

Cities – Coins – Commerce

Essays presented to Ian Blanchard on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday

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Ian Blanchard – A Very Personal Appreciation

by Philipp Robinson Rössner

A special minute of the Senatus of The University of Edinburgh produced on the occasion of the official retirement of Ian Blanchard as full professor of medieval economic history (15 February 2006) reads viz.

Ian Blanchard was appointed as Assistant Lecturer in Economic History in October 1965 and retired as Professor of Medieval Economic History in December 2005, a total employment period in the University of more than 40 years.

Educated at Bemrose Grammar School, Derby, he gained a first class Honours degree from the London School of Economics in 1963. He then became a research student at LSE under the supervision of Professor Carus-Wilson, one of the giants of her era, researching economic change in Derbyshire in the period 1270–1540. Within two years, his thesis was so nearly finished that he was recommended to Berrick Saul for a post in Edinburgh and was awarded the job on condition that, alongside the teaching of medieval economic history, he also developed expertise in Russia. The stage was set for an extraordinary career, in which he published significant research work covering every century from the fifth to the twentieth, with a continental spread which included Europe, Asia, Africa and Central and South America, and taught courses covering an equally wide spread of periods and places.

Beginning from his PhD, his early published research focused on population change and economic and agrarian development in later medieval and early modern England, with special emphasis on lead production and those who worked in it. By the late 1970s and the early 1980s, his publications were widening, into consumption and hierarchy in peasant societies, into money and finance, and to a growing and long-lived interest in silver, access to which he came increasingly to see as one of the key determinants of regional change in pre-twentieth century economic history. But, alongside these more specialized areas, he was also becoming known in the profession for the depth and breadth of his knowledge of wider issues, demonstrated for many years in his stunningly wide-ranging annual reviews of the periodical literature for the *Economic History Review*, and nowhere more apparent in this period than in his magisterial survey, ‘The Continental European cattle trades, 1400–1600’, *Economic History Review* 1986, in which he ranged spatially from the Black Sea to the Baltic and the North Sea and from Smolensk to Venice and Strasbourg, and thematically across regional changes in production, money supply and commercial confidence, transportation systems, population, diet and consumer demand, and war and peace.

In the 1990s, the range of his publications expanded further still, into trade, commerce and finance transactions between and into the countries surrounding the North Sea, and to his first major book in this area, *International Lead Production and Trade in the “Age of the Saigerprozess”, 1460-1560*; this has been followed in the last five years by the first three volumes of a four volume survey of *Mining, Metallurgy and Minting in the Middle Ages*, the first volume of which covers the dominance of Asia in the years 425–1125, the second and third African gold and European silver production, 1125–1225 and 1250–1450. He also, after nearly 25 years of teaching Russian economic history, produced in 1989 a magisterial survey,

Russia's "Age of Silver": Precious Metal Production and Economic Growth in the Eighteenth Century, and followed it with a series of papers on eighteenth century Russian economic history, ranging across peasant agriculture, energy and power, railways and ferrous metal production.

This diversity of research interests has been matched by the range of Ian's teaching, including a key role in Economic History 2 as course coordinator for many years and as lecturer on its substantial Russian component. Among his many Honours courses were *Arthurian Worlds: Reality and Myth*, *The Origins of the Middle Ages, 400–1340*, *Medieval British Landed Estates, Towns and Trade*, *Golden Khersonese: Polity, Society and Economy in South-east Asia prior to 1570*, *English Peasant Society 1370–1700* (jointly with Tony Goodman), *Economic Change in Eastern Europe, 1898–1958* (jointly with Henry Palairot), and *Russia since 1985: a Transitional Economy*.

Not surprisingly, Ian's international contacts have been wide-ranging and highly productive for his research. He has travelled widely in Europe, spent two significant periods at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* in Paris, and since 1994 has spent some time each year teaching and researching at the Central European University in Budapest. In line with his enormous international reputation, over half his books and articles have been published outside the United Kingdom, in six different European countries as well as the United States.

Ian's foremost interests have always been as a scholar, and the depth and rigour of his teaching have inspired a number of his most able students to enter research careers. Among his colleagues, while being a strong defender of quality and traditional study skills, teaching and assessment arrangements, and with high expectations with respect to students, he also pioneered the provision of detailed class handbooks and later the provision of a mass of learning and project materials online. His enormous range of contacts brought many stars of the discipline to Edinburgh but in other areas of departmental activity a concern with administrative detail not infrequently passed him by. But his overall contribution to the leading international status of Economic and Social History in Edinburgh has been immense. He is still continuing with some teaching, but will now be able to spend even more time at home with his prize sheep flock, enjoying with Maud good food and wine, his huge collection of films, and continuing contacts with scholars of many nations across the world.

This is the wording of the official *laudatio*. Not much can be added, really. The historian, by the means and tools of her trade, however, should always consult mirror sources – if available – or use his first-hand empirical evidence based on close scrutiny and study of her subject so as to corroborate and, where possible, complement and round up the picture. And thus, some of the following remarks may serve to enhance the picture of what clearly has been and still is a remarkable scholar, man of true character, and – above all – a valued human being and friend. The “truth” about a person or subject of study will always lay somewhere in-between the two or more positions reflected in the range of sources chosen. No one as yet has proven to be able to look into a living person's brain (not even the best neurologists and brain scanners can do that at the moment the present lines are written). The historian is in the same vain when trying to get to grips with the peoples and structures in the past which (s)he studies on the basis of the written documentation and other sources available for each particular subject and period. Thus the following lines are merely intended to provide, if not a corrective, a slightly more lively account of “the Blanchard” as he was – and is – known to someone who has spent some time in his immediate physical habitat.

When I met Ian first in 1999/2000, the academic year I stayed as a visiting undergraduate at the University of Edinburgh he was talking predominantly about sheep. This was less due to his interest in pre-modern agrarian economies – he had been teaching a course on ‘Arthurian Worlds’ after all – but rather to the foot-and-mouth catastrophe that was hunting British farmers and the countryside at that time. His predominant fear was, of course, with Maud making a professional living from sheep rearing, that their flock had to be culled. More than anything else Ian was monitoring the daily news about further developments with the disease – which at that time, understandably, considerably distracted him from his regular duties as a professor, such as teaching classes and supervising graduate students.

After a few years I returned back to Britain to commence work on a doctoral thesis under the supervision of the very same Ian Blanchard who had in the meantime had enough reason to become much more relaxed again. During this period I learnt all the important secrets of the trade a young postgraduate must know. They were only little related to my actual subject of study at that time (which was the foreign trade of eighteenth-century Scotland). Our meetings took place in fine locations adjacent to the Uni, such as *Maxie's* or the *Centraal*, and almost invariably involved several bottles of Chardonnay, a plate of mussels (for Ian) and some other wholesome food within the price range affordable for an empty-handed postgraduate with a waiver on tuition fees but no further monetary support whatsoever (frequently Ian would foot the entire bill, against the actively-expressed will of the undersigned). It would have been a waste of time speaking about one's doctoral work during these meetings, as things of much greater importance were discussed, such as the academic world and its abysses, human nature in general, riding horses, the economic history of Russia and medieval mining and minting. Ultimately these talks, without anyone possibly able to foretell, would lead to the undersigned producing a senior doctoral thesis on exactly these matters (monetary economics of the German reformation period); they therefore had an inherent scheme, an invisible direction and a master plan from the very beginning.

The first time Ian would seriously engage with the doctoral work of the undersigned was about two weeks prior to submission of the thesis, when it was really time to do so (at that point he told me that the whole thesis had to be re-written). The thesis was successfully passed and defended, though; and any further involvement would only have meant a possible waste of energy, as the argument and layout of the doctoral work were constantly changing and thus remained until the very end imperfect. It would not have made any sense to seriously engage with anything that would change every so often and had not attained anything near a final shape that was worth actually talking about. From this I learnt how valuable the trust of a supervisor was who gave me the opportunity to develop my thoughts and models entirely by myself, and who never interfered with my approach (apart from instances in which I was very obviously wrong). This also taught me how to think as rigorously as possible

within a hopelessly narrow framework of time (which only the lazy would actually call “pressure”; economists speak of efficiency).

Most of all, however, I benefited from Ian’s impressive knowledge of medieval economic history, particularly mining issues, and I was impressed by his ability to work day and night. When necessary, i.e. when he was developing a particular stream of thought or testing out a new model, Ian liberated his schedule of research from the conventional societal boundaries of “time” and “space”. He would not come down into town from Newlees Farm for days in a row; when that was the case I knew that he had been working for several days and nights without interruption, after which he would usually take a correspondingly long period out for sleeping (the only other case scenario for this to happen was the lambing period when he would be likewise unavailable for classes and meetings, being on stand-by day and night, helping out Maud on the farm delivering lambs). This work ethos may be called Weberian or protestant in approach – even though Ian was and is an avowed atheist (he would probably not subscribe to the view that atheism is a very strong religious belief in itself, based entirely on a quite non-rationalist and blind following of a God named “Reason”, a discursive and very deceitful strategy developed by the seventeenth-century European enlightenment thinking). But in this way he was merciless to himself (partly due to the excessive consumption of cigarettes which stimulated his thinking), in the same way as he was in his thinking, which was rigorous throughout and very honest and straight.

Luckily for his colleagues he did not act on some of the impulses that feature in parts of his CV not quoted in the above minutes by the Senate (but which were communicated to the undersigned in private). From the section on “hobbies” that did not make it into the official *laudatio* in 2006, we learn for instance:

Hobbies: Good food and wine. I was fortunate enough for instance to acquire at rock-bottom prices a dozen half bottles of 1961 Chateau Lafitte, a dozen bottles of 1961 Chateau Yquem and a similar quantity of pre-phyloxia madeira, which provided standards for tasting other wines. Films of which I have a large collection. In the ‘eighties after we had moved to the country I enjoyed both riding and shooting (particularly foxes).

Whilst I am able to confirm the first two hobbies of Ian’s which may be classified as “culinary”, it is (with regard to the latter) not known just how many foxes survived the prospected carnage in Stirlingshire in the ‘eighties (and just how good or bad Ian’s shooting skills were). Luckily he never tried this hobby on human beings, at least not as far as I know (even though he must have had some sort of motivation once and again). Instead, Ian loved to interact and engage in lively, if not at times heated, discussions with people. And if he had the choice he would always opt for socializing, going out for drinks, enjoy a fine meal and simply have a good time with friends and colleagues, rather than sitting in his office or study doing research.

In this way the Central European University at Budapest was a congenial environment. Ian was “recurrent” professor there, and the final meetings leading up to the submission of my doctoral thesis and subsequent examination process were held at Budapest, as in the meantime I had relocated to Berlin (from which

an affordable direct flight was available). At Budapest one enjoyed the best food, best Hungarian Tokay and first rate Czech Pilsener and, occasionally again, some rigorous talk about academic matters.

In many ways Ian did not quite correspond to the image a continental European greenhorn had of an archetypical Englishman, as Ian was always very straightforward and outspoken (this may have been due to his acquired “German-ness” in terms of character and outlook since the 1960s). Even though clearly upper middle or upper class in terms of upbringing and outlook – or perhaps because of that – Ian would never tell a lie, and he would never waste a word on verbiage or flowers of speech. He would not tell you everything that he thought, but if he said something, you could be sure that he meant it exactly as he spoke it. And he would never let a faulty piece in a string of arguments slip your mind if it would lead to a biased model, wrong reasoning or argumentation that was in any way weak or mistaken. He would make the very same model collapse.

Ian Blanchard is a true gentleman, with perfect manners, a witty sense of humour, a sharp mind and a remarkable scholar who has decisively altered our thinking about – and knowledge of – medieval and early modern economic history. The undersigned is proud to be able to return, as a small and insignificant token of gratitude, the present *festschrift*. This is a collaborative venture of a small range of colleagues and friends who have been in some way or another interacting with Ian’s work and life as an academic. It has been a pleasure to be the editor of such fine pieces of work written by such pre-eminent scholars, all of whom have an extraordinarily rigorous standard of thinking and reasoning that is hardly matched by anyone else active in “the game” – apart, perhaps, by Ian Blanchard himself.

April 2012

Philipp Robinson Rössner

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Ian Blanchard / LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

A. Medieval and Early Modern Economic and Social History**(i) Books**

1. International Lead Production and Trade in the “Age of the Saigerprozess,” 1460–1560 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte-Beihefte, Vol. 85, 1994). Pp. 376. ISBN 3-515-06461-3.
2. Mining, Metallurgy and Minting in the Middle Ages, four volumes (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001–)
 - Vol. 1. Asiatic Supremacy, 425–1125 (2001), pp. xiv, 550. ISBN 3-515-07958-0
 - Vol. 2. Afro-European Supremacy, 1125–1225 (African Gold Production and the First European Silver Production Long-Cycle) (2001), pp. xxxv, 369. ISBN 3-515-07967-X
 - Vol. 3. Continuing Afro-European Supremacy, 1250–1450. African Gold and the Second and Third European Silver Production Long-cycles (2005) pp. lxii + 706. ISBN 3-515-08704-4
3. The International Economy in the “Age of the Discoveries”, 1470–1570. Antwerp and the English Merchants’ World (Stuttgart: Studien zur Gewerbe-und Handelsgeschichte, Vol. 29, 2009), Pp. x+288 ISBN 978-3-515-09329-3

(ii) Editions of Documents / Edited Books

4. The Duchy of Lancaster’s Estates in Derbyshire, 1485–1540. Derbyshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, III (1971) Pp. 124. ISBN 0-950-17862-4
5. Industry and Finance in Early Modern History . Essays presented to George Hammersley on the occasion of his 74th Birthday (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, VSWG-Beihefte, Vol. 98. 1992). Pp. 272. ISBN 3-515-05806-0. With Anthony Goodman and Jennifer Newman
- 6./6a. Labour and Leisure in Historical Perspective, Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, VSWG-Beihefte, Vol. 116. 1994). Pp. 198. ISBN 3-515-06595-4 and with my co-chairman of this session B-3a at the Eleventh IEHA Congress in Milan, 12–18th September 1994, Wray Vamplew, the official Congress volume of proceedings (Milano: Università Bocconi. 1994). Pp. 126.

(iii) Articles

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8. Derbyshire Lead Production, 1195–1505, *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, XCI (1971), pp. 119–138
9. The Miner and the Agricultural Community in Late Medieval England, *Agricultural History Review*, XX, 2 (1972), pp. 93–106
10. Seigneurial Entrepreneurship: the Bishops of Durham and the Weardale Lead Industry, 1406–1529, *Business History*, XV, 2 (1973), pp. 97–111

11. Commercial Crisis and Change: Trade and the Industrial Economy of the North-East, 1509–32, *Northern History*, VIII (1973), pp. 64–85
12. Stannator Fabulosus, *Agricultural History Review*, XXII,1 (1974), pp. 62–74
13. English Lead and the International Bullion Crisis of the 1550s, in D. C. Coleman and A. H. John (eds.), *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England* (1976), pp. 21–44
14. Labour productivity and work psychology in the English mining industry 1400–1600, *Economic History Review*, Second Series, XXXI, 1 (1978), pp. 1–15
15. Resource depletion in the European mining and metallurgical industries, 1400–1800, in: A. Maćzak and W. N. Parker (eds.) *Natural Resources in European History* (Washington, 1979), pp. 85–113.
16. Consumption and Hierarchy in English Peasant Society, 1400–1600, *Chicago Economic History Workshop Papers*, No. 20 (1980), pp. 1–12
17. England and the International Bullion Crisis of the 1550s, in: H. Kellenbenz (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Age of Expansion* (Nürnberg: Beiträge zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Vol. 2, 1981), pp. 87–118
18. Lead Mining and Smelting in Medieval England and Wales, in: D. W. Crossley (ed.), *Medieval Industry* (London: Council of British Archaeology, Research Report No. 40, 1981), pp. 72–84
- 19./19a. Konsumpcja ne wsi angielskiej, 1580–1680 (English Peasant Consumption. The End of an Epoch, 1580–1680) *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* XXX,1 (1982), a précis of which was published in the *Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Economic History*, Budapest 1982
20. Industrial Employment and the Rural Land Market, 1380–1520, in: R. M. Smith (ed.), *Land, Kinship and Life Cycle* (Cambridge: Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time, 1, 1984), pp. 227–276
21. The British Silver-Lead Industry and its Relations with the Continent, 1470–1570. An Outline of Research, in: E. Westermann (ed.), *Montanwirtschaft Mitteleuropas vom 12. bis 17. Jahrhundert. Stand, Wege und Aufgaben der Forschung* (Bochum: Der Anschnitt, Beiheft 2. 1984), pp. 179–188
- 22./22a. The Continental European Cattle Trades, 1400–1600, *Economic History Review*, Second Series, XXXIX (3) 1986, pp. 427–460. Reprinted in D Irwin (ed.), *Trade in the Pre-Modern Era, 1400–1700* (Oxford 1995)
23. “Real Money” and “Money of Account”: Reflections upon Medieval European Monetary Systems, in: H. Witthöft et al. (eds.) *Die historische Metrologie in den Wissenschaften* (Ostfildern: Verlag Scripta Mercaturae 1986), pp. 192–200
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26. Weights and Measures in the Mineral and Metal Trades of the Middle Ages, in: J. C. Hocquet et al. (eds.), *Metrologische Strukturen und die Entwicklung der alten Maßsysteme* (St. Katharinen, Verlag Scripta Mercaturae 1988), pp. 62–88
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28. Lothian and Beyond: the Economy of the “English Empire” of David I, in: John Hatcher and Richard Britnell (eds.), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 23–45
29. The Origins of Medieval Western European Silver Monometallism, 420–720 A.D., in: Rainer S. Elkar, Cornelius Neutsch, Karl Jürgen Roth & Jürgen H. Schwacht (eds.), *Vom rechten Maß der Dinge, Beiträge zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. Festschrift für Harald Witthöft zum 65 Geburtstag* (St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 2 Vols., 1996), I, pp. 33–58
30. Social Structure and Social Organization in an English Village at the Close of the Middle Ages: Chewton 1526, in: Edwin Brezette de Windt (ed.), *The salt of common life: individuality and choice in the medieval town, countryside and church. Essays presented to J. A. Raftis on the occasion of his 70th birthday* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, West Michigan UP, 1996), pp. 307–340
31. Credit and Commerce: from the Mediterranean to the North Sea economies in the Early Sixteenth Century, in: Herman Diederiks and David Reeder (eds.), *Cities of Finance: Proceedings of the colloquium. Amsterdam, May 1991* (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1996), pp. 21–33
32. Northern Wools and Netherlands Markets at the Close of the Middle Ages, in: Grant G. Simpson (ed.), *Scotland and the Low Countries 1124–1994* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, The Mackie Monographs, 3. 1996), pp. 76–88
33. English Royal Borrowing at Antwerp, 1544–1574, in: Marc Boone and Walter Prevenier (eds.), *Finances publiques et finances privées au bas moyen âge. Actes du colloque tenu à Gand le 5–6 mai 1995* (Garant, Leuven-Apeldoorn: Studies in Urban Social, Economic and Political History of the Medieval and Modern Low Countries, no. 4. 1996), pp. 57–74
34. Thomas Gresham, ca. 1518–1579, in: Ann Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange. Essays on the history and topography of a London institution* (London: London Topographical Society, Publication no. 151. 1997), pp. 11–19
35. Sir Thomas and the House of Gresham: Activities of a Mercer-Merchant Adventurer, in: Francis Ames-Lewis (ed.), *Sir Thomas Gresham and Gresham College. Studies in the*

Intellectual History of London in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 13–23.

36. Times of Feast, Times of Famine: A critical examination of recent British research concerning market structures and trends in the production of carboniferous fuels, 1450–1850, in: Paul Benoit and Catherine Verna (eds.), *Le charbon de terre en Europe avant l'usage industriel du coke* (Turnhout: De Diversis Artibus t. 44 [ns.7]. Proceedings of the XX International Congress of the History of Science, Liège 20-26 July 1997, vol. IV. 1999), pp. 61–75
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40. “Thomas Gresham,” entry in *Dictionary of British Economists*, edited D. Rutherford (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004). ISBN 1-84-371030-7
41. *New Dictionary of National Biography*, essays concerning Sir Thomas and Sir Richard Gresham, Richard Clough and Stephen Vaughan (Oxford UP, DNB, 2004)
42. Foreign Merchants in Early Modern Towns and International Market Intelligence Systems, *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 10 (2004), pp. 175–180
43. Cultural and Economic Activities in the Nomadic Societies of the Trans-Pontine Steppe, *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 11 (2005), pp. 191–206
44. Egyptian Specie Markets and the International Gold Crisis of the Early Fifteenth Century, in: Lawrin Armstrong, Ivana Elbl, and Martin M. Elbl (eds.), *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of John H. A. Munro* (Leiden & Boston, 2007)
45. The Late Medieval European ‘Integration Crisis’ 1340–1540, in: Troels Dahlerup and Per Ingesman (eds.), *New Approaches to the History of Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Copenhagen: Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser 104, 2009)

(iv) Joint Articles

46. The Habsburgs and the Antwerp Money Market: the Exchange Crises of 1521 and 1522–3, in: I. Blanchard et al. (eds.), *Industry and Finance in Early Modern History: Essays Presented to George Hammersley on the Occasion of his 74th Birthday* (Stuttgart: VSWG-Beiheft, 98.1992), pp. 27–56. With Herman Van der Wee who provided some of the materials concerning exchange rates for this article.

B. Russian Economic History

(i) Books

47. Russia's "Age of Silver." Precious Metal Production and Economic Growth in the Eighteenth Century (London: Routledge, 1989) Pp. xvi + 431. ISBN 0-415-00831-X

(ii) Articles

48. The Altai silver industry: the development of multiple provisioning systems in eighteenth-century Russia, in: Ekkehard Westermann (ed.), *Bergbaureviere als Verbraucherzentren* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, VSWG-Beihefte, 130. 1997), pp. 359–367
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- 50./50a. Le développement économique en perspective historique: l'avenir de la Russie à la lumière de son évolution à l'époque moderne (1700–1914), in: Michèle Merger et Dominique Barjot (eds.), *Les entreprises et leurs réseaux: hommes, capitaux, techniques et pouvoirs xixe-xxe siècles. Mélanges en l'honneur de François Caron* (Paris: Presse de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1998), pp. 381–392. An English translation entitled 'Russian and Soviet Economic Development in Historical Perspective, c. 1700-1998' will be found in Elspeth Reid et al. (eds.) *Edinburgh Essays: Russia on the Edge of the Millennium*. Intro by Dennis Ward. (Nottingham, 2000) ISBN 0-946134-57.
51. Russian railway construction and the Urals charcoal iron and steel industry, 1851–1914, *Economic History Review*, Second Series, 53/1 (2000), pp. 107–126
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55. Integration and Disintegration: Baltic Iron and North Sea Markets, in: Leos Müller / Philipp Robinson Rössner / Toshiaki Tamaki (eds.), *The Rise of the Atlantic Economy and the North Sea/Baltic Trade, 1500–1800* (= *Beiträge zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte, Vol. 117*), Stuttgart 2011, pp. 139–154