized literature. For readers with little background knowledge in economics I provide a glossary defining key concepts, which are marked in bold, for example **barter**. Economic ideas demanding more attention are explained in the text or in appendices.

This is a work of synthesis, but it attempts to give challenging and new insights. I am indebted to generations of economic historians as well as to a great many of my contemporaries. That normally shows itself in endless footnotes, which not only interrupt the narrative flow but also drown the general historical trends amidst all the details. Instead, I have chosen to end each chapter with a selective list of references which is also a suggestion for further reading. Authors I am particularly influenced by are referred to in the main text.

A large number of colleagues have guided me. Cormac Ó Gráda has as usual been a very stimulating critic and Paul Sharp has not only saved me from embarrassing grammatical errors but is also the co-author of two chapters. I would also like to thank Carl-Johan Dalgaard, Bodil Ejrnæs, Giovanni Federico, Christian Groth, Tim Guinnane, Ingrid Henriksen, Derek Keene, Markus Lampe, Barbro Nedstam and Jacob Weisdorf for helpful comments and suggestions.

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