Chained to the Manor?

Payment patterns and landlord-tenant relations in the Salland region of the Netherlands around 1750^{1}

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Abstract

In this paper we examine landlord-tenant relations inspired by insights from the new history of money, that payment patterns can be made to yield details about the social realities of which they form part. There is a marked tradition in the literature that subsistence tenant farmers in Early Modern Europe were chained to manors, notably through credit. Using manorial accounts, a widely available source in Europe from the late Middle Ages, we found that landlord-tenant relations on the eighteenth-century Rechteren manor in Salland were far less fraught than some of the literature on the region supposes. This article shows that tenants moved in a monetized, market-oriented society, possessed considerable choice themselves as to how to use which markets, and drew considerable benefit from their current account with the manor. Tenants used credit to smooth fluctuations in income and expenses.

Keywords: Money, credit, debt, manorial accounts, landlord-tenant relations

1 Introduction

There is a marked tradition in the literature going back to Alexander Chayanov highlighting the plight of tenant subsistence farmers in Early Modern Europe. Notably those tied to big manors are considered to have

1 This paper is based on T. Kooijmans, 'De heer ten dienste van zijn boeren, betalingsverkeer en sociale relaties in Salland rond het midden van de achttiende eeuw', MA Thesis University of Amsterdam, 2014.

been bound hand and foot to their landlords, entirely dependent on them economically as they were subservient socially. Credit is seen as a crucial factor keeping tenants in their dependent position. Bad harvests would see them fall into rent arrears and other debt from which they could rarely extricate themselves because landlords took advantage of them in setting loan terms and product prices.² Recent research by Sheilagh Ogilvie and others has thrown doubt on this view.³ They found no evidence of structural debt chains in the German countryside; the borrowing pattern of tenant farmers did not really differ from that of farmers working their own land. Drawn as they are from collateral succession inventories and other documents drawn up at particular moments in time for individual people, their data capture stock, so any structural aspects driving debt patterns cannot be observed.

In this paper we present an alternative approach to tenant indebtedness looking at flow by using a widely available source, manorial accounts.⁴ We do this applying recent insights from monetary history to an old controversy in Dutch historiography, the position of tenant farmers in the Salland region of the eastern Overijssel province of the Netherlands around the middle of the eighteenth century. First we discuss that controversy and the monetary history insights which we argue can help us to solve it. We then present seven relatively short sections describing farming in the Salland region (Section 3), the Rechteren manor (4), the steward's administration (5), the character of transactions entered (6), the central importance of labour (7), the stretch of credit (8), money, payments, and exploitation (9). Section 10 rounds off with conclusions.

- 2 For influential historical work in the tradition of Chayanov and Polanyi, see for example: P. Kriedte, *Peasants, landlords and merchant capitalists. Europe and the world economy, 1500-1800* (Gottingen 1980) 4-6; P. Goubert, 'The French peasantry of the seventeenth century: a regional example', in: T. Ashton (ed.), *Crisis in Europe 1560-1660* (Londen 1965) 141-165. For an overview of literature in this tradition see: S. Ogilvie, 'Choices and Constraints in the Pre-Industrial Countryside', in: C. Briggs, P.M. Kitson and S.J. Thompson (eds.), *Population, welfare and economic change in Britain, 1290-1834* (Wooldbridge 2014) 269-306, there 272-274.
- S. Ogilvie, M. Küpker en J. Maegraith, 'Household debt in Early Modern Germany: evidence from personal inventories', *Journal of Economic History* 72 (2012) 134-167. For an overview of literature with criticism on this view see: Ogilvie, 'Choices and Constraints', 272-274 and 278-279.
- 4 For a discussion of this source, see B.J.P. van Bavel, 'Pachtboek, pachtcontract, legger, pachtrekening-courant en rekening, typologie en interpretatie van de laat-middeleeuwse bronnensoorten met betrekking tot de verpachting van grondbezit', in: D.E.H. de Boer, J.W. Marsilje and J.G. Smit (eds.), *Van der rekeninghe, bijdragen aan het symposium over onderzoek en editieproblematiek van middeleeuws rekeningenmateriaal gehouden in Utrecht op 27 en 28 februari 1997* (The Hague 1998) 99-110.

2 Landlord-tenant relations and payments

The controversy about Salland tenant farmers dates from the 1980s and began with the historical-antropological work of Kitty Verrips-Roukens. She described landlord-tenant relations in lurid terms. According to her, landlords wielded unlimited power over tenants little better off than medieval serfs: 'True, killing tenants was not allowed, but the landlord could arbitrarily throw them off their land, raise their rent, bar access to heathlands, issue orders and bans, and put them to work for him'. The tenants could not possibly escape this situation, because of their total dependence on the landlord for their food and income: 'access to land was and remained entirely his decision, so he could decide whom to let work and whom to leave idle'.

Two years later Jan Luiten van Zanden came to the opposite conclusion. According to him, Salland farmers had the upper hand in relations with their landlord. It was not unusual for them to go slow on rent payments, often for years on end, and successfully resist rises: 'the tenants considered some rent arrears as a basic right. This hampered increases after 1750, farmers arguing that they could barely pay their present rents'. The tenants accepted oppression from nobody, and they even succeeded in avoiding tax increases through collusion: 'the farmers gained a monopoly over the public tithe auctions, which they used to keep bids low'. 8

The intuition that analyzing payments between landlord and tenants may solve this controversy comes from the recent overturning of old notions about the link between the circulation of money, credit, and debt in the countryside. As often as not, historians have interpreted a paucity of cash transactions as a sign of poor market penetration. Unable to earn cash, farmers would supposedly have been entirely dependent on credit,

⁵ K. Verrips-Roukens, *Over heren en boeren. Een Sallands landgoed 1800-1977* (The Hague 1982) 24. Our translation.

⁶ Verrips-Roukens, Heren en boeren, 27. Our translation.

⁷ J.L. van Zanden, 'De opkomst van een eigenerfde boerenklasse in Overijssel, 1750-1830', AAG Bijdragen 24 (1984) 105-130, ibidem, 122. Our translation.

⁸ Van Zanden, 'De opkomst', 122. Our translation.

resulting in mounting debts and a slide into poverty. The view that an absence of cash reflects a low level of market activity echoes the old German *Stufentheorie* according to which societies evolve from subsistence via barter to market production, money, and finally the use of credit, from a *Naturalwirtschaft* via a *Geldwirtschaft* to a *Kreditwirtschaft*. We find such an echo in Slicher van Bath's landmark history of the Overijssel countryside, where he writes that the *Geldwirtschaft* made headway very slowly there. According to Verrips-Roukens the circulation of money in Salland increased only during the nineteenth century.

However, recent monetary history research has effectively demolished those stage theory notions. In a remarkable conceptual shift, historians have discovered how data about coin circulation, the use of money, and payment patterns can be made to tell more about relations between social

⁹ Cf. C. Muldrew, The economy of obligation, the culture of credit and social relations in early modern England (Basingstoke 1998); idem, 'Wages and the problem of monetary scarcity in early modern England', in: J. Lucassen, (ed.), Wages and currency. Global comparisons from antiquity to the twentieth century (Bern 2007) 391-410; idem, 'Debt, credit, and poverty in Early Modern England', in: R. Brubaker, R.M. Lawless, and C.J. Tabb (ed.), A debtor world: interdisciplinary perspectives on debt (Oxford 2014); L. Fontaine, L'économie morale, pauvreté, crédit et confiance dans l'Europe préindustrielle (Paris 2008) 51-77. However, Ogilvie, 'Household debt' denied on the basis of their Württemberg data that debt signified economic decline. For an examination of credit patterns based on collateral succession data see also P. Spufford, 'Les liens du crédit au village dans l'Angleterre du XVIIe siècle', Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales 49 (1994)1359-1373; C. Muldrew, 'From credit to savings? An examination of debt and credit in relation to increasing consumption in England (c. 1650 to 1770)', Quaderni storici 137 (2011) 391-413; W. Rykbosch, A consumer revolution under strain, consumption, wealth, and status in eighteenth-century Aalst (Southern Netherlands), unpublished PhD thesis Antwerp and Ghent 2012, 137-140.

¹⁰ B. Hildebrand, 'Naturalwirtschaft, Geldwirtschaft, und Creditwirtschaft', *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* II (1864) 1-24.

¹¹ B.H. Slicher van Bath, Een samenleving onder spanning, geschiedenis van het platteland in Overijssel (Assen 1957) 654, 667, 745-746.

¹² Verrips-Roukens, Heren en boeren, 70.

groups and about economic growth.¹³ One key finding is that in the past there existed no fixed link between credit, cash, and market exchange. Cash and credit functioned as substitutes for each other, and people used one or the other depending on a variety of circumstances. Akinobu Kuroda's research into coin use and payment patterns in Asia found that the circulation of money really consists of various flows layered according to the way in which social groups use money. That use depends on the particular group's income, spending pattern, cultural habits, and alternative means of payment available. 14 Daniel Vickers uncovered that layered social reality in fascinating detail with a paper on payment patterns in the New England countryside towards the end of the eighteenth century. 15 He analyzed three diaries with notes about exchanges of goods and services, payments, debts, and claims and showed that the way in which people paid each other depended on the social relation between them. A clear, underlying logic determined whether goods and services supplied were paid in cash, settled via mutual current accounts, entered as debts or claims, or noted as social obligations outstanding. The journal of a merchant active in

13 J.M.W.G. Lucassen, 'Loonbetaling en muntcirculatie in Nederland, 1200-2000', in: Jaarboek voor munt- en penningkunde 86 (1999) 1-70; idem, Wages, payments and currency circulation in the Netherlands from 1200 to 2000', in: idem (ed.), Wages and currency, global comparisons from Antiquity to the twentieth century (Bern 2007) 221-263; idem, 'Deep monetization: the case of the Netherlands 1200-1940', The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History 11 (2014) 73-122; Muldrew, Culture and idem, 'Wages'; T. Lambrecht, 'Reciprocal exchange, credit and cash: agricultural labour markets and local economies in the southern Low Countries during the eighteenth century', Continuity and Change 18 (2003) 237-261; S. Matthews, 'Money supply and credit in rural Cheshire, c. 1600-1680', Continuity and Change 24 (2009) 245-274; D. Vickers, 'Errors expected, the culture of credit in rural New England, 1750-1800', Economic History Review 63 (2010) 1032-1057; J. Welten, Met klinkende munt betaald, muntcirculatie in de beide Limburgen 1770-1839 (Utrecht 2010); C.J. Zuijderduijn, 'Zakkenvullers en zakkenrollers, papieren muntvondsten uit Hoornse en Kamper archieven', De beeldenaar 35 (2011) 109-114; E. Buringh and M. Bosker, 'Soldiers and booze, the rise and decline of a Roman market economy in north-western Europe', in: R.J. van der Spek, J.L. van Zanden and B. van Leeuwen (eds.), A history of market performance: from ancient Babylonia to the modern world (Oxford 2014) 236-266. In 2014 this journal published a special issue with a series of papers on the subject. See the overview of the literature in the issue's introduction: J. Lucassen and J. Zuijderduijn, 'Special Issue: Coins, currencies, and credit Instruments. Media of exchange in economic and social history', The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History 11 (2014) no. 3.

14 A. Kuroda, 'The Maria Theresa dollar in the early twentieth-century Red Sea region, a complementary interface between multiple markets', *Financial History Review* 14 (2007) 89-110; idem, 'What is the complementarity among monies? An introductory note', *Financial History Review* 15 (2008) 7-16; idem, 'Concurrent but non-integrable currency circuits, complementary relationships among monies in modern China and other regions', *Financial History Review* 15 (2008) 17-36.

15 Vickers, 'Errors expected'.

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the Almelo region bordering Salland during the first half of the seventeenth century shows similar patterns, although the loose character of his jottings keeps the underlying social logic in the dark.¹⁶

Now for our case the nub of the matter is whether or not the choice between alternative means of settlement was a free one. A preference for cashless settlement, for instance, could be simply a matter of convenience. Even today we find paying cash a chore, and it was even more so in times with very poor coinage such as early Modern Europe. Stephen Matthews found that, in the early Modern Cheshire countryside, coin shortages promoted the settling via current accounts rather than cash. ¹⁷ Such settlement systems can operate on a basis of social equality, as the New England one uncovered by Vickers clearly did. ¹⁸ However, on Markegem, an eighteenth-century manor in Flanders examined by Thijs Lambrecht, the landlord ran a cashless settlement system which he used to keep his tenants and labourers tied to the farm. ¹⁹

Thus if we want to understand the nature of landlord-tenant relations in Salland we need to know whether or not they were monetized, and, if so, whether the pattern of settlements between landlord and tenants shows signs of the latter being dependent on the former.

3 Tenant farmers in the Salland region

Salland forms the centre of the Overijssel province (Map 1). Around 1750 the region was still profoundly rural, only eight percent of the population lived in a city.²⁰ Farming dominated the economy, by 1800 more than three quarters of the labour force still worked the land.²¹ The rest earned a living in trade and proto-industry. Farmers mainly cultivated buckwheat and rye, and, because the fairly poor sandy soils made the region unsuitable for

- 17 Matthews, 'Money supply', 258.
- 18 Vickers, 'Errors expected', 1040.
- 19 Lambrecht, 'Reciprocal exchange', 243. See also idem, Een grote hoeve in een klein dorp: relaties van arbeid en pacht op het Vlaamse platteland tijdens de 18de eeuw (Ghent 2002).
- 20 Slicher van Bath, Samenleving, 64.
- 21 Slicher van Bath, Samenleving, 449.

¹⁶ T. Hesselink-Van der Riet, W. Kuiper and C. Trompetter (eds.), *Het schuldboek van Arend Kenkhuis* (Amsterdam 2008). Cf. Matthews, 'Money supply', who also unearthed extensive credit networks.

cattle rearing, the little livestock which they did keep served mainly for producing manure. Slicher van Bath's authoritative work characterized Overijssel as a society under strain from having reached the physical limits of farm production. However, recent research on the Twente region to the east of Salland shows that growth was definitely still possible. Though the two regions differed in type of soil and farming structure, Salland may have enjoyed similar growth.

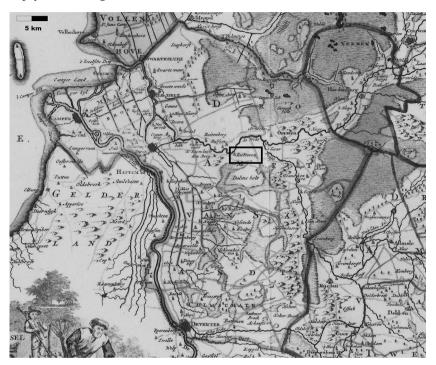


Illustration 1: The Salland region with Rechteren
Source: Isaak Tirion. Atlas van de XVII Nederlandsche provintien,
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Commons - http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Salland_1757.jpg#
mediaviewer/File:Salland_1757.jpg

J.L. van Zanden and D.J. van der Veen, 'Boeren, keuters en landarbeiders. De sociale structuur van Salland aan het begin van de negentiende eeuw', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 10 (1984) 158-159.

²³ C. Trompetter, 'De dynamiek van de Twentse landbouw in de periode 1600-1832', Overijsselse historische bijdragen 113 (1998) 48-65.

Tenant farming predominated in Salland. Around 1750 city-based investors owned 47 per cent of the farmland, aristocratic estates 20 per cent and investors from other provinces 6 per cent, with the result that probably less than 25 per cent of farmers owned their land. 24 Tenant farms are traditionally divided in two categories, large ones called erven producing enough to provide a living, and small ones or katersteden which did not, so tenants had to generate supplemental income by working elsewhere. The former enjoyed a superior social and legal status in the community to the latter. Households on katersteden were also much smaller, averaging 5.4 people against 8.9 for the erven. The small farmers needed less help to work their land, so they had fewer live-in servants and children tended to leave home early, presumably to earn a living as a servant elsewhere. 25 According to Slicher van Bath, just over half the farms were erven in 1720 and 45 per cent *katersteden* or peasant holdings, but since the latter were on the rise the proportion had probably reached 50-50 by 1750.26 This was a consequence of population growth, tax registers showing the number of Salland households rising from 4,677 in 1723 to 5,994 in 1764. 27 As population growth put pressure on available resources, access to land became more and more difficult, so the number of people with very little land or no land at all increased. By 1800 about 11 per cent of the population were landless labourers.²⁸ They were Salland's poorest people, and the farming crises which hit Salland during the 1720s and 1730s must have hit them very hard indeed.²⁹ By the end of the 1730s, when our analysis starts, the situation had begun to improve, but only just.

4 The Rechteren manor around 1750

The castle and manor of Rechteren lie near the town of Dalfsen and may be seen as a typical example of the large Overijssel estates. During our period the landlord was Johan Evert Adolf van Rechteren Limpurg Speckveld (1714-1754), whose family had held the feudal title to the manor since the

- 24 Van Zanden, 'Opkomst', 111; Slicher van Bath, Samenleving, 306-308.
- 25 Verrips-Roukens, Heren en boeren, 24-25.
- 26 Slicher van Bath, Samenleving, 450.
- 27 Slicher van Bath, Samenleving, 34-35.
- 28 Slicher van Bath, Samenleving, 450.
- 29 Jan Bieleman, Boeren in Nederland. Geschiedenis van de landbouw 1500-2000 (Amsterdam 2008) 236.

fourteenth century. Over time, successive lords had added the nearby Schuilenburg and Eeze estates to its possessions. Heavily endebted, the properties did not generate a lot of income for the landlord. Around 1750 the three estates together yielded 3,463 guilders after deduction of labour costs, but after deducting interest paid of 1,957 guilders and various other costs of 1,360 no more than 550 guilders remained as net revenue. That was a little more than five times what a labourer earned on the estate. The mill hand received 75 guilders a year, the gardener 100. The Rechteren steward sold the manor's products on the Zwolle market, a city of 10,000 inhabitants 3.5 hours away on foot. The nearest village was Dalfsen, a town with 2,500 inhabitants on the other side of the river Vecht, a 30 minutes' walk.

Some ten per cent of Rechteren's arable land was exploited by the manor itself, the rest was split over 38 tenant farms of very different sizes.³² These farms do not neatly fit the traditional two-way split mentioned above. Seventeen were peasant holdings with too little land to live off, so the tenants of those farms needed both to earn an additional income as well as having to buy in cereals for food and seed. As we will see, they often bought that from the Rechteren steward, often but not always. Most peasant tenants in this group paid around forty guilders a year for their farm, only one of them more than sixty. Twelve farms belonged to an intermediary category whose annual lease was paid partly in money and partly in kind, a fixed quantity of rye and buckwheat. In terms of average cereal prices during the 1740s, this amounted to annual rent payments of between 40 and 100 guilders. Tenants in this group could live off their land, so they did not have to find additional income or buy in cereals. The nine biggest farmers paid rents in money and in kind of 100 guilders or above, one of them as much as 300.33

Rechteren tenants had six-year lease contracts, with both tenant and landlord having a right to end the contract after three. To limit the risk of arrears tenants sometimes had to put up guarantors. As a rule contracts were rolled over on expiry without a change in terms or the amount of rent. Succession of a deceased tenant by family members occurred often, so it was rare for new tenants to come in. During our period only four

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³⁰ D.P.M. Graswinckel and H. Hardenberg, *Het archief van het kasteel Rechteren* (Den Haag 1941)

³¹ Historisch Centrum Overijssel Zwolle (henceforth HCO), Archief Huis Rechteren bij Dalfsen (henceforth HR), inv.no. 543.

³² According to the manor's own estimate the farmland leased out was worth 59,000 guilders and the farmland in direct exploitation 5,800 guilders: HCO, HR, inv.no. 543.

³³ HCO, HR, inv.no. 780, 'Pagtboek' (1738-1747).

sitting tenants made way for new ones. Two of these changes followed a termination of the lease after protracted rent arrears, in which case all the tenant's possessions fell to the landlord. The reasons for the other two changes are unknown. Rent was due every year at the Martini Market on the 11th of November, but tenants did not really pay on that day, it served as a formal settlement date for debts and claims between landlord and tenants. On top of their rent tenants owed a gratuity in the form of, say, a few chicken, a lamb, some butter or eggs, plus several days' labour, for instance to dig peat or make hay for the landlord. Three tenants paid their entire rent in the form of labour, presumably because they leased houses without much arable land. The tenants on bigger farms or erven also had to serve with their cart and horse, but if they did so to transport the landlord's produce to the market, they were paid for that. Finally, lease contracts stipulated the tenants' responsibility for proper maintenance of their house and land and made special mention of caring for the trees, a valuable source of timber for the landlord.34



Illustration 2: Castle Rechteren.

Source: collection Nederlandse Kastelen Stichting, KLM Aerocarto

34 HCO, HR, inv.no. 770, Verpachtingscodicillen.

5 The steward's administration

Like other aristocratic manors, Rechteren was managed by a steward. In 1738 Jacobus Jansen took this job, which he was to hold for more than forty years. His duties included managing the manor's own exploitation, selling its products, collecting rents, and keeping the accounts. Fortunately his ledgers have survived and their entries combine to give a good impression of landlord-tenant relations on Rechteren. For two reasons we decided to concentrate on one of his ledgers, the one for the years 1738-1747. First, we wanted to look at the middle of the eighteenth century. Just then farming in Overijssel returned to prosperity after a prolonged downturn. The period of transition like this should show the extent to which tenants were indeed bound to their landlord, and, if so, whether or not changing economic circumstances enabled them to cut themselves free.

Second, we needed to limit ourselves because the processing of Jansen's administration proved very labour intensive. The most important source were his so-called *pachtboeken* or the ledgers of the lease account.³⁶ The term does not really fit the ledgers' character, they were really current-account books in which the steward entered all his dealings with tenants, debts, claims, payments to and from, easily some one hundred to two hundred transactions per year. Yet, for all their richness, these ledgers do not yield one particular kind of information. They are records of formal transactions, so we cannot derive from them whether steward and tenants, or the tenants between themselves, engaged in the kind of informal exchange of goods and services which Vickers found in New England.

6 The character of transactions on the lease account

The steward's lease account ledgers show, first of all, that the Rechteren manor was fully monetized in at least one sense: money served as a gauge of value for all transactions and some of them also had fixed prices in

35 Bieleman, *Boeren* 139-144. See also E. Vanhaute and T. Lambrecht, 'Famine, exchange networks and the village community, a comparative analysis of the subsistence crises of the 1740s and the 1840s in Flanders', *Continuity and Change* 26 (2011) 155-186, idem 164.

36 HCO, HR, inv.no. 780, 'Pagtboek' (1738-1747). We entered all transactions for all tenants into a spreadsheet, but omitted entries concerning a few scattered pieces of land not connected to a particular farm. Three folios were missing: f76 Schipper to Hessum, f80 Jan Pauls, f83 Hovenier. The ledgers from other periods show that current accounts were used throughout the eighteenth century in a very similar fashion: HCO, HR, inv. no's. 777-782.

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money. Moreover, by 1740 the manor had been monetized in this sense for close to a century. The oldest administration preserved data from 1653, when rent payments were already noted in round sums, from which the money value of goods or services supplied by tenants was deducted.³⁷ That administration also shows payments in money for rye delivered, and a transformation of lease obligations in kind to sums of money. By 1697 at the latest the steward wrote all labour, services, and goods in money terms.³⁸

Returning to the ledger we used, around 1740 some transactions had fixed values. For labour supplied tenants were credited with the wage then common in Overijssel, ten stuivers or 0.5 guilders a day in summer and eight stuivers or 0.4 guilders in winter. Tenants giving day labourers on the manor board and lodging received 14 stuivers a week. However, the price of cereals which tenants delivered to Rechteren or bought from the manor was tied to the Zwolle market price, a point to which we will return. Since tenants sat down with the steward every year around Martini Market to settle accounts, all of them must have been fully familiar with the value of goods and services in terms of money. Moreover, the ledger shows many signs of tenants keeping their own administration and bringing claims sustained by notes or quittances to their meeting with the steward, which sometimes made him correct his entries. Unfortunately no such tenant administration has survived.

However, the second function of money, means of settlement, was almost absent on Rechteren, because steward and tenants almost never used cash to settle transactions (Table 1). During the ten-year period covered by our ledger Jansen entered receipts totalling 25,971 guilders against expenses of 15,460. The difference of 10,511 guilders represented the surplus on the lease account, not the manor's gross revenues. Most of the steward's expenses on the lease account concerned payments for services supplied to Rechteren's own farm exploitation and perhaps also to the two other manors, Schuilenburg and Eeze. Consequently they would have been transferred to the manor's general exploitation account and deducted from its overall revenues. Now the point is that during our period few payments on the lease account were settled in cash: only four per cent of all transactions and almost eight per cent of their total value. The rest remained on the

³⁷ HCO, HR, inv.no. 776, Pachtregister van het huis Rechteren 1666-1669. HCO, HR, inv.no. 785-787, 'Afrekenboekjes met de meiers van Rechteren'.

³⁸ HCO, HR, inv.no. 778, Pachtregister van het huis Rechteren1697-1702.

³⁹ Van Zanden, 'De opkomst', 123-125.

account for later settlement. Most of the cash payments occurred on the manor's revenue side and represented big tenants, those with an annual rent of more than 55 guilders, settling what still remained of their rent to pay. Those tenants rarely supplied labour to the manor and did not buy cereals either (Table 2), so they usually had to pay the rent either with products or with cash. Small tenants almost never paid cash because, as we have seen, their farms produced too small a surplus. Indeed, they often had to buy cereals from the steward and paid both the rent and their purchases almost entirely with labour, a form of exchange still common in the late nineteenth century. The average value of labour supplied was even considerably higher than the annual rent plus purchases.

Table 1. Cash payments on the Rechteren lease account, 1738-1747

	Transac- tions	Of which in cash	Transac- tions (gld)	Of which in cash (gld)	Percentage cash	Average value of
	(number)					cash trans- actions (gld)
1738	64	3	1,505	62	4,1	20.7
1739	185	11	4,352	185	4,3	16.8
1740	149	6	5,284	94	1,8	15.7
1741	166	3	4,641	354	7,6	118.0
1742	159	7	3,879	230	5,9	32.9
1743	163	14	3,972	638	16,1	45.6
1744	192	11	4,024	387	9,6	35.2
1745	207	14	4,945	380	7,7	27.1
1746	191	12	4,385	288	6,6	24.0
1747	145	6	4,001	270	6,7	45.0
Total	1,621	87	40,988	2,888	7,0	33.2

Table 2. The value of rent, labour, and food exchanged between tenants and steward, 1738-1747

	Average annual	Average value of	Average value of	Total number of
	rent (gld)	labour supplied	cereals bought	cash payments
		per year (gld)	(gld)	
Big tenants (rent	118	14.3	0.26	80
>55 gld, n=18)				
Small tenants (rent	28	41.37	11.2	7
<55 gld, n=17)				

⁴⁰ Van Zanden, 'De opkomst', 121.

Thus the Rechteren tenants were well acquainted with two of the three functions of money, even if they used one of them, means of exchange, only rarely. We may therefore assume that tenants also knew the third fuction, store of value, although we cannot tell this from the lease account. We also assume that people there, just like those in New England, also exchanged goods and services valued more in social terms than in money but, if they did so, that was not because they were unfamiliar with money.

7 Labour as a pivot of exchange

The Rechteren tenants were also fully familiar with market exchange. The lease account entries for wages paid to tenants combine to suggest the existence of a labour market which they used as and when it suited them. Payments show a widely varying pattern of labour supplied by tenants. Some of the big tenants never worked for the manor, others often, others again varied between a lot and a little. Appendix 1 gives standard deviations in wages earned for all tenants, from which we draw three more or less representative cases in Figure 1.

All small tenants except for two supplied more labour than they owed in terms of rent. Some of them even notched up a considerable credit position with the steward by every year earning rather more through working than they owed by way of rent and purchases. By contrast, one small tenant never settled his annual rent of 11.20 guilders with manorial work. He liked arrears, which he paid up once in a while with a large sum of money apparently earned elsewhere.

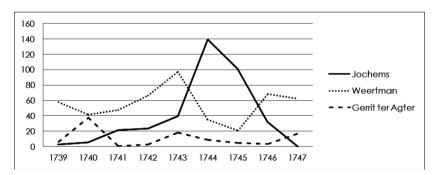


Figure 1: The annual amount of wages earned by tenants Jochems, Weertman, and Gerrit ter Agter, 1739-1747 (gld)

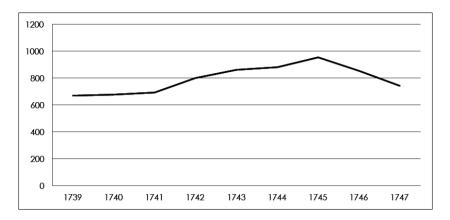


Figure 2: The total value of wages paid to tenants, 1739-1747 (gld)

This marked variation in tenant behaviour suggests that tenants possessed considerable freedom of choice and were not bound hand and foot, as Markegem's tenants in Flanders were. Until 1745 the total amount of work supplied by Rechteren's tenants rose slightly and then dropped somewhat, but it showed no great fluctuations from year to year (Figure 2). There was always enough work if tenants wanted it. Rechteren paid a total of about 800 guilders a year to tenants, which comes down to 1,700 days or over 44 per tenant. 41 During our period big tenants received a little more than a total of 243 guilders in wages a year, leaving almost 560 gulden for the small ones. Since the annual rent bill of the small tenants totalled about 530 guilders, they could all have paid their rent with work. But they did not, the volume of work differed from tenant to tenant and from year to year. This suggests that tenants could always find work elsewhere and perhaps even could maximize earnings by shifting between employers. Two of the small tenants must have earned enough away from Rechteren, because they rarely worked for the manor yet invariably ended up with a positive balance on 11 November. The same appears to have been true for two others, whose annual average payments for work averaged just about the amount of their rent.

Consequently Rechteren does not appear to have exploited its tenants, indeed, the manor to have done the opposite: it offered them a form of

⁴¹ Assuming that most work was available in the summer, we calculated this as follows: 600 of the 800 guilders paid in summer wages of 10 stuivers makes 1,200 days, plus 200 in winter wages makes 500 days.

security, notably to the ones with a precarious economic position. Tenants could always work and thereby earn the cereals they needed to feed their families and sow their crops, and that possibility protected them against the risk of food shortages. The tenants used that opportunity as and when needed, that is to say, they acted as one would on a market.

8 The stretch of credit

Moreover, the Rechteren steward's account also offered tenants a very flexible overdraft facility. We turn first to the small tenants in Figures 3 and 4. The consequences of the farming malaise during the first decades of the eighteenth century stand out. Until 1742 average debts on 11 November rose, four years later the small tenants were still overall in debt before they managed to achieve surpluses. The boxplot of Figure 3 shows to good effect that averages deceive here, because there was a wide gap between the lowest and highest balances. Figure 4 underlines the disparities. Four tenants maintained a positive balance throughout the period, eleven out of seventeen had achieved that by 1748, leaving six still in the red. Of those six, three always ran a debt equal to one or one-and-a-half year's rent, that is to say, they were simply slow in paying and did not suffer from any particular crisis effects. 42 A fourth tenant behaved similarly, be it on the higher level of two to three years' rent. Of the two others, one normally had a positive balance so he happened to have had a bad year, and the other had almost managed to pay down his quite large debt to a small amount. From 1745 most small tenants built up a positive balance with the steward, so for them his administration worked as a form of savings account where they could keep money.

The average balances of big tenants show a similar, and similarly deceiving, trajectory (Figures 5 and 6). For them, the trough arrived a year earlier and the recovery took longer, so by 1748 the average balance was still negative, though only just. However, a few extreme cases, tenants with several hundreds of guilders debt, push up that average. From 1743 most big tenants succeeded in reducing their debt, but by then two of them had already been evicted from their farms after the steward had lost patience with them, a rare occurence in Salland. ⁴³ Overall, the big tenants' balances

⁴² As mentioned above, this was common in Salland: Van Zanden, 'De opkomst', 121.

⁴³ Van Zanden, 'Opkomst', 121. According to van Zanden big tenants of the Huis Almelo manor showed, more than the small ones, a tendency to run up rent arrears during years of crisis and repay that debt only gradually during a recovery.

were fairly small and alternated between positive and negative, so like the small tenants they did not have structurally high debts. A final striking feature of Figure 5 is the shrinking of the box. That is to say, from year to year the number of big tenants with a balance in the second or third quartile on 11 November dropped, they were either below that, in debt, or above, in credit. Small tenants did not show a similar phenomenon, they tended to keep a positive balance.

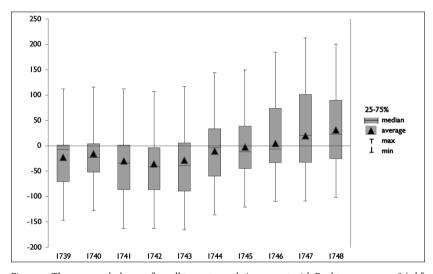


Figure 3: The average balance of small tenants on their account with Rechteren, 1739-1748 (gld)

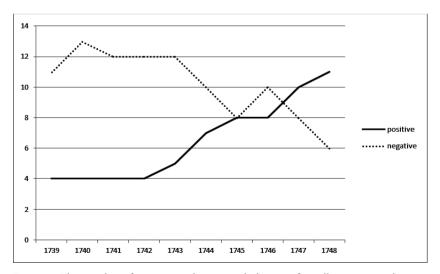


Figure 4: The number of positive and negative balances of small tenants on their account with Rechteren, 1739-1748

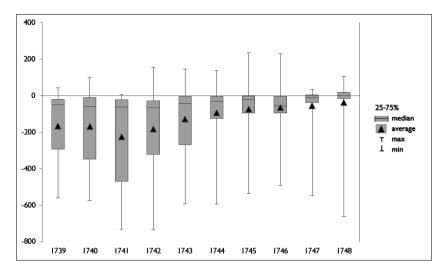


Figure 5: The average balance of big tenants on their account with Rechteren, 1739-1748 (gld)



Figure 6: The number of positive and negative balances of big tenants on their account with Rechteren, 1739-1748

The variety of behaviour concerning overdrafts shows tenants free to tailor that facility to their needs, both in absorbing the impact of a downturn and in bouncing back once it had passed. And the overdrafts appear to have benefitted notably the most vulnerable group (Figure 7). Debts run up by small tenants were comparatively lower than those of big tenants, about one year's average rent at the trough for the former, double that for the latter.

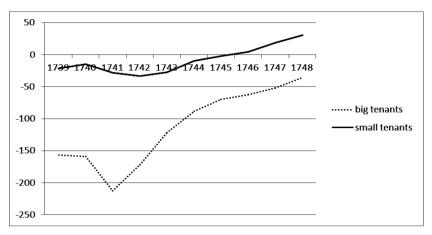


Figure 7: The average balance of tenants on their account with Rechteren, 1739-1748 (gld)

The small tenants also recovered faster and achieved an overall positive balance by 1744, which big tenants had not yet managed to do four years later. Then again, probably the latter were used to running their farms with some debt, which their creditworthiness enabled them to do as long as they made sure not to overtax the stewarsd's patience. Whatever the reason, neither small tenants nor the big ones were caught in a vicious debt spiral.

9 Money, credit, and exploitation

Another aspect of the Rechteren tenant overdrafts merits our attention. Tenants used credit to smooth fluctuations in income and expenses, not as a substitute for other forms of money. The literature often links the use of credit and alternative settlement systems to poor coinage and similar deficiencies of money circulation. The idea is that scarce means of circulation would have tied people to credit, giving landlords opportunity to exploit tenants. According to Verrips-Roukens that was exactly what happened in Salland.

⁴⁴ Muldrew, 'Wages'; idem, Economy of obligation, 3; B. Willems, Leven op de pof, krediet bij de Antwerpse middenstand in de achttiende eeuw (Amsterdam 2009), 106.

⁴⁵ Verrips-Roukens, *Boeren*, 70, suggesting that increased commercialization and monetization freed some tenants from having to work for the manor, whereas others remained bound for a lack of money. There are no data on coin circulation in Salland during this period. In the Republic as a whole circulation of small and medium denomination coins which were used to pay for rent, wages, and private grain purchases is estimated to be meeting demand around the middle of the eighteenth century, see Lucassen, 'Deep monetization' and idem, 'Wage payments'.

Now we do have indications that steward Jansen wielded power over the Rechteren tenants. After all he could evict them and, as we have seen, this occurred twice during the 1740s. However, in both cases it was not the level of debt that made him take action, since other tenants with similarly high debts were left alone. ⁴⁶ It was rather that debts had spun out of control, the tenants concerned proving unable to sustain regular payments from their own sales or with products or labour supplied to the manor. The steward also used his control over access to scarce land to let new tenants pay a part of the debts left by the evicted farmers.

Finally, the steward overcharged for cereals tenants had failed to deliver. As a rule rents were to be paid partly in money, partly in cereals. What tenants had not delivered in the form of cereals by Martini Market, Jansen debited to their accounts at the then current market price. This was almost always higher than prices during January-March, when the harvest was normally collected, transported, sold, and the proceeds credited to tenants' accounts. From Jansen's ledgers for the years 1774-1780 we calculate that the amount debited by the steward for cereals not delivered on 11 November were 12.6 per cent above that year's average prices in the regular months of January to March. 47

Even so there are no signs that tenants were structurally exploited via their accounts with the steward. Perhaps Salland did have a scarcity of good coin that stimulated the use of current accounts and credit. That is not in itself a sign of exploitation; economic actors with close relations often keep mutual current accounts because that is, quite apart from the quality or otherwise of the means of payment, simply far more convenient than paying cash. ⁴⁸ For that reason Jansen also kept current accounts with the local butcher, the tailor, the cooper, and the printer. Using current accounts usually says more about the intensity of relations between actors than over the availability or quality of alternative means of settlement.

Moreover, the lease accounts suggest relations between landlord and tenants were not oppressive at all. Tenants not only had a flexible credit facility at their disposal, they were also free to participate in labour and commodity markets. As we have seen, they used the option to work on the manor as it suited them, and they did the same with the possibility to buy cereals (Table 3). Some tenants often bought cereals, others almost never,

⁴⁶ When evicted, tenant Pirik owed 733 guilders (4.3 times rent) and Jochem op den Grave 655 guilders (8.9 times rent), high figures but not exceptional. Tenants Grotenboer and Weertman had comparable debts, but remained on their farms.

⁴⁷ HCO, HR, inv.no. 782, Pachtregisters van het huis Rechteren 1773-1781.

⁴⁸ See for instance also Lambrecht, 'Reciprocal exchange', 244.

but we can deduce very little from differences between tenants because individual circumstances such as farm size and household composition will have determined most of those. Of course as a rule tenants with the smallest plots bought cereals far more often, every year or almost every year, than those with bigger ones. Hendrick de Timmerman and Zeiger de Timmerman, for instance, with an annual rent of forty guilders, bought as much cereals as Jan Pot, presumably a labourer who lived rent-free, bought a lot of cereals, and worked so much on the manor that he usually ran a surplus with the steward.

Table 3's column 4, however, uncovers interesting differences in the averages. At 9.9, the standard deviation for Jan Pot indicates that, from year to year, he bought greatly varying quantities, spending ranging from a low of just over 14 guilders to a peak of more than 47. And his behaviour was very common. The standard deviation for most of the small tenants, eleven out of seventeen, was above three, that is to say, the quantities they bought varied substantially as well. Even the tenants who bought every vear, such as Jan voor 't Hecke, Bissom, Marsman, Bosman, en Jan Derksen/Gerrit Hoeveman, almost never bought similar quantities. Even in years in which the majority of small tenants bought cereals saw a few of them buying less than their average quantity. In 1740, for instance, sixteen out of seventeen bought cereals, but four less than usual; in 1746 fifteen, and six less than usual; in 1743, 1744, and 1747 fourteen, of whom respectively nine, twelve, and seven less than usual. Total purchases by tenants never exceeded 23 per cent of Rechteren's overall production, so the variation in purchasing patterns was not caused by the availability of cereals.⁴⁹ Given their farm size and production it is also unlikely that small tenants' stocks explain the marked variation in their buying behaviour. Clearly they possessed alternative means of acquiring cereals for food and seed and were able to choose the most favourable option for them. That is to say, the small tenants took part in a circulation outside of the manor and were not chained to their current account with the steward.

⁴⁹ We cannot use prices to calculate the volume of cereals supplied, because we do not know what kind of cereal was bought, rye or buckwheat. Estimating the price effect did not change the results much: see Appendix 2.

Table 3: The average annual cereal purchases of small tenants from the steward, 1738-1747 ⁵⁰

	Rent (gld)	Average annual	Standard	Number of
		purchases (gld)	deviation	years in which
				tenant bought
Jan Pot	0	29.6	9.9	9
Jan voor 't Hecke	0	14.9	8.3	10
Jannis Kosters	0	13.9	7.3	9
Jan Iden	14	3.5	0.9	8
Wagtevelt	23.8	11.5	7.3	9
Bissom	25	24.2	10.5	10
Kraake	28	9.5	2.9	9
Marsman	28.9	11.2	6.4	10
Graven, Arent	30	4.3	1.8	5
Bosman	30	6.8	2.9	10
Hulsebos	30	6.5	3.5	8
Jan Derksen/Gerrit Hoeveman	35	7.2	3.3	10
Timmerman, Master Hendrick	40	31.3	18.0	7
Timmerman, Zeiger de	40	22.7	12.9	5
Campman	45.4	7.5	2.8	3
Graven, Egbert	45.4	2.4	1,2	8
Jan Vos	46.1	7.3	3.8	2

Nor are there signs that the steward could freely take advantage of tenants by exploiting the difference between November and January-March cereal prices. This issue mostly concerned big tenants with production surpluses. Table 4 gives their average annual shortfall of rent in kind due on 11 November. The average annual deficit for all big tenants varied between 15 and 55 per cent, so external factors affecting them all, such as harvest yields, did play a role, be it probably a small one. General weather conditions seem to have mattered less, for average deficits for rye and for buckwheat did not move in the same direction.

⁵⁰ The annual total cereal purchases by tenants fluctuated between 11 and 23 per cent of the total rent paid in cereals by tenants. Additionally, Rechteren earned some unknown produce of the land in private exploitation, which was around 10 per cent of total acreage.

⁵¹ We checked the correlation between average cereals prices and deficits, which yielded an R² of 0.48 for rye and zero for buckwheat.

Table 4: The large tenants' average annual shortfall in rye and buckwheat rent payments, 1738-1747

	Average annual rye deficit as part of the total rye rent due	Standard deviation	Average annual buckwheat deficit	Standard deviation
Boggenberg	0.33	0.36	0.12	0.32
Camerman	0.49	0.49	0.47	0.48
Gerrit ter Agter	0.20	0.27	0.14	0.31
Jan Alphers	0.05	0.14	0.11	0.33
Jan Kroes	0.04	0.11	0.22	0.38
Jan Pauls op 't Vlier	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Jannis Jan	0.41	0.46	0.36	0.41
Jochem	0.32	0.40	0.54	0.51
Lambers Boer	0.26	0.30	0.19	0.29
Mulder	0.36	0.37	0.13	0.33
Pirik	0.53	0.34	0.15	0.30
Ekvelt	0.55	0.47	0.17	0.32
's Grotenboer	0.13	0.24	0.15	0.31
Schutter Hendrik	0.29	0.23	0.17	0.28
Veldtjan	0.34	0.47	0.49	0.50
Weertman	0.30	0.43	0.23	0.42

Moreover, what stands out is the variation in individual tenant behaviour. Jan Kroes, at one extreme, almost always paid his full rent in rye on time, resulting in an average annual rye deficit of only 0.04. Jan Pauls, on the other hand, had a deficit of 1.0, because he never did and preferred to sell his cereals himself and pay the steward with labour and money. The generally high standard deviations for most other tenants show them deciding from year to year what to do. Some, like Jochem, paid the entire rent in kind most years, but nothing in a few; other tenants' deficit strongly fluctuated from year to year. All tenants must have known that having rent-in-kind arrears on November 11 was disadvantageous for them. So if they chose to accept that, they must have been able to compensate it, for instance by selling the produce due themselves at a sufficiently high price. Consequently tenants were not powerlessly subjected to the steward's way of charging rent, this may even have worked as an incentive for them to find better outlets for their produce.

10 Conclusion

We set out to examine landlord-tenant relations inspired by insights from the new history of money, that payment patterns can be made to yield details about the social realities of which they form part. We draw two main conclusions from the Rechteren manor accounts we used. First, such accounts, ubiquitous in Europe from the late Middle Ages, provide good material to rigorously test the long-standing position going back to Chayanov that subsistence tenant farmers in Early Modern Europe were chained to manors, notably through credit. Manorial accounts have the crucial advantage of showing flow, so we get closer to the dynamics of social relations than evidence derived from stock takings such as succession inventories. This means that such accounts enable us to find out whether landlord-tenant relations really remained frozen from time immemorial until the dawn of modernity, as the Chayanov-derived view implies.

Second, we found that landlord-tenant relations on the Rechteren manor were definitely far less fraught than some of the literature on the region supposes. Tenants moved in a monetized, market-oriented society, possessed considerable choice themselves as to how to use which markets, and drew considerable benefit from their current account with the manor. The steward did have power over tenants; he could evict them and his pricing of cereals delivered could work to the tenants' disadvantage. But, not only were tenants not totally subjected to his whims, the current account's stretch provided a vital facility to all tenants for weathering crises, and to the small ones a key fall-back option. The farming crisis preceding our period did see tenants fall into rent arrears and other debt, but without the landlord taking undue advantage of them, so tenants were able to recover once the crisis had passed.

These findings tie in with those of Ogilvie and others, that, though credit was omnipresent, there were no structural debt chains in the Württemberg countryside. They have two implications. First, we really must stop applying the old stage theory labels of *Naturalwirtschaft* or *Geldwirtschaft* to any society, unless it can be shown convincingly that money played no part at all in transactions, not even as an implicit gauge of value. Second, we have to look more critically at credit and debt in the countryside. Credit will have substituted cash widely, regardless of coin availability, simply because current accounts were more practical. In such cases credit need not signal structural debt, let alone debt dependence. Indeed, credit might have been beneficial to tenants, as it was in the Rechteren case.

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Appendix 1: The average annual value of rent, labour supplied and cereals delivered for every Rechteren tenant, 1738-1747

	Total rent	Of which in	Of which in	Of which in	Average	Stddv	Average annual
	(gld)	money	rye (mud)	buckwheat	annual		cereal pur-
		(gld)		(mud)	wages (gld)		chases (gld)
's Grotenboer	307.7	125	25	15	3.20	6.4	0
Mulder	225.9	20	40	2	0.83	2.0	0
Weertman	207.7	100	17	6	56.90	19.2	0
Pirik	171.6	56	17	8	15.20	18.5	0.6
Jan Alphers	160.3	30	16	13	9.19	11.6	0
Rekvelt	100	11.2	10	10	12.13	9.0	1.1
Herms op Nielensen	100	100	0	0	0.00		0
Boggenbergh	93.3	0	12,5	8	1.31	2.8	0
Gerrit ter Agter	84.4	8.4	9	8	11.33	11.4	0
Schutter Hendrik	81.1	14	8	7	0.42	1.4	0
Lambersboer	80.9	0	10	8	5.67	7.9	0
Jochem op den Grave	76.5	35	8,4	0	52.88	51.4	0
Veerman	75	75	0	0	7.00	3.5	0
Jan Pauls op 't Vlier	63.5	39	3,8	1.5	46.80	14.3	1.4
Camerman	62.2	0	7	7	3.60	6.4	0
Jan Kroes	58.9	5.6	6	6	0.00		0.1
Jannis Jan	57.7	0	6,5	6.5	16.70	23.8	0
Veldtjan	53.3	8.4	5,5	4.5	6.60	9.0	0.4
Jan Vos	46.1	5.6	5	4	3.43	4.0	1.5
Campman	45.4	0	6	4	41.40	19.9	2.2
Master Hendrick	40	40	0	0	75.00	34.5	30.2
Timmerman							
Zeiger de Timmerman	40	40	0	0	73.33	21.6	19.1

	Total rent (gld)	Of which in money	Of which in rye (mud)	Of which in buckwheat	Average annual	Stddv	Average annual cereal pur-
	-	(gld)	·	(mud)	wages (gld)		chases (gld)
Graven, Egbert	39.1	17	3	2	38.00	18.8	2.0
Gerrit Hoeveman	35	35	0	0	45.40	18.0	7.21
Graven Arent	30	30	0	0	48.33	12.9	3.4
Bosman	30	30	0	0	56.80	11.7	7.1
Hulsebos	30	30	0	0	30.67	8.9	5.2
Marsman	28.9	28.9	0	0	62.33	27.5	11.2
Kraake	28	28	0	0	53.33	13.5	10.0
Bissom	25	25	0	0	55.50	18.0	24.9
Wagtevelt	23.8	23.8	0	0	45.67	16.0	11.8
Jan Iden	14	14	0	0	21.56	8.5	2.8
Jan voor 't Hecke	0	0	0	0	28.70	12.2	14.9
Jan Pot	0	0	0	0	51.33	25.2	26.7
Jannis Kosters	0	0	0	0	24.33	12.3	12.5

To calculate rental values we have taken average cereal prices during the years 1738-1747 of 24.75 guilders per 100 litres for rye and 19.65 guilders for buckwheat. A few tenants did not owe any money or produce, only labour, probably because they rented no arable land at all.

Appendix 2: The estimated effect of prices on the volume of cereals bought by tenants

The lease account only gives the guilder value of cereals bought by tenants and not the quantity of rye or buckwheat supplied. Fluctuating price differentials between the two cereals may therefore theoretically affect our calculation of what tenants bought presented in Table 3. To check that, we made an alternative estimate of quantities bought by dividing the value of each transaction by an index price calculated as the average between the prices for rye and buckwheat charged by the steward in a given year, with the basis of 1738=100. Since rye and buckwheat prices shadowed ech other quite closely during our period, the figures in the right two colums below are a better approximation of quantities bought than the guilder values in Table 3. Both calculations result in a standard deviation of half the average, so the difference between the two calculations is minimal.

	Value in guilders		Values in guilders divided by price index number			
	average	stddv	average	stddv		
Arent, Graven	4.3	1.7	3.4	1.6		
Bissom	24.9	10.6	19.4	8.2		
Bosman	8.1	4.5	5.7	2.3		
Campman	7.5	2.8	5.1	2.6		
Graven Egbert	2.6	1.4	2.2	1.2		
Hulsebos	6.5	3.5	4.8	2.2		
Jan Derksen nu Gerrit	7.2	3.3	5.7	2.8		
Hoeveman						
Jan Iden	3.5	0.9	2.8	0.8		
Jan Pauls op 't Vlier	4.6	1.3	4.0	0.6		
Jan Pot	29.6	9.9	23.5	6.6		
Jan voor 't Hecke	14.9	8.3	11.7	7.5		
Jan Vos	10.0	***	6.3	2.4		
Jannis Kosters	13.9	7.3	10.7	5.3		
Kraake	10.0	3.7	7.8	3.1		
Marsman	11.2	6.4	9.6	5.2		
Rekvelt	5.3	0.7	4.8	1.3		
Timmerman, mr. Hen-	31.3	18.0	28.5	19.0		
drick						
Timmerman, Zeiger de	22.8	13.9	18.0	11.9		
Wagtevelt	11.5	7.3	9.3	5.4		
Total Averages	11.6	5.9	9.3	4.7		