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Hans-Peter Baum

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Annuities in Late Medieval Hanse Towns

HANS-PETER BAUM

¶ *In this article, Professor Baum reports on recent research into the annuity markets of late medieval German Hanse towns. While historians traditionally have considered annuities an essentially noncommercial form of credit, Baum takes a different approach. Considering the annuity market as an economic institution, he describes its function as an instrument of credit and offers some speculations about how his conclusions modify our traditional view of the late medieval economy.*

Between 1967 and 1976, a research team at the University of Hamburg under the guidance of Rolf Sprandel studied the annuity markets of Lübeck, Hamburg, Brunswick, and Stade.¹ The project centered on Hamburg, where five researchers, including myself, covered the period from 1250 to 1490.² For the other cities, shorter periods of time were studied. Taking Ahasver von Brandt's dissertation on the Lübeck annuity market as a methodological starting point and applying some elementary statistics, the research team studied various aspects of the annuity markets.³

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¹ Rolf Sprandel, "Zur statistischen Auswertung der ältesten Hamburger Stadtbücher," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 56 (1970): 1–24; Rolf Sprandel, "Der städtische Rentenmarkt in Nordwestdeutschland im Spätmittelalter," *Forschungen zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 16 (1971); Hans-Peter Baum and Rolf Sprandel, "Zur Wirtschaftsentwicklung im spätmittelalterlichen Hamburg," *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte (VSWG)* 59 (1972): 473–488; Klaus Richter, "Untersuchungen zur Hamburger Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte um 1300 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der städtischen Rentengeschäfte" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 1971); Hans-Joachim Wenner, "Handelskonjunkturen und Rentenmarkt am Beispiel der Stadt Hamburg um die Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 1972); Hans-Peter Baum, "Hochkonjunktur und Wirtschaftskrise: Hamburger Rentengeschäfte 1371–1410" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 1976); Peter Gabrielsson, "Struktur und Funktion der Hamburger Rentengeschäfte in der Zeit von 1471 bis 1490: Ein Beitrag zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte der nordwestdeutschen Stadt" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 1971); Helga Haberland, "Der Lübecker Renten- und Immobilienmarkt in der Zeit von 1285–1315: Ein Beitrag zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Hansestadt" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 1974); Jürgen Bohmbach, "Umfang und Struktur des Braunschweigischen Rentenmarkts 1300–1350," *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 41 (1969): 119–133; Jürgen

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Abstract

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