

ensured that relatively few marriages were performed during both March and December, but it is clear that internal as well as external pressures maintained popular adherence to the Christian calendar. The number of conceptions dropped precipitately during Lent. There was less conjugal observance of Advent, and Croix notes a tendency away from Lenten abstinence over the century.

The work on which this study is based is staggering; Croix examined the records of more than one hundred sixty thousand births, eight thousand marriages, and fourteen thousand deaths. He has organised it clearly and concisely, integrating the tables and graphs into the text. A few similar sets of documents survive from other parts of Brittany; one hopes they will be plumbed with the same flair and ingenuity.

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WOLFGANG BERGER. — *Das St.-George-Hospital zu Hamburg. Die Wirtschaftsführung eines mittelalterlichen Grossshaushalts*. Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1972.

Berger's book is a study in medieval accountancy. It is an exhaustive survey of the economic records of a charity foundation in North Germany. The *Spital* of St. George outside the town walls of medieval Hamburg functioned from the later thirteenth century as a home for lepers. It received cases from four urban parishes, keeping lepers off the Hamburg streets for several centuries. It provided old age insurance for a number of town officials, burghers and their dependents. It was also a retreat for those in the fifteenth century who wished to do penance in their last years of life, and thus seek a surer path to heaven.

From the 1440s onwards detailed accounts have survived, notably the kitchen records or *Kohenbücher*. Berger uses these and allied economic archives to reconstruct the household budget of this famous medieval urban hospital, from which price data were already tabulated in the 1930s.¹ The reader has to contend with a mass of graphs, and tables as text. He is given the burial cost of a poor leper (one mark), the cost of candle-light at the altar (four shillings), and the cost of a church-warden when processing at Christmas (six pence), as well as total income, expenditure and the hospital's investments in rents, houses and lands.

It is not an easy book to read. Detail predominated but the patient reader will find it full of useful piecemeal evidence for an understanding of standards and expectations of common burgher life in fifteenth and early sixteenth century North Germany.

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Prices and Wages in Late Medieval Germany

URSULA HAUSCHILD. — *Studien zu Löhnen und Preisen in Rostock im Spätmittelalter*. Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1973.

The town of Rostock on the South Baltic provides Dr. Hauschild with archive evidence to test the general thesis of Professor Abel that in fifteenth century Germany labourers' wages had reached a level of adequacy, compared to prices of basic food stuffs,

¹ Cf. M.J. ELSAS, *Umriss einer Geschichte der Preise und Löhne in Deutschland*, Leiden 1936-49.