Town

A City-Dweller's Look at Thirteenth to Fifteenth Century Europe

by Lisa J. Steele
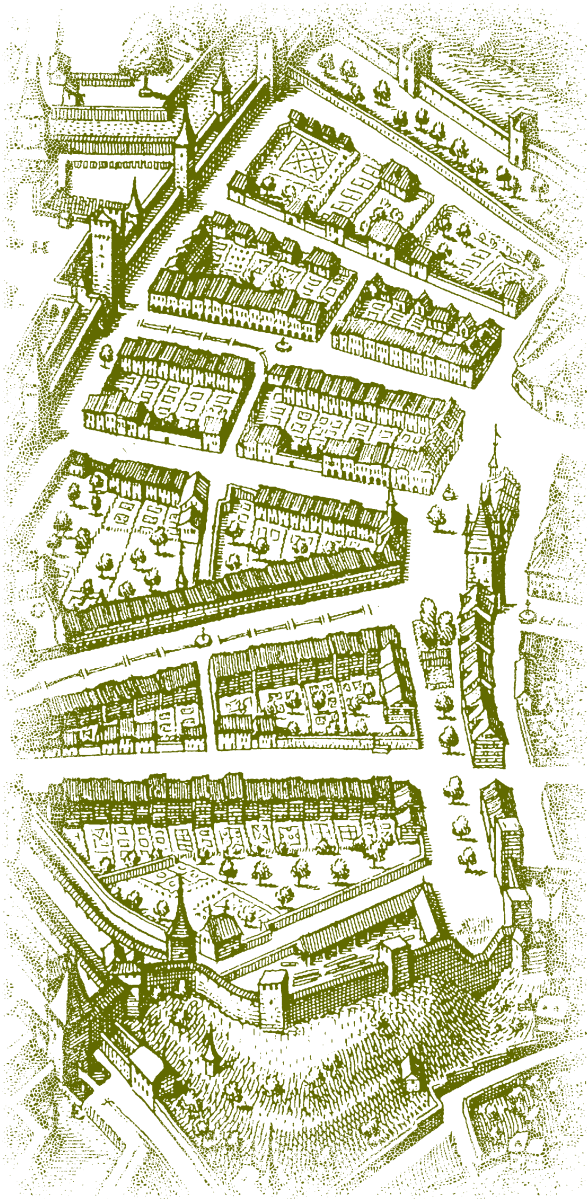
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CUMBERLAND
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Introduction

Medieval cities and towns were home to a tiny percentage of Europe's population. The vast majority of people were farmers who lived their entire lives within the sound of their own parish church's bell. To a farmer, a town was a market for his goods, and a source of those few items that could not be made in his village. Rural adolescents went to towns looking for work, before returning to take up their roles in village life. Others immigrated permanently in hopes of a better, or at least different, life. The sick, injured, or dying sometimes went to a town with hope for a miraculous healing via the relics held in its churches and cathedral. And, of course, towns were the homes of powerful indirect influences on a farmer's life – the local bishop, and, if not the landholder of the farmer's fief, then perhaps that landowner's feudal superior.

To a townsperson, farms and fiefs were the source of their food, fuel, and industrial raw materials like wool and hides. Clergy and regional landholders depended on rural parishes and fiefs for their incomes. A steady influx of rural immigrants maintained and grew urban populations. Wealthy townsfolk sometimes owned rural estates, providing a private source of fresh food and a refuge from the town during hot, often disease-ridden summer months.

Towns and cities were important nodes in a vast network of international trade, commerce, and finance. They were home to scholars, artists, and administrators. Clergy were trained in their cathedrals, monasteries, and universities. Workers came from the countryside, many in hopes of escaping feudal duties and attaining better lives.

Traditionally, medieval society was divided into three classes or estates – those who fight (nobles), those who pray (clergy), and those who work (farmers). Urban merchants did not fit cleanly into those divisions, an uncomfortable problem for medieval theologians and philosophers. In England and France, the urban working estate was subdivided into two basic groups: the wealthy merchant class which ruled the towns (the "worthy men", *prud'hommes,* or *probi hominess*), and everyone else (the "lesser people", *le menu people*, or *animale viles*). The tension between these two urban classes became an ongoing feature of town life.

Town is the companion volume to **Fief**, an introduction to English and Norman French small landholdings in the 9th to 11th century. **Town** primarily focuses on urban life in the 13th to 15th centuries in England, France, and Italy, with some digressions into other areas and times. Like **Fief**, this book discusses the fundamentals of a town's political, economic, and religious roles, as well as its logistics, physical architecture, and inhabitants.

Town is designed for armchair historians, medieval re-creationists, and role-playing gamers. Its focus is to help the reader understand the interlaced structures of town governance and life, in an effort to portray or recreate that setting, rather than for purely academic study. It was written, in part, from the author's curiosity about the urban portion of medieval society and a frustration with implausible fictional settings. In the course of the project, the author was amused to discover how many aspects of medieval urban life remain unexplored, perhaps because historians seem to focus on their particular specialties, and not on the town as its own entity.

As always, many people have been involved in this project over the decades since it began, including several helpful reference librarians at a variety of universities and libraries including the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Boston Public Library, Mount Holyoke College, and the Worcester County Law Library. Their help has been invaluable.

Any errors are the author's.

Fundamentals

What was a town? For the purposes of this book, it was a permanent settlement where most of the inhabitants made their living in administration, trade, and industry, rather than as farmers or monks. It was defined by its economic function, by its religious role, by the political rights of its citizens, or by its political rights as an entity. Its key feature, however, was its role as a trade center. Thus, a town can be defined as a settlement holding one or more permanent (year-around) markets.

Towns evolved in natural locations where people came to buy and sell goods. A large village might hold markets once or twice a year, often on the feast day of the village's patron saint. Market towns of a thousand inhabitants or more held more frequent regional markets, generally collecting goods from fifteen or more farming villages within a day's travel by laden cart (about 7 miles).

Because towns were defined by markets, many of their characteristic institutions were dedicated to protecting peaceful relationships with key trading partners, maintaining safe trade routes, controlling the quality of the town's goods, and protecting the value of its money. Towns regulated much of their trade through guilds – organizations of artisans and merchants who self-regulated trade and manufacturing. The existence of one or more guilds is another indicator of a town, rather than a village.

At the opposite end of the urban scale from a market town was a city like Palermo or Paris, which might have 200,000 to 250,000 permanent residents, and several specialized markets collecting goods from multiple nations. Cities were rare. One historian estimated that in 1300, there were only six or seven towns in all of Western Europe with a population greater than 50,000, thirty with a population between 20,000 and 50,000, forty with a population between 10,000 and 20,000, and perhaps a hundred with a population between 5,000 and 10,000.

Many towns grew around, and in the shadow of, a bishop and his cathedral. Bishops were powerful political figures and major landholders, as well as spiritual leaders. Often the cathedral and its associated prop-erty was virtually a separate entity intermingled within the secular town – tenants of cathedral property and clergy had their own jealously guarded privileges and rights, but might not share in the rights given by the secular ruler to the town's other inhabitants.

In addition to a cathedral, most towns had several neighborhood parish churches, monasteries, and, in a few cases, a university, all of which comprised a complex religious society. The leaders of the cathedral, various wealthy, powerful monastic orders, mendicant orders, parishes, and universities all had their own traditional privileges and rights, and often jealously competed with each other for power and prestige. Churches competed for donations and tithes from the faithful, and in turn provided vital charitable services, as well as daily religious rites and common sacraments.
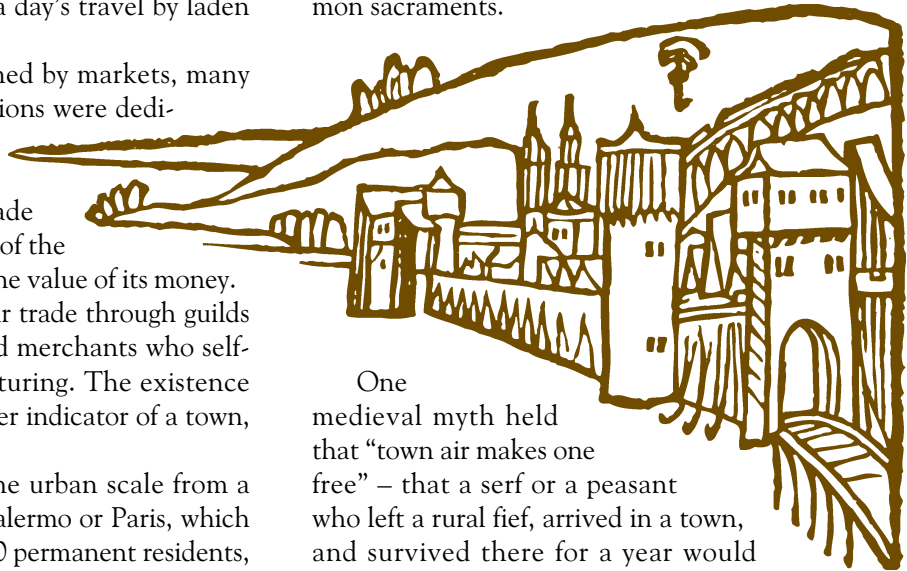
One medieval myth held that "town air makes one free" – that a serf or a peasant who left a rural fief, arrived in a town, and survived there for a year would become a free citizen of that town. The reality was more complex. On the one hand, towns depended on rural landholders and farmers for their food and could not afford to take in every discontented peasant. On the other hand, urban mortality rates were high; towns needed a constant influx of immigrants as workers and artisans. (See p. 95)

Towns often accreted specific rights for their inhabitants. Townspeople (*bourgeois*) had protected rights within their home town and lands subject to it, or to the landowner who controlled the town. Outside of those boundaries, the bourgeois became

a foreigner (*aubaine*), protected by the grace of the landowner in whose lands he traveled. Towns negotiated with their neighbors and trade partners on behalf of their bourgeois to protect their inhabitants' rights to safe travel and commerce. Often reciprocal treaties gave inhabitants of one town similar rights in the other. A town, or its landholder, also might become involved in disputes between its inhabitants and others, seeking to redress the losses of a prominent citizen wronged on another's lands, including raising a ransom or threatening trade restrictions or punitive taxes on the offender's inhabitants and their goods.

As collective entities, towns often acquired many, or all, of a noble landholder's rights. Towns often had their own law courts, or were subject to the courts of powerful large landholders, rather than local knights. Many were, to a greater or lesser extent, self-governing and self-regulating, with customs and rights set forth in written charters purchased from landholders, rather than having their rights dependent on rural custom and oral memory.

Perhaps the most common indicator of a town was physical – its walls. Many towns had large stone barriers which provided some protection during war and unrest, and made it easier for the town to enforce its monopoly on goods and services. Walls also provided a sense of urban solidarity, providing a physical separation between the urban household and its rural counterparts.

A SHORT EUROPEAN URBAN HISTORY

The medieval town evolved from Roman and pre-Roman settlements, although their historical continuity was often more tenuous than proud urban historians alleged. In some cases, parts of the old Roman street plan or Roman building foundations survived into (and past) the Middle Ages, but that was often the only connection between the medieval and Roman town.

> # Walls provided a sense of urban solidarity, providing a physical separation between the urban household and its rural counterparts.

The Romans often laid out their towns on a rectangular plan with two major cross streets – one running east-west, the other north-south. The two streets met at a central market forum. The Romans renovated some conquered settlements into a rectangular plan. Roman towns were also likely to be found on plains, where they could be more easily connected to Roman roads, rather than more defensible hilltop locations.

As the Roman Empire began to crumble, unwalled settlements on the plains either were fortified, or abandoned in favor of more defensible sites. Between wars and a general collapse in trade, town populations shrank. The Catholic Church, recognized by Emperor Constantine in 312, had established churches in urban centers. As other authorities collapsed, its bishops asserted themselves as urban leaders and defenders. By the 5th century, bishops were common rulers in most towns in Italy, France, and the remains of the Roman Empire.

In other places, monasteries became the nucleus of new towns as people settled near them. Although monasteries, like rural manors, were generally self-sufficient, they often produced and exported surplus wool and food. Monastery-based towns were often smaller than those based around a cathedral or landholder's castle because the monastery's market was smaller. Monastic towns often had their market place right outside the monastery's gates, with streets radiating outward, which created a different street plan than towns evolved from Roman settlements.

As invading tribes like the Visigoths and Franks settled around the surviving towns, their leaders began to challenge the bishops for control of towns and their surrounding lands. Some towns were divided: the bishop ruled the area around the cathedral, often within the old Roman center; the settled invading leader ruled the remainder of the town and the countryside. Ruling landholders made favored towns their capitals, generally stripping the bishop of any

significant legal power beyond the immediate cathedral neighborhood.

As the new rulers established order in the countryside, trade began to return, but the Roman trade routes had been disrupted. Coastal towns and those which relied on navigable rivers as trade routes were endangered by Viking raiders in the 9th and 10th centuries. Coastal towns on the Mediterranean were likewise threatened by Muslim raiders. Most population centers were raided at least once. Those which had neglected their fortifications since the Germanic invasions were frequent targets. Frequently-attacked towns contracted into a defensible nucleus.

At the dawn of the 11th century, towns were small and generally well-fortified. Most were governed by a local noble landholder, a bishop, or some combination of the two. Trade mostly relied on inland routes (roads and rivers), and was based on basic goods like grain and cloth. But things were improving for townspeople. Increased grain yields caused rural populations to expand, which in turn created a surplus of inexpensive food and of labor. Surpluses allowed urban populations to expand. These larger groups became restless under the control of secular and ecclesiastical rulers and began to demand self-government, or at least greater rights. Communes and chartered towns began to appear. As towns began to expand, their streets sometimes followed a radial or fan-shaped pattern, drawing in what were once suburbs along the towns' main roads. Other cities planned their expansion; new districts were laid out on a rectangular plan.

During the 12th and 13th centuries, trade routes continued to expand. Landholders created new towns and trade colonies and sold charters to existing ones to raise cash for their needs. Not all new towns survived; some could not compete with established markets and withered back into villages or were abandoned altogether. The towns that survived were planned, and tended to follow a loose grid pattern of rectangular blocks. Town manufacturing became increasingly sophisticated and specialized. Luxury goods from Outremere (the Christian-occupied Eastern Mediterranean coast during the Crusades), Egypt, and even China made their way into Europe through Italian merchants. The grain trade expanded over a wider area, making it easier for towns to weather regional shortfalls. Even the supply of gold and silver for coins expanded due to trade, increasing the supply of money and allowing inflation to rise.

By the late 13th century, urban and rural populations were beginning to outstrip agricultural yields. By 1270, many towns had reached the limits of their growth. Purchasing power began to diminish as inheritance divided rural lands into plots too small to support a family. Increasing numbers of farmers moved to the towns, which soon could not provide enough jobs for the immigrants. Towns had to look further for grain to feed the working poor and the destitute. At the same time, climate shifts towards longer, colder winters and shorter growing seasons stressed agricultural yields. Guilds began to restrict new apprentices and new members. Trade patterns again shifted when Italian merchant ships began sailing through the newly-liberated Straits of Gibraltar to northern European ports, bypassing the old land-based trade routes.

Things began to fall apart in the 14th century. Plague killed millions in the towns and in the countryside. The survivors were in a stronger bargaining position for wages and political rights, due to the shortage of labor. Weavers and other workers began to rebel against guilds and urban rulers from Ghent to Florence. Wars and unrest drove refugees from farms into the towns and, at the same time, constricted trade and agricultural yields. Towns began to spend an increasing amount of their budgets on new fortifications.

The early 15th century brought the Renaissance to Italy. Towns were again growing wealthy. Much of that wealth was spent on the arts, including grand buildings. While wars and unrest remained a major problem, plague-related deaths had stabilized and agricultural production was once again able to support an expanding population. By the end of the 15th century, however, much of northern Italy had been conquered by the French. Southern Italy was mostly in Spanish hands. The remaining independent Italian city-states were mostly controlled by hereditary rulers or royal governors. Wealth was shifting from Mediterranean trade routes to the Atlantic ports as ships began to sail around Africa to the Far East or across the Atlantic to the Americas.

Town ends in 1500, at the dawn of the Renaissance, although there are a few examples from later years. Towns and cities continue to expand after this date, but their structures and roles were changing and becoming less recognizably medieval.

POPULATION

Location	Year	Population
Assisi	1232	12,400
Barnstaple	1377	1,400
Canterbury	1377	6,240
Cologne	Mid-15th century	30,000
Dartmouth	1377	1,200
Exeter	1086	2,000
Exeter	1377	3,100
Florence	1172	10,000
Florence	1200	15,000 – 20,000
Florence	1300	96,000
Florence	1336	90,000
Florence	1349	32,000
Florence	1362	70,000
Florence	1375	56,500
Florence	1389	54,700
Florence	1427	36,910
Florence	1480	40,300
Hamburg	1300	5,000
Hamburg	1375	8,000
Hamburg	Mid-15th century	16,000
Leipzig	1474	4,000
London	1377	30,000 – 40,000
London	1501	33,000 – 46,000
Lübeck	1300	15,000
Lübeck	Mid-15th century	25,000
Paris	1100	3,000
Paris	1328	214,000
Paris	1380	90,000
Paris	1500	150,000
Perugia	1285	28,505
Perugia	1495	28,455
Pisa	1315	50,000
Plymouth	1377	2,700
Provins	1270	12,000
Reims	1328	15,000 – 18,000
Toulouse	Early 14th century	35,000
Venice	1200	80,000
Venice	1300	120,000
Venice	1350	48,000
Venice	1500	120,000
York	1066	9,000
York	1377	14,000
York	15th century	14,000
Ypres	1412	10,000

GLOSSARY

Alderman: English name for a member of a guild council or representative of a ward on a municipal council. Equivalent terms include: échevins (Fr.), schepenen (Flanders), Schöffen (Gr.), and scabini (It.).

Aljama: (Sp.) Jewish quarter within a city. A corporate body with its own officials and taxes, often directly subject to the monarch.

Arte: (It.) Trade guild.

Ban mile: The area outside a town's wall in which it had legal powers.

Bourgeois: (Fr.) A town citizen who owned land within the walls.

Burgage: A way of holding urban land in England and Scotland where the landholder rented urban property to another person in return for a yearly rent or service. It was easier to sell, inherit, or dispose of burgage land than most rural property. Burgage tenants often had to refer their disputes to the borough court, which was an important source of urban revenue.

Burgess: (En.) An urban citizen who owned land within the town, rather than renting it. Often associated with a higher social status and legal privileges. Where applicable, the term implies a member of the sworn association of the town.

Burgrave: Count of the "burg", a kind of seigniorial officer.

Citizen: Urban resident with full civic rights. Citizenship could be inherited or earned, and often required a citizenship oath at majority. In England, full-citizenship (described as having the "freedom" of the city) could be inherited, purchased, given, or earned by service or apprenticeship. Prospective citizens generally had to be of "free birth" (not slaves or serfs) and not involved in any lawsuits that might embroil the town if citizenship were granted. Some towns required a period of residence in the town, guild membership, minimum property qualifications, and/or a history of tax payments.

Commune: (Fr.) A sworn association of inhabitants of a town or neighborhood pledged to mutual aid, the oath acknowledged by the landholder. In the 11th century, French landholders began to recognize town governments as communes, but the recognition was separate from a charter or grant of liberties. By the 13th century, a commune was expected to have a written charter granting its liberties, a communal bell to summon or warn citizens, and a municipal seal.

Commune: (It.) A sworn association of the inhabitants of a town pledged to mutual aid. An Italian commune was an assertion of independent self-government against a secular or ecclesiastical landholder. In some case, the populace came together as a commune; in others, it evolved from pre-existing associations.

Confraternity: A charitable or religious organization. Historical sources sometimes refer to these groups as guilds or gilds, although they are often distinct from trade and craft organizations. For purposes of **Town**, this term refers only to charitable and religious entities unless a specific historic organization is being discussed. Economic organizations are generally referred to in this text as guilds to avoid confusing the modern reader.

Consorteria: (It.) A mutual protection association composed of ten to forty adult men descended from a common ancestor, usually a rural noble. Normally, the group occupied adjoining houses in a single neighborhood, at least one of which had a defensive tower. The group held property in common, to prevent the family's wealth from dispersion by inheritance. Group leaders could discipline members by excluding them from income or property. In some cases, leaders held the right of high justice (execution) over their members. Groups of consorteria might ally into armed family associations and "tower societies" for mutual defense.

Consul: (It., Southern Fr.) Member of a city counsel.

Condato: (It.) Countryside around a town that is legally subject to it.

Estimo: Sworn statement of taxable property, given orally or in writing.

Farm: Fixed payment collected by English towns and paid to the monarch.

Franchise charter: (Fr.) A formal grant of rights to a town. It does not involve a communal oath, but membership in the town is defined and includes legal privileges.

Gild: (see Guild)

God's Penny: A nominal sum used to seal a contract.

Guild: For purposes of **Town**, this term and "arte" refer only to economic entities unless a specific historic organization is being discussed. Religious and charitable organizations are generally referred to in this text as confraternities to avoid confusing the modern reader.

Jurés: (Fr.) Officials who work for the sworn association of town inhabitants. The échevins (see alderman) generally worked for a landholder. Jurés could become a town council, succeeding a board of échevins, but often supplemented, then supplanted the échevins.

Magnate: (It.) Person with noble or aristocratic ancestry.

Mezzadría: (It.) A sharecropping system in which the landholder generally received half of the harvest.

Murage: (En.) Tax often imposed for building or maintaining urban walls. Murage was frequently assessed as a tax on urban residents' properties and as a toll on goods passing into or out of a town's walls.

Pavage: (En.) Tax often imposed for building and maintaining streets, often assessed on goods by weight or cartload as they entered a city.

Podestà: (It.) Administrative and judicial officer in some Italian cities. The office appeared in the early 13th century, when guilds sought a counterbalance to consular "legislatures" dominated by wealthy families of noble ancestry. The podestà was traditionally not a citizen of the town he governed (in order to ensure impartiality), was appointed for a one to two year term, and generally limited his private contacts within the town during his term.

Popolo: (It.) Political organization of prosperous merchants, artisans, crafters, and magnates, sometimes with administrative functions. The term primarily dates from the 13th century.

Portage: (En.) Tax often imposed for building and maintaining bridges, often assessed on goods crossing the bridge by weight or cartload, and on goods offloaded from boats or ships.

Prévôté: (Fr.) Landholder's administrator of a town responsible for collecting revenues due the landholder and adjudicating disputes.

Rat: (Gr.) Administrative council.

Resident: A person dwelling in a town who does not meet the criteria for citizenship.

Schultheiss: (Gr.) Mayor or chief magistrate; seigniorial officer in a town.

Scula: (It.) A devotional fraternity. (See confraternity)

Signoria: (It.) Town government by a single individual or powerful family, often hereditary. Most common from the late 13th century onward in some northern Italian city-states.

Staple: (En.) Monopoly right of a town to buy, sell, manufacture, transport, and tax certain goods within a given radius of the urban walls. Inhabitants of the town were exempt from this fee on goods they did not consume personally. Foreigners had to stop, pay tolls, and often sell their goods to local merchants or brokers.

University: Community of scholars which has received papal permission to grant graduates the ability to teach anywhere (*jus ubique docendi*).

Agriculture

The country is very fertile and pleasant, with an abundance of wine, fruits, and vegetables, and cereals of every type. These nourish a warrior race ... The city is surrounded by woods and marshes, and thus well protected against enemy invasions.

The city [Noyon] is located between two streams: to the east flows the Goële, and to the west the Marguerite. A third, called the Verse, receives both streams, and the waters of all three flow into the Oise, that river of renown, not far from the ramparts. In the vicinity grow many fruit trees, and the radiant soil, enlivened by its meadows and green verdure, is very agreeable to the inhabitants. In addition, to the east as well as to the west, the city is well fortified by rocks, rivers, hills, and valleys, all around that it could not be simpler to defend her with just a handful of men against a huge and mighty invasion.

– Radbod, Bishop of Noyon
(late 11th century)

A town could not grow enough food within its walls to feed its populace. Thus, a town's leader's primary, often paramount, concern was the security of its food supplies and the stability of the price for grain. Grain was vital to make bread and ale, and to feed the town's many animals. Prodigious quantities of grain, vegetables, fruit, ale, beer, wine, livestock, and fish had to be brought into town. The amounts involved could be staggering. In the late 13th century, Milan, one of the largest cities in northern Italy, consumed an estimated 1,200 bushels of grain per day. An inhabitant of early 14th century Frankfurt ate more than 220 lbs. of meat per year. Late-13th century Paris annually consumed nearly 270,000 animals: 189,000 sheep, 30,000 oxen, 20,000 calves, and 31,000 pigs. Early 14th century London imported 140,000 tons of wood each year to cook its food, warm its inhabitants, and supply its industries. An inhabitant of mid-14th century Lucca consumed five to six barrels of wine per year. When possible, meat, fish, and produce had to be fresh, as medieval storage methods were limited. Thus, it was crucial for a town to be located in a fertile area which could supply the vast majority of its typical needs. A major city like London or Paris might draw supplies from a radius of fifty to sixty miles. A 13th century town of 3,000 inhabitants might need the produce of at least 14 square miles of farmland, generally within 20 miles of its walls. When a bad harvest threatened local supplies, a wealthy city might try to purchase grain from great distances – in 1268, Venice sent ships to the Black Sea for wheat.

A town sought to control its food supply. If it had military control of the surrounding countryside, it could force its subject farmers to sell their surplus grain to it and make it illegal for them to seek other markets. Where the town's military influence was more limited, it became very interested in the politics of the rural nobility. It could directly set grain prices and units of measurement within the town's limits. If it wished to influence the market more subtly, it could tax imports and exports of other foods. A town could also purchase and store grain in plentiful years as a hedge against famine. When those stores were exhausted, a town might first cancel its taxes on imported goods (*gabelle*) in order to encourage rural farmers to bring in needed supplies tax-free. Generally, the remittance was for a short duration, typically four to five days, to encourage prompt action. If supplies remained low, towns spent large sums of money and endured heavy financial losses to purchase grain and sell it at low prices to undercut speculators and avoid unrest over scarce supplies. Some even paid bounties to

merchants who imported foreign grain and prohibited grain exports. (Export bans were also regularly imposed on pigs, sheep, and wine.)

A town's concern with food was also reflected in the number of food-related guilds and trades such as grocers, spicers, bakers, butchers, fishmongers, brewers, and ale-wives. These guilds and trades (discussed further at p. 80) could be quite powerful. However, towns often regulated the quality of food, prices, measures used, and disposal of wastes in an effort to protect the populace from undue cheating.

Towns did supply some of their own food. Urban inhabitants often kept pigs and chickens for meat, and grew some vegetables and herbs in their gardens. Some towns had fields and pastures within their walls. If a town's population began to decline due to disease or war, newly unused lands were often converted to agricultural use. Most towns were located on a river, which supplied fish and eels. The water supply and drainage ditches in Amiens, Rouen, and Troyes provided each town with an estimated five tons of fish per year.

CONDATO

We order that before next January the podestà and the consuls will arrange for every citizen of Pistoia whom they think fit, their dependants, men and women of the district over 14 years of age, to take an oath not to commit theft, sackings, fires, devastation or the export of agricultural products like olives, grapes, figs, chestnuts, wood, cabbages or leeks or anything else; and they are to swear that if they see anyone else doing these things they will report it as soon as possible to the owner or to the crier of the city.

– Extracts from the Statute of the Podestà, Pistoia (1162-1180)

The relationship between a town and the surrounding landholders was complicated. Landholders wanted to sell their produce to a town's ever-demanding market at the greatest prices. The town wanted to ensure a steady supply of food at the lowest price, which often involved complex diplomatic negotiations with nearby and distant landholders. Italian city-states solved this problem by taking direct control of their surrounding countryside (the condato), often forcing rural landholders to reside in town, where the urban government could keep an eye on them. Other city-states directly controlled the farmers through a sharecropping system (mezzadría). Taxes on rural hearths could amount to 10-15% of a city-state's budget. City-states could also demand forced loans from rural villages, soldiers for military service, or labor for urban walls and roads. City-states also imposed export bans (divieti), which required rural farmers to sell their grains, wool, and livestock to the city-state.

Some members of the town's urban elite, including its bishop and major monasteries, often owned their own land in the surrounding countryside. The produce of that land could be directly sent to the urban household, bypassing the urban market. In the alternative, during the summer, a wealthy urban family might spend weeks or months on land it owned in the countryside, living directly from its products.

Of course, the town depended on the same cycle of seasonal sowing and harvests as the surrounding landholders. Yields were limited by the soil's quality and on the weather, but a typical farmer could expect a return of four to five bushels of grain for every bushel of seed. The bulk of the harvest was stored in granaries and used within a year; surplus could be stored for two to four years.

WASTE

A town also produced a great deal of waste: human, animal, and from its crafts and industries. Waste laws were rudimentary. Most waste was disposed of in open sewers and ditches which then dumped the effluent into the river, preferably downstream from the major parts of town. Wealthy houses and monasteries might have their own private sewers or waste-water canals. A few Italian cities had the remains of their Roman underground sewers. In Rome, the ancient Cloaca Maxima remained partly functional and diverted some of the town's wastes into the Tiber. Paris dug its first underground sewer in 1370, which drained wastes into a tributary of the Seine River. Rubbish that was not disposed of in the sewers might be eaten by pigs, which were sometimes allowed to roam in the streets, or by dogs and rats. The rest was carried out to the river or to dunghills outside the city.

Human waste was deposited in privies or cesspits in private yards. Cleaners regularly dumped the material in the river or sold it to farmers for fertilizer.

Some towns built public latrines at the base of the urban walls or over a designated canal, in an effort to channel wastes from those too poor to have their own facilities.

Some towns limited animal wastes by restricting how many stables could operate in town, and limiting the numbers of pigs. Families often kept chickens and geese for meat. Some owned dogs. Cattle and sheep were generally only brought into towns for slaughter. Rats, pigs, and baby geese foraged in the streets for garbage and left behind their own waste. Towns also had to deal with the chaff and dust from animal fodder, which was flammable. (Thus, towns often limited stables and households to only keeping a small supply.) A few towns arranged public garbage collections, often on Saturdays. The waste was either dumped into the river or outside the walls. Other towns made each building owner responsible for the street in front of his or her home. A combination of peer pressure and fines tended to maintain a minimal level of cleanliness.

> *… butcher shops, fishmongers, tanneries, and dye works were generally restricted to the down-river parts of town, or even forced outside the town walls.*

Industries known for their foul-smelling wastes like butcher shops, fishmongers, tanneries, and dye works were generally restricted to the down-river parts of town, or even forced outside the town walls. Again, their wastes were dumped directly into the river, where it would be diluted. Slaughterhouses killed thousands of animals each year for meat, dumping thousands of pounds of blood, entrails, and other wastes into the rivers. Fishmongers often set nets along the river and cleaned their catch on the riverbanks, adding more blood and entrails to the water. Tanneries converted hides into leather using slaked lime, tannic acid, and other chemicals, all both odiferous and toxic. Dyeworks also used a variety of toxic, and sometimes odiferous chemicals, some of which were rinsed into the river. Cloth made from flax needed to be soaked during a process called ret-

ting. (Some towns forbade preparing flax entirely, or allowed only enough for personal use.) All cloth was also washed, which needed clean water, and fulled (thickened) by being washed with lye, Fuller's Earth, and other treatments, the unused portions of which were rinsed away into the river.

Towns also produced a moderate amount of airborne waste from the wood and charcoal used for heating and for various crafts. The amounts were not large by modern standards, and generally drifted away with the wind. Townspeople were more concerned about the odors from slaughterhouses and tanneries, which were often located on the periphery of the town.

WATER

Almost all towns were built along a river. A navigable river was a more reliable trade route than roads, which were often in poor repair and more subject to bandits and tolls. In addition, ships and boats could carry bulk goods more economically than carts and pack animals. Rivers provided power for mills, brought fresh water for drinking and trades, and carried away wastes.

The character of the river helped to shape the city. Was it affected by the tides? Was it swift-flowing, with ample power for mills, but hazardous to navigate because of the strong current? Was it slow and gentle, requiring dams to create current for water wheels, but easier to navigate? Was it prone to flooding? Did it dwindle in droughts or in summer exposing sandbanks and impeding boats? All of these affected the town's use of its river and the architecture, particularly bridges, along it.

Rivers were also important for waste disposal, and for fresh water for drinking, cooking, and crafts. Hilltop towns generally overlooked a river, and relied on springs, wells, and rain water collected in cisterns. In Rome, one ancient aqueduct, the Acqua Vergine, still functioned during the Middle Ages. Its route was mostly underground and less likely to be disrupted by

war. The city's magistrates appointed supervisors to oversee the aqueduct from its entrance to the city to its exit at the Trevi fountain. The supervisors tried to prevent private siphons and preclude unsanitary behavior at the fountain like bathing, washing laundry, or washing animals. Paris began building new aqueducts in the late 12th century. Orvieto built one in the late 13th century. The Pozzo di S. Patrizio in Orvieto is an extreme example of an urban well built slightly after the Middle Ages. Built from 1527-37 as a water supply for the Albornoz fortress, the well is 175 feet deep, and lined with two spiral stairwells large enough for mules to transport jugs of water to the surface.

Venice may be the sole example of a major town which is not located on or near a river. Instead, Venice was built on a series of islands in a saltwater lagoon. Much of its fresh water came from wells which collected and filtered rainwater. At times, Venetian sailors brought additional amounts of fresh water to town from nearby rivers in boats and dumped the water by bucket into the urban wells. (Medieval technology was not sufficient to reach an aquifer deep under the city.)

Whatever its source, water had to reach homes and craft shops. Wealthy families and some businesses hired professional water carriers or dug private wells. Those less fortunate families had to carry their own water home from the river, public wells, or public fountains. (By the mid-13th century, towns were increasingly able to pipe water to communal fountains – Milan had 6,000 fountains supplying drinking water in 1288.) By the 15th century, English towns were increasingly installing closed underground water conduits, often lined with lead. A municipal conduit-keeper was charged with ensuring repairs and prohibiting merchants and artisans from using the conduit water for trade, instead of for cooking and drinking. Homeowners paid a fee to maintain the conduits.

While bathing was not common in the Middle Ages, Roman-style public baths were found in a few regions from the 10th to the 14th century. Other towns offered a series of tubs, called stews, for bathers. Many baths and stews were closed in the 14th century due to scandals over the bathers' conduct.

Crafts needed water to produce goods and to power various kinds of water mills. Thus, towns dug canals. A typical canal was three feet deep, six feet wide, and had a sufficient grade to create a reasonable current to power mill wheels. Butcher shops, tanners, millers, and dyers all located their shops along the canals for waste disposal.

Town leaders were concerned about water pollution. They did not understand precisely how water quality affected public health, but they knew that drinking water contaminated with human waste, offal, dye, and tannin (used to treat leather) was unhealthy. They also knew that contaminated water could lessen the quality of their cloth manufacturing, and thus sometimes organized crafts and trades so that the waste from each would have a limited impact on those downstream. The freshest water was used for drinking, cooking, and cloth cleaning. Dyers deposited alum in the water as a byproduct of their work. Skinners, glove-makers, and curriers could take advantage of the dissolved alum to treat their skins and thus were located downstream of dye works. Butchers, who needed large amounts of clean water while slaughtering animals, could be located upstream from tanners, who needed less water and who dumped tannin downstream as a byproduct of their work. (On the other hand, the smell of slaughtered animals often resulted in butcher shops being located as far from residential areas as possible, often well downstream of other artisans.)

While dyes and tannin were a health concern, the amounts used in a typical town were not highly polluting. Some of the chemicals even helped break down organic wastes, making the water less dangerous to downstream communities.

Architecture

The city of Rouen is very populous and has been made wealthy by different sorts of commerce. It is an agreeable city due to the number of buildings surrounding the port, the murmur of running waters, and the charm of the meadows. A large abundance of fruits, fish and all sorts of products adds to her wealth. The mountains and forests, with which she is surrounded on all sides, the walls, the trenches and other military constructions, make this city very pleasant indeed. Much of her luster comes from her churches, as well as the appearance of her houses and buildings.

– Orderic Vital, monk of Saint-Evroul, Normandie (c. 1148)

A town's physical structures, like its geography, have a strong impact on its character and its economy. The town's climate, wealth, common local building materials, and social structures will be reflected in its simplest residences as well as its grandest cathedrals and guild halls. Each town had its own quirks, but there were some common features.

Due to the constant risk of fire, town rulers encouraged residents to build in stone and brick, and to replace older wooden buildings with less flammable materials. London's Assize of Buildings (1189) encouraged builders to make residences from stone, to use stone party-walls when buildings shared structures, and to use tiled roofs. In 1213, London forbade roofs of reeds, rushes, straw, stubble, or thatch. In the 14th century, London forbade wooden chimneys. By 1381, the city also required every house to keep a container of water by the door to fight fires.

Towns also limited building density, both to prevent fires and to maintain the width of streets and squares for travel and trade. Lots were typically narrow on the edge facing the major streets, which encouraged narrow, deep homes. A typical English burgage lot was 60 feet wide and 200 feet deep or 70 feet wide and 400 feet deep. Street width and orientation was also affected by the prevailing climate. In colder areas, streets might be angled to break up winter winds and make it easier to clear snow. In warmer climates, buildings might be oriented to cast cooling shadows on hot streets and squares.

Urban builders relied to a large extent on professional artisans like brickmakers, carpenters, wallers, and stonemasons instead of the traditional peasant and serf labor available to rural landholders. Towns could conscript labor for municipal projects – in 1486, Genoa required its stonemasons to each contribute a day's labor to building the Molo (a municipal wharf) – but typically preferred to pay skilled workers. Urban builders also had to purchase their materials; peasants and serfs could often gather wood from the landholder's forest.
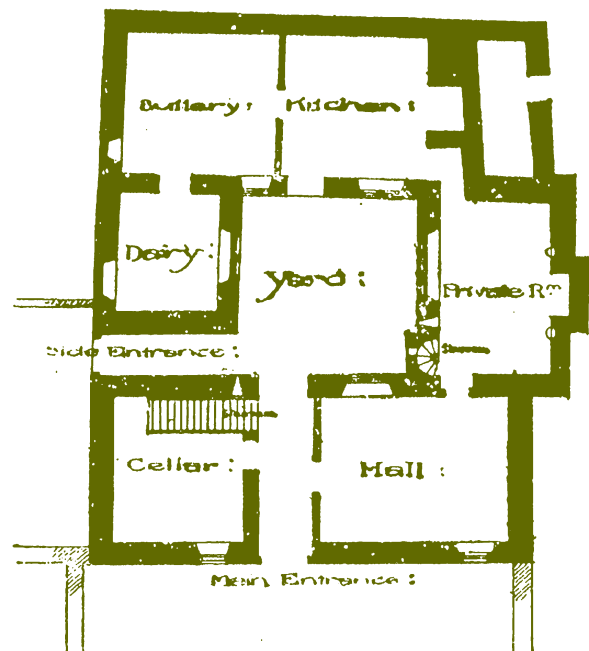
CONSTRUCTION METHODS

Urban construction generally depended on professional builders, not family members and neighbors. On the smallest projects, the patron acted as contractor, hiring and supervising artisans, and purchasing materials directly. Many projects involved written contracts, although patrons rarely seemed to ask for competitive bids or try to minimize costs. In England, patrons tried to protect themselves from delays and poor work with penalty, surety, and bond clauses. Italian patrons rarely used similar means, although

supply contracts often held the supplier responsible for expenses resulting from delivery delays.

On larger projects, the patron might hire a purveyor of the works (*provveditore*, It.) as a general contractor. The purveyor was responsible for supplies, materials, and labor, and for securing the worksite from thieves. His accounts were open to inspection by his patron, and often were regularly audited. A cathedral building site, one of the largest projects of the time, might employ over 100 workers at a time. (Contrary to popular myth, cathedrals were built by professional artisans, not religiously-motivated volunteers.)

Construction required a variety of materials: brick, stone, and wood for the structure itself; sand and lime for mortar; and gravel for foundations and fill. Smiths were hired to provide nails, tie rods, braces, tools, and parts for scaffolding. Local materials were generally used for most projects, although prestigious buildings like cathedrals might require imported stone despite the difficulty of transporting it. Large projects might also require imported wood, particularly for large structures. A cathedral, for example, might need 400 to 700 trees for its major wooden parts, some of which required specific lengths, diameter, and curvature. All of this meant a large, diverse urban construction industry with ties to nearby and distant quarries and forests.

TYPES OF BUILDINGS

There were a wide variety of buildings in a typical town. A few are described below to give some feeling for the sorts of structures one might encounter while strolling through a medieval town.

Baths

Private and public bath houses existed in some towns. A medieval bath house was not an elaborate Roman-style thermae with multiple rooms and pools of different temperatures. Instead, it had one or two rooms with several individual or two-person wooden tubs. Paris had 26 public baths to serve its 200,000 inhabitants in 1292. Reims had three bath houses in 1328 for a population of 15,000 to 18,000. Provins had two bath houses for 12,000 inhabitants in 1270. Bath houses were often made wholly or partly of stone to reduce the risk from the fires used to heat bath water. They also needed sturdy floors to support the weight of water-filled tubs.

Bath houses were often inexpensive, but were mostly frequented by the nobility, higher clergy, and wealthy townspeople. Merchants and the lower classes were more likely to bathe in *stews*, which offered heated water in wooden tubs and often a prostitute's services. Bath houses tended to be better built with tubs designed for one person. Stews often had larger tubs designed for a bather and a prostitute. In both, curtains often shielded the bather from drafts and public view.

Many towns closed their bath houses in the 14th century due to scandals and suspicion of public immorality. It is unclear to what extent bathers were separated by gender. Illustrations of men and women bathing together typically are interpreted as showing a prostitute and her customer, but might sometimes portray a married couple.

Jewish neighborhoods had a ritual bath (*mikvah*) for men and women, and might have their own bath house if local custom or law forbade Jews to bathe with Christians. The mikvah was often located underground, in part because it often had its own well to provide pure water, as well as a cistern to hold rainwater.

A few towns, including Bath, were known for their hot mineral-laden springs, which often were believed to have medicinal powers.

Bridges

A town's riverside location generally meant that it had one or two bridges for trade with the opposite bank. Urban bridges were rarely simple spans; they often included shops on each side of the roadway and water-powered mills below. Many included fortified gateways and drawbridge segments.

Often travelers were charged a toll to cross, which could provide a significant amount of revenue. Indeed, some bridges were built as investments – the landholder granted the builder the right to the tolls of the bridge (*pontage*) for a certain number of years in return for the investor building and maintaining the bridge. In other cases, a religious order such as the Augustinian Altopascio Order in Lucca, the Benedictine Fratres Pontifices in France, or the Order of St. Jacques du Haute Pas of Paris built bridges and

supported themselves from tolls and from offerings at a chapel on the bridge.

The material for a bridge varied depending on the river's current and the traffic likely to pass over it. Bridges were made entirely of timber, of a wooden roadway over stone piers, or entirely of stone. A typical span between piers ranged from five to twenty feet, although the arches of the famed Avignon bridge over the Rhône had spans of 100 feet. A bridge's piers were often protected by triangular projections (cutwaters) to shield them from the current and from collisions with boats, fallen trees, and other debris. Even with these precautions, bridges required constant maintenance to repair damage from water, collisions, and heavy carts with iron-shod wheels.

A bridge also affected river trade. It formed a physical obstruction to attackers trying to pass it. Boats had to pass under the arches, with clearance varying due to the river's height, and between the piers, which were often not evenly spaced. A bridge also narrowed the river and could produce complex currents and eddies. London Bridge's 19 piers narrowed the river by half, and could produce standing rapids six feet high.

Inhabited Bridges

Many urban bridges had houses and shops on the bridge itself. The most famous of these were London Bridge (built 1176-1209) and the Ponte Vecchio in Florence (built circa 1345). In both cases, the bridges were built on the site of earlier Roman bridges. London Bridge was the larger, with twenty arches, and buildings three to six floors high. Ponte Vecchio had only three arches and three story buildings on it. Rent from the bridge's buildings helped pay for repairs and upkeep, although London Bridge's Bridge Masters (sometimes called Bridge Wardens) came to own considerable land in the city and beyond it.

London's Bridge Masters were elected on Midsummer's Day from among the city's leading guilds. They could serve two consecutive one-year terms, and could be re-elected following a break in service. Several held the office for ten to twelve years; one served for 23 years. The Masters were responsible for collecting rents from the 140 houses and buildings on the bridge itself, and from lands and buildings owned by the bridge. They were served by a staff that included a clerk, carpenters, masons, sawyers, carters, cooks, rent-collectors, and a rat-taker.

Castle

Many towns had fortified buildings for their own defense, and to protect urban rulers in case of riot or insurrection. If a town was subject to a landholder, it might include the noble's castle, often fortified by its own walls, in addition to the town's walls. The Tower of London and the Louvre in Paris are both examples of castles which formed part of the town's defenses.

Towns might also include fortified houses owned by other landholders, or by higher clergy, and fortified monasteries (often fortified when they were outside the town's walls, and later absorbed as it expanded).

Cathedral

As the third year that followed the year one thousand drew near, there was to been seen over almost all the earth, but especially in Italy and in Gaul, a great renewal of church buildings; each Christian community was driven by a spirit of rivalry to have a more glorious church than the others. It was as if the world had shaken itself, and, casting off its old garments, had dressed itself again in every part in a white mantle of churches.

– Raoul Glaber, Benedictine monk, Historiarum libri quinque ab anno incarnationis (c. 1026)

Certainly not every town could boast of a cathedral (the seat of a bishopric), and not all bishoprics could build the ornate structures one associates with a medieval cathedral. In the mid-12th century, French towns began a competition to build the largest cathedral. Laon's cathedral reached 79 feet high in 1194. By 1163, Notre Dame in Paris reached 108 feet. Chartres exceeded it in 1194 at 121 feet. The largest completed cathedral, Amiens, reached 426 feet in length and 138 feet 10 inches in height in 1288.

The cathedral at Beauvais was the tallest unsuccessful attempt. Its nave reached 157 feet 6 inches in height in 1225, but part of its vault collapsed in 1284. Its builders made repairs over the next 50 years. Work was then interrupted by the Hundred Years War and recommenced in 1500. In 1593, the spire and bell tower collapsed, injuring a single priest. Had the collapse occurred minutes earlier or later, it would have collapsed in the midst of the Ascension Day services and killed thousands. Faced with a huge

repair bill, the cathedral chapter admitted defeat and finished the building in its truncated form.

Cathedral construction had a vast impact on the town and its surroundings. It consumed vast amounts of raw materials and labor over decades, sometimes centuries. Chartres was built in a mere 28 years, between 1194 and 1222. Reims took 70 years, Notre Dame in Paris 75, and Laon 85 years. The cathedral of Sens in Burgundy, which had a less dependable stream of income, took over a century, between 1128 and 1230. Construction might not end when the physical structure was complete. Subsequent bishops might renovate it, adding towers, spires, chapels, and windows.

During construction, the cathedral site was home to a large work force of artisans. Many traveled from building site to site as the construction progressed. Cathedral construction also drew pilgrims who, like modern tourists, needed lodging and food, and made offerings and gifts to the cathedral chapter.

Financing a cathedral was incredibly expensive; the surviving records suggest a typical cathedral chapter spent an average of 1,000 livre per year when actively building the structure. To make matters more complex, finances had to be maintained over decades, through multiple architects, bishops, and building committees.

Italian chapters relied on a building committee called an opera. It was often composed of three to six members, each serving for at least one year. They were charged with fund-raising and overall supervision. The operai were not paid, but were given gifts from the cathedral chapter. The opera delegated day-to-day management to a salaried purveyor.

Italian city-states also often built a separate baptistery alongside the cathedral. In the mid-12th century, bishops consolidated baptisms into a single Easter ceremony at which all of the commune's infants were baptized together. The Lateran baptistery, founded in 440, is one of the oldest. Its octagonal shape was a model for many Italian baptisteries. Florence's baptistery was built between 1059-1128. Pisa took much longer; its baptistery (the largest in northern Italy) was started in 1153, but not completed until 1363. Siena is one of the few Italian city-states which did not have a separate baptistery, but included it within the cathedral. France had a few cathedrals with detached baptisteries. In England, there was one at Canterbury.

Churches and Monasteries

A typical town might have had two dozen or more neighborhood churches, chapels, monasteries, and houses of religious orders. These buildings varied widely in size, age, style, and decoration. Moreover, they were not merely religious buildings, but were used for council meetings, elections, civil courts, storage, and various ceremonies. The Papacy tried to limit non-religious uses. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council strictly forbade household goods to be put in churches except when necessary to protect them from a fire or from war.

Churches and monasteries often had their own walled enclosure, especially if the building had originally been outside the town walls. The area within the church's enclosure was subject to church law, not that of the town, creating one or more cities within the overall town, each with its own rivalries, traditions, and needs.

Clock Towers

A few towns had mechanical clocks, which were developed in the 14th century. Some had moving hands, carillons, and mechanical figures. Milan's clock, built in 1335, is one of the oldest. The weight-driven clocks were accurate to within a half-hour per day.

Guild Halls

Guilds, organizations of master artisans and merchants, were wealthy, powerful forces in a town's politics and economy. Their large halls were places to meet, to store records and official standard weights and measures, to hold merchant courts, to inspect and store goods, and to display the guild's prominence to the town's residences and guests. The Florentine Palazzo dell' Arte della Lana, completed in 1308, was built for the city's powerful wool guild. In addition to its halls, it had a fortified tower where guild members could take refuge during unrest. The Guild Hall of Merchant Adventurers of York, built between 1357-61, also had a large great hall; the lower level of the hall held a chapel and a hospital for 13 poor people.

Hospitals

A medieval hospital or *hotel-Dieu* was created to care for the sick, the elderly, or pilgrims. Some served the public as a whole, others focused on specific groups like lepers, pilgrims, orphans, or the blind. Many of these institutions were created by a patron in gratitude for a miraculous cure. If the donor did not make sufficient financial provisions for ongoing care or if the hospital encountered hard times, it might dissolve or be merged into another hospital. Treatment was limited to fresh food, prayer, and medicinal bleeding.

During the 11th century, nearly every bishop built a hospital near the cathedral. Over time, the buildings were taken over for church administration or residences, and new hospitals created on the fringes of the town. Florence alone had 35 hospitals at the end of the 15th century.

Hospitals typically had wards for the sick, a chapel, and cloistered quarters for its clergy. Open wards, which were divided by wooden screens, were replaced with some private rooms in the 13th century. A hospital could be as small as a typical house, caring for a half-dozen patients, or be a large building caring for a hundred or more.

Inns

Most towns licensed inns for merchants and travelers; Milan had 150 in 1288. These were, in effect, large residences, often with one or more common rooms with multiple beds. A small inn might have three or four beds; a large one seven to ten beds;

and a very large inn eighteen to twenty beds, often with several beds to a room. Each bed often held three guests. Inns also often offered safe storage for a merchant's goods and either owned, or were allied with, a stable for horses and mules. Because innkeepers often acted as agents to help merchants sell their goods in town and navigate its taxes and tolls, inns often became associated with specific trades or nationalities.

Market Places

As noted above, the market was the town's reason for existence. Thus, its market place was critically important. It needed to be convenient both to local consumers, and to visiting merchants. It might be as simple as a large plaza or could have permanent stalls and covered areas. Each town would have at least one. Larger towns had two or three, each specializing in different goods.

In England, a market cross marked the site of the marketplace. The cross could be a small cross or obelisk, or it could be a building or tower. Norwich's town cross, built in 1411, was a 60-foot-tall building and was one of the largest market crosses outside London. The market also held the *tron*, a public scale or weighing beam with the town's official weights and measures.

Mills and Factories

Medieval towns used their rivers to power mills. Some of the earliest mills were built in the 4th and 5th centuries, and were used to grind grain. A typical grain mill would grind four to six quarters (32 to 48 bushels) of grain per day. A typical person ate at least twelve bushels of grain per year. Thus, a typical town would have one grain mill wheel for every 600 to 1,200 inhabitants. The exact number depended on the size of the wheel, how it was powered (overshot, undershot, or horizontal), and the average flow of the current providing its power. Each mill powered one grinding wheel. Mills specialized in grinding grain for bread or making malt (for brewing and animal feed). Using the same mill wheel for both tended to affect the flavor of the malt and the consistency of the bread flour. Mills for other purposes, such as fulling cloth, were first mentioned in Normandy in 1087. Because grain mills were more profitable than other

kinds of mills, other kinds of mills existed only where there was a surplus of water power.

Mills were expensive to build and to maintain. A mill was usually built and owned by a landholder or by a religious order. The church typically owned between half and three-quarters of a town's mills. A prospective owner had to create an appropriate flow, often creating a mill dam. The mill building needed strong foundations, stone channels for water, two millstones, and the oak or chestnut waterwheels and gears. The building had to support the heavy equipment, and endure the vibration of its gears. It also had to contain fires which might result from grain dust and the friction of the mill's wooden parts. Sometimes, the sturdy building was used as a temporary fortification or prison.

In the 15th century, some rural water mills were converted to wind mills, which were easier and cheaper to build and repair, but less reliable. It was rare to find enough steady wind or space for a wind mill in an urban setting.

Mines

A few towns had mines beneath the town streets. Paris' Roman limestone mines were extended deep underground in the 12th century to mine hard limestone for Notre Dame, the Louvre castle, and other buildings. In the Holy Roman Empire, salt mines were found near, and sometimes under, towns.

Ovens

Most houses had their own fireplaces and hearths for cooking and heating, although Milan forbade private hearths to reduce the risk of fire. Bakers, of course, had their own ovens; their buildings had tile roofs for safety reasons. Towns also often provided communal ovens for residents to bake bread and meals.

London had public cook shops, a variation on a communal oven, which provided pre-cooked meals and cooked meat.

Residences

Most of a town's buildings were residences. They commonly had shops on their first floor, with the shopkeeper's residence on the upper floor or floors. In the rear, many residences had small yards for livestock, tiny worksheds, gardens, and the disposal of household garbage. Even merchants' palaces in Italian city-states often had store-rooms and offices, or a least a study to conduct business, on their ground floor.

A house often had washing hanging from poles on its façade. In southern climates, awnings suspended from poles provided shade from the summer sun. Some houses had a holy image or statue in a niche on their exterior, sometimes with a candle placed in front of it.

In England and northern France, houses were typically made with timber frames and wattle-and-daub walls. In Italy, brick was more common. Stone buildings were more expensive, but more durable and more fire-resistant. Windows were small and often covered with linen, hide, or oiled parchment. Glass windows, made with tiny panes, were rare. Natural

light was obscured by narrow streets and overhanging buildings. Some buildings actually touched across the street, forming a *hautpass*, which provided extra room for the residences, and braced each building against the other.

A town's poorest residents lived in windowless rooms on the upper floors of residences, or in hovels in back yards or courtyards. Artisans generally rented houses, which they shared with apprentices and servants. A small artisan's house might measure only 15 feet by 15 feet.

In northern Italy, the wealthiest families owned large fortified homes. These buildings often had stone towers, 150 to 200 feet high, which were both refuges and places from which to drop stones and oil on intruders. The largest of these towers, the Torre degli Asinelli in Bologna, was 315 feet high. These places were often shared by several closely related families.

More distant relatives lived in neighboring buildings, which were often linked by arches or bridges.

Shops

As noted above, most residences in a town's center had a shop on the lower level. Other retail buildings included "lock-up" shops – a small room or rooms without an attached residence used for sales, work, and storage, and semi-permanent market stalls used for sales and sometimes storage. In 1234, Canterbury had 200 shops in its center. In 1300, Chester had 270 shops and 15 selds (private bazaars; see p. 45). In 1437, Winchester had 437 shops and 102 semi-permanent stalls in its main marketplace.

Location was critically important. Generally, the building's narrow side faced towards the street, leaving room for only one shop. Where a building's long side faced a major street, the owner might divide it into two or three narrow shops, little bigger than permanent market stalls.

Shops generally had large windows to let in light and display wares. Often it had two horizontal shutters – when open, the lower one (supported by two legs) became a display shelf, and the upper one (hung from rods or chains) an awning-like shade and rain barrier. To minimize theft, a typical door was narrow (27"), allowing only one person to enter at a time. Valuable goods were made, kept, and sold deep within the shop. Cheaper goods could be sold from the window. At night, the door and window would be closed and barred. The shop might also have internal wooden shutters to further secure the wide window opening. Stores might also hang wares like sausages and dried meats, shoes, or tools of the owner's trade from external poles as advertisements.

Starting in the mid-13th century, some buildings had jetties (cantilevered upper stories), which provided shade and rain protection for the lower stories, at the cost of narrowing the upper portions of the street. Pedestrians might linger under its shelter, and be attracted to the goods displayed in its stores. The jetty's beams could also be decorated to further attract customers.

In 13th century Chester, some merchants built a group of shops on both the ground floor and the upper story, connected by covered walkways. The two-tiered district covered four main streets of the town center. Shoppers saw the upper-story goods from the street, and climbed stairs to reach the galleries and bridges. This two-level shopping area was unique in Europe.

Roads

"Roads", in this context, refers to the travel routes across the countryside. Technically, these were outside the physical boundaries of a town, but they were key trade routes and a matter of urban concern. The most common roads were the remnants of the old Roman system. Because they were built for military purposes, they often did not follow logical trade routes. However, even in ruins, the Roman roads were often better than their medieval counterparts. Landholders and monarchs built their own roads, and charged tolls for their use.

A 13th-century Veronese contract describes medieval road construction. The builder first laid a foundation of earth twenty-four feet wide and two feet deep. Then, the builder laid a layer of small stones or gravel twelve feet wide and one foot deep. The entire length was bordered by a drainage ditch on one side. The resulting road was narrow. If two travelers met and could not pass, custom required the one with the lightest load, or which was least subject to damage, to give way.

Streets

Streets, on the other hand, were within the town's boundaries. Streets were often paved with a bed of gravel or sand, over which was a layer of stones or pebbles that was tamped down. Because it was rare to completely close a street to repair it, new layers were often placed over incompletely removed old layers, making the street higher over time. Often a street had a drainage ditch in its center, and there were occasional open cesspits. Towns began to pave major streets and squares with large stones starting in the mid-13th century.

London streets were, in theory, wide enough for two carts to pass abreast or for sixteen armed men to ride side by side. The widest streets in late 15th century Bristol were fifty feet wide. Others were thirty-five feet wide. Lanes and alleys might be six to nine feet wide. Homeowners often encroached on the streets with sheds, steps, overhanging upper levels, signs, and solars. Sometimes, the homeowner asked for a permission to encroach on the public ways. Most, however,

took the chance that a minor expansion would be unnoticed, and thus tried to avoid the delays, bribes, and risk that permission would be refused.

Normally, those who owned property along a street were responsible for maintaining and paving a section of it along their frontage and up to the middle of the roadway. If a building owner did not pay taxes for this work within three months of receiving notice, his goods could be seized and sold to pay the bill. Public squares and the areas around walls and gates were maintained at public expense. This was often funded by *pavage*, a fee on goods entering town based on the weight and type of cart carrying it. (Pedestrians and personal goods were usually immune from this fee.) A municipal paviour or surveyor of the streets was often appointed to oversee repairs and cleanliness.

Roman Ruins

In Italy, and along the Mediterranean coast, large Roman structures were used as frameworks for buildings or mined for their stone. Numerous European churches and cathedrals reused parts of their Roman predecessors both to save costs and to borrow some of the allure of the Roman past.

In Rome itself, the Colosseum was a crumbling ruin used by prominent Roman families for homes, like caves in a cliff. Another Roman family had fortified the Roman Theater of Marcellus into houses, apartments, and a fortified tower. (A family similarly transformed the Roman amphitheater in Arles, along the French Mediterranean coast.) The catacombs, although ransacked by the Goths and Lombards, were still sometimes used for shelters and secret meetings. In other Italian cities such as Orvieto, Etruscan excavations were supplemented with medieval tunnels and rooms, honeycombing the area under the city.

Synagogues

A Jewish house of worship was a rare building in medieval towns. While small numbers of Jewish families could be found in many towns, large Jewish communities were uncommon. If a town was large enough to build its own synagogue, the building was used as a combination meeting house, house for prayers, place for religious studies, and hall for community meetings. Customarily, Jewish builders were forbidden to build synagogues that were better decorated than the town's churches, thus the buildings were often plain from the exterior, with decorated interiors.

Town Hall

The first purpose-built town halls were Italian. Rome built one in 1151, Parma in 1196, and Padua in 1200. Other Italian city-states soon followed. Previously, most town councils met in a church or in their members' homes. Other northern European countries began building town halls in the mid-13th century.

Town halls were built for meetings and to house municipal records, especially tax records. Many had bell towers to summon the populace, and balconies from which leaders could address crowds. Notaries and clerics worked in the halls copying records and drafting documents.

Walls and Gates

Towns often needed defensive works to protect their residents from bandits, robbers, and soldiers. Not all towns had walls, nor were such walls as existed often well maintained. The state of a town's defenses depended on the current and historical stability of the region. Montpellier, for example, had stone walls about 6' wide, and 40 to 50' tall, with a total of eleven gates and more than 20 towers. In England, there were many unwalled towns, and those towns that built walls used them more to force goods through gates where they could be taxed than as defensive works.

Large towns might have several sets of walls. Each set would be built beyond the current inhabited portion of the town, which would then expand to fill the entire enclosure. Suburbs would develop beyond the walls, which would eventually be enclosed in a new set of defenses. Thus, a town might grow along its roads, rather than in a more symmetrical pattern.

With walls came gates. Unlike a castle, towns often had several gates to ease trade. In addition to their military uses, gates also allowed towns to control access, collect tolls, and inspect goods as they entered or left. Urban gates were often decorated with towers and drawbridges, as much a display of wealth and power as useful defenses. Gate houses were also often used as prisons or residences.

SAMPLE REAL ESTATE PRICES AND CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Item	Date	Location	Cost
Barn, large	1309-10	Buckinghamshire	83 livre (see p.38 for a discussion of coinage)
Brick, per thousand	15th C.	Florence	4 lire per 1,000 including transportation to work site
Brick, per thousand	1429	Venice	10 lire, 10 soldi
Bridge, stones, purchase	1412	Romans	72 florins per 100 stones for arch
Bridge, stones, transport	1412	Romans	40 florins per 100 stones for arch (by land); 20 florins per 100 stones per arch (by water)
Bridge, wood, purchase	1390	Romans	50 florins per thirty 30' high fir trees
Bridge, wood, transport	1390	Romans	42 florins per thirty 30' trees
Chapel within church	14th C.	Florence	210 fl. (typical)
Church, large	15th C.	Venice	38,000 lire (for construction)
Iron bars	1425	Venice	6 soldi for 4 bars
Iron door lock	1431	Venice	1 lire 5 soldi
Gatehouse, stone	1313	Warwickshire	16 livre, 13 sou, 4 dernier (not including timber, or transporting stone)
Glass	1436	Venice	1 ½ soldi/pane
Gold Leaf	1432	Venice	10 lire 14 soldi per thousand
Kiln, for bricks, tax value	1427	Florence	100-200 florins
Kiln, for tiles, tax value	1427	Florence	30-40 florins
House, bishop's	13th C.	London	50 marks
House, row of 8	1415	London	46 *l* 13 *s* 4 *d*
House, small	1335	Paris	70 l
House, large	1341	Paris	200 l
House, Mercer's, with chapel	Mid-15th C.	London	100 marks (carpenter's fee)
House, Merchant's	1313	London	36 *l* (carpenter's fee)
Lead	1425	Venice	2 soldi/ pound
Lime, barrel	1429	Venice	6 soldi, 9 denari
Market stalls	1380-1	Exeter	£ 11 (for 12 stalls in enclosed meat market)
Mill	1299	Fladbury	80 marks
Mill	1396	Ivinghoe	65 *l* 9 *s* 3 ½ *d*
Mill, fulling	1293	Kent	38 *s* 6 *d*
Mill, horse-powered	1408	Ivinghoe	108 *s* 4 *d*
Mill, weir in river	1370	Downton	118 *s* 3 *d*
Mill cogwheel	1373	Castleford	6 *s* 8 *d*
Mill stone, for bread	1301	Taunton	2 *l* 2 ½ *d*
Mill stone, for malt	1301	Taunton	9 *s*
Mill stone	1390	Congleton	11 *s* 1 ¾ *d*
Mill waterwheel	1373	Castleford	10 *s*

The tables are drawn from various sources, and to some extent reflect the idiosyncrasies both of surviving records and of information reported by various historians. Prices have not been translated into a standard measure; some differences may reflect changes in the metal content of coins. Thus, the tables are of more use for showing trends and examples than for allowing direct comparison of prices from one region or time to another.

Item	Date	Location	Cost
Nails	1425	Venice	10 soldi per 50
Palace	1426-36	Venice	23,000 lire (estimated total building cost for the Cà d'Oro)
Pasture, enclosed	1299	Throckmorton	5 marks
Rent, fulling mill	1294	Kent	8 s/yr.
Rent, fulling mill	1302	Kent	18 d/yr.
Rent, fulling mill	1394	Exeter	40 s/yr.
Rent, room in brothel by prostitute	14th C.	Nuremburg	7 pfennings/week, plus 1 per customer and 3 per customer who stayed the night
Rent, residence	1427	Florence	5 florins/yr.
Rent, laborer residence	1427	Florence	10-20 lire/yr.
Rent, standard lot	1155	Scarborough	4 p/yr. if gable towards street
Rent, standard lot	1155	Scarborough	5 p/yr. if side towards street
Rent, standard lot	1196	Stratford-on-Avon	12 d/yr.
Rent, shop	1380	Exeter	16 s/ yr. (near guild hall)
Rent, shop	1380	Exeter	3 – 10 s./yr. (on bridge)
Rent, shop	1427	Florence	10 ½ florins/yr.
Rent, shop	1457	Florence	18 florins/yr.
Rent, town house	1281	Paris	20 l. /yr.
Rent, town house	1297	Berwick	10 l 3 s 5 ½ d
Rent, town house	1297	Edinburgh	16 d /yr.
Rent, town house	1297	Jedburgh	8 d /yr.
Rent, town house	1297	Haddington	12 d /yr.
Rent, town house	1297	Renfew	40 d /yr.
Rent, town house	1297	Stirling	20 d /yr.
Rent, town house	1300	Berwick	46 s 8 d /yr.
Rent, town house	1300	Berwick	20 s /yr.
Rent, town house	1320	Paris	27 l. /yr.
Stone, cartload	1490	Florence	8-13 soldi
Stone, cartload	1500	Florence	12 soldi
Tower	1180	Danemarche, France	1175 l parisis (for architect and laborers)
Tenement	1424	London	62 l
Tenement, rent	1424	London	40 s/yr.
Ultramarine	1432	Venice	26 lire 15 soldi / pound
Waller, for roof	1390	Florence	1 soldo per square braccio
Waller, for wall	1360	Florence	12 soldi per braccio (about 27-28") (inc. materials)
Waller, for wall	1390	Florence	2 soldi per braccio
Waller, for wall	1432	Florence	8-9 soldi per braccio (inc. materials)
Waller, for wall	1464	Florence	2 soldi per braccio
Window glass	1324	Paris	2 s per sq. ft. (clear)
Window glass	1324	Paris	3 s per sq. ft. (colored)
Window glass	1410	Ghent	6 s per sq. ft. (clear)

Church

The religious life of a town centered on its many churches and monasteries. The Catholic Church was a significant political, economic, and social presence. In older towns, the local bishop often became the center of urban government after the Roman Empire's fall. Other towns grew around a monastery, whose abbot had a significant voice in the town's government. Even if a town subsequently gained political independence, its bishop or abbot remained a powerful political force.

Many towns started with only one parish church, which might be the cathedral (seat of its bishop). As the town's population expanded, it generally outgrew that church. More parishes were created, along with monasteries, friaries, and other religious houses. Some large towns became the sites for communities of scholars, who formed a university. Each parish priest, abbot, and university leader had his own political and economic interests. Some were subject to the local bishop, others to their own orders, and all ultimately to the Pope in Rome. There could be a large number of churches. Medieval London was divided into nearly 100 parishes; Norwich and York into over 40 each; Worcester and Cambridge into 10 each. A few towns, such as Westminster, remained essentially one parish. Of course, the number of parishes does not include monasteries, mendicant houses, and other religious organizations.

The Church held a variety of legal privileges for its property and clergy. As a general rule, its property was exempt from secular laws and authorities. It did not pay taxes or tolls to the town. Clergy, about six percent of a cathedral city's population, were immune from prosecution by secular rulers and could be punished only by their own superiors. Some of these rights extended to tenants of church property, even if they had not taken holy orders. Moreover, the church's property tended to expand at a slow pace because parishioners donated or sold land and buildings to it, and it rarely sold property to secular rulers. This expansion caused significant friction between the town and its clergy, and often resulted in agreements about the scope of church properties and when newly acquired properties obtained privileges and exemptions.

Within the clergy, tithes were a frequent source of disagreement. The tithe was a tax on one-tenth of every family's annual profits from agriculture or business. Everyone was subject to it, even the clergy. In addition, when someone died, their heirs owed their parish church *mortuary*, a fee "for tithes willfully or ignorantly detained, or imperfectly paid." Churches and religious orders struggled between themselves over which urban residents owed tithe to their churches and how tithe revenues would be divided between the receiving church and its superiors. Churches also quarreled over donations from the public, burial rights (and their attendant fees), and other gifts.

For the public, the Church was a key part of daily life. Many urban residents worried about their souls. Usury was a sin. The New Testament itself suggested that "It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter heaven." (Matthew 19:23, 24) Clerics preached, often in vain, against vanity and ostentatious displays of wealth. Thus, urban merchants and artisans often made public displays of their faith by gifts to their parish churches and to religious orders. Each guild had its patron saint and donated generously to its associated parish. Workers who could not afford cash gifts offered labor or in-kind goods. In later centuries, merchants and artisans became more respectable in the

clerics' eyes. But even then, charismatic preachers railing against ostentatious wealth could play on the wealthy urban classes' uncertainty and guilt, at least until the preacher overreached himself or was caught in a scandal.

Socially, a town could be divided by religion. The highest ranks of the clergy were the equivalent of secular nobles – wealthy and powerful with significant administrative duties over scattered manors. All other clergy were set apart by their vows, which made them subject only to ecclesiastical law. These could be further divided between those ultimately subject to the local bishop, and those subject to their superiors and ultimately to the papacy. In addition to the laity, there were also protected religious minorities like Jews (generally royal subjects with protected rights to exercise their faith), and, in some areas, Muslims and Eastern Orthodox clergy and laity. Finally, there were those whose religious faith was not protected, or outlawed, like non-Christian household slaves and heretics.

ALMSHOUSES

Monasteries and churches distributed money, bread, and clothing to the poor at regular intervals, with special donations on certain holy days, often including the feast day of the church or order's patron saint. Over time, churches, monastic orders, guilds, and hospitals created almshouses dedicated to distributing charity. Often, the houses sheltered thirteen paupers (a symbolic figure). Others sheltered a large number of paupers, including orphans. Local residents were given preference over others.

In return for charity, the paupers had to agree to obey the house's rules. These usually prohibited drunkenness, fornication, and fighting. The residents were also forbidden to beg. Generally, they lived in individual rooms arranged around a courtyard, similar to a monastery's cloister.

CATHEDRAL

A cathedral is the chief church of a diocese (a bishop's district); the location of the bishop's throne (*cathedra*); and is usually close to the bishop's residence. In addition to its religious importance, a cathedral is also the administrative center for a large number of churches and monasteries. Senlis, the smallest diocese in medieval France, had 73 parishes to oversee. A typical diocese might have 2,000 to 3,000 parishes.

As a building, a cathedral need be no bigger than any other church. The term is associated, however, with grand architectural masterpieces which housed a large collection of religious relics and drew pilgrims from miles around.

Within the cathedral is the high altar, generally separated from public view by a wooden rood screen. Only the bishop and the chapter of monks associated with the cathedral were allowed to be near the high altar. Scattered around the sides of the building were smaller chapels, often donated by wealthy patrons. The chapels allowed several priests to simultaneously say Masses on behalf of the dead. At one point, Canterbury cathedral had about 400 altars, and 600 priests who celebrated Masses for the dead four times each day.

Cathedrals and churches were also civic centers. City officials often took their oaths of office in the cathedral. Markets were sometimes held in the nave. Bishops and clergy blessed the city's militia at the cathedral before they left for war. Major proclamations were often made from the cathedral's porch. In Ferrara, the city's statutes were carved on the cathedral wall in 1187.

In Italy, perhaps moreso than elsewhere in Europe, the cathedral and its piazza, were sacred spaces. Towns took special care to keep the cathedral and its surroundings clean, neat, and free from unseemly activities. Modena threatened anyone who profaned its cathedral or piazza with perpetual banishment. In Pistoia, a special contingent of guards was assigned to prevent couples from copulating in the cathedral of San Iacopo during the saint's festival in July.

Bishop

A medieval bishop was a powerful landowner, a man of enormous wealth and secular power. He was also the spiritual leader of his diocese and the supreme civil authority within the bishopric's vast holdings. He had the rights of high and low justice, and the right to mint coins. As a landholder, he was often a warrior. The bishops of Senlis and Beauvais, for example, were crucial to the French victory at Bouvines in 1214.

To Be a Bishop

A new bishop's role was complex and contradictory. If he were fortunate, his election was essentially undisputed and he could quickly receive his pall from the Pope. If he were unlucky, he might find himself dealing with years of expensive litigation in the papal courts, while perhaps being locked out of his own see by a rival claimant.

The new bishop then had to take possession of his secular estates, which might involve fees paid to his feudal liege. He had to decide whether to keep existing officials, or replace them with his own officers, and deal with any debts and disputes left to him by his predecessor. This would likely involve a tour of his estates, which might extend over a wide area.

Finally, he had to resolve his supervisory duties in his parish, which again would likely involve touring major parishes, monasteries, hospitals, and other clerical institutions to assess the state of the parish's physical and spiritual health. Again, this might involve keeping or replacing his officials. He would also be expected to hold a synod, often in the spring, to introduce himself and to discuss issues facing the diocese. (His administrative duties would make it hard for him to be a scholar, if he were so inclined, although a few bishops and archbishops managed to balance those roles.)

If he were fortunate, he already had experience administering complex estates either as the son of a landholder, as an abbot, or as an official in his predecessor's administration. If not, he would be more dependent on his officials, who might have their own agendas.

The new bishop would find himself expected to act as a judge, resolving disputes on his many manors, and between his parishes and clergy. He likely had his own prison, where errant clergy could be imprisoned for misdeeds. Depending on the state of his parish, he might find himself involved in reform efforts, or battling heresy among his parishioners. He would likely find himself in a tangle of existing disputes involving his neighboring landholders over his secular lands, and resolving his parishes' disputes with each other and with rival clergy.

He would have to set up a household able to travel with him as he made his rounds among his parishes and estates. He might also be expected to attend the royal court and that of the nearest major landholder for his diocese. He would be expected to be a good host to guests, and to participate in hunts and other social activities among nobles. As a secular landholder, he would also be expected to maintain knights and to lead them into battle if necessary.

All of those duties generally came with a generous income and a lifestyle luxurious by medieval standards. If his health permitted, he might well enjoy the benefits of his new role for many decades.

Unlike other landholders, bishops were elected and held their office for life unless promoted to another office or deposed by the Pope. Before the 11th century, they were elected by popular vote of their parishioners, often with considerable influence from the local landholders. The Papacy struggled to assert its power over appointing its own officials during the Investiture Controversy. The issue was finally resolved by the Concordat of Worms (1122), which eliminated the overt role of secular landholders and monarchs in appointing church officials, but allowed some influence over the process.

Thus, starting in the 11th and 12th centuries, bishops were elected by the chapter of monks who served the cathedral. In practice, powerful landholders often drafted a list of nominees for the chapter to consider; normally, the bishop was a clergy member from a noble family, often related to nearby secular landholders. If the chapter chose a candidate who was not on the list, neighboring landholders might resist the new candidate, sometimes violently. The Papacy would then intervene to protect the Church's nominal independence, but Rome was quite far from most bishoprics and its influence waxed and waned depending on the Pope's reputation and ability.

Although the bishop was chosen by the chapter, his relationship to it was often hostile. Laon's bishops, for example, issued frequent rules prohibiting the monks (canons) from singing their offices with undignified haste, talking in the cathedral, talking to women, carrying weapons, selling goods in the cathedral, or accepting bribes. The need to frequently

repeat the rules suggests the canons often disobeyed. In a few cases, bishops who died from a sudden illness were rumored to have been poisoned by their own canons.

The basic duty of a bishop was, and is, to ordain priests and to oversee the parishes within his diocese. Bishops were divided into the "Ordinary" (concerned with administration), and "Suffragan" (responsible for sacramental duties). A large diocese might have 2-6 suffragan bishops and one ordinary bishop ("the" bishop of the see).

A bishop had a duty to visit each parish in his diocese once per year to interview the clergy and parishioners and resolve any ecclesiastical lawsuits. Many bishops spent considerable time traveling from manor to manor, visiting parishes enroute. In 1289-90, the Bishop of Swinfield moved his household 81 times in the course of ten months. He spent 57 days at one manor, 34 days at another, and 29 at a third. Over a period of 51 days in the spring, he stayed in 38 different places. It took 30-40 horses to move his household, which included a pack of hunting hounds.

Unfortunately, a typical diocese had too many parishes scattered over too large an area to reasonably visit that often. Archbishop Thomas Corbridge, of York, spent his entire four-and-one-half year reign (1300-1305) in his dioceses visiting his parishes and still did not get to many. Richard Gravesend of Lincoln tried to visit each of his 800 parishes at least once every three years during his reign (1258-79). Even conscientious bishops often delegated their duties to various aides, including the *archdeacon* (charged with collecting the bishop's share of tithes), *archpriest* (later *dean*, a ceremonial post), *chancellor* (private secretary, head of the cathedral school, library, and archives, judge of cases not handled by archdeacons, and judge of appeals from archdeacons' decisions), *vicar forane* (later *rural dean*, regional administrator and investigator), and *vicar general* (special confessor for sins normally only absolvable by the bishop). Local parishes often hosted the archdeacon or rural dean, who often visited on the feast of the church's patron saint to say Mass.

When the bishop did personally visit a church, it was a significant event. He could arrive with upwards of 40 servants and their horses, which the parish was expected to house and feed, and could stay as long as he wished. (The Third Lateran Conference (1179) limited an archbishop's visiting retinue to himself and 50 people, a bishop to himself and 30 others, an archdean to 7 others, and a dean to 2 others.) During his visit, he questioned the parish clergy and the rural dean or archdeacon about the state of the parish, its priest and parishioners. His servants might physically inspect the church, its vestments, and vessels, and interview leading parishioners about their religious education and their priest's behavior. Often the bishop gave a sermon and announced official decrees. He might also give the rite of confirmation to local youths, but records suggest this was a rare event.

Of course, the bishop also had duties as a secular landholder and employed various manorial officials such as stewards, receivers, and auditors who managed his lands. His role as secular landholder was a key to his wealth and power. In England, a large part of a bishop's income came from his manors. The Archbishop of Canterbury held 34 manors in the 13th century; the bishop of Winchester held 50 manors at that time. Like other secular landholders, he could be embroiled in property disputes, sometimes lasting across several bishops' reigns. As a secular landholder, he had duties to inferior landholders (knights), and often duties to a feudal superior, which might involve military service. Prominent bishops were often summoned to the royal court and, in England, to Parliament. The bishop's religious and secular duties also required a staff of servants to aid him in maintaining a suitable household and hosting visiting nobles and clergy.

The bishop could, and often did, compel all of the clergy in his diocese to attend an annual synod. Clergy could pay a fee in the range of 1-2 *s* to avoid the trip. At this meeting, civil and ecclesiastical lawsuits were heard and resolved, reforms were announced, and the clergy informed of the latest directives from Rome. The synod was normally held in the fall, just after the harvest. Some bishops held a second synod in the spring, before planting.

A bishop's job was expensive. Despite the Bishop of Winchester's enormous income (over 2,977 l. worth of land in 1291), he was often in debt. Bishop Godfrey Lucy borrowed 3,000 l. from the chapter in 1200; his successor, William Raleigh, borrowed another large sum in 1238 to pay fees caused by a dispute over his election. Boniface of Savoy inherited a debt of 14,670 l. when he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1244; he was eventually able to pay off his debt. His successors were less

fiscally able; Archbishop Winchelsey found himself owing 3,000 l. to a group of Italian merchants in 1295. Much of the money was spent on the bishop's household, including various officials, attendants, servants, and soldiers.

By the 14th century, the Roman Curia charged a new bishop a fee called the *servitia communia*, which equaled a third of the diocese's first year's income. In 1215, Walter Gray, the incoming archbishop of York, was charged 10,000 l. to have his election ratified by the papacy. In the late Middle Ages, bishops were encouraged to borrow the sum from papal bankers at a high interest rate. Moreover, bishops were, in theory, required to travel to Rome for a private papal interview. The trip, and the attendant bribes and fees, were quite expensive, as was the fee for an exemption from the journey. In England and France, the crown claimed the right to seize the lands of a bishopric during a vacancy (the "right of regalia"). During the interregnum, the crown had a landholder's authority to collect rents and taxes, settle disputes, and even grant a charter to a subject town. Once elected, the new bishop had to appear before the crown to reclaim his rights, a visit which often involved its own "gifts" and fees.

Canons

The canons of a cathedral, or of any church, were a group of clergy who had entered a religious order. The name came from the canon, or rules, that defined their community (*chapter*). There were several kinds of canons: cathedral canons (who formed the council of the bishop), collegiate canons (who performed Masses and other sacraments), prebendiary canons (who received a fixed income called a *benefice* or *prebend*, for performing Masses and other duties), and simple canons (who had some duties, but did not receive a benefice or prebend). The canons' primary duty was to attend Mass and choir services, sing the psalms, deliberate in chapter meetings, and escort the bishop as needed. Normally, a canon was bound to his chapter and could not travel from it for any long period without official permission.

Canons were usually appointed by the bishop, by the chapter itself, or, in some cases, directly by the Pope. In a few cases, the founding patron of a church or the creator of a prebend or benefice reserved the right to nominate canons.

A cathedral might have 30 to 80 canons to advise and assist the bishop in his duties. Although the bishop may have been a member of the chapter before his election, after election he was no longer a part of it. Instead, the chapter was led by its *dean* (sometimes known as a *provost* or *archpriest*). It might also have officers like a treasurer, secretary, and sacristan. In the early Middle Ages, the chapter divided its duties and resources equally. From the 9th century onward, some chapters became lax, dividing revenues unevenly and no longer living together as a religious community. In 1059, the Papacy announced a series of reforms to curb these problems. It found the need to announce or repeat reforms in later centuries, suggesting the problem was ongoing.

CHURCHES AND SUBORDINATE CHAPELS

Every town had one or more parish churches. If a cathedral was present, several urban churches might be subordinate chapels, administered by the cathedral's canons. Other churches were independent parish churches, subject to the bishop just like all the other parishes in the diocese, but otherwise competing with each other for parishioners and their tithes, fees, and donations, and for travelers' gifts and donations.

Each church had one or more priests associated with it. The priest said daily religious services, performed sacraments, distributed charity, helped parishioners who needed work find it, helped those who needed laborers find them, arbitrated disputes between parishioners, and gave religious lessons to children. A typical church had four to five clergy and about 300 parishioners. Parish clergy were often assisted by churchwardens, elected by the parishioners and paid a small stipend to help manage the building, vestments, and vessels. Each parish was expected to maintain itself from donations, fees, tithes, and rents from lands it might own besides its own building. The Church discouraged priests from requesting payments for sacraments, but clergy encouraged parishioners to make offerings on major religious holidays, the feast day of the church's patron saint, and during Masses said for the dead.

The clergy collected the benefice of the parish and either performed sacraments, or delegated that role to other clergy. Parish clergy were responsible for

teaching their parishioners about their faith, correcting sins, preventing heresy, and performing the sacraments. Parishioners expected the clergy to protect them from supernatural harm and from natural disasters like floods, fire, heavy storms, and illness.

All Catholic clergy were, ideally, celibate. Pope Gregory VIII mandated celibacy for the clergy in 1074. Enforcement varied. On the one hand, urban clergy could be more closely supervised than their rural counterparts. On the other hand, many of their superiors were known for their own improprieties and were willing to turn a blind eye to discreet affairs.

Churches were expected to give charity to the poor and hospitality to travelers. On feast days, churches were often crowded with the sick and dying lying on blankets or on litters praying for a miraculous cure. Some stayed at a church for weeks or months in hopes that their prayers would be answered. The ill penitents sought to touch reliquaries or relics – some bought dust, stones, or bits of cloth that had been placed near a relic or tomb and were believed to have absorbed miraculous qualities. Others ate the wax and wicks of candles that had burned in a church's shrines.

Churches were also often crowded with the urban poor seeking distributions of bread and money. Wealthy parishioners often left money in their wills to be donated to the poor during their funeral Mass in return for the beneficiary's prayers for the deceased's soul.

Relics

Among a church's most powerful symbols were its relics – the remnants of saints or even of Christ himself. Every church had at least one relic. A major cathedral might own hundreds. In Laon, hundreds of relics hung, each in their own gold and gem encrusted reliquaries, from a huge iron chandelier in the center of the cathedral's crossing. The faithful sought to touch relics, or at least the reliquaries, and in some cases would settle for cloth coverings, or even dust

> In Laon, hundreds of relics hung, each in their own gold and gem encrusted reliquaries, from a huge iron chandelier.

that collected on tombs, or waste water from cleaning the tombs or reliquaries. (Holy water and a consecrated host were also held in high esteem.)

While few relics could be authenticated, the public did not seem to doubt their provenance or power. Guilbert de Nogent, a 12th century French chronicler, was one of the few skeptics. He wrote of his doubts about a relic of his home cathedral, a dove made of crystal and gold said to contain milk from the Virgin. The bird, housed in an ivory reliquary, was displayed on the cathedral's high altar on the festival of the Virgin's Milk (January 25). Among the more improbable European relics were the three heads of St. Quiriace (each found in a different part of France), two heads of St. John the Baptist (Amiens and Constantinople), multiple parts of the True Cross and of the Virgin's clothing, Christ's blood, the aforementioned Virgin's milk, an Italian convent which claimed to hold a piece of clay from which Adam was made, one of Enoch's fingers, and an almond from Paradise; and eight different claimants to being the foreskin of Christ (Lateran in Rome, Sainte Chapelle in Paris, Santiago de Compostela, Le Puy en Velay, Calcata (near Rome), Charroux, Coulombs, Langres).

As manifestations of the divine, relics were kept in richly decorated containers. Saints who were renowned for their poverty during their life would be honored with vast riches in Paradise. Thus, medieval priests felt it appropriate to reflect that honor on earth by decorating the saint's shrines and remains. The reliquaries also served as emergency stores of cash – gems could be sold and gold melted down in an extreme crisis.

Relics could be vital sources of gifts and donations. Pilgrims and parishioners made offerings to churches holding important relics, often in thanks for or in hope of a miraculous cure or divine intervention. Canterbury cathedral received nearly two-thirds of its annual income from pilgrims' offerings. On the other hand, the cash received was often spent to feed pilgrims and guests drawn by the relics, thus the net

profit is uncertain. Relics were sometimes stolen by rival clergy or by powerful nobles, so churches often hired armed guards for their displays, and to accompany relics when they were displayed to the public.

Mendicant Chapters

The mendicant orders (friars), of which the Dominicans and Franciscans are the best known, arose in the late 13th century. At the time, the Church was struggling against two powerful heretical movements, the Cathars and the Waldensians, who preached a life of simple poverty in contrast to the decadent lives of many wealthy bishops and abbots. Unlike monks, friars did not live in cloisters and were not isolated from the community. Instead, they were expected to wander, preach, and live simple lives as an example to the faithful. Their orders' houses and churches were often built near urban gates and major streets, making it easy for friars to preach in nearby public squares. As reformers, the mendicant orders attracted patrons and donations from merchants, nobles, and even royal grants. As with other reform orders, the influx of wealth and property quickly led to concerns that the orders would themselves become corrupted. Some chapters succumbed to temptation. Others struggled to remain true to their founders' ideals.

Friars could be extremely influential figures in town life. In the late 15th century, for example, Fra Savonarola, a Dominican friar, was able to briefly drive the Medici family from Florence and became the leader of a fundamentalist Catholic republic. Unfortunately, Savonarola then preached against Pope Alexander VI, who excommunicated him. The popular friar was arrested, tried for heresy, forced to confess, and publicly burned to death.

The mendicant orders were administratively independent of the local bishop. Pope Boniface VIII's official pronouncement "Super cathedrum", for example, allowed friars to preach in their own churches, although not at the same time as the local bishop was preaching. They could offer various sacraments, including hearing confessions, without sharing the revenue with the cathedral chapter, although they were encouraged to work closely with bishops about confessions. This led to friction between the friars and local parishes, as the friars' services to the sick and dying diverted bequests from parish churches. Attendance at the friars' churches also weakened parish churches' ties to their neighborhoods. Parish priests also resented being upstaged by the friars' preaching. Clerical lawsuits ensued, with varying success.

As the mendicants enforced the church's doctrine against heretics, the friars provoked popular resentment. When friars began to investigate popularly venerated saints, they concluded that several were, in fact, heretics. When they broke open the "saints' tombs" to destroy their relics, they nearly provoked riots in several Italian city-states. Resentment, although not riots, also flared when the Inquisition condemned as heretics community members who were popularly thought to be orthodox, even exemplary in their faith. On the whole, however, the friars remained popular, despite some discontentment.

Monasteries

The earliest monastic orders trace their history to St. Benedict's first rule for his order, written at Monte Cassino in Italy in 530. The Rule, with its emphasis on work and prayer, became the basis for monastic life for many orders. As noted above, in the aftermath of the Roman Empire, some towns formed around monasteries, providing a market to supply its needs and sell its surpluses. Other towns grew to encompass suburban monasteries. Often monasteries and the local bishops were at odds over tithes, donations, and land, leading to complex political battles with local rulers and with the papal bureaucracy.

Urban monastic orders, like their rural counterparts, followed long cycles of corruption and reform. Would-be abbots became dissatisfied with existing orders and took a group of followers to an isolated location to found a new order. The new order set an example of piety and good works. To maintain control over the order, its founders sought and often obtained papal protection against the local bishop's control. The new order attracted money and donations from patrons seeking the monks' prayers for their souls. These donations allowed the order to expand, creating daughter houses that eventually overwhelmed the order's administrative capacity, leading to lax enforcement of rules and to corruption. This, in turn, inspired a new cycle of reformers.

Convents

Religious groups of women (nuns) arose not long after the first male monastic orders. Women were expected to stay in their cloisters. The Archbishop of York forbade nuns in his diocese to go on pilgrimages in 1195 and again in 1318. Many convents followed similar rules to the Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Hospitallers, although female religious communities were more strictly cloistered than their male counterparts. In the 14th century, urban convents became more common than rural convents. Many new urban convents were formed as part of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, following rules adopted for the nuns. (The rule for female Franciscans, the Poor Claires, was written by St. Francis himself for his follower St. Claire and approved by the papacy before her death.)

Nuns, like monks, were expected to live simple lives and perform manual labor. Nuns were more likely to hire male laborers to work their convents' fields, and worked at sewing or copying manuscripts instead. Some convents were founded as abbeys; the female abbess had the same power over her nuns and lands as a male abbot. Others were founded as priories, where the female prioress managed the nuns and land, subject to a male abbot. A few abbeys, such as France's Fontevraud, were created as double monasteries, with both monks and nuns living in separate buildings on the same site. Fontevraud was controlled by its abbess, as were houses that followed its model.

Many women became nuns not out of religious devotion, but because either their families could afford an appropriate donation to the order, but not the expense of a dowry and wedding; or else they entered as widows in order to avoid remarriage.

Rumors of sexual activity were common. Some orders tried to maintain their reputation by strict measures. In Rome, one convent only allowed the nuns to communicate with outsiders through one or two grills. Supplies and goods were passed through a *rota* (turntable) supervised by two nuns. Nuns who went to draw water at the convent's well were to do so silently and, at least, not to be heard outside the walls. Badly behaved nuns were punished for several offenses by sitting on the ground in front of the convent and eating a harshly restricted diet.

Hospitalers and Templars

The Crusades inspired two orders of knights who took monastic vows. The Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar were, like many reform orders, directly responsible to the Pope and protected from supervision by local bishops. A large town, or one frequently visited by pilgrims and Crusaders, often had a Hospitaller or Templar commanderie.

The Knights Hospitaller (Knights of St. John of Jerusalem) was founded in 1113 by merchants from Amalfi as a monastic order to care for sick pilgrims. Their name was derived from the location of their hospital near the Church of St. John the Baptist in Jerusalem. Pilgrims and wounded Crusaders donated lands and money to the order, which used the funds to maintain castles and garrisons in Outremer as well as extensive holdings in Europe. When Acre fell in 1291, the Hospitallers moved first to Cyprus, then to Rhodes, which the Order ruled as an independent state. The Order's holdings were organized into eight *tongues* (one each in Aragon, Auvergne, Castile, England, France, Germany, Italy, and Provence). Each was administered in turn by a Prior or, if there was more than one priory, by a Grand Prior. The order itself was divided between the knight-monks and the monks who cared for the sick.

The Knights Templar (Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon) was founded in 1119 by Hugh de Payens and eight other knights to protect pilgrims in Outremer and to battle the Muslims. The Order was led by its Grand Master, who in turn appointed Masters of the Order for various regions.

The Order became wealthy from donations and from banking. At first, the Order had become involved in arranging letters of credit for pilgrims, who could deposit funds at a local commanderie, receive a letter of credit, and use it to draw upon funds from Templars in Outremer. From there, the Order became involved in general banking, making large loans to nobles, including the French crown. Eventually, the order ran afoul of King Philippe IV (the Fair) of France. In 1312, he persuaded Pope Clement V to suppress the order due to allegations of heresy and idolatry. Philippe IV was able to seize many of the Order's assets; the Grand Master of the Order was burned at the stake as a heretic in 1314.

Tithes

The reader may note a persistent theme in the above section, about conflicts between monasteries, churches, and cathedrals over tithes. Tithes are a complex topic, with many local variations. In general, the Church claimed a tax on one-tenth of every person's annual income to support priests and monks in their prayers. The tax was claimed from everyone, including the poor, regardless of personal hardships. Rural farmers paid their tithes in grain and livestock, often rounding in their favor when possible. Urban tithe payments were more commonly in other goods. Butchers, for example, might donate tallow, a byproduct of their work which could be used to make candles. Others might pay their tithe in cash, which was more common in urban areas. Failure to pay a tithe, or blatant cheating, could result in a parishioner being shut out of his parish church or fined. In some cases, a local priest could ask the secular authorities to close up the debtor's home and seize his assets for sale, or even imprison him until his debt was paid.

Leo IV wrote that parishioners should pay tithe to the church where their holy baptism was given. This basic rule worked for rural areas, where most people were born, lived, and died in the same parish. It became more complex in urban areas, where the population was more mobile and could settle in whatever part of town they wished. The basic rule was one of seniority. When a new church was built, it could not infringe on the tithe revenues of existing churches. In practice, this led to complex arguments over how tithe revenues should be divided and who a parishioner owed a tithe to. Tithes could be assigned to distant churches and monasteries, who hired local agents to collect and transfer the revenues.

Once collected, the tithe was divided between the parish clergy, the fabric (physical maintenance of the church building), the poor, and the local bishop. (A monastery divided its tithe between the monks, the fabric, the poor, and its mother house.) Each year, a church would account for its tithe revenues to its superiors. The bishops, in turn, paid a share of their receipts to the Papacy through a complex system that evolved into a papal bank.

Universities

In the 13th century, a series of universities were founded in major European cities and came to be recognized by the Papacy as independent of the local bishops. A few institutions, such as the medical schools of Salerno and Montpellier, and the law school of Bologna, were much older, dating from the 9th to 11th centuries.

Universities drew students from across Europe to study, teach, debate, and philosophize. A large university could add 7,000 students to a town's population; a smaller university perhaps 2,000. Along with the students came servants, administrators, paper makers, book makers, notaries, and the university's faculty. This was a mixed benefit. Students had a well-deserved reputation for rowdiness, fighting, burglary, quarreling, and mayhem and, as members of the clergy, were not subject to the civil authorities. Their servants often shared their legal privileges, and were frequently deemed worse than the students themselves.

Universities also added another layer of complexity to local politics because they were generally chartered by the crown or by the Papacy and were fiercely protective of their, and their students', rights. In 1320, for example, the podestà of Bologna executed a university student from Catalan for sleeping with a professor's niece. The non-Italian students were so shocked by this breach of their traditional privileges, that they organized a strike and demanded the podestà be punished. He, in turn, arrested four student leaders and executed them. At that, the entire university community left Bologna for the nearby city of Imola. A year later, Bologna asked the faculty and students to return, and offered economic recompense. They eventually did so; the podestà had by then left office, his fate is not clear. In 1404, a group of young students in Bologna startled a group of nobles' horses, causing some to fall. Several days later, the nobles' soldiers charged, on horseback, a group of youngsters on their way to a church and beat several. The University cancelled its classes and threatened to leave the city. The crown intervened, banishing the nobles from the kingdom, ordering their palace to be utterly demolished, and imposing a fine.

Creating a university was not easy. The site had to attract both faculty and students, and the university had to offer its graduates the ability to teach in a wide area. Salerno, Montpellier, and Bologna had longstanding reputations as centers of learning. The origins of their universities are vague, mostly lost to legend and history. Paris' university developed from

its cathedral school and later gained a papal charter. The University of Toulouse, on the other hand, was directly created by papal charter at the end of the Albigensian Crusade and had both the Papacy and the French monarchy as patrons. Its purpose was to teach theology in the heart of the lands most affected by the heresy. Emperor Frederick II created the University of Naples as a matter of prestige, and as an alternative to Bologna's law school as a source of administrators for his empire.

Students and teachers were, almost without exception, male. Most students were minor members of the clergy whose moral character was vouched for by their local bishop or the head of the local monastic order. This did not stop the students, often young men, from gaining a reputation as rowdy, mischievous rogues, fond of drinking and casual sex, who escaped punishment for misdeeds by virtue of their clerical status. While some students remained consistently at a university until they gained their degree, others came and went as their finances and interests allowed. Toulouse, for example, required a student to attend only 15 days of classes per year in order to obtain a certificate of matriculation, with all the privileges that came with it. With diligence, a student might eventually gain mastery in his field (usually Arts, Medicine, Law, or Theology) and become licensed to teach others. If the university had a papal charter, the license was accepted in all of Europe. Degrees granted by universities chartered by a king or emperor were generally recognized only in that ruler's lands.

There were two major models of university structure – the Paris and the Bologna systems. To put it simply, in the Parisian model, the students themselves managed the institution, setting the curriculum, hiring and firing faculty, and determining the requirements for a degree. Students in the Parisian system were organized into colleges – a combination of residence and dining hall, organized geographically, and supervised by the faculty. In the Bologna model, the faculty managed the institution and set the standards. Students in the Bologna system were organized into "nations", similar to a modern fraternity, but organized geographically, which served as a social club, study group, disciplinary body, sources of housing and meals, and even moneylender during times of distress. The nations had significant influence on the faculty, and through it on the university.

In general, a medieval university offered the following privileges:

- All of its full-time students and full-time faculty were considered protected by the highest secular authority in the land (usually the monarchy or its equivalent). By definition, both students and faculty were also clergy with the usual privileges of that status. It was a serious crime to falsely claim university privilege.

- All students and faculty were subject only to ecclesiastical justice and, when within a day's travel of the university, or on university business, subject only to its own justice. The university could withdraw this privilege if it saw fit.

- All universities had the sole right to determine the standards for graduates without interference from any secular official or bishop.

- Universities had the sole right to determine the course of their studies, again free from outside interference.

- Universities had the sole right to strike – to cease all classes and instruction, in any place and for any reason.

- Universities held a monopoly on instruction in the higher arts of law, medicine, and theology within a reasonable radius of their campus.

- The Dominicans and Franciscans were actively involved in university education, although they generally educated their own friars outside of "secular" schools. The Dominicans created four *studia* in England, Germany, Lombardy, and Provence to educate promising friars. The Franciscans educated their friars at studia in Assisi, Bologna, Oxford, Paris, and Toulouse. The best Dominican and Franciscan students were sent from the studia to Paris for a master's degree.

Other Religious Movements

In addition to the major religious orders, there were various popular and heretical movements which affected urban life. Some of the major groups are mentioned here; however, a detailed history of these groups is beyond the scope of this book. Most of the popular religious movements were reactions to fail-

ings in the Church, principally worldly bishops and priests whose lives did not reflect the Church's ideals. Many of these movements grew during times of social unrest, war, and disease when the Church was not seen as sufficiently protecting the faithful. Many of the heretical groups allowed women significant leadership roles, again in contrast to the Church.

The Church responded to heresy in a number of ways. At first, local bishops had the duty to investigate heretics. They could excommunicate them and either expel them from the diocese or turn them over to secular authorities to punish. In 1184, Pope Lucius III issued a decree, Ad abolendum, which clarified the Church's doctrine regarding heretics. It required, among other measures, that bishops visit their parish more often, and investigate reports of heresy. Supporters of heretics became subject to excommunication and secular punishment like banning from public office. In 1199, Pope Innocent III decreed that heresy was a form of treason; a heretic's property could be confiscated by a secular ruler and the heretic's heirs disinherited. In 1220, Emperor Frederick II was the first to decree that heretics were to be burned at the stake, which became the near universal punishment in Europe. Later, the Church charged the mendicant orders – the Dominicans and Franciscans with countering heresy, and created a series of papal inquisitions to investigate and fight heresy (see pg. 57).

Béguines

Women in northern France and the Low Countries began to live in a semi-cloistered life of prayer and good works starting in the 12th century. They did not take orders and were not nuns, but were often respected for their devotions. Some women lived together in urban households, often supporting themselves as weavers, caring for the sick or for children, by working as servants, and by begging. At its height, a large town might have several hundred Béguines, living alone or in individual households (each with its own rules). In general, beguines held mainstream beliefs, but the Papacy considered the movement potentially heretical and opposed it. Despite official disapproval, some houses survived well into the Renaissance and later.

There was a male counterpart to the Béguines, the Beghards, which was strongly associated with male weavers in the same areas and met with similar opposition from the Papacy and various local clergy.

Brethren of the Free Spirits

The Brethren of the Free Spirits was a powerful religious movement in Germany, the Low Countries, and Northern France in the 13th and 14th centuries. The group believed that its members were in a state of grace without priest or sacraments and that God was within them. Some Brethren claimed the right to use and take what they needed without payment, sometimes defending their thefts with violence. Some records suggest bands of the Brethren wandering the countryside committing rapes and robberies, although others suggest their misdeeds were exaggerated by a hostile clergy. The group was declared heretical by the Papacy in 1311-12. The movement appears to have been very chaotic, with few leaders and little clear overarching theology. Some Béguines and Beghards were influenced by its broad theology and lapsed into heresy.

Cathars

The Cathars, known in France as the Albigensians, were one of the most prominent heretical groups in the 11th through 13th centuries. Cathars believed that the universe was divided between good and evil, spirit and matter. The material world was created by the Devil as a manifestation of evil, thus they practiced strict asceticism. The Cathar liturgy was simple, preached and discussed in the vernacular. Male and female Cathar spiritual leaders, the *perfecti*, lived in the community and demonstrated their faith by good works and austere living. This was often a persuasive counter-example to the lives of distant monks and more worldly urban clergy. The laity (*credentes*) owed respect to the perfecti, but were also free to attend Catholic Masses. The Cathar movement had its strongest influence in the south of France, particularly in the County of Toulouse. Their church structure was simple. There were four bishops in Agen, Albi, Carcassone, and Toulouse. The bishops had two assistants, the senior of which would succeed him upon his death. Beneath them were the perfecti and the credentes (converts).

The Church responded to the popularity of the Cathars by recognizing the Dominican and Franciscan orders, which also sent preachers to live pious lives of poverty and preach to the faithful. The Papacy also sponsored the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars (1208-44). In Italy, Cathars were able to exploit anti-papal sentiments and live with relative peace prior to

the Albigensian Crusade, settling in Florence, Orvieto, Viterbo, and near Milan. The Crusade drove refugees into Provence and Italy. Dominican inquisitors pursued them. Many of the survivors settled near Lake Garda, in Italy, where they were attacked and killed by Verona's signore. Thereafter, Cathars survived only in remote parts of Italy.

Flagellants

The first mention of the Flagellant heresy was in Perugia in 1260. Following an outbreak of plague in 1259, Raniero Fasani, an Umbrian hermit, organized a brotherhood of "Disciplinati di Gesù Cristo" which spread rapidly in Central and Northern Italy. The brothers, men and women, scourged themselves as penance for the world's sins. They formed large processions, some claimed amounting to 10,000 people, who beat themselves with leather thongs as they marched through towns calling upon bystanders to repent. A typical procession lasted 33 1/2 days, one for each year of Christ's life. By the end of 1260, the movement had spread into the Holy Roman Empire and east into Poland and the Balkans. A year later, the Pope forbade the processions and they stopped, for a time.

There were periodic outbreaks of flagellant processions starting in Germany in 1296. The outbreak spread from Poland to England. It became organized with a distinctive costume (a white habit and mantle with a red cross), a hierarchy, and public ceremonies which drew thousands into its processions. The leaders boldly began to criticize the Church, claimed to absolve sins, and claimed miraculous powers. The Papacy condemned the movement, and suppressed the processions in the fall of 1349. As public opinion turned against the movement, it dwindled into isolated outbreaks.

Lollards

This heretical movement started in the mid-14th century and was based on the writings of John Wyclif, a theologian at the University of Oxford. The movement claimed that a priest must be pious to perform sacraments, and that a pious layman could also do so. Lollards translated the Bible into the vernacular, favored religious poverty, and opposed the Church hierarchy, especially for its large landholdings and political role.

A number of leaders of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt espoused Lollardism, thus leading the English monarch to suppress the movement along with the rebels. In 1401, Henry IV passed a law which forbade translating the Bible and allowed landholders to burn heretics at the stake. A number of prominent Lollards were arrested and burned, including Sir John Oldcastle, a friend of Henry V.

Waldensians

The Waldensians, or Vaudois, were commonly confused with the Cathars because of some similarities in their doctrines. The sect was founded by Pierre Waldo, a merchant of Lyon, who had a friend translate the Scripture for him in 1160. Pierre later sold all of his goods, gave the proceeds to the poor, and swore to devote his life to preaching and to charitable deeds. He was soon joined by followers.

In 1180, the Archbishop of Lyon forbade the Waldensians to preach, but they continued nonetheless. The Archbishop appealed to the Papacy, which lumped the Waldensians in with the Cathars as heretics. In response, many Waldensians became more radical, rejecting the Church and many of its sacraments. They denied the ability of saints or prayers to intervene for the dead, claiming that the soul's fate was fixed at the moment of death. Many held that the efficacy of a sacrament depended on the performing priest's moral conduct, which was contrary to the Church's doctrine. The Waldensians had a version of the Cathars' perfecti, who they called *barbes* (uncle). Their church did not have bishops, although it did have ministers, deacons, and priests. Male and female preachers spoke using translations of the Bible, which they offered to their faithful.

As the Papacy began to move against them, some Waldensians moved into the high Alpine valleys of Dauphiné. In 1486, Pope Innocent VIII sent an Italian Inquisitor into Dauphiné with military support. Many Waldensians were taken prisoner: some reconciled themselves with the Church, others were executed. In 1499, Louis XII sent his own confessor, the Bishop of Sisteron, to investigate the matter. In 1509, all of the sentences passed by the previous Inquisitors were annulled. Confiscated properties were returned to the original owners, or their heirs.

Commerce

Towns were primarily centers for trade and commerce. To drastically oversimplify, a town gathered raw materials from its hinterland, and exported them in bulk; or processed them into finished goods like cloth, and sold the results to various consumers. Over time, towns began to gain reputations for the quality of certain wares, which allowed them to charge a premium for their goods. In order to protect their reputations, local merchants formed guilds which controlled the supply and manufacture of goods, by licensing and regulating manufacturers. Towns and regions began to specialize, improving their own profits while becoming increasingly reliant on others for raw materials and for other types of goods.

The heart of a town was its market place. The market, held weekly in small towns and daily in cities, provided everything from the staples of daily meals to costly spices, from the simplest plain wool cloth to ornate silk brocades. Among storefronts and stalls wandered itinerant hawkers, often with protected rights to sell their wares. By concentrating sales in a single market place, municipal and guild inspectors could more easily monitor quality, quantity, and price. The market place was the site of the public scales and official measures, both vital to setting disputes. Often it was a place where urban criminals were punished and decrees proclaimed.

The market place was, first and foremost, under the control of the town's guilds. As discussed in more detail on p. 81, guilds were effectively monopolists, controlling demand for various raw materials and supplies of finished goods. Each set rules concerning price, quantity, quality, competition, locations for manufacture and sales, and the investigation, trial, and punishment of infractions. Generally, the guilds prohibited foreign merchants from selling in stores; they could rent market stalls, booths, or tables. Guilds set the legal weights and measures, which required foreign merchants to make

and sell goods in conforming sizes or face confiscation or destruction of non-conforming items. They sometimes required language interpreters, at the foreign merchant's expense.

The market place was also under the control of the town government. Towns often established their own laws about product safety, quality, and price which generally overlapped guild rules.

Towns often taxed goods entering and leaving their gates, and charged fees for the use of market stalls and other temporary selling spaces. Unlike the guild, town government often encouraged foreign merchants, regulating inns to make sure that travelers were welcomed and kept safe, while requiring innkeepers to prevent frauds and minimize violence.

MONEY

"Coins are the most incomprehensible things. Their value rises and falls, and one does not know what to do. When one thinks that he has gained, he finds the contrary."

– Gilles Li Muisis, Abbot of Tournai (14th C.)

The urban market, unlike its rural counterpart, was based primarily on cash, not on barter or in-kind payments. Medieval money is a complicated topic. On the one hand, each region had a relatively simple set of silver, and later gold, coins. On the other hand, the value of those coins varied widely due to changes in their metal content, and fluctuations in the supply of circulating coins. To add an additional layer of complexity, some regions kept accounts in a different system of money, which might bear little relation to the physical coins in circulation.

Keeping track of the value of money was a major headache for merchants and administrators, particularly prior to the introduction of Arabic numbers in the 12th century. (Prior accounts and arithmetic operations used Roman numerals.) Many different towns might hold the right to mint coins – each with

A Merchant's Arrival

When a merchant arrived in a new town for the first time, he first encountered the watch at the gates who collected any taxes or tolls on his merchandise. If he wanted to claim an exemption from a fee, he might need to speak to an urban official at the town's hall.

As he entered the gate, he might be surrounded by young boys, each trying to persuade him to stay at a particular inn. The choice was important: not only did he want a safe place to stay that was (relatively) vermin-free, but he also wanted a trustworthy inn-keeper, because an innkeeper often served as a local agent and intermediary between his guests and local guilds. Negotiations often began in inns, which became associated with guests from particular regions or trades. Having picked an inn, the merchant would let the young man lead him to it – negotiate a room, and perhaps a place to stable his horse (if any) and warehouse any bulky goods. If he was armed, he might have to leave his weapons at the inn during his stay. If he was arriving by ship or boat, some towns restricted his ability to off-load his goods, requiring him to sell from the ship, or the quay.

From the inn, he might then go to the market to conduct his business. He might rent a market stall to sell his wares from the town government, show his goods to a local guild inspector to prove their quality, and make sure that his goods conformed to the local weights and measures. Generally, all sales had to take place in the marketplace, under the watchful eye of urban and guild officials. He might also have to visit a moneychanger to have enough local currency for transactions.

Some towns restricted how long a foreign (resident of another town) or alien (citizen of another monarch) merchant could stay in town. Typically, he might only be able to stay in one place for 40 days at a time. When he wanted to leave, he might hope to avoid taxes on exporting any unsold goods.

If he arrived alone, he might have difficulty with transactions. Local merchants were often wary of strangers – they might not be able to trust the quality of his goods, nor be able to easily collect damages or a debt. He might seek family members or others from his home to vouch for him as pledges for his debts.

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their own metal content; which could change if the town's ruler decided to debase the coins to raise revenues from the mint by getting more coins per raw silver, or if the mint itself became dishonest. Rulers periodically demonetized existing coins, declaring them unusable for transactions, and forced their subjects to return the old coins to the mint for new coins, which might contain less silver. Often, guild and town rules required transactions to be made in the coins minted in the town or, if the town did not have its own mint, in the most commonly circulated regional coins – which created a brisk business for moneychangers.

When manufacturing goods or entering a contract, a merchant had to anticipate the demand for coins in the future. If, for example, a trade fair were about to open, there would be a high demand for local coins (which would raise their relative value), and a surplus of foreign coins as foreign merchants changed their money in order to make transactions in the local currency. The problem would be reversed when the trade fair ended and foreigners sought to change their money back into their preferred coinage.

Merchants also had to consider periodic shortages of coins. In the late 14th and 15th centuries, there was a systemic shortage of silver for coins. More coins were being sent out of Europe to the Baltic, Middle East, and Asia for spices, silk, and luxury goods, than were being minted from newly-mined silver. The shortage of silver may have expanded the use of gold coins, which were first introduced in the mid-13th century. It may have also contributed to debased coinage issued in the late 14th and early 15th century. (A series of new mines opened in the mid-15th century reduced the silver shortage.)

The basic Carolingian money system was in common use. A "pound" (489.6 grams) of silver (livre tournois or l.) was divided into 240 pennies (dernier or d.). At first, the livre was also divided into 20 shillings (sou or s.) as an accounting measure. This created a ratio of 1 to 20 to 240, which was found across western Europe. Only the dernier was a physical coin at first – both the sou and livre were used only for accounting. Over time, various other coins evolved. England issued, at various points, half-pennies, farthings (quarter-pennies), groats (4 pennies), and

nobles (80 pence). The "mark" was also an accounting unit worth 2/3 of a pound, not an actual coin.

Physical money had to be small, so that it could not be easily shaved or clipped. It had to be stamped by its issuer to make it harder to forge. Its weight and content had to be consistent, preferably over a long period. One of the problems, of course, was that units of measure were inconsistent or obscure. For example, in the 13th century, an English penny was expected to weigh 32 grains of wheat, taken from the middle of the ear. This made it hard to be certain that a coin had not been clipped or debased, or that two different moneychangers were using essentially the same weights.

Until 1252, almost all medieval European coins were based on silver, usually mixed with copper for durability. In that year, Florence and Genoa first struck gold coins: the florin and the genovino. In 1284, these were joined by the Venetian ducat. Gold coins became the preferred coin for high-value transactions, which were most common in the Italian city-states. When, as periodically happened, the value of gold coins rose in relation to silver coins, there was a run on gold, which skewed the relative value of the coins. This led to price increases and more frequent clipping or shaving of the more numerous silver coins.

The new currency created more complexity, and opportunities for profits. Over time, two parallel systems of money came into use in Italy: the piccolo (silver and copper coins used for small transactions) and the grosso (silver and gold coins used for large transactions). A merchant who paid his workers in piccolo while selling the goods they produced in grosso, could benefit from the exchange rate between the two systems and increase his profits.

Some merchants realized that carrying around large amounts of coins was physically demanding and attracted robbers, and developed letters of credit and a form of banking. In effect, a merchant in one town could deposit money with a banker and receive a letter of credit which would allow him to draw credit on an office of the same bank in a different town. The bank's profit on the transaction was built, in part, into the exchange rate between the two currencies. Banks periodically exchanged correspondence to settle their accounts and balance their books. Merchants also used similar letters among themselves, settling outstanding balances in physical coins periodically.

The advent of letters of credit also allowed paper transactions for loans and deposits. The depositor had to trust that the bank would return his money in coins upon demand; however, banks kept only a fraction of their obligations in coins (the reserve). The rest of their obligations existed primarily as value in their ledgers. In 1321, Venice passed a law allowing a bank up to three days to pay a depositor's demand, implicitly recognizing that the bank did not keep a reserve of 100% of its deposits. Trust was important, as banks periodically failed under the weight of poor record keeping and uncollectible loans.

Credit

Most credit was handled within social networks (family members, neighbors, or business contacts). A shoemaker, for example, might borrow money from a skinner to purchase raw leather, intending to repay the debt from the shoes when sold. A weaver might borrow money from his or her family to purchase or repair a loom, intending to repay the debt from their earnings. This kind of loan was generally informal, made between parties who knew and trusted each other. Repayment might be in cash, in kind (goods or services), or by free labor for the creditor. In some modern impoverished communities, business owners are often involved in tight-knit webs of informal loans to and from their peers and neighbors – medieval small merchants and artisans may have had similar networks to pay for equipment, raw materials, repairs, a sudden need for extra laborers, taxes, bribes, or other emergency expenses. Since the lender and creditor know each other, the lender takes a lesser risk of default. On the other hand, loans within a geographically limited community mean that each member is relying on others who are all vulnerable to a decline in the local economy. Only wealthy merchants could draw credit regionally or internationally from banks or distant peers.

A lender might ask for a pledge for a large loan, if he or she does not know the debtor well, or if the debtor has a history of defaults. The pledge was a person or persons who agreed to pay if the debtor defaulted. Pledges were used to vouch for the repayment of loans and the payment of fines and fees; to ensure that a vendor would actually deliver the goods, or that a purchaser would actually pay for them; and to ensure that a litigant would appear in court. Often,

one could ask a family member, friend, or business associate to act as a pledge. In some cities, one could hire a professional pledge for a fee.

Pawnshops

Pawnshops were a predecessor to banks in many areas. A pawnbroker lent money in return for physical collateral (a pawn). Loans were generally for a short term, often at a high interest rate. If the debtor didn't repay the loan, the pawnbroker could sell the pawn. Towns often regulated pawnbrokers, limiting the maximum rate of interest and the types of goods that could be accepted as pawns.

Pawnbroking was one of the few jobs open to Jews. Jewish theology allowed Jews to charge interest on loans made to non-Jews; Christian theology did not (although the prohibition was often evaded by clever merchants). Many small Jewish communities had social and family ties to other such communities, creating a network of allies that could exchange money or make loans. Jews were also often vassals of the monarchy or a large landholder like a duke, which provided some protection against local authorities, but made the communities vulnerable to pressure from the monarchy or duchy to lend money and to forgive old loans.

Banks

Great rogues … traitors and imposters … They devour not only men and domestic animals, but also mills, castles, farmlands, meadows, heath, and woods. … They hold a sheet of paper in one hand and a pen in the other; with their help, they fleece the local people and with their money they fill their purses. … They grow fat on others' needs, and they themselves are like wolves who devour men.

– English commentator on the Lombards (Italian bankers)

Christian lenders also sought to lend money at interest. Would-be bankers found various ways around the Church's prohibition against usury. A banker might charge high fees for failing to make timely payments, or might label the interest as a gift from the borrower to the lender. Interest might be hidden in the exchange of one currency for another, or in shares in a business transaction.

Ironically, one of the preeminent medieval bankers was the Knights Templar, a religious order. The Templars were founded in around 1100 to protect pilgrims in Outremer. It created an internal banking network to transfer donations from far-flung churches to support its knights and to enable pilgrims to draw funds on their travels. It later became a banker to wealthy merchants and governments, including the French crown. In 1312, a series of political scandals led to the wholesale suppression of the Order and the execution of its leaders as heretics.

Debt Collection

Creditors probably enforced many of their debts informally, through renegotiated terms, personal or community pressure, threats, or even physical violence. (Presumably, there were medieval loan sharks, although there are no records of their activities.) A small creditor might have to settle for something other than money like goods, services, or free labor.

Creditors who lent medium-to-large sums occasionally had to sue to enforce their debts. First, they had to find a court with jurisdiction over the debtor, which might mean traveling to the debtor's home. Then they had to file the suit and have it resolved. Large loans were often made in writing. Even then, the lender had to prove that the debt had not been repaid. Some courts would allow the debtor to prove repayment by compurgators (friends of the debtor who would support his sworn testimony).

Once the lender received a judgment, he still had to enforce it. He could ask the court to direct an officer to seize and sell the debtor's property. (Some canny debtors sold their property to family or friends before the lawsuit began.) He could demand satisfaction from the debtor's pledges (if any). In some places, he could insist on the debtor's arrest and imprisonment until payment was made. In others, he could seize goods from the debtors' countrymen, leaving them to collect from the defaulter.

MEDIEVAL ECONOMIC THEORY

The laws of supply and demand, and the "invisible hand" of the market were not medieval concepts. Economics itself was not an academic field. Instead, theologians and philosophers considered the moral issues inherent in trade and investment. Thus, medieval economics focused on ethics and morals.

It was morally wrong to sell shoddy or adulterated goods, to charge an excessive profit, or to demand an unfair wage. Medieval philosophers were concerned with the "just price" for goods and with the difference between natural gain from land, livestock, and trades, and unnatural gain from trade and money-lending. Usury (selling time), speculative buying (violating the just price), and gambling were sins. Clergy also fulminated against excessive consumption, particularly of luxury goods. Clerical discussions of the "just price" of goods were based on its inherent value, which sometimes coincided with fair market value, and sometimes was more abstract.

Some historians speculate that the increasing importance of purgatory as part of Catholic doctrine was a response to the rise of merchants and the increasing problems of profit from trade and usury. Strictly applied, medieval doctrine would have otherwise made nearly every merchant eternally damned. Of course, the concept of a moral debt paid off by years in purgatory spawned a market in indulgences, creating a moral economy to parallel the terrestrial one.

COMMODITIES

Towns existed to produce and trade finished goods. The three main urban trades were the food trades, textiles, and leather goods. Many foods, like meat and bread, were manufactured and consumed in the town or its immediate area. Some two-thirds of a town's capital might be involved simply in feeding itself.

Other goods, like textiles, leather, and beer, were made for both local use and for export. Most goods were made and sold relatively quickly. Goods were often left in their raw state (live animals, raw wool, unmilled grain) until needed. Stocks of semi-finished goods were less common. In some cases, a year's supply of raw materials arrived at once, after a harvest or sheep shearing. In those cases, workers tried to quickly turn the raw materials into finished goods, or into a form that was unlikely to spoil during storage.

The most commonly traded commodity was wool cloth, which was traded across western Europe. Raw wool was, for example, gathered in England and sold to manufacturers in Flanders. Italian cloth was sold at the Champagne Fairs to buyers across Europe. Beer and wine were also widely made and exported.

Towns were centers for imports, sometimes for their own use, and sometimes to re-export to other areas. English ports imported Gascon wine, German beer, dyestuffs from Flanders and Picardy, and many other goods. Towns were also centers for local trade, importing goods from one part of their countryside to sell to another part of it.

Beer

Ale and beer were widely brewed in towns and in the countryside. Until 1200, urban and rural brewers were using the same basic methods. Urban brewers did so on a larger scale. Both primarily sold their wares locally, and soon after production. In the 13th century, brewers began to make beer with hops on a large scale. (Hops, a bitter herb, made beer more long-lasting and more amenable to transport because it inhibited bacteria growth).

Starting in 1200, northern German brewers began to make hopped beer in quantity. The brew sold well within the brewers' towns, and competed with locally brewed ales and beers made with a mixture of herbs called *gruit*. Because hopped beer could be stored, it could be produced and stockpiled, instead of being sold at once. As a relatively heavy, bulky good, beer was easier to export by sea, thus German ports began to dominate the trade. In the mid-14th century, Hamburg's sailors exported 5,600 tons of beer to Amsterdam each year, in vessels with a cargo capacity of only 40 to 50 tons each. (This trade was a third of the value of Hamburg's exports.) Once the beer arrived in Amsterdam and other northern ports, it was resold by local agents to shippers who carried it along rivers and canals to Flanders and beyond. Of course, brewers in Holland, Flanders, England, and other places began to copy the German beers – slowly figuring out the best brewing methods. Eventually, acceptable hopped beer could be made locally in most of northern Europe, reducing the beer trade to the best luxury products.

Brewing was relatively simple. The brewer purchased raw grain and malted it by first soaking it in water then allowing the wet grain to germinate either on a sunny floor or in a kiln. The malted grain was crushed in a mill and "mashed" by adding hot water. The resulting liquid (wort) was then sparged (drawn slowly from the grains). Water could be added, and a second or even third infusion drawn off – each infu-

sion and resulting brew progressively less alcoholic than its predecessor. The wort was flavored with hops and other herbs, then boiled, cooled, and filtered to remove sediment. Yeast was added, and the final product poured into casks to ferment. Once the brew had fermented sufficiently, it could be sold.

Brewing, then, required various vessels for soaking, boiling, and mixing; access to a mill; and often access to a kiln. Large amounts of grain, water, and fuel were needed to make the final product. It was thus somewhat capital intensive. However, large quantities of beer could be made in a single large building employing up to a dozen workers. As a food trade, it was regulated by the town and dependent on the same grain stocks as bread, making it vulnerable to price shifts and urban manipulation of the grain market.

Wool Cloth

Raw wool was gathered from sheep owned by rural landholders or monasteries. A factor then sold the raw wool to carders who carded or combed it to remove dirt and impurities. The factor then bought the carded wool and resold it to spinners. The spinners spun the carded wool into thread using a distaff or spinning wheel. Again, the factor bought the thread and resold it to weavers who turned it into cloth on a loom. Using the same system, the cloth was processed by fullers who prepared it for dying. It was soaked and dried by tenters, then dyed. It was then brushed, sheared, and folded for sale. Finished cloth revealed the hand of a master weaver, who often imprinted his or her work with a seal. For the wool merchant, this system meant that little capital was at risk – the various subcontractors bore the risk of production mistakes and damaged wares. A cloth merchant could tell the origin of fabric from its color, shape, method of folding, and the width of fabric.

The wool trade became one of the major engines of the medieval urban economy and of international trade. Raw wool, for example, was gathered from England and sold to Flemish towns where it was made into cloth. That cloth was then sold across northern Europe. Italian cloth similarly was made in the northern Italian city-states and exported to the Holy Roman Empire, around the Mediterranean, and France. Clothmakers' guilds were among the most powerful in many city-states, and in many European towns.

Spices

The spice trade is one of the most intricate and exotic in medieval Europe. Most spices came from India and Indonesia, along Arabic trade routes to the Mediterranean, where they were shipped by Italian merchants to Europe. Despite the long journey and vast numbers of middlemen, some spices were so common that, for example, there was sufficient pepper in England in 1197 for traders to form London's Guild of Pepperers. European traders also sold cinnamon, ginger, saffron, cloves, cardamom, nutmeg, mace, and grains of paradise. Fraud was unfortunately common – spices were adulterated with lesser quality materials, or with other additives. Thus, guilds like the Pepperers inspected incoming spices for quality and purity before allowing them to be sold.

As importers of a commodity that was quite valuable for its weight and size, spice dealers did not need large buildings, warehouses, or many employees. They needed contacts among ship captains and merchants along the trade routes to ensure supplies of dependable quality and quantity.

DIPLOMACY AND REPRISALS

Towns balanced two competing goals. On the one hand, laws and customs were deliberately skewed in favor of local merchants and artisans. On the other hand, towns needed to trade with their counterparts both near and distant. Thus, they sought favored treatment for their merchants in other areas, in return for reciprocal privileges for favored trading partners.

The town's residents held the most privileged position. In an age before dependable means of identification, it was difficult for a foreigner to prove his good character and trustworthiness. Sometimes, a visitor had a local contact who could vouch for his identity and good conduct. A visitor who lacked local business partners, relatives, or former neighbors risked being cheated, robbed, or even killed. If a merchant could gain contacts in a foreign town to vouch for him, post a bond for his performance of a contract, and otherwise look after his interest, then it was much easier for him to trade in that town. Still, he lacked the legal privileges of a town resident and faced various legal restrictions and fees.

Over time, towns developed diplomatic relations with frequent trading partners. Two towns could negotiate a treaty, each giving the other's residents some or all of the legal privileges of their own residents. Some of the most powerful towns were able to negotiate unilateral treaties in which their residents gained privileges, but the foreign partner's residents gained few in return. In a few cases, powerful towns created trading colonies – neighborhoods where the distant town's laws and customs were enforced instead of those of the host.

Major port cities sought protection for their sailors as well as their merchants. They negotiated rights for shipwrecked crews and recovery of cargo, agreements about salvage and compensation for pirate attacks, mutual agreements to suppress piracy, rights to promptly unload goods from a ship or dock to dry warehouses, and relief from customs duties (particularly in the case of re-exported unsold merchandise). In Muslim countries, Italian ports sought the right to have their own churches, cemeteries, community oven, residences, and warehouses.

Thus, a bailiff seeking to collect a toll or fee from an arriving merchant who claimed an exemption under a treaty or trade agreement needed to establish the merchant's identity. In the absence of a local contact, the bailiff might rely on clothing, accent, and the merchant's goods. If the bailiff was unconvinced that the visitor was entitled to the exemption, he could seize a portion of the merchant's goods equal to the toll in *distraint*. If the claim was valid, the merchant's home town could try to resolve the dispute and have the goods returned. If the merchant could not prove his entitlement within a reasonable period, the seized goods could be sold for the owed toll.

When a town's merchants were robbed or cheated by another town, the merchant's home could take reprisals. The victim could apply to his home town for the right to seize goods of equal value from any merchant of the offending town. Sometimes, this right of *distraint* was extended to debt collection. The legal theory linked the person directly responsible for the misdeed to his family, guild, community, or even sovereign. Thus, towns made the merchants of other towns communally responsible for each others' good behavior. A merchant from one town could, having failed to obtain justice in the place where the wrong was committed, try to seize goods from the debtor's townspeople at a convenient market or fair.

Generally, the owner of the goods offered a pledge for their value and then pursued the original debtor. Distraint could also be used if a merchant was robbed and was unable to obtain justice from the robber's lord or from the place where they sold their spoils. In more serious cases, towns could boycott the goods and market of the offending town until the matter was resolved.

The potential for reprisal and being held responsible for another's misdeeds caused merchants some concern. Disputes sometimes arose about whether the offender really was a resident of a particular city, or member of a merchant company or guild. Treaties between towns often discussed limits on reprisal rights and offered amnesty from reprisals to those attending periodic fairs and festivals. In some cases, towns agreed to a method to settle disputes. Verona and Mantua, for example, agreed in 1276 that in the event of a dispute, each town's podestà would appoint a judge to hear suits from the citizens of the other city. If the accusation was proven, the accused's home city would prosecute the offender under its laws.

The web of treaties, customs, and relationships made medieval commercial laws and trade even more complex. Local merchants dealing with foreign vendors had to know whether the foreigner was subject to a local treaty and, if so, what rights applied in the event of a dispute, fraud, or nonperformance of a contract. Foreign merchants had to establish their rights to preferred status, when applicable, or be keenly aware of the reputations and trustworthiness of their trading partners.

FORMS OF BUSINESS

Most medieval businesses were small family-owned operations. The master owned and operated a single shop. His spouse and children often assisted him. Many guilds allowed his spouse to continue operating the business after his death, but sometimes limited her ability to do so if she remarried.

A family business could only raise a limited amount of capital. In a partnership, two merchants would agree to share the profits and risks of their business. Both were jointly and separately liable to creditors for the business' losses. Early partnerships were formed for a single venture and dissolved after its conclusion. The *commenda*, an Italian temporary partnership popular in the 12th and 13th centu-

ries, allowed one merchant to borrow capital from another to fund an overseas trading venture. The borrower was expected to return the capital and a share of any profits from the venture. In its German counterpart, the *sendeve*, the traveling partner only received a salary, not a share of the profits. Merchants might be involved in more than one temporary partnership at a time, and often did not get involved with the same temporary partner twice. (This seems to be due not to mistrust or frequent bad outcomes, but to timing of ventures, available money, and difficulty planning ventures.) Other temporary partnerships allowed a borrower to use a sum of cash for a fixed term (usually 1-3 years), at the end of which he was expected to repay the debt and a share of his profits, if any.

In addition to a temporary partnership, merchants used various loan and insurance agreements to divide risk and profits. The "sea loan", for example, placed the entire risk of loss of principal on the lender while the vessel was at sea (at double the normal rate of interest), and entirely on the debtor once he had docked safely at his destination. Even if the debtor was unable to trade successfully, he still had to repay the full principal and interest.

More durable partnerships evolved over long-term ventures like trade between Italy and the Champagne fairs. Partners could contribute equally and share profits equally, or contribute uneven amounts, and normally share profits either in proportion to the amount invested or with the partner doing the greater amount of the work receiving a greater profit. Generally, losses were likewise shared in proportion to one's contributions. Guilds limited partnerships; often foreigners and non-guild members could not enter partnerships with guild members because of concerns about their creditworthiness. Early Italian banks were, in effect, nested long-term partnerships.

The Church used a communal form of property ownership. Parishes, monastic orders, and mendicant orders owned their property as a corporation. Individual members could only use or manage property. This was a particular problem for the early Franciscans – St. Francis (the son of a wealthy Italian cloth merchant) had directed his followers to own nothing. His successors vested ownership in the Papacy, and allowed Franciscan friars to merely use what property they needed.

Accounting

Italian businesses were the first to adopt Arabic numerals and double-entry bookkeeping, which gave them a significant administrative advantage over their rivals. Leonardo of Pisa wrote a book, "Liber Abaci", in 1202 which described the new notation, then called Indian numerals. Positional notation made it easier for businesses to make calculations, but the new numerals were controversial. Florence banned their use in 1299 due to concerns about fraud. (Florentine merchants continued to use the new system, but kept their official records in Roman numerals.) Other towns banned the new system in the 14th century for similar reasons. Padua, for example, required prices to be marked in clear letters, not figures. Arabic numerals did not become common in Europe until the mid-16th century.

There are some records of double-entry bookkeeping in use in Florence in 1211. Surviving accounts show a double-entry system in use in northern Italy from the mid-13th century onward. Benedetto Cotrugli wrote a manuscript on the method in 1458. The first published book on the subject, Luca Paciolo's Summa (1494), describes a double-entry accounting system then used in Venice.

Bookkeeping was complex. Italian merchants kept separate books for different parts of their business. There would be one book for income and expense, another for long-distance trades, a third book with the records of the corporation (the *libro secreto* or secret book), and a fourth book for debts and credits. Records were sometimes kept contemporaneously, then reorganized and transcribed into their appropriate volume. Superiors reviewed records to make certain that their factors and clerks were not embezzling funds.

MARKETS

Periodic markets, as opposed to permanent marketplaces, were rights granted to a town or church, often by a regional landholder or the monarch. The town or church paid a fee for a monopoly on sales of certain goods, or sometimes all non-locally produced goods, in their market for a specific time. A 13th century English legal treatise recommended that markets be held no closer than 6 2/3 miles apart (which was a typical distance a merchant could travel to the market, sell one's goods, and

return by nightfall), and no less than two to three days apart. Market holders disagreed. Some filed lawsuits over competing markets 15 or more miles away. Others co-existed with markets less than a mile apart.

The grant of a market included various privileges, including jurisdiction in the town's courts of any disputes that arose during the market (often the market holder had to install a pillory on the site to punish offenders), a right to enforce regional or royal assizes on prices (typically bread and ale) and to keep any fines imposed on violators, the right to collect tolls from those using the market, the right to a monopoly on sales within the area around the market, and the services of the regional landholder's sheriff to announce the establishment of the market when the grant was received. Towns holding markets made their revenues from tolls to access the market, rental of stalls and tables, sales taxes on many goods, and a toll (*tronage*) for using the market's public weights.

Some smaller towns fell into a middle ground between permanent markets and periodic markets. Several held weekly markets. Some held bi-weekly, or even thrice-weekly markets. Market holders had the usual toll and stall rights, but generally had less emphasis on market courts, instead using the town's courts to resolve disputes.

The market holder could sue in the grantor's court to enforce this right against infringing merchants and/or towns. Towns fought to defend their rights against newcomers – often a landholder would not grant the right to a market if it would damage an established market, and the condition was written into the grant itself. In England, the royal sheriff could ban an infringing market and order its stalls physically dismantled. Sometimes the aggrieved townsfolk from the old market tried to physically dismantle the new market and seize the offenders' goods. This often led to riots, which were strongly discouraged by regional landholders.

Seld

A few English towns had "selds", a sort of private bazaar or shopping mall. Generally a seld was a large building subdivided into stalls owned by a wealthy merchant family or a guild. Generally, it focused on one trade or good, and had its own trading rules. Selds

became popular in the 13th century, then declined in the mid-14th century as the building became divided by too many owners.

FAIRS

A trade fair was a periodic market held in addition to the town's normal markets. Where markets generally sold goods from merchants to consumers, fairs generally sold goods between merchants. Every town of any size held at least one annual fair, often on the anniversary of the town's patron saint. A typical fair often lasted for three days – the vigil, feast, and morrow of the saint's day.

La Sensa, Venice's fair held at Ascensiontide, for example, celebrated the "marriage" of the doge of Venice to the sea. In 1177, Pope Alexander III rewarded the city for its aid with the grant of indulgences (forgiveness for past sins) to anyone who visited the Basilica of San Marco within 8 days of the festival. The fair, held since 1000, was a time for grand processions, ceremonies, celebrations of noted victories of past years, pilgrimages to San Marco, and trade. Venetian merchants displayed their finest wares, both local products and imports from Venice's many trading posts and colonies.

A large town might hold multiple fairs, which could each last for a month or more. Paris' Lendit fair, created by royal grant to the monks of St. Denis in 629 CE, was held annually beginning on October 9, the feast day of St. Denis, and lasted for a month. During that month, no other town could hold a fair in the vicinity of Paris, thus creating a monopoly for the monks. The resulting gathering brought merchants from across northern Europe. Eventually, the fair became so successful that a second Parisian fair was begun – this time under the auspices of Notre Dame cathedral. The monks of St. Denis eventually took control of the second fair, although the University of Paris retained a ceremonial role. A third fair, the Foire Saint-Germain, was held by the monastery of St-Germain starting in the 13th century. (It was discontinued in the 15th century during difficult times, and revived in 1482.)

A town did not have to be the size of Paris to hold multiple fairs. In the 15th century, Exeter, a town of perhaps 3,000 in south-western England, held seven fairs each year and had three market days per week. Exeter's St. Nicholas' fair (held for

three days in early December) was one of the oldest in Devon and Cornwall. The Whitsuntide fair was held in late May and lasted for a week – attendees were free from local tolls and various taxes and customs duties. The Lammas fair was held for three days in early August – during it, all goods were to be sold at the fair; any goods exposed for sale within an arm's length of a door or window could be confiscated by town authorities. Exeter also held a fair on Ash Wednesday; Good Friday; the feast of St. Mary Magdalene (July 21); and the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle (December 21). No other English town is known to have started five new fairs in the last 14th and early 15th centuries, or to have had all seven fairs remain successful.

Generally, anyone could rent a stall at a fair and sell goods. Merchants were subject to less stringent controls than in the host town's usual market place. Where town laws favored local merchants, laws at major fairs strove to treat all merchants equally. Disputes at major fairs were settled by the fair's own courts, rather than the host's courts. In many towns, urban leaders prohibited local merchants from increasing their food prices during the fair, or from reselling local goods in the fair's market instead of their own shops. Fairs supervised their food sales, garbage disposal, fire prevention, and contracts. Some had their own weights and measures, sometimes different from the host town's. Many imposed a dusk to dawn curfew on trade and travel to improve safety. Others forbade fairgoers from carrying weapons and required innkeepers to confiscate and safely store travelers' arms. Prostitution and gambling were regulated or prohibited, usually unsuccessfully.

A fair, then, was a significant opportunity for trade which could bring prosperity and renown to its host. Towns struggled for the rights to hold fairs, which might involve negotiations with their neighbors, or political maneuvering with regional rulers. Once established, the fair's rights and privileges were jealously protected in order to ensure the flow of trade and profits to the host. Their owners had to strictly adhere to their traditional rights. If the holder of a fair extended it by a few days to take advantage of good business, it might lose the right to the fair. Similarly, it might lose its rights if it closed a fair early because of bad weather or poor sales.

Champagne Fairs

The Champagne Fairs were the largest and most famous trade gatherings in western Europe. Champagne, a county in eastern France, was a convenient market for drapers, wool merchants, importers, linen and fur traders, and leather sellers. A cycle of six major fairs lasting 49 days each evolved: one at the town of Lagny, one at Bur-sur-Aube, two at Provins, and two at Troyes. Because of the fairs' size, each was divided by week: one week for merchants to arrive and set-up, ten days for cloth sales, eleven days for leather sales, one week for miscellaneous goods (dyes, metals, spices, etc.) sold by weight, and one week to settle debts and credits. Merchants who did not deal in all the offered goods might use the intervening time to inspect purchases, negotiate contracts, or start on their way to the next town.

The fairs had their own legislation, magistrates, and guards. Each was supervised by two Keepers of the Fair and their assistants; and the Keepers of the Seal, who kept the official measures, issued negotiable commercial paper (Letters of the Fair), and judged crimes. The Fairs were guarded by 100 men-at-arms, and maintained tax collectors, clerks, porters, notaries, and inspectors.

Merchants too organized themselves into companies specifically to trade at the Fairs. In general, each had its own captain, guards, counsels (to negotiate with the Fair officials) and harbingers (to arrange lodgings for the company enroute and at the Fairs). Towns regulated their merchants' behavior at fairs, often through their guilds. A merchant whose actions brought disrepute upon his town could expect to be punished by his guild, if not by the urban rulers.

The Count of Champagne and the urban rulers of the four towns derived a great deal of money from the fairs. Thus, they actively protected and promoted them. Thibaud II the Great (1125-1151) and his successors made considerable efforts to protect travelers to the fair on the roads of their land. Thibaud II even negotiated with his neighbors to aid traveling merchants wronged on their lands while enroute to the Fairs.

The Fairs reached their height in the 12th and 13th centuries. During those decades, they were the hub of trade and money exchanges in Europe. By the end of the 13th century, they had begun to decline. The French king had conquered Champagne and reduced the power of its rulers.

Trade moved to Paris, Flanders, and Italy. Italian ships were able to cross the Straits of Gibraltar and directly purchase English wool. By the 14th century, the Champagne Fairs had all but died out. When Italian weavers began to replace English wool with Spanish wool in the late 14th century, there was little need for a replacement fair.

Flemish Merchant Companies

Flemish merchant companies were one example of an organization used for trading at English fairs and the Champagne Fairs. As a group, they rented market stalls, lodging, and warehouses at various fairs, and along their route. They traveled together, for protection both against bandits, and against dishonest merchants at their destination.

The companies were organized by town and led by *eswardeurs* (inspectors). The merchants of the company agreed to obey the eswardeurs; any act which brought shame or ridicule on the town or the company could result in fines or exclusion from the trading company. Each year, the company's rules were read aloud before the group left for a fair. Typical rules required the merchants to sell only goods from their home town, and generally only their own goods (taking goods on commission was discouraged). Often the goods were inspected before departure by the appropriate guild inspectors, wrapped, and sealed for the journey. Goods were unwrapped at their destination and inspected again by the eswardeurs before being offered for sale. The merchants agreed about how many servants and apprentices could travel with them. None could depart without enough goods to sell to support themselves during the trip. Members were urged not to gamble, and to obey the rules of their host town and its fair. They were firmly discouraged from getting involved in litigation at the fair, and were urged to settle disputes and pay fines promptly. Merchants also agreed to collectively ostracize any merchant who cheated them or misused credit extended to him.

The company, thus, provided protection of numbers for its members and acted to protect the reputation of itself and its town. In return, the inspection requirements ensured that substandard goods were not sold abroad and that merchants were less likely to find themselves stranded without resources far from home.

INNS AND TAVERNS

When a merchant arrived in a town, he first needed lodgings and storage for his goods. Most travelers stayed in inns. The larger the town, the more were available. A large trade city like 13th-century Florence had over 600. Inns often had associated stables and warehouses for travelers' goods and pack animals. Many inns and taverns had a sign (*enseigne*), often an animal, plant, or symbol to identify it in a mostly-illiterate society. A branch or bunch of foliage was also a common mark for lodging.

A newly-arriving traveler could expect competition for his business. Innkeepers sent boys to the gates of the town each day to entice travelers to their lodgings. Some had criers extol their food and wine. Others were more direct. In 1205, Toulouse forbade tavern and inn keepers from forcing pilgrims to enter their businesses by seizing the traveler's clothing or his horses' reins. Hosts were also not allowed to lock travelers in the building or to force them to buy food and drink only from the lodging. In 1425, Scotland, uniquely, fined travelers 40 shillings if they stayed in with friends when an inn room was available.

Selecting a reputable inn was important. By custom, the innkeeper provided not just lodgings, but also acted as a liaison between foreigners and local merchants, and sometimes as factor, moneylender, or warehouse keeper. Merchant companies sent messengers ahead of the main body to arrange lodgings (and retail space when appropriate) in advance. Long-standing companies had habitual lodgings and long-standing arrangements. When arriving in a new location, the messenger's task was to negotiate for appropriate spaces, including details like inquiring about fleas and other vermin in various inns. This was an important point – innkeepers were not well liked and were often accused of cheating their customers by serving poor quality meats and wines, taking undue profits for their liaison services, harboring prostitutes, and allowing vermin to thrive in their rooms. By custom, if a guest died, an innkeeper was entitled to a share of their goods, which led to rare accusations of poisoning.

Travelers also needed places to eat and drink other than their inns; typically they frequented taverns and alehouses. These establishments served both locals and foreigners. Visitors learned of taverns by criers who advertised the quality of its food and beverages, and their price. London, in 1309, had 354 taverns and over

1,300 brewshops (mostly ale-sellers) for its population of 80,000. The categories overlapped. Taverns often brewed and sold alcohol, as well as simple meals, but often had to stop selling alcohol when the curfew bell sounded. Alehouses and brewshops generally only supplied drinks. Both were often places of poor repute, associated with singing, brawling, gambling, and prostitution. In literature, the tavern was the antithesis of the church, a place of carnality and vice where honest men were ruined by drink and other evils.

TRAVEL

A merchant's trade involved travel. As one anonymous chronicler wrote, a merchant's life consisted of "journeys hither and thither, in rain and wind, in snow and hail, now drenched, now dry, now sweating, ill fed, ill lodged, ill warmed, and ill bedded." Time, not miles, was the true measure of distance.

A rider could expect to travel thirty to forty miles in a day. One willing to press a horse could travel forty to fifty miles per day. Someone on foot averaged fifteen to twenty miles per day. A merchant's pack train, similarly, would only travel fifteen to twenty miles in a day on the rutted paths which were considered roads; if the train was loaded with baggage wagons and footmen, it might average only eight miles per day. In unsettled areas, a rider or pack train also had to carry food for its mounts and their handlers, which reduced their cargo capacity.

The road always had many difficulties. Bad water, illness, and injuries could strand a traveler far from home, as could storms and floods. The traveler faced tolls, dishonest merchants and innkeepers, ferrymen willing to drown passengers for their goods, bandits, unemployed mercenaries, and avaricious nobles.

For those traveling to or from Italy by land, the Alps offered a special challenge. The trails were marked by looming cliffs, avalanches, ice sheets, and hidden crevasses. Travelers, animals, and sledges traveled roped together over the worst sections. None of the passes could be traveled by wheeled carts. Wagons and carriages were dismantled and carried over the pass by pack animals or by men. The Romans preferred the Mont Joux and Colonne-Joux (Petit St-Bernard) passes into France. Medieval travelers preferred the Mont Cenis to the Petit St-Bernard.

Crossing snow and ice-covered parts of the passes was impossible without a guide. *Maronniers*, Savoyard mountaineers who guided travelers across the mountains, competed fiercely for business at either end of each pass. Guides moved travelers and cargo swiftly downhill using a *ramasse*. The ramasse was a sledge, made of branches held together with rope. Passengers and gear were tied to the sledge which was swiftly propelled by gravity. The guide steered the sledge with an iron-tipped staff.

All of the passes were liberally dotted with almshouses, hospices, inns, and monasteries. Innkeepers, like *maronniers*, competed fiercely for travelers. If a traveler fell ill, the innkeeper was bound to provide reasonable aid and keep any belongings safe. If the traveler died, his or her belongings were sent to the hospice of Mont Joux or to Aosta where they were kept for a year and a day to allow his heirs and creditors to claim them. After that, they were sold and the proceeds divided between the hospice and the innkeeper.

Where rivers were available, they offered convenient trade routes. Most boats were flat-bottomed cargo craft, built in forested regions where the river first became navigable and sent downstream to pick up passengers and cargo. Downstream speed varied with the current; in a good season it averaged 15 miles per day. At night the boats tied up at riverside villages where the crew and passengers could sleep ashore. Once the boat reached the sea, it was often broken up for timber and firewood. The crew then walked home along the riverbanks, often exhausting their wages along the way. Enterprising sailors sometimes purchased a mule or horse at the river mouth, walked or rode back with it, and sold it to a farmer at home.

In France, each major river had its own groups of mariners which protected its trade from outsiders. Among the better known were the "*Communaté*" of the Loire, which levied a tax on everything passing along the river and its tributaries; and the mariners of Paris, who were so important a ship became part of the city's seal.

River transport was popular among merchants because it was cheaper than transport over land. A single mule can carry 350-400 pounds. The mules themselves must be fed, and the merchant need pay one muleteer for every 12 mules. A cart can carry 800 to 1,600 pounds, and the merchant must pay the driver and feed the horse or oxen drawing the cart. Small river boats, called variously *argentants*, *garbares*, or *sapins*, carried 15-20 tons of cargo downstream, ate nothing themselves, and needed a fairly small crew

in relation to the cargo. The *chaland*, another cargo craft, carried 20-60 tons of cargo and had a single square-rigged sail that allowed it to return upstream at the end of its voyage. On a relatively calm river like the Loire, passenger craft might travel up and down the river on a regular schedule. Most towns had two departures each week. The journey took three days per stage from Roanne to Nevers, from Nevers to Orléans, and from Orléans to Nantes, which was about the same speed one could make on the roads.

The hazards of river travel were numerous: dishonest mariners, storms, floods, sandbanks, and rapids. Bandits were somewhat more rare, but could stretch chains across the narrow parts of rivers or pillage boats trapped on sandbars. In Italy, boats traveled the Po in large convoys for mutual protection. Chapels to St-Nicolas, the patron of mariners, were found along several rivers. Crosses or oratories sometime marked the beginnings of gorges or rapids which claimed many boats.

Finally, there was ocean travel. For those along the Mediterranean coast, sailing was relatively easy. Compared to the Atlantic, the Sea is calm and placid. Its temperature remains warm (a constant 65° F) throughout the year. Its water is more salty than the Atlantic (and this supports ships better); its waves are small, short, and choppy. Storms come and go quickly. Winds in the smaller seas – the Adriatic, Aegean, and Ionian – are erratic. The Mediterranean's tides are almost non-existent, a mere 10" on average. The hazards generally came from other ships. For many years, Muslim pirates preyed on shipping from ports on various islands and in North Africa. Until the Spanish captured Gibraltar, trade between the Mediterranean and Atlantic was minimal, although a few German cogs were among the Crusaders' ships in Outremer during the First and Second Crusades. In later years, the Italian communes often preyed on each others' shipping.

Mediterranean trade mostly involved shallow-draft sailing ships, and merchant galleys rowed by sailors and, rarely, slaves. Sailing ships were larger than their Atlantic counterparts – both Venice and Genoa had a pair of 500 ton merchant vessels in the mid-13th century. Merchant galleys (*galere da mercato*) of the late 14th century ranged from 100 to 300 tons. Typical sailing ships like the *tarettes* were smaller, perhaps 100 tons. The galleys did not need a favorable wind to sail and were often used as warships and trade vessels for luxury goods. Sailors were often better trained than in the Atlantic, in part because the lanteen sails so common along the Mediterranean were more complex to handle, and in part because there was more trade and thus more demand for trained sailors. The ratio of crew to cargo was even more favorable for ocean travel than for land or river transport – 1 sailor to 5 to 10 tons of cargo depending on the ship design.

Trade along the Atlantic and Baltic Seas had its own hazards. For the Atlantic trade, the winds come mostly from the west, driving ships towards the French coast. The strongest currents flow south, towards the north-west tip of Spain. Many ships were lost in the Bay of Biscany when they were driven shoreward by prevailing westerlies and were unable to beat into the wind quickly enough to escape. The Hanse prohibited ship travel in the winter, between Martinmas (Nov. 11th) and St. Peter's Day (Feb. 22), due to ice. Any large ship entering a Hanseatic port after Martinmas which could not prove that it had begun its journey before that date, would be confiscated along with its cargo. Smaller ships involved in purely local trade were not prohibited from sailing, but risked ice damage or loss. Ships often traveled the Baltic in convoys of two to five when piracy was low, and larger convoys of ten or more when during times of war or when piracy increased.

Atlantic and Baltic shipping often used *cogs*, which were small vessels with a bowl shaped hull, and blunt "castles" fore and aft. They were slow, unwieldy, and prone to bouncing about on storm-strengthened swells. Until 1200, most had single square sails. Around 1200, carpenters began building ships with two or more masts and combining the square sail with the triangular lanteen sail. Such rigging made the ship better able to use the winds, although a more skilled crew was needed. A typical 13th century Hanseatic cog had a cargo capacity of 130 tons. In the 14th century it was replaced with the larger *hulk* or *holk* with a capacity of 300 tons.

Between England and France lay the English Channel – a mere 112 miles at its mouth and but 21 miles at Calais. Crossing the Channel was rarely easy. Its tides could change the water's level greatly, exposing and hiding shoals and rocks. In the Gulf of St-Mâlo, the difference between tides is some 28 feet. Even open water was unsafe. Between Cherbourg and Flanders, sand banks and ridges

lurked mere feet below the surface to tear the bottoms from unwary craft. Goodwin Sands, an infamous ships' graveyard off the port of Deal, is roughly 11 miles long and 6 miles wide, with sand bars that shift with each storm. At low tide, the sands might be 13' above the surface.

The Channel crossing and entry into the French ports was sufficiently tricky that in 1226, Queen Eleanor of England enacted the *rôles d'Orléron*, a set of maritime rules, which, among other things required sea captains to allow native Breton pilots to guide ships into harbors. By French custom, contracts made at sea had no validity because seasickness could cause one to agree to anything upon promise of safely regaining land.

Trade between England and Flanders was somewhat less hazardous. Thus, English wool could be shipped to Flanders' cities, where it was processed into cloth and sold at the Champagne Fairs in western France. There was also some trade between Baltic

Sea ports and England, primarily dominated by the German Hansa. English efforts to obtain privileges for its merchants in the Baltic similar to those enjoyed by Hansa merchants in England was the source of ongoing tension in the 15th century.

One final hazard for an oceangoing merchant was the customs involving shipwrecks. Goods salvaged from a wrecked ship belonged, in theory, to the monarch. Salvage from river boats belong to the local landholder. In practice, a fair amount of goods were kept by local residents who came upon them. For oceangoing vessels, if an animal escaped alive, it was to be kept for three months so that its owner could claim it. After that, it belonged to the crown. If a person, dog, or cat escaped the vessel alive, it was not a wreck. Any salvaged goods were held for a year and a day so that their owners could claim them. If the owners did not come forward, the goods were forfeited to the crown.

TYPICAL COSTS FOR SERVICES AND COMMON GOODS

Item	Date	Location	Cost
Assassination	1355	Venice	48 ducats (noble killed by hired fur trader)
Assassination	1355	Venice	100 ducats (noble killed by hired boatman)
Assassination	1392	Florence	100 ducats (two Florentine dyers living in Venice killed by hired Florentine merchants)
Bath, steam	Late 13C	Paris	2 d.
Bath, warm	Late 13C	Paris	4 d.
Burial	1417	Pisa	100 s. (moderately inexpensive mass and burial)
Livestock pasturage	1487	Aberdeen	1 d. /animal (for foreigners)
Prostitute	Mid-14C	London	4 d.
Multure (mill fee)	Mid-14C	England	1/32 to 1/13 of the grain processed (1/20 is typical)
Public Execution Ceremony	1323	Carcassone	8 l. 14 s. 7 d. (4 heretics burned)
Public Execution Ceremony	1323	Carcassone	5 l. 9 s. 6 d. (3 heretics' corpses exhumed and burnt)
Ratcatcher	Mid-14C	London	4 d.
Regrater (reseller, huckster)	Mid-14C	London	1/2 d. /day (fee to sell in market)
Rent, inn room	1345	London	1 1/2 d. /week
Toll, good carried by person	1201	Northampton	1/4 d.
Toll, cartload of goods	1201	Northampton	1 d.
Toll, packhorse of goods	1201	Northampton	1/2 d.

TYPICAL COSTS FOR SERVICES AND COMMON GOODS

Item	Date	Location	Cost
Ale, per gallon	1320	London	1 d. (good quality)
Ale, per gallon	1320	London	3/4 d. (ave. quality)
Ale, per gallon	1423	London	1 1/4 d. (good quality)
Ale, per gallon	1423	London	3/4 d. (ave. quality)
Almonds, pound	1359	Paris	14 d.
Arquebus	1485	Grenada	11 reales
Arquebus	1519	Nuremburg	5 florins (elaborate gift)
Bed, for hospital	14th C.	Florence	10-15 lire
Beef, pound	1395-1405	Florence	1 soldi, 2 denari
Beef, pound	1491-1501	Florence	1 soldi, 3 denari
Boots	1470	Derbyshire	6 d. /pair
Brooch with gems	1444-45	Worcester	5 pounds (gift to noble)
Calf	1365	Paris	9 d.
Candle, tallow	1406	Salisbury	1 1/2 d. per pound
Cloth, wool	1380	Ely	5 s. /yard (for bishop)
Cloth, wool	1384-5	Hereford	2 s. 11 d. /yard (for knight)
Cloth, wool	1384-5	Hereford	2 s. /yard (for yeoman)
Cloth, wool	1384-5	Hereford	1 s. 7 d. /yard (for servant)
Cloth, wool	1390	Exeter	3 d. per narrow yard (12 x 1 yards), coarse material
Copper, ingot	1426	Venice	11 s./pound
Crossbow	1519	Nuremburg	13 1/2 florins (elaborate gift)
Dates, pound	1338	Paris	6 d.
Fish, pound	1395-1405	Florence	4 soldi, 3 denari
Fish, pound	1491-1501	Florence	3 soldi, 10 denari
Fruit, dried	1380	London	1 d. to 4 d /pound (currants, dates, figs, prunes, raisins)
Glass, small pane	1426	Venice	1 ½ soldi
Gloves, velvet	1429	Venice	3 ducats
Ginger, pound	1338	Paris	15 s.
Hazelnuts, pound	1338	Paris	15 d.
Herring, barrel	1309	Hull	1 s. 2 d.
Horse	1391-2	Exeter	33 s. 4 d.
Lamb	1395-1405	Florence	2 soldi
Lime	1425	Venice	6 soldi, 9 denari/ barrel
Oil, orico	1445	Florence	1 1/2 florins
Oxen (for meat)	1265	Paris	5 s. 3 1/2 d.
Oxen (working)	1265	Paris	10 s.
Peas, field	1270-80	London	3 s. /quarter

TYPICAL COSTS FOR SERVICES AND COMMON GOODS

Item	Date	Location	Cost
Peas, green	1270-80	London	9 s. /quarter
Pears	1270-80	London	1 s. /quarter
Pears, warder	1270-80	London	6 s. /quarter
Pepper, pound	1279	Ducklington	12 d.
Pepper, pound	1411	London	20 d. (royal price ceiling)
Pork, pound	1395-1405	Florence	1-2 soldi
Pork, pound	1491-1501	Florence	1 soldi 1 denari to 1 soldi 7 denari
Rice, pound	1359	Paris	1 s.
Rose-water, pound	1338	Paris	20 s.
Saffron, pound	1359	Paris	48 s.
Saffron, pound	1380	London	12 s. to 15 s.
Sausage	1395-1405	Florence	3 soldi
Sausage	1491-1501	Florence	2 soldi, 8 denari
Slave, female	1475	Florence	50-100 florins
Slave, male	1423	Venice	50 ducats
Sheep	1265	Paris	2 s. 6 d.
Ship	1250	Genoa	2,000 livre Genoese
Shoes	1470	Derbyshire	4 d. /pair
Sugar, pound	1338	Paris	13 s.
Sugar, pound	1359	Paris	8 s.
Tablecloth	1329	Suffolk	8 d.
Towel	1329	Suffolk	1 s.
Veal, pound	1395-1405	Florence	2 soldi
Veal, pound	1491-1501	Florence	2 soldi, 3 denari
Wax, pound	1305	London	2 1/2 d.
Wax, pound	1374	Coventry	5 1/2 d.
Wax, pound	1374	Warwick	6 d.
Wax, pound	1406	Salisbury	6 1/2 d.
Wheat, quarter	1209	Hampshire	2 s 7 d.
Wheat, quarter	1302	Hampshire	5 to 6 s.
Wine, barrel	1425	Venice	3 lire 16 soldi
Wine, cogno (405 litres)	1445	Florence	3 1/2 florins
Wine, English	1270-80	London	1 d. – 1 1/2 d. /gallon
Wine, Gascon	1270-80	London	3 d. – 4 d. / gallon
Woad	1294	Bristol	1 1. 4 s. / quarter
Woad	1294	Lincoln	1 l. / quarter
Woad	1305	Yarmouth	13 s. 4 d. / quarter
Wool (raw)	1209	Hampshire	2 s per stone (14 lbs.)
Wool (raw)	1302	Hampshire	4 s. per stone

Crime & Punishment

Companions of our band, care-free,
Rob ye for naught except for gold.
Seek only those who're weak, ye see;
Let those go who seem too bold;
And when ye take a purse or so,
Nor backwards ever throw a glance:
Beware the Law where'er ye go,
Which makes you on the Gallows dance.

Towns were crowded places with many opportunities for frauds, thefts, and violent crimes. Urban authorities sought the right to hold their own courts which could resolve criminal complaints, administer fines, and punish malefactors. Their courts, however, were limited. Medieval society had a complex web of legal privileges. Clergy, for example, had the right to be tried under ecclesiastical law. Within the clergy, certain orders and universities had the right to discipline their own members separate from the bishop's court. The right of sanctuary allowed criminals to seek protection from the Church against civil law for 40 days (a few sites let criminals remain indefinitely). Often, sheriffs and urban officials could not enter Church property to serve warrants or make arrests, but had to wait on a public street for their quarry to emerge. Royal vassals could demand trial in royal courts. Guilds often held primary jurisdiction over their members for acts which violated guild rules. Major fairs held their own courts during their sessions to resolve merchants' disputes and crimes like assaults and thefts. This division of jurisdiction made it hard for towns to keep order.

Violence was a common feature of urban life. In Antwerp, in the second half of the 14th century, court records show twice as many cases for physical violence as for theft. In early 15th century Brescia, nearly half of the sentences imposed by the city's podestà and criminal court judges were for brawls, wounds, and dire insults. Vendettas, common in Mediterranean cultures, made quarrels more serious, creating a cycle of revenge attacks and counter-attacks that could quickly build into a riot.

To some extent, ongoing low levels of violence were part of the relationship between workers and their employers. A dispute between an employee and his employer was hard to fairly resolve in urban courts, which were rightly regarded as biased in favor of the wealthy. A disgruntled worker might instead gain satisfaction by vandalism or violence. Town records record many instances of nighttime vandalism, creditors being attacked, street brawls between rival factions, gang rapes, and personal vendettas settled with knives and clubs.

What could a town do? To reduce crimes which took place after dark, many towns imposed a strict curfew forbidding most people from traveling on the streets at night without permission. If, for some reason, a person needed to go into the streets, he was expected to carry a lantern or light to demonstrate honest intentions. In Siena, anyone caught outside after dark was fined 20 s. Curfews primarily dissuaded the easily temptable. They did not prevent groups of youths, often university students or sons of wealthy citizens, from congregating after dark in large groups to engage in vandalism, robberies, or even housebreaking and rape. (Student groups were not to be underestimated. In 1408, a group of Parisian students armed with swords, daggers, axes, and polearms, wearing mail and padded leather jackets, invaded another group of students' party and killed their host.)

Homeowners secured their houses and belongings. Ground floor windows were shuttered or protected with iron bars. Doors were barred or chained shut. Important papers and belongings were kept in stout locked chests, often in the owner's bedroom.

Towns regulated weapons. Most forbade foreigners and even many residents from carrying weapons. Foreigners were usually required to deposit their weapons for safekeeping with their host or innkeeper on arrival in town. Residents and foreigners alike were often precluded from carrying weapons to markets and fairs; even knights and noble participants in tournaments had their right to carry arms and arm their followers limited.

In 1099, Genoa forbade anyone to carry weapons without a license, which was available for "defensive" weapons to citizens known to have mortal enemies.

When civil disorder increased in 1161, Genoese were allowed to carry swords and knives, but not bows and lances. In 1386, Milan prohibited anyone from carrying a weapon in the city, or any of its subject towns. London allowed its residents to own bows designed to throw stones, arbalests, and slings, but prohibited shooting at birds as missed shots tended to damage buildings or wound bystanders.

Many towns blamed the urban poor for most of their crime and, after distinguishing between the deserving poor (cripples, widows, orphans, the infirm, and the elderly), and the false poor (unemployed artisans and peasants who were able to work), tried to expel those who could work, but did not have jobs. French law allowed urban authorities to seize frequent tavern patrons without steady incomes and expel them. During and after the Black Plague, England and France responded to a shortage of labor with laws forcing the healthy unemployed to find work or be expelled from towns. Armed men had to prove that they were part of a militia, landholder's army, or mercenary company, or they would be branded as vagabonds. Yet a third law ordered healthy unemployed persons to work at public projects on municipal ditches and walls for whatever wage the town offered.

When a crime occurred, towns did not have detectives to investigate. Urban authorities depended on the victim's family and witnesses to identify the culprit. Under English law, anyone who saw a felony was expected to cry out (raise a hue and cry). All able-bodied men were expected to respond to the cry and try to apprehend the criminal. Failure to raise a hue when appropriate, or respond to a hue, could result in a fine.

Some towns encouraged accusations and denunciations. In Siena, for example, an accuser could receive from one-fifth to one-half of the fine imposed on a malefactor. Venice installed a series of carved lion's mouths (bocca-di-leone), into which anyone could anonymously post a denunciation which would be read and considered by the appropriate authorities. (There were different boccas for various purposes, including denunciations related to tax evaders or related to public health).

Curfews and Night

At night, the streets of a medieval town were lit only by moon light. In 1379, Venice was one of the few places to require public illumination – the main bridge was lit by lanterns. At dusk, a town locked its gates, denying entry to travelers until dawn. The last travelers who were allowed to enter had just enough time to find lodgings before darkness fell. At dark, churches rang their bells to sound the curfew. At that point, workers ended their tasks. Taverns closed to the public. Honest people were expected to remain at home, or to carry a lantern or torch if they had to wander the streets. Wanderers without lights could be seized by the watch, detained until dawn, and fined.

A few honest workers might be awake during the night. Although guilds forbade artisans to work after dark, so as to maintain the quality of their wares, a few trades began their day at night or in the early hours before dawn. Bakers, for example, needed to light their ovens and start their bread baking before first light. Similarly, Venetian glass-makers needed to tend their furnaces' fires. For the most part, however, a town's inhabitants went to sleep as darkness fell.

Within a town, the streets were narrow and irregular, intermingled with alleys, squares, gardens, and nooks. This made it hard to find one's way without light, and easy for robbers and thieves to hide. In 1427, Poitiers asked the French crown to install chains to block some of its streets and trip fleeing thieves. Towns also often placed chains across their river to prevent boats from sneaking past.

As noted above, these precautions did little to deter burglars, thieves, and gangs of youths bent on crime. For the most part, an honest citizen's best defense was to stay indoors, behind stout doors and shuttered windows.

At dawn, a market bell frequently signaled the opening of the city gates. In many towns, no buying or selling could occur until this bell sounded, or after the evening curfew bell.

COURTS

Towns sought the right to hold their own courts, particularly to enforce economic laws favorable to merchants and guilds. Towns had more than one court. Bishops held courts to try ecclesiastical malefactors. English market towns and sea ports had Courts of Pie Powder (from the French *pied-pouldre* or dusty feet) to settle merchant disputes and enforce rules on quality and weights and measures. Guilds had internal courts to discipline their members. Even

the town itself might have multiple courts. Faenza, for example, had five courts – the Bench of the Eagle for criminal cases; the Bench of the Lion for civil cases; the Bench of the King for cases about agrarian property; the Bench of the Oxen for contracts involving minors; and the Bench of the Horse for contracts involving women. The podestà and the Captain of the Popolo (see pp. 77-79) both had their own courts as well. For an aggrieved party, finding the right court, and obtaining jurisdiction over the offender, was itself an art. Siena provided one judge per neighborhood (*terzo*) to serve as criminal and civil lawyers for the poor, without charge to their clients.

Of course, the various courts competed for power, influence, resources, and revenues from fines. There were bitter disputes between towns and clergy, and between towns and their neighbors, over misdeeds done by subjects of one against subjects of the other. There were political struggles over who would be appointed as a judge, and how that judge resolved cases. Italy, for example, tried to limit accusations of favoritism by hiring judges from other towns. Others hired locals, assuming they would be more familiar with the complex relationships between parties, and might thus be able to craft a more acceptable result.

Normally, cases were heard by a judge. However, chapter 39 of the Magna Carta stated that "No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgement of his equals or by the law of the land." This implied that English freemen had a right to trial before a jury. This is not the modern jury; an English jury of the time was more of an investigating body, as well as one which could decide cases. Still, it was often an improvement over a trial before a judge appointed by a landholder or town government.

Trials often involved sworn testimony, often with the aid of compurgators (oath helpers) who formally supported the testimony of a witness or party. The Church prohibited clergy from participating in trial by ordeal in 1215, and the custom dwindled out thereafter. In some places, disputants could opt for trial by combat or a formal judicial duel, often subject to various customary rules and oaths to try to balance the party's abilities.

PUNISHMENT

Once a defendant was convicted of a crime, punishment ranged from fines to torture to banishment to execution. Treason and heresy were punished most seriously, generally by execution in a particularly painful manner. Murder, arson, and other serious crimes were generally punished by death, banishment, or a requirement to journey on a pilgrimage to a distant shrine. Robbery and burglary were punishable by death, even if the thief left empty-handed. Forgers, coin clippers, and bearers of false witness often lost their right hand, so long as their offenses were minor. (A shilling's value was the threshold between amputation and execution in England.) Felony convictions also meant forfeiture of the felon's lands and goods to the authorities. Assaults were commonly punished by fines, levied at a rate primarily intended to prevent violence between and against residents of the town. Criminals, and the losers of civil suits, could also be required to make promises of future good behavior, enforced by posting a sum or money as a bond.

Execution was the most common punishment for serious crimes. Common criminals were generally hung at the gibbet. The bodies were often left to rot on the public gibbet as a warning to others. (Public gibbets in a large town could hold dozens of bodies at the same time.) Nobles were generally beheaded. Heretics were often burned at the stake, sometimes after being strangled to death. For treason and heinous crimes executions became more brutal, using methods like drawing-and-quartering.

Banishment was a common punishment. Normally, most people were born, lived, and died in the same area. To banish someone was to cast them away from their homes, families, and any social support. Under the *Lex Salica*, the banished person was *wargus sit*, to be treated like a wolf and driven away from normal society. He or she could be killed, and the homicide would be considered self-defense. In Italy, urban criminals often fled into the condato. They were tried in absentia and banned from the city as punishment. Their name, *bandito*, may have resulted from the ban (*bannitus*) which prohibited their return. Urban podestàs were charged with regularly sending out patrols, and communities in the condato were heavily fined for sheltering bandits. Factions in Italian city-states also often routinely banished their political rivals (and their families) upon taking power.

Mutilation, ranging from branding, to flogging, to removing body parts, was a common punishment, generally reserved for less serious offenses. Criminals could also be sent to the public pillory, where their survival and level of injuries depended on the mood of the crowd, which could pelt them with stones and rubbish.

Imprisonment was uncommon – feeding, housing, and guarding prisoners was expensive. Towns used jails to hold prisoners prior to trial, between trial and punishment, and rarely as a form of punishment. Bishops and abbots used their own prisons to punish errant clergy. Debtors were held until their debts were paid. War captives were held waiting ransom payments. Papal inquisitors sometimes used prisons both as punishment, and as a way to coerce suspects into confessions.

A prisoner was expected to pay for his or her own support. Prisoners were generally held together in large rooms – disease and vermin were common. Nobles and certain politically powerful captives were often held in separate buildings in more comfortable conditions depending on their wealth and the reason for their captivity.

PENANCE

Most crimes were also sins; secular punishment did not provide absolution. Thus, the Church also had a role in deterrence and punishment. Penance ranged from self-denial, to prayers, to exile and forced pilgrimages. Custom, and published penitentials, gave guidance to a priest in setting an appropriate work of satisfaction. In some cases, penance could also be satisfied by fines. In the 14th century, the Church created an *indulgence* system which allowed sinners to do penance in advance of committing a sin. Worshipers sometimes also imposed their own penance, ranging from fasting, hair shirts, and other forms of self-mortification to public flagellation (see p. 36).

A worshiper confessed his or her sins to a priest in the worshiper's parish. Some mendicant orders also had the authority to hear confessions. Before the 13th century, confession was made irregularly, often just before a journey or during a life-threatening illness. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council required every Christian to confess once a year and receive communion at Easter, else the worshiper could be denied a Christian burial.

Confession was generally public, not private, which meant that one's neighbors heard one's misdeeds, and vice-versa. On the one hand, this might inhibit full disclosure; on the other hand, it was hard to keep too many secrets from one's neighbors. Even if one could confess privately, many penances required readily observable public behavior, which led to general speculation and gossip about the underlying cause.

ORGANIZED CRIME AND CRIME CONTROL

Although medieval towns did not have police or detectives, they did have a watch. The watch, composed of volunteers or hired guards, primarily looked for fires and closed the city gates at night. The watch also enforced town ordinances, pursued and arrested suspects after a hue-and-cry had been raised, kept prisoners until they were released, and served town warrants. Watchers were posted on the walls, gates, and towers – sometimes the ladders to the walls were removed to keep watchers from abandoning their posts. Watchers also meandered through the dark streets with torches to look for troublemakers. As crime prevention, it was a well-meaning system, but inefficient.

A guard wearing his insignia of office, usually a staff with the town's arms, represented the entire community. An assailant striking a guard assaulted the town's authority and was dealt with harshly. When the guard put down the staff at the end of the night, however, he returned to being an ordinary person, with no protection from enemies he might have made during his duties. Siena provided free medical treatment for guards and soldiers injured in its service, guaranteed to pay its soldiers' ransom if they could not afford it, and offered a pension for life if a guard or solider were disabled on duty and otherwise indigent.

Siena used a volunteer watch system. Each neighborhood provided the names of 200 men eligible for the night watch. Two men from each company of 200 men served for six months as *paciarii*, responsible to the commune for enforcing the peace between rival families and supervising their own companies. Often they were stationed at the gates and bell towers to sound warning of trouble. Two guards were stationed at each gate every night. Others patrolled the streets by day and by night.

Watch

The structure of the watch varied by town. A typical English watch was headed by the beadle, an aide to the local alderman who heard complaints about crime. The beadle could summon the watch and could settle minor disputes. The senior watch officer was a sergeant, who reported to the town's mayor, royal sheriff, or landholder's bailiff. A sergeant might also be the town crier. A common watch man was a "petty constable" who reported to the sergeants and the beadle. In 1422, Coventry had 24 constables for its population of 5,000.

Siena, on the other hand, had one police officer for every 145 inhabitants. The podestà, captain of the Popolo, the Council of the Nine, and the war captain all had their own separate police forces. All of these forces were subject to official reviews to confirm that they had the requisite number of watchmen, who were properly equipped and well-behaved. Instead of hiring individual watchmen, Italian towns generally hired a captain, who in turn hired watchmen or brought them with him from another job. If the watch company's turn was not tied to an official's term of office, the contract was usually for about six months.

Inquisition

The Inquisition was, perhaps, the closest thing medieval Europe had to an organized investigation force. The Inquisition was not a single unified organization. There were many regional inquisitions, each with its own duties, methods, and goals, which rarely cooperated with each other. As with other areas of medieval society, unifying themes were often tweaked to regional needs and issues.

The Papacy created the Inquisition in 1230 in response to the Cathar heresy. Prior to the Inquisition, bishops and parish priests were expected to uncover and correct heretics among their flock. When this approach failed, as it did in southern France, Dominican monks and others were assigned to investigate the faithful for signs of heresy and to punish those who had lapsed from orthodoxy. The Spanish Inquisition, begun in 1478, was a specific alliance between the Papacy and the Spanish monarchy for similar purposes.

The Inquisition had some aspects of a police force. It had powers of arrest, imprisonment, interrogation, and (effectively) execution, backed by the Papacy and by secular authorities. Inquisitors arriving in a community offered the public a period in which to confess their sins and receive absolution. After that period ended, the inquisitors began interviewing witnesses and informants, gathering denunciations. The tribunals occasionally suspended trials when they believed the accusation was false, but inquisitors did not think false accusations were common. The consequences for perjury were often light, although a perjurer could be burned at the stake, scourged, publicly humiliated, or sentenced to the galleys. The potential reward, on the other hand, was tempting. The Inquisition seized a heretic's property (or more specifically a secular landholder seized the property on the Inquisition's behalf), and often gave a portion of it to informants as a reward. The remainder was used to pay for the heretic's imprisonment before trial (less an allowance to support his relatives). Any balance after the heretic's execution was sold by the landholder. In theory, the proceeds were used to pay for the Inquisition's activities.

The accused was generally presumed to be guilty. Inquisitors often imprisoned suspects for long periods to coerce statements. Inquisition manuals also advised investigators how to obtain confessions with various ploys, including a predecessor to the good cop/bad cop routine, feigned sympathy or pity, and the use of jailhouse informants. The Inquisitors kept records of their investigations, organized by village and town, and were able to thus cross-reference statements – both those made by the suspect previously and those made by his or her neighbors.

Even death was not an escape. Inquisitors sometimes dug up the bodies of heretics to burn them. (The practice had a long past. Pope Formosus (891-896) was exhumed by his successor and his corpse tried for heresy. The body was dragged thru Rome and dumped into the Tiber. The body was later recovered and buried with honor by a subsequent pontiff in 898.) A heretic's heirs were disinherited, which made residents sensitive to accusations about their ancestors' beliefs, particularly as there would be few witnesses able to disprove an allegation.

Torture was allowed, according to "the conscience and will of the appointed judges, following law, reason, and good conscience. Inquisitors should take great care that the sentence of torture is justified and follows precedent." Torture was used in a minority of cases for interrogations, not punishment. In most cases, the threat of torture was enough to

procure a confession. Confessions made under torture were not valid evidence. The accused had to ratify the confession a day after the ordeal. In theory, an accused could only be tortured once, but a session could be suspended and resumed several times.

After investigation and interrogation, the case was considered by a trial of judges outside of the accused's presence. He or she could be acquitted, fined, given penance (including wearing a distinctive yellow cross on his or her clothing), sent on a penitential pilgrimage, imprisoned (for life or a term of years), reconciled to the faith, or executed by being burned at the stake (in person or in effigy). The trial could also be suspended and the accused released, with the warning that a trial could be resumed at any time. As a technical matter, the Inquisition did not execute the accused; they were "relaxed" to a secular court which performed the execution.

Organized Crime

Historians know very little about whether there were medieval counterparts to modern criminal gangs or groups like the Mafia. For obvious reasons, thieves did not keep written records for posterity. The only sources come from court records, often from interrogations which might be seen as exaggerated products of torture.

Thieves were a logical outgrowth of the wealth found in towns. Petty theft by servants and apprentices was common. In towns with a surplus of unemployed journeymen and other day laborers, bored young men might turn to theft, burglary, and robbery for income or sport. Criminals could steal and fence goods, or be involved in extortion, smuggling, fencing, loan-sharking, gambling, and fraud.

In is unlikely that thieves had formal organizations. If any structure existed, it probably resembled a modern street gang, organized by neighborhood or ethnicity, with a hierarchy based on force and violence. Local strongmen might extort money from small merchants, hucksters, and hustlers in return for "protection" from vandalism, shoplifting, and disruptive patrons. They might demand a weekly fee or percentage of profits from intinerant peddlars and hustlers in return for protecting their monopoly on a particular street or plaza. The strongmens' greed was tempered by self-interest – if the strongman demanded too much money, his targets were not able to make

a living, and had an incentive to complain to the authorities. Strongmen could extort more from peddlars or hucksters involved in illegal activities because they would be more reluctant to complain and thus bring attention to their own actions, but even those involved in illegal trades could be driven to complain by too many demands for money.

More formal organizations also existed. In 1455, the Dijon authorities complained about the Coquillards, allegedly an association of an estimated 500 criminals, including specialists in picking locks, sleight-of-hand, forging coins and selling false gems; as well as robbers, gamblers, bandits, and footpads. The group even waylaid merchants and travelers for ransom. It was rumored to have a king, to whom the Coquillards paid a share of their profits. They were said to have their own jargon, and inns and brothels where they could take shelter from the authorities. Eventually 15 members of the group were captured; one betrayed the organization to save his life.

At the same time, the Grand Coesre (Beggar King) was rumored to hold court in Paris over the Argot (Slang people). His interests were managed by Cagoux (lieutenants) in the provinces, and Archsuppots (a clerical title) who recruited young apprentices to the organization. The Argot gathered in brothels and inns sometimes called Cours des Miracles (the Court of Miracles), because beggars who pretended by day to be crippled cast off their disguises within and resumed their "healthy" activities.

In southern France, yet another group of 400 thieves led by a king and his constables was discovered in 1464. It was rumored to raid churches for their altar vessels and reliquaries. At times, such a group would be hard to distinguish from bands of unemployed mercenaries wandering France during lulls in the Hundred Years' War.

In addition to these large organizations (assuming the sources did not exaggerate), bands of rural bandits might have urban confederates to watch inns and markets for good targets and to help fence their stolen goods. Generally, such groups existed by the sufferance of their neighbors; the lack of privacy in urban neighborhoods made it unlikely that locals were unaware of false beggars, thieves, and robbers. So long as the rogues shared their profits with their neighbors through gifts, loans, and patronizing local merchants and did not endanger their neighbors, the community had little incentive to cooperate with the authorities.

TYPICAL FINES AND PUNISHMENTS

Offense	Date	Location	Amount/Punishment
Assault	Early 13th c.	Venice	25 lire fine
Assault	1336	Venice	300 lire di piccolo fine
Avoiding town market	1321-2	Exeter	10 s. (frequently made purchases outside of town to avoid toll)
Carrying knife beyond legal length at night	1320	Venice	50 l. (plus an additional 50 l. if possessor refused a search)
Climbing church façade	1245	Biella	22 s.
Concubine	1458	Avignon	50 l.
Concubine	1466	St-Michel-d'Euzet	2 l.
Driving an iron- wheeled cart carrying stone, water, or wood	1367	Beverly	12 p / offense
Driving an iron- wheeled wagon carrying a heavy load	1369	Beverly	2 s / offense
Driving an iron- wheeled cart carrying a heavy load	1369	Beverly	12 p / offense
Disobeying city warder	1364	London	10 – 40 s
Failure to provide watch member	1428	Paris	12 d. (fine used to pay for substitute watcher)
Fire, accidental	1189	London	40 s (paid by each occupant of house if flames could be seen from street)
Forestalling	1309	Ipswich	20 s. (acting as middleman in protected market)
Forestalling	1428	Aberdeen	20 s. (fine for buying food before it reached the market)
Forestalling	1482	Aberdeen	66 s. (1st offense)
Forestalling poultry	1306	Southwark	40 d
Horse, unattended	1426	Nottingham	4 d (seizure of horse until fine paid)
Illegal fishing	1337	Iver	2 d
Improper accounting, town chamberlain	1309	Ipswich	4 d for every 1 d not properly accounted for
Improper grain storage	15C	Siena	500 lire (violation of grain storage law intended to prevent mercenaries from foraging)
Obstructing travel	1436	Nottingham	40 d (fine on pedestrian blocking horses on street)
Organizing strike	1245	Douai	Fine of 60 s. and banishment for a year and a day
Neglect of duties, bailiff	1309	Ipswich	10 pounds

Offense	Date	Location	Amount/Punishment
Neglect of duty to host ambassador	1483	Venice	10 ducat fine (debtor ineligible for public office until paid)
Nuisance	1302	St. Ives	6 d
Nuisance	1354	Beverly	40 d
Nuisance	1421	Coventry	12 d
Pig, unattended	Mid-14C	London	4 d (pig could be killed on sight, owner could purchase carcass for 4 d)
Pig, unattended	Mid-14C	Sandwich	12 d (pig killed and carcass sold to charity)
Pig, unattended	1445	Cambridge	4 d
Practicing medicine without license	1330	Bayons	40 s
Private meeting with foreign ambassador by Senator or Council member	1481	Venice	1,000 ducat fine and 2 years exile
Procuring	1282	Cordes	Forfeit house, or if not a homeowner, fined 20 l.
Procuring	1458	Avignon	200 l.
Rape	1369-70	Rodez	5 l
Rape, attempted	1307	Montaillou	20 l
Rape, of prostitute	1194	Pexiora	1 s.
Rape, of prostitute	1286	Pisa	10 – 40 s.
Rape, of prostitute	1388	Vallassina	10 l.
Robbery, 1st offense, less than 1 lire	Early 13th c.	Venice	Whipping
Robbery, 5-10 lire	Early 13th c.	Venice	Loss of eye
Robbery, 40 lire+	Early 13th c.	Venice	Hanging
Selling supplies to English	1369-70	Rodez	5 l
Sodomy (any "abnormal" sexual behavior)	14th c.	Venice	Burning alive
Soliciting a prostitute	1369-70	Rodez	2 l
Traveling at night	15C	Siena	20 s
Traveling at night w/o light	1431	Lyon	60 s / offense
Traveling at night while armed	15C	Troyes	10 s (plus confiscation of weapon)
Using false weights	1335	Canterbury	80 l (plus reimbursement to defrauded customers)
Watch, failing to stop thief	595	Paris	5 s (plus reimburse for stolen goods)
Watch, failing to stop thief	813	Paris	4 s
Weapon possession	1409	Venice	25 lire (or 15 days in prison)

Education

Urban residents were more likely to be literate and numerate than their rural counterparts, but an exact rate can't be determined. Merchants and shopkeepers needed to manage basic accounts and keep records in order to operate their businesses. Secular and ecclesiastical administrators likewise needed to keep records and accounts in order to manage bishoprics, guilds, and town government. Thus, there was a need for basic education, as well as vocational training.

At first, education was a Church monopoly. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council directed every cathedral to hire a grammar master for the clergy and indigent scholars, and every metropolitan bishop to hire a theologian. No one could set up a grammar school in London, for example, without the approval of the Bishop of London and the chancellors of St. Paul's cathedral. From the 12th century to the mid-15th century, London had three approved grammar schools which taught basic Latin vocabulary and grammar, and gave basic religious instruction.

In theory, church-sponsored teaching was free – knowledge was a divine gift, not to be sold. But a teacher had to earn a living and could be given a benefice or salary, or charge reasonable fees. Teachers could also accept gifts from those that could afford to donate to them.

When a Church education proved inadequate, or too expensive, lay "primary" schools arose which were focused on literacy in the vernacular and basic arithmetic. Lay schools first arose in Flanders and Italy, and then spread across urban Europe. Urban students tended to split their time between studies and work in shops, so the schools focused on practical problems and taught a rapid script (*scrittura mercantesa*), designed for record-keeping and merchant correspondence. In 1440, King Henry VI founded Eton, a primary school in Windsor, with a grant for the education of indigent scholars.

By 1467, approximately 40% of the tradesmen in London had basic literacy in English, and 50% of those were literate in Latin as well. There is less evidence about the literacy among London's women. Women were admitted to some primary schools, but excluded from grammar schools. A woman who wanted to learn Latin generally had to hire a private tutor.

Monasteries had long maintained libraries and lent books to other monasteries. Until 1436, all European books were hand-copied, and were thus rare and expensive. Johannes Gutenberg invented his famous printing press in 1436 (finishing the press in 1440). His combination of press and moveable type spread rapidly, and made printing far less expensive, vastly expanding the number and types of available books. In the mid-15th century, towns began to set aside rooms, and eventually buildings, for their collections of books. These were not public libraries, but the collections were available to wealthy patrons.

MASTER-APPRENTICE SYSTEM

The apprentice system was the most common form of vocational training for young men in Europe. A master was allowed by his guild to employ a limited number of apprentices (in addition to his own spouse and children). The Guild set standards for the fee a master could charge the apprentice's parents, and the minimum length of the apprenticeship before an apprentice could try to qualify as a master. If, upon completing an apprenticeship, the apprentice then became a citizen of the town, the urban government might also set standards for apprentice contracts.

The prospective apprentice's parent paid a master a fee and entered into a written apprenticeship contract. The master agreed to house, feed, and train the apprentice in his trade. The master was responsible for the apprentice's work and behavior. Often the contract forbade the apprentice to gamble, fornicate, or hang about in taverns. The agreement required the apprentice to be appropriately trained, and not used merely as a domestic servant. A master could discipline the apprentice, including beating him, but not so seriously as to permanently damage a limb. If the apprentice left before completing the contract, his family could be fined.

Once accepted, the master had to enter the apprentice on the guild's rolls and pay a fee to the guild. If the guild required that an apprentice be literate, he would be examined by the guild prior to enrollment. Some towns also required the master to enroll the apprentice on its records, and, of course, pay an additional fee. Enrollment was often part of a ceremony to impress the event upon the memory of the youth and on witnesses.

Disputes between masters and apprentices (or their families) about the terms of the contract were resolved by the guild or town, as appropriate. The contract was assignable – the master could sell the apprentice's contract to another master, or dispose of it in his will. Generally, the apprentice could refuse to consent to a sale of the contract, ending it prematurely.

There are some records of senior German apprentices hazing new apprentices. Hazing included teasing, beatings, smearing with dirt and dung, cleanings, shaving, and other similar activities. The new apprentices were expected to endure the hazing without protest, and sometimes even to sing during the ceremony. This was likely common in other cultures. In Bergen, new journeymen entering the merchants' guild had to pass three ordeals at the annual spring festival – they had to answer questions while hoisted into a smoking chimney, make their way back onto a ship having been thrown into the water three times (aided by a friend armed with a stick), and be whipped until they bled. After the ceremony, they were expected to sing a humorous song for their fellows during dinner.

Upon completing the minimum term set by the guild, the apprentice could request an examination by a group of masters. If he passed their test and paid the appropriate fees, he became a master and could open his own workshop or store.

In trades with a high demand for intermediate levels of skill such as many of the textile arts, some guilds created a journeyman stage between apprenticeship and mastery. The journeyman spent a term of years as an apprentice under the supervision of a master. At the end of that term, the apprentice was a journeyman and could work under the supervision of any master. After a still longer period as a journeyman, he could apply for examination by a group of masters and become a master, able to open his own shop or store.

UNIVERSITIES

As noted above, medieval universities were created by the Church to educate its clergy as theologians and administrators. Students were almost universally male, and Christian. There are more records of Jewish students than of female students. Some universities, especially in Italy and southern France, admitted a few Jewish students. In the late 15th century, Padua became a center for Jewish students, including many who fled Spain during the *Reconquista*. In 1466, the King of Sicily granted a charter to Sicilian Jews to create a university, although it may have been limited in practice to teaching theology and training rabbis.

Universities taught, in Latin, the *trivium*, which consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and logic; and the *quadrivium*, which consisted of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. A thorough grounding in both was needed to study philosophy or theology. Some universities taught medicine, based on translated classic Greek texts, and law, based in part on Roman texts.

A university education was based on lectures from respected texts. Students often sat in halls listening to a lecturer reading from the text, then commenting on it. A student's notes became, in effect, a copy of the text and of the comments. Students were examined on their memory and understanding of these works. Students who passed comprehensive examinations before the university faculty received their license to teach, or became eligible to study more advanced fields.

In the 12th century, Peter Abelard, a master at the University of Paris, introduced a new style of analysis and debate with his book *Sic et non* (Yes and no), discussing contradictions in various standard texts. Abelard himself was tried for heresy at Soissons in 1121 and at Sens in 1140. In Soissons, one of his books was burned. At Sens, more of his writings were condemned. At that point, he retired to Cluny, where he died two years later.

Also in the mid-12th century, university classes began to involve public debates among masters, and among students, to teach students about reasoning and oratory.

Some subjects were restricted, or available only to advanced students. There was, for example, considerable debate about teaching Aristotle's translated works, particularly *Physics*, *On the Soul*, *Metaphysics*, and *Ethics*, which conflicted with several then-standard texts. His views on human reason and ability also conflicted with theological positions on divine law and the clergy's moral authority. Some commentators eventually "Christianized" Aristotle by purging offensive passages. Other parts of Aristotle's writings became the standard texts, replacing the prior works.

In general, then, a university education was more theoretical than practical, but it was a vital necessity for anyone seeking to teach philosophy, medicine, theology, or law, and useful to those seeking to advance in the Church's hierarchy.

Entertainment

Both towns and rural villages held feasts and celebrations during the medieval year. The difference was scale. A village might hold a fair, festival, or celebratory dinner for a relative handful of residents. Urban celebrations involved hundreds or thousands of participants, often drawing spectators from significant distances. Some feasts were massive urban celebrations, others were held by individual churches or guilds. In Bruges, there were thirteen processions each year, held as part of civic or religious festivals. Venice held sixteen processions per year.

Urban celebrations were, in part, intended to demonstrate and reenforce local ties and relative precedence. Many had a religious element, and were intended to seek salvation or religious protection from the honored saint. Others were, partly, intended to draw money from participants and spectators into the local economy.

CIVIC PROCESSIONS

Many towns had periodic processions to honor the election of new urban officials, or to welcome important dignitaries to the town. Generally, civic processions were more ad hoc and less elaborate than their religious counterparts. Still, they were occasions for the town's leaders to demonstrate their importance and impress guests.

RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS

Weekly processions occurred in some towns. Each Sunday, the leaders of the cathedral chapter, its subject churches, and the bishop processed from the bishop's residence to the cathedral. At the cathedral, they were met by acolytes with lighted candles and censers. On major saints' days, the procession might include important relics. The cathedral chapter might also process to a town's church to honor it on its saint's day. In Bergamo, the cathedral clergy processed each Sunday to one of its cloisters of nuns in honor of the Virgin. In Pisa, there was a procession each Friday from the cathedral to its cemetery in honor of Good Friday and the town's dead.

Processions might also be held to invoke divine favor after a natural disaster, a major disease outbreak, bad weather that might affect the harvest, or in times of war. In some towns, the faithful might even punish a patron saint for failing to come to their aid by placing the saint's statue outside the church or conspicuously honoring a rival saint instead.

HISTORICAL COMMEMORATIONS

Some urban feasts celebrated major historical events. Venice, for example, annually celebrated a military expedition against Dalmatia launched on May 9, 1000, Ascension Day. On that date, Doge Sebastiano Ziani sailed against Emperor Frederick I. When the victorious Venetians returned, Pope Alexander III gave Ziani a consecrated ring symbolizing Venice's marriage to the Adriatic. The feast became an elaborate festival in which the Doge, the Bishop of Olivolo, and important Venetian notables sailed out by the Lido in a gilded boat (*bucintoro*) into the open sea for a service of supplication and thanksgiving. The Doge and his court were sprinkled with holy water while psalms were chanted. A ring was thrown into the water to commemorate Venice's symbolic marriage to the sea.

Perugia held an annual feast on December 7 starting in 1371 to mark the start of a popular uprising

against a hated political party. The celebration was far less elaborate, but similarly honored the town's past while re-enforcing civic unity.

RELIGIOUS FEASTS

There were a variety of important religious festivals during the year. Easter was one of the most important. Towns often celebrated the feast of their cathedral's patron saint as well. Parishes held smaller celebrations in honor of their church's patron saint. Guilds often held feasts to celebrate their own patron saint.

Many towns had two major processions in the spring – one on the Major Litanies (also the feast of St. Mark the Apostle (April 25)) and one held over three days (the Minor Litanies) a few days before the Ascension (40 days after Easter). These major processions involved clergy, urban leaders, guilds, and the public walking a traditional route around the entire town, pausing before its important religious sites. (Some modern theologians link the spring processions to ancient pagan rituals to ensure a good planting season.) Workers, even household servants, were encouraged to attend the major celebrations.

> Groups of unmarried men in each neighborhood elected a "king" to lead them in drunken revelry.

Candlemas

Candlemas (February 2) was the first of several celebrations dealing with candles used in the year's religious ceremonies, as well as smaller candles blessed for use in the home. Candlemas commemorated the Virgin's offering of a candle in gratitude for Jesus' safe birth forty days after Christmas. Parishes offered candles to their churches on the churches' saints' feast. Urban officials offered them after elections. Candles might be offered in commemoration of public events, including military victories.

Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi was a popular summer feast authorized by a papal bull in 1264 and confirmed by the Council of Vienne in 1311. The feast, a joyful celebration of the Eucharist, commemorated a mir-acle where a torn host turned to flesh and began to bleed near the town of Orvieto. The feast day was held on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, sometime between the end of May and the end of June. It, like most religious festivals, began with a Mass. Afterwards, the congregation carried a consecrated host through the main streets of the town to a market square or other location suitable for a large feast. The procession included all of the major civic and religious leaders, each in their finest clothes, marching in a strict order of least wealthy to most, ending with the clergy, accompanied by the mayor. At the end of the route, the clergy placed the host in an appropriate church near the feast site.

The procession might include wagons depicting religious scenes, sponsored by the guilds. In other towns, religious plays might be held at stationary locations or at the feast site. York's cycle of Corpus Christi plays was one of the most elaborate celebrations of the holiday.

Although Corpus Christi was a joyful celebration, it could also spark guild rivalries. In 1399, guild members rioted during a Corpus Christi celebration in Chester.

Fete des Fous (Feast of Fools)

The feast of Shrovetide (northern Europe) or Carnival (southern Europe) was held on the eve of Lent. Traditionally, the faithful fasted during Lent, thus perishables like eggs and meat were used up before the Lent fast began on Ash Wednesday. In the 13th century, some clergy organized feasts of fools on that night to mock the higher clergy and satirize religious rituals and sacraments. Groups of unmarried men in each neighborhood, known as *abbayes de jeunesse*, *conards*, *folle*, or *malgoverne*, elected a "king" to lead them in drunken revelry.

In Paris, the butchers led their best fattened ox (*le boeuf gras*) through the city. A butcher's young child, dressed in finery and carrying a sword and scepter, rode on its back as king or queen of the day. Musicians accompanied the procession. The butchers offered the ox to the mayor on the steps of the city

hall. With that ceremony, Carnival, with its feasts, dances, and drinking, began in Paris.

The Church intermittently tried to discourage the Feast. In 1207, Innocent III tried to have it discontinued in Polish churches. In 1400, the University of Paris tried to ban it. In 1436, Basle allowed the feast to proceed, but only if it was not irreverent.

Lent and Easter

Lent, a 40-day period between Ash Wednesday and Easter, was a time of fasting, marked by the absence of celebrations. Men stopped cutting their hair. All Christians refrained from eating meat, eggs, and dairy products. Churches often covered images and crosses. Some towns restricted loud or boisterous activities during Lent. Sumptuary laws might encourage even more modest dress during Lent. After the Fourth Lateran Council, Jews were encouraged to remain indoors during the season. Prostitutes were often expected to limit or suspend their activities.

Easter Sunday was a major Church festival. It was one of the few times each year when communion (preceded by confession) was mandatory. In Italy, Easter was also an occasion for communal baptism of the community's infants. After Mass, it was a time for celebration, feasts, and dances as the faithful broke their Lent fast.

Assumption of the Virgin

The Assumption of the Virgin (August 15) was an important festival. In Italy, it was a traditional time for a truce, so that even soldiers could attend ceremonies in their home church. Assaults and violent conduct during the festival were more strictly punished than at other times. Tolls and fees were suspended for visitors. Candles were sold in the market, under the strict supervision of guild leaders who required religious candles to only use beeswax and linen wicks. During the feast, candles were offered by the faithful to the cathedral and other churches. The laity could also buy candles to be blessed for their own use.

Italian city-states required every male head of household to attend the services. Urban officials sometimes checked attendance, and looked for anyone banished from the city who might try to sneak into the ceremony. Generally, foreigners, women, and children were excluded from the candle offering procession, although they could observe the ceremony.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPETITIONS

Some events were intended to boost urban unity as a whole. Others were intended to channel neighborhood rivalries. Feasts, festivals, and fairs were often a time for official or unofficial neighborhood competitions. Combats between rock-throwing mobs (*sassaioli*) were common in Perugia and Rome. Milan, Pavia, and Ravenna were known for fighting with wooden weapons (*giuocco del mazzascudo*).

In Siena, there was the *elmora* (a melee with wooden swords and lances), the *battaglia de'sassi* (a melee with thrown stones), the *pugna* (a brawl fought with fists wrapped in cloth), and the *pallone* (a soccer-like game). Sienese officials tried to limit the mayhem with laws. Stone throwing was banned in 1253. The elmora was banned by the end of 13C. A group tried to convert the unarmed pugna into an urban rebellion in 1325, but were thwarted by alert authorities.

In Venice, there are records of battles between neighborhoods as early as 810. Combatants fought with rocks and sharpened sticks hardened by repeated soaking in boiling oil, protected by shields, helmets, and even armor. In 1369, the Great Council encouraged a set of battles on the first day of the New Year and during the regatta (early September) to help young men learn combat skills. In the 15th century, there are scattered records of battles fought on bridges and in small plazas (campi). In 1421, there is a record of a neighborhood battle fought on a bridge, the Ponte dei Servi. In 1493, a bridge battle was staged on the Ponte di Santa Fosca for the duke of Ferrara. In 1505, the Council of Ten tried to ban "wars" at the bridges, and failed.

Races

The Palio was, and is, a horse race held in Siena each year. It was one of many run in northern Italy starting in the 13th century. The name refers to the banner or flag given to the winner in honor of the city's patron saint. Records first mention the Sienese palio in 1238 as part of a festival of the Assumption of the Virgin. Palios often honored saints, rarely other individuals.

Prior to the 16th century, the Sienese palio was a race from one point to another. (During the 16th century, it became a race around the main plaza of Siena, a dangerous course to both riders and spectators.) Each of the Sienese neighborhoods (terzi) sponsored a horse, which was decorated with the neighborhood's colors and symbols.

Another renowned Italian race was, and is, Gubbio's Festa dei Ceri, or Corsa dei Ceri, held in mid-May since the mid-12th century. Three teams of a score of men race to carry 15' tall heavy wooden statues (each with a large candle in it) through the city to the cathedral on top of Monte Ignino. The statues represent Gubbio's patron saints: San Ubaldo (city's patron), San Giorgio (merchants' patron), and San Antonio (farmers' patron). San Ubaldo is always first to enter the cathedral, but the winning team makes the first offering.

Snowmen

In northern climates, the first heavy snowfalls might result in snowmen, snow sculptures, and an impromptu winter festival. During a three month period of snow which fell on Arras in the winter of 1434, locals built a series of satirical snowmen and snow sculptures including one of Jeanne d'Arc, who had passed through the city in 1431. A Florentine writer noted the nude snow figures and fine snow-lions built by famous masters in the winter of 1510. In 1511, Brussels residents and guilds decorated the city with snow sculptures celebrating biblical scenes, folk heros, local personages and tradespeople, and even some lewd scenes – fifty scenes and 110 snowmen in all.

TOURNAMENTS

In England and Northern France, tournaments and jousts were popular hobbies for young nobles and their followers. Many were regularly held near towns, which provided comfortable lodging and supplies for the participants and their audience. It was said, in fact, that almost every fortnight there was a tournament in one place or another. A tournament, in the sense of a mass combat, might draw hundreds of knights, each with several followers and servants, adding thousands of people to the town and its surroundings. Jousts, combats between two individual knights, attracted fewer participants, but could still draw hundreds of nobles and their retinues to the host town.

There was no regular circuit for tournaments, although there were customary locations. At times, monarchs tried to ban tournaments and jousts out of concern for the injuries to their knights, and the potential for violence inherent in large crowds of armed young men gathering for competition. Thus, the customary locations tended to be in border areas, distant from the monarch's control, generally near at least one medium-sized town which provided a base for the competitors. Jousts, which tended to be smaller and needed less space than mass combats, were held in conjunction with weddings and other celebrations.

Tournaments originated in France and were referred to elsewhere as *Conflictus Gallicus* or *batailles francaises*. The term referred specifically to massed combats or mêlées between knights; eventually it came to refer to all knightly combat competitions. A "joust" was often held as the preliminary event in a tournament. Later, the joust became the almost-exclusive form of the competition.

Early tournaments were little more than agreed-upon battles between opponents. The only difference between an early tournament and war was the participants' intent. They became popular around 1170. Some were held in conjunction with markets and fairs so that a tourneyer could find adequate food, lodging, and stables, and buy armor, arms, harnesses, and horses as needed. The tourneyer did not travel alone – he generally had servants, squires, foot soldiers, archers, armorers, weaponers, and other companions. Mercenary leaders and large landholders often watched tournaments, hoping to hire successful unlanded knights. The participants and the watching crowds, of course, attracted artisans, entertainers, merchants, mountebanks, pickpockets, and prostitutes.

Mêlée tournaments in the 12-14th centuries involved teams of 20 to 250 contestants. The day before the tournament was filled with trial jousts and, when the Church permitted, Masses. The tournament itself lasted for a day – afterwards, both men and horses were too tired to continue. The tournament commenced with a series of individual jousts (*commençailles*), then the mêlée tournaments with lance, then sword. Those captured moved outside the list to arrange terms with their captors. Others could rest and rearm in refuges called *recets*.

Towards the end of the 12th century, mêlée tournaments became less popular and jousts began to be arranged. Later tournaments included both jousts by individuals and mêlée between groups of up to 40 on a side. Some involved a fixed number of passes; one in Toury, France, in 1380 involved three courses with the lance, three exchanged blows with battle-axe, and three dagger thrusts.

In the late 14th century, some knights developed an alternative to tournament jousts. They would hold a pass or bridge, denying passage to any knight who would not joust with them. One of the most famous jousts of this type was arranged by Boucicault in 1390 at St-Inglevert between Calais and Boulogne. The heralds cried for three months that Boucicault and two companions would hold the field for thirty days (March 20 to April 20) and would joust with any knight or squire who approached. No combats would be allowed on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays, in keeping with the Truce of God. Those who were enemies of France would run a course of five strokes with sharpened lances. Friends of the king were restricted to blunted lances. For the most part, these jousts did not affect merchants passing through, except when they were delayed while the knights battled.

Tournaments were condemned by the Church and banned by many secular rulers. They made it more likely that a knight would accidentally kill another Christian, and even more likely that he would commit the sin of pride. The Church was successful in banning tournaments during Lent, during Crusades, and intermittently at other times. (The various papal bans were lifted by John XXII in 1316, who feared that the numbers of potential Crusaders had been too badly limited by forbidding participation of excommunicated tourneyers.)

Monarchs and major landholders disliked tournaments because tourneyers and their followers were also brawlers. A Rochester tournament held in 1251 turned into a riot as foreign knights were chased into the town. In 1288, a competition for squires at a fair in Boston turned into a riot; participants looted part of the fair. Other towns reported fights between participants over lodgings and invitations to dinner and feasts. The Church offered the Crusades as an alternative challenge, but knights saw no reason not to participate in both pastimes.

Secular authorities were also concerned about tournaments. Some feared bands of armed knights roaming the countryside. Others feared that tournaments would provide a cover for major landholders planning rebellion. And there was the possibility that a tournament fatality might be a well-concealed murder. Tourneyers were sometimes ambushed enroute, and tournaments sometimes turned into riots between feuding factions. In England, the Statute of Arms (1292) limited knights to three attendants at a tournament. The weapons and armor they could carry and wear during the tournament was also limited. Spectators and servants were not allowed to travel to the tournament armed.

The English crown alone tried to regulate tournament locations. In 1194, Richard I ordered that tournaments could only be held under a charter. Participants paid for entry by rank. An earl paid 20 marks, a baron 10 marks, a landed knight 4 marks, and landless knights 2 marks. In 1477, the fees were changed to 10 marks for an earl, 4 l for a baron, 40 s for a landed knight, and 20 s 8 p for an esquire. The crown tried to forbid foreign knights from attending English tournaments, and set forth rules for conduct. Violations were punished by forfeiting a horse and armor, imprisonment, and fines.

The crown authorized five lists (tournament fields), all south of the river Trent. One was near Wiltshire, another near Warwickshire, another near Suffolk, a fourth near Northamptonshire, and the last near Nottinghamshire. The site restriction and the ban on foreigners quickly fell by the wayside, but other restrictions survived.

The last mêlée tournament was held in England in 1342. In Flanders, they lasted until 1379. Jousts continued for some time thereafter; however, armor became much heavier and more specialized, increasing safety, but limiting the ability of many knights to participate in the sport.

ENTERTAINERS

Entertainers were not normally organized into guilds, but they often had societies or companies for mutual aid and protection. Many entertainers were wanderers, spending most of the year on the road between trade fairs and festivals, seeking work where they might find it. A few of the largest towns had sufficient audiences and patrons to support year-around groups of actors, acrobats, animal trainers (wards), jugglers, and street musicians. Paris, for example, had

the great Confraternity of the Passion, which was given royal recognition in 1402.

These were often scandalous jobs. Acting, for example, had been considered a disreputable profession since the Roman Empire. German custom treated actors as less than human. Early Christian custom classed actors with prostitutes. St. Augustine wrote that they should be denied sacraments. Thomas Aquinas considered most entertainers reprehensible.

Musicians, on the other hand, had somewhat more respect. Those of higher status and greater skill were employed by nobles, wealthy merchants, and clergy. Others were hired by towns for festivals and feasts. Patrons hired minstrels to play at weddings, funerals, and other ceremonies. Other musicians performed in inns, taverns, bathhouses, and brothels. The lowest status was reserved for wandering street musicians, who were regarded as little better than serfs.

There were a few guilds or confraternities of musicians. One of the first, the Confrérie des Jongleurs et des Bourgois d'Arras, was founded in 1175. At first, this guild was more of a religious organization founded to honor a miraculous intervention in a dispute among the jounglers (wandering musicians). Later, it evolved into a musician's mutual protection group. London developed a guild of church musicians in 1240. In Paris, the Confrérie de St-Julien des Menestriers, a professional craft guild, was formed in 1321. It included standards for apprenticeships, wage guidelines, standards of behavior, and an effort to limit competition. The confrérie was later able to found a hospital for ill musicians and a chapel.

Bull-baiting, in which bulls were harried to death by dogs, was a popular entertainment (and a health requirement: unbaited bull meat was believed to be unhealthy). Several London butchers were sued in 1349 for selling bulls' car-

casses without baiting them. Thus, local residents gathered to watch bulls being baited before slaughter. (Bear-baiting, in which the bear was harried, but often not killed, was an aristocratic pastime, as the necessary dogs were expensive to raise and maintain.) Trained animal acts were likewise popular at fairs and festivals.

PROSTITUTES

During much of the Middle Ages, prostitution was seen as a civic necessity and as a means of preventing male homosexuality. There was a large surplus of young, unmarried men, including transient merchants and recently-arrived male workers in towns; many town governments deemed prostitutes necessary to protect the honor of wives, daughters, and nuns. (A few cities were noted for their male prostitutes, but such men were never openly sanctioned by municipal authorities.) Where prostitution was allowed, married men and clergy were prohibited from frequenting prostitutes and brothels, a prohibition as widely ignored as efforts to ban the practice itself.

Legal acceptance did not mean that prostitutes were considered respectable townswomen. Often, they were still social outcasts, sometimes required to wear distinctive clothing or a badge, or prohibited from wearing certain clothing associated with "respectable"
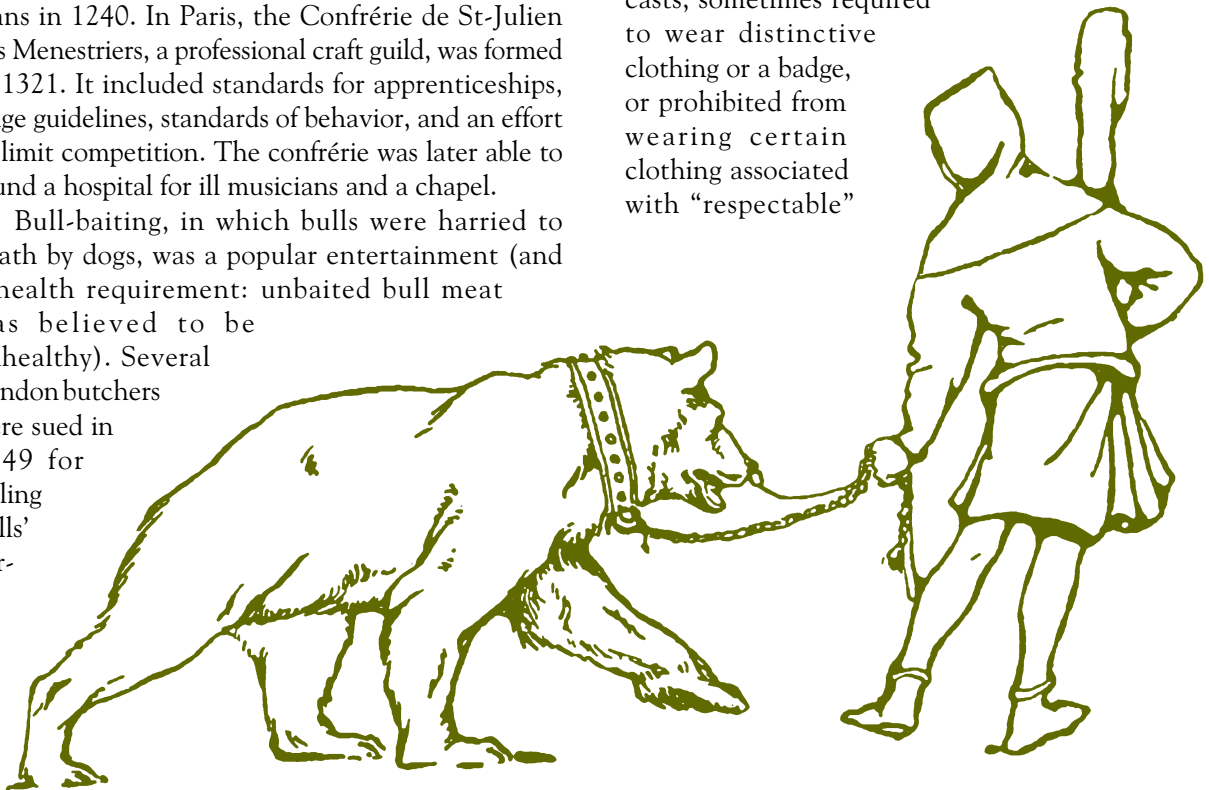
wives and daughters. (Oddly, laws requiring that prostitutes wear particular clothing sometimes co-existed with bans on prostitution, a mixed message at best.) Many towns required prostitutes to live outside the walls, or on designated streets. Some towns prohibited prostitutes from attending public church services, walking in public during the week preceding Easter, or even speaking with "respectable" women.

The Church also disapproved of prostitution, both because of the promiscuity involved and the making of money from it. It was willing to accept it, however, as a lesser evil than male homosexuality or the rape of "honest" women. A number of Church leaders tried to redeem prostitutes, helping them marry or earn a living in a trade.

Pimps (*houlier*, Fr.) and procuresses (*marquerelle*, Fr.), on the other hand, were rarely tolerated. The Church viewed making a living from a woman's prostitution as a sin similar to usury (making money from money). Pimps were blamed for recruiting gullible women from the countryside or small towns with false promises of wealth or love. Some prostitutes found that a male protector was necessary to prevent rape or assault by customers. The procuress, the pimp's female counterpart, was often a retired prostitute who arranged liaisons between customers and prostitutes, and was believed to offer abortion advice, contraception, and love potions. Some pimps and procuresses managed prostitutes under the cover of a business like a school or textile making that could recruit and employ many single young women without suspicion.

Numerous women made their living as prostitutes. At some points and times, there were few other ways for a woman to make a living in a city. Some women became prostitutes when they were widowed, or their family fell into debt. Often they were recruited from different towns, perhaps to avoid scandals involving women from local families. Frequently, towns required prostitutes to practice their trade in brothels, which were monitored by the local officials. Some towns had municipal brothels which were farmed, like other property, to investors to manage. Some prostitutes lived in their brothels, which were sturdy structures, often walled, to prevent rowdy men from assaulting the residents. Others lived elsewhere and were required, like all workers, to cease their trade at dusk and return to their homes during the dusk-to-dawn curfew.

> ## Some women became prostitutes when they were widowed, or their family fell into debt.

Some towns tried to protect prostitutes from exploitation by brothel keepers. A few limited the amount of rent and board the keeper could charge. Others prohibited keepers from overcharging for food and beer, or from lending money to the prostitutes. Some forbade prostitutes from spinning or carding wool, which limited their ability to earn an "honest" living, but also prevented the keeper from forcing them to work when not with a customer. (Some German towns, conversely, encouraged prostitutes to spin for their keeper when not otherwise busy.) A few forbade keepers from beating the prostitutes. Bishops, in some towns, had one of their clerics inspect the brothels periodically to make sure that none of the women were being held against their will.

In 1254, Louis IX tried to outlaw prostitution in France. When his ban proved unenforceable, he urged towns to distance brothels from churches, monasteries, and cemeteries, and, in effect, create districts for the trade. After 1350, many towns relaxed their laws. Some founded municipal brothels. In 1400, Venice and Florence even included prostitution among their civic values because the trade provided a safe outlet for unmarried men's sexual needs. (Florence did, however, create a vice-squad, the *Ufficali di Notte* (Office of the Night) to prosecute male prostitutes and male homosexuals.)

Oddly, perhaps, concubines and courtesans (the educated female companions of male merchants and nobles) were not regarded as prostitutes. The relative fidelity of the relationship between concubine and lover made it more acceptable than a prostitute's promiscuity. The courtesan's education (and wealthy clientele) made her more socially acceptable in some areas. In others, during the 15th century, one could be fined for keeping a concubine, but brothels were licensed or permitted by the town.

Finance

Money woes were at the heart of many towns' problems and politics. Medieval towns did not plan budgets in the modern sense; however, a medieval urban government's problems would seem familiar to a modern city council. The expense side of the ledger included building and maintaining public works (streets, roads, sewers, and canals), building and maintaining public buildings, maintaining public safety through a city watch (and sometimes by hiring mercenaries), paying for public celebrations, and, of course, paying the salaries of the town's clerks and administrators. One big difference would be the education budget; medieval towns did not provide public schools. Medieval towns also often intervened in the grain markets to stabilize the price of bread and grain during famines or shortages (an expense unfamiliar to modern urban planners). Finally, feudal superiors periodically demanded loans and charter fees to fund wars and other extraordinary endeavors which could also create sudden large strains on municipal budgets.

On the income side of the ledger, a modern American town primarily depends on property taxes and vehicle excise taxes. It may also impose its own sales tax, hotel tax, and other fees. Often, a modern town also receives funds from the county, state, and federal government. The medieval town had to depend more on its own resources. Its revenues came from four general sources: commercial fees like *gabelles* (customs duties), tolls, fees charged to guilds for charters and enrollment of their members, fees for use of public weights and measures, and fines collected on commercial offenses (which together could total half of a town's income); property taxes; rental income from municipal property; and fines for criminal offenses. Italian city-states added to that a personal property tax (*lira* or *estimo*) and a municipal bond-like system (*monte*). Italian towns also had control over their rural countrysides, and could extract taxes, forced loans, and labor from them, which provided a significant share of the urban budget.

Many towns managed their finances month-to-month with relatively little continuity or planning. Officials were required to provide annual accounts of revenues and expenses to the town councils, which closely supervised an appointed treasurer, insisting on official authorization for even small sums. Officials were often personally liable for any unapproved expenses and unaccounted-for revenues.

MONTE AND PUBLIC DEBT

Towns often found themselves in debt and had to borrow money. Some encouraged their leading citizens to loan money and issued bonds in return. Over time, Italian city-states formalized these loans into a permanent organization, the *monte*. The monte issued shares in the community's debts, redeemable at its option, which paid a fixed rate of interest. Venice's monte Vecchio paid 5% interest in 1270 and owed over 1,000,000 ducats in 1313.

Venice required every citizen of moderate wealth to own shares in the monte, and repaid those loans whenever it had a budget surplus. Investors could transfer shares in a limited manner; their price varied depending on the interest rate paid and public perception of the community's finances. Some citizens saw shares in the monte as a stable investment to fund a dowry, or endow a charity. For the most part, it was a good investment. Venice's monte paid its interest steadily for over 100 years. When, however, the city was in dire financial straits, a monte could, and sometimes did, fail.

The monte also had a fiscal cousin, the *monte delle doti* or *monte delle fanciulle* (dowry fund). Florence created the first dowry fund in 1424. It allowed an investor to deposit funds (typically 60 to 100 florins) in anticipation of receiving a larger amount after a fixed term of 5, 7 ½, 11 or 15 years. The interest rate was high – up to 21% for a 7 ½ year term. If the daughter had married, and consummated her marriage within the term, the sum was paid to her husband or his representative. If the daughter died or became a nun before the term ended, the principal was returned to her family with no interest. If she married after the end of the term, her husband only received the original principal. While this monte's stated goal was to aid families in providing adequate dowries for their

daughters, the fund also provided a large cash reserve to pay Florence's debts.

Another cousin of the monte was the *monte di Pietà*, a municipal alternative to pawnbrokers. Perugia's monte di Pietà, one of the first, was created in 1462. From there, the institution spread throughout northern Italy. Franciscan monks encouraged Italian city-states to create this type of monte to provide low-interest loans (5-10% interest) to the poor, undercutting Jewish moneylenders, who the Franciscans regarded as dangerous moral influences. (Dominicans generally opposed the monte, contending that lending at interest was usury, regardless of the interest rate charged.) Some monte di Pietà also loaned seed to peasant farmers, asking for repayment at harvest either in kind or in the value of the seed at that point. (Thus undercutting sharecroppers who demanded one-third to one-half of the harvest as repayment for the loan of seed.) Although primarily charitable, in later years some montes made loans to the wealthy as well. The monte di Pietà was intended to be privately funded by donations and interest-free loans, and run using the interest charged to pay its workers and administrators. A few montes received public funds. Some made loans to the urban government as well as to the poor.

TAXES

There were a wide variety of taxes and fees, some of which have been discussed elsewhere in this book. There were a few basic systems. A town could tax homes by inhabitants (head or poll taxes) or by the home (hearth taxes). It could tax property or income (the Italian *lira* or *estimo*). It could tax certain goods entering or leaving the town (*gabelle*). English towns broadly imposed taxes on imported goods to pay for walls (*murage*), streets (*pavage*), and bridges (*portage*). A town could also impose fees for violations of its laws and for the use of various services like the municipal scales and official

> Most basic foods, except bread, were taxed; a burden which fell heavily on the working poor and near poor.

measures. It also kept any fines its courts imposed. When the Hanseatic League needed to raise money for a war with Denmark in 1361-70, it imposed a tax (*Pfundzoll*) of four pfennigs for every pound of value of goods exported from each Hanseatic port by ship or by land.

In some cases, towns collected taxes on behalf of monarchs or other feudal superiors. In the late 14th century, for example, English towns collected poll taxes for the monarchy to fund the Hundred Years War. In 1377, the crown levied a simple tax of 4d. on every person older than 14 who was not a member of the clergy. The clergy paid a separate tax. The poor were exempt. In 1379, the tax was gradated by social class. The minimum rate (now imposed on those over 16) was still 4d. Artisans paid 6d. Wealthy merchants paid 10s. Members of the nobility paid 2l to 6l. 13s.; bishops typically paid 4l. In 1380-1, the rate again changed, assessing a mean of 1s. per person over age 15 – a large amount. Anger over this assessment contributed to the Peasant's Revolt in 1381.

The tax burden fell most heavily on small shopkeepers, artisans, and small landholders. These groups owned a small bit of easily-valued property, and lacked the wealth and connections to influence the government and obtain tax exemptions. Most basic foods, except bread, were taxed; a burden which also fell most heavily on the working poor and near poor, for whom food was a large share of their expenses. Wealthy families often had lands in the countryside from which they could obtain some food, further reducing their share of that tax.

Some towns raised money through tax farming. The community sold the right to collect a tax or toll to a collector for a fixed term. This allowed the community to receive immediate cash for a future return; however, the collector would pay less than it expected to collect. In return, it tried to collect as much as possible, and was not generally held accountable for abuses in its collection methods.

Governance

Urban governance came in many forms. Some towns were subject to a major landholder or monarch and governed directly by an appointed official. Some held a charter which allowed them to elect their own officials. A few, such as the northern Italian city-states, were independent and able to select their own rulers. Within these broad categories were many regional variations to accommodate local needs, customs, and the complex interactions between the town and its powerful religious and economic leaders, as well as surrounding landholders and other political powers.

One legacy of the fall of the Roman Empire was a need for strong leadership to unify a town and maintain its defenses. Towns from that era tended to be either subject to a nearby landholder, or to the local bishop. Over time, subject towns struggled for and generally gained some measure of independence through charters. The northern Italian city-states took a separate path, freeing themselves from feudal and ecclesiastical overlords to become independent communities with control over their rural hinterlands. Even there, however, wars and hard times brought intermittent control by powerful rulers and their families.

SUBJECT TOWNS

The subject town was the simplest form of urban government. The town was controlled, much like a medieval fief, by a powerful landholder, such as a count or duke, or by an ecclesiastical landholder, such as a bishop or abbot. Sometimes, the town was literally divided between both a secular and an ecclesiastical landholder, each the absolute ruler of certain neighborhoods, which may even have been divided by a wall. In either case, the ruler generally controlled the town's taxes, finances, and trade.
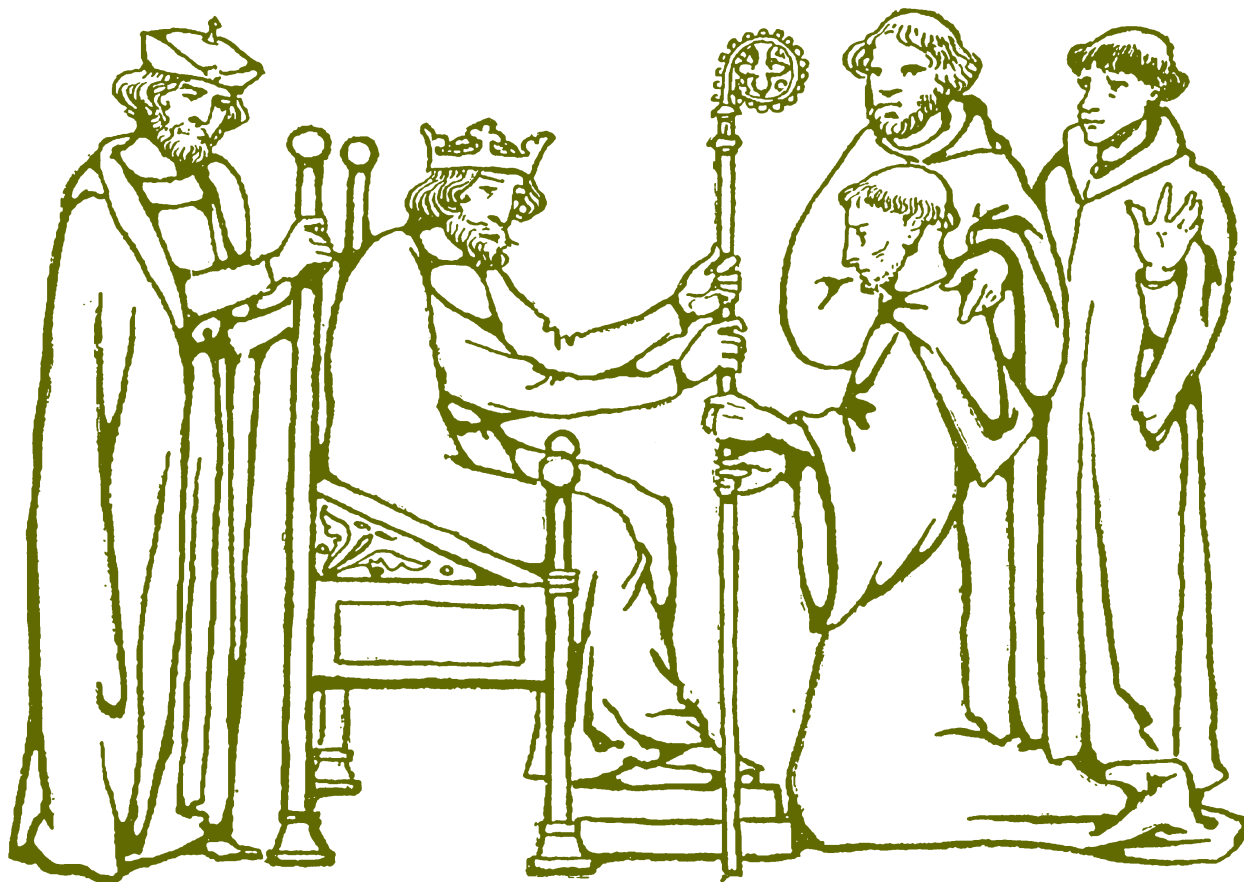
CHARTRES – SUBJECT TOWN WITH TWO SOVEREIGNS

Chartres, a small town of about 7,000 in the early 13ᵗʰ century, was the capital of a rich agricultural center and home to a noted cathedral. Its economy was mostly agricultural, with few guilds, although the town did hold four fairs on the feasts of the Purification, Assumption, Annunciation, and Nativity of the Virgin.

The Count of Blois and Chartres controlled part of the town, and appointed masters for the wool trade, butchers, fishmongers, furriers, shoemakers, and the tavern keepers. A few years after the count appointed a master for the butcher's guild, the cathedral chapter ordered the butchers who sold meat in the cloister to discontinue their guild, which created a conflict between the two sovereigns. The Count had the right to set and collect taxes in his portion of the town, and shared some of the revenues with the bishop.

The bishop and cathedral chapter of Chartres controlled the area around the cathedral, which included its own communal oven and a butcher's stall which were not subject to the count's regulations or taxes. Merchants who lived in the area around the cathedral cloister could practice their trades without paying the count's taxes or fees.

When Count Louis I gave charters to two of his towns in 1196, he did not grant one to Chartres because of the bishop and cathedral chapter's hostility to the idea.

In 1195, the Papacy gave the cathedral chapter the right to prohibit their serfs from conspiring to form a commune. In October, 1210, a riot erupted in which the townspeople attacked and looted the house of the cathedral's dean. The French king intervened, and ordered the Count to repay the cathedral chapter for the damage. The bishop eventually received 500 Parisian livres, the chapter 1,500 livres, and the king kept 1,000 livres for his troubles.

Five years later, there was another riot when one of the Count's officers seized some of the chapter's serfs for a crime and hanged one of them. A panel of the bishops of Paris, Orléans, and Senlis heard the dispute and ordered the official to pay a 300 livres fine. In 1249, another man holding the same office for the count hanged another of the chapter's serfs as a criminal. The chapter's dean fined the count 150 livres and ordered the provost to be publicly whipped. In response, two of the Count's men kidnapped a cleric. The dean fined the Count and the provost 400 livres, ordered the provost undergo three whippings, and banished the two kidnappers.

Problems between the count, the town, and the chapter continued through the 13ᵗʰ century, at one point forcing the chapter to flee from the town for five years. Finally, in 1258, the Count sold his interest in the town to the French crown, which had also obtained the chapter's rights, making Chartres wholly subject to the same monarch.

Landholders needed towns. Monarchs wanted cash to hire armies instead of relying on feudal levies, and encouraged their vassals to pay them with cash (scutage) instead of service. Thus, vassal landholders needed to convert their agricultural surplus and natural resources into cash in their towns markets, as well as bringing in cash from tolls, taxes, and fees. Town governments could also be pressed to make forced loans at times of fiscal crisis. Thus, landholders encouraged the creation of towns, and granted liberties to existing ones.

Cities in the Italian Papal States were sometimes governed by papal "vicars." The vicar's primary job was to raise an annual fee (*census*) for the papacy and to raise troops for the papacy. If a town did not pay its census, the entire population could be placed under interdict and the vicar excommunicated. Vicars served for renewable terms. Towns often insisted on the right to consent to a vicar's appointment.

If a town was the home of a noble's court, it might be called upon to house guests and officials for major festivals, weddings, or other occasions. A noble's castle rarely had enough space to house or feed all of the members of its court. Courtiers rented or purchased houses, and bought food from the local market. A court could be a significant economic benefit to its town. By one estimate, a monarch's court generally had a couple hundred members and employed two locals (servants, merchants, artisans) per member of

the court. A bishop's or duke's court had only a couple dozen members, but employed over three locals per member of the court. The cost, however, was the landholder's interference with the town's administration and finances, and problems controlling members of the royal household who were generally not subject to local courts.

Towns sought charters because the interests of a subject town and its ruler were often quite different. The landholder generally wanted to maximize his revenue from the town. The town's merchants wanted to increase local trade (which might mean decreasing taxes and tariffs to compete with rivals) and needed a body of commercial law with dependable, predictable results. If the ruler's administrator consulted with prominent local merchants and guild leaders, peace could be maintained. However, local residents often became restless and demanded self-government. Rulers generally resisted ceding their power, which sometimes led to violent demonstrations and riots. While the ringleaders of such unrest were often severely punished, their successors might be more successful in negotiating a charter.

CHARTERED TOWNS

Many chartered towns started as subject towns, but a few were granted a charter at their creation. In France, these planned communities were called *Villeneuve* or *Villefranche* and were often created to help a landholder settle and control a contested rural area.

A charter was a written grant of right from a landholder to a town as a corporate landholder. Generally, the landholder granted a charter in return for a large sum of cash, and often periodic payments thereafter. When a town held land in this manner, the payment was sometimes called a fee farm rent or the king's fee. Charter terms varied widely depending on the parties' needs and negotiating power, regional conditions, and local traditions.

A well-written charter enabled a town to grow or prosper. A poorly-written one crippled its growth, especially if it denied the town the ability to protect travelers from bandits and tolls, or limited its access to key taxes or fees.

Generally English and French charters included:

- Terms establishing the form of the town government, including the method of choosing its executive and legislative councils.
- Legal protection for urban merchants against feudal justice.
- An urban justice system that abolished trial by duel and by ordeal. Townspeople often also had the right to defend themselves against criminal charges by oath, often with the aid of compurgators (oath helpers).
- Urban real estate being held as "free" land without feudal duties in return for rent paid in money, not feudal labor.
- Exemption of urban merchants from various customary feudal duties and fees.
- Protection of property from arbitrary seizures. A debt collection system was created.
- Granting the right to collect tolls, fees, and taxes to the urban government.
- The peace of the market (*paix du marché*), which protected travelers to and from the town's market from arrest or violence. In England, the peace was often symbolized by a market cross raised in the market place.

Charters could be revoked or limited by the granting landholder or his successors, especially if the town failed to meet its obligations or rebelled against the grantor of its rights. If the landholder died or was conquered by another noble, his or her successor could also change the charter's terms or demand a fee for renewing the charter.

INDEPENDENT CITY-STATES

A few towns became independent landholders in their own right. Most of these were found in northern Italy where, for a combination of reasons, powerful, wealthy towns were able to escape the control of local landholders, while nominally acknowledging duties to distant rulers like the Holy Roman Emperor or the Papacy. Some cities in the Holy Roman Empire like Basel, Cologne, Mainz, Ratisbon, Speyer, Strasbourg, and Worms became free cities (*freie Städte*), with limited duties to the Emperor. (There were also imperial cities, also independent of a local landholder, with slightly different duties to the Emperor.)

CHARTER OF ST. OMER, 1127

There are several charters available in translation. This is a portion of the charter granted by Count William of Flanders to the town of St. Omer, showing typical provisions regarding justice and rights to be free of various tolls and taxes.

I, William, by the grace of God, Count of Flanders, not wishing to reject the petition of the citizens of St. Omer–especially as they have willingly received my petition about the consulate of Flanders, and because they have always been honest and faithful to me–grant them the laws written below, and command that those laws remain inviolate.

First that to every man I will show peace, and I will protect and defend them with good will just as I do my other men. And I grant that justice be done to all of them by my bailiffs, and I wish that they do justice to me also. I grant liberty to my bailiffs such as my other bailiffs have.

If any citizen of St. Omer lend money to any one, and the borrower freely acknowledge this in the presence of lawful men of that town and of his heirs, if the debt be unpaid on the agreed date, he or his goods may be detained until all be paid. If he be unwilling to pay, or deny the agreement, he shall be detained until he pay the debt if he be convicted on the testimony of two bailiffs or two sworn men.

All those who have their guild and belong to it, and who reside within the limits of the town, I make free of toll at the [various ports] I grant them the toll which the people of Arras pay at Bapaume.

If it should happen that at any time I should acquire land outside of Flanders, or if a treaty of peace be made between me and my uncle, Henry, King of the English, I will cause them to be made free of all toll in the land acquired, or in the whole land of England, or I will make them free of all customs by the terms of such treaty.

All who dwell within the walls of St. Omer, or who dwell there in the future, I make free from cavagium [head-tax], and from suit of court.

As I wish the citizens of Flanders to be free henceforward from all customs, I shall require from them no scot, or taille, or forced loan.

The thirty pounds a year I had from St. Omer and whatever I ought to have from there, I grant for the restoration of their damaged property, and for the maintenance of their guild. The burgesses shall see to it that there is good and stable coinage during my life whereby the town may be improved.

Since the guards who nightly watch the castle of St. Omer have had a fee decreed from of old to be in oats, cheeses, and goatskins, and since they have been accustomed to take bread and one or two denarii from every house unjustly on the feasts of St. Omer and St. Bertin and at the Nativity, or to take guarantees from the poor for these things, we decree that they shall not dare in the future to take anything above their stipend.

I grant for their use the pasture in the wood near St. Omer, which is called Lo, and the marshes, meadows, whins and fallow lands, except the land of the lepers, just as it was in the time of Count Robert the Bearded.

I make free from all toll the houses which are in the care of the advocate of the Abbey of St. Bertin, namely, those which are inhabited. Each gives twelve denarii at the feast of St. Michael, twelve denarii as brotban, and twelve denarii as byrban. Those which are empty pay nothing.

An independent city-state did not derive its rights from a charter. Its powers could only be limited by a military or political conquest of the city which forced its government to submit. The Italian city-states struggled among themselves over land, markets, and political influence, often forming leagues to oppose a city which threatened to become too powerful.

In the 13th century, some Italian city-states fell into the control of a single ruler. These leaders, *signories*, acquired power in various ways. Some accumulated power gradually by capturing the various communal offices of podestà, captain, and others. Others took control quickly, the populace virtually acclaiming a leader to resolve long-term tensions and factional fighting. And some seized control after a violent revolt against their opponents. Having assumed political control, the leader then asked the commune or Popolo to formalize his rights. He might also seek further legitimacy by having a title confirmed by the Emperor or Papacy, or both.

LEAGUES OF TOWNS

Independent towns might form temporary or long-term alliances. German towns formed leagues called *Städtebund* against local princes and bishops. The Emperor allowed leagues so long as they respected imperial rights and did not disturb the public peace. In Italy, northern Italian city-states formed several leagues, most notably the Lombard League, against the Holy Roman Emperor. The Lombard League in various incarnations lasted between 1167 and 1250. The League maintained a common army, drawn from its members, and inflicted several military defeats on Emperors Frederick I and Frederick II, who were each trying to assert their rights to tax the city-states and appoint their rulers.

Probably the best known league was the Hanseatic League of Northern Germany. The Hansa had started as a merchant organization, but evolved in the 13th century into a loose-knit league of towns. It was an amorphous organization. There was no charter, no statutes, no legislative body, not even any executive officials. Members could expel an errant member, but otherwise had little ability to maintain a united policy. As a group, the Hansa members worked cooperatively to gain merchants' rights and privileges, and to retaliate against foreign competitors. It was not even clear which cities were members at various times – the number fluctuated from under 100 to over 160.

The Hanseatic League evolved from local alliances between Germanic towns over the course of several decades in the late 13th and early 14th century. In 1259, Lübeck, Rostock, and Wismar formed an agreement to mutually combat Baltic piracy. In 1264, several towns agreed to assist each other during wars. In 1280-82, Lübeck led several towns in a boycott of Bruges over restrictions on German merchants. In 1282, representatives from several towns met to ally themselves against local landholders. In 1284-5, a group of towns agreed not to ship grain to Norway and sent armed ships (cogs) to patrol the exits from the Baltic Sea to enforce the boycott. Within a year, Norway agreed to give the towns the trading privileges they sought. In 1358, Lübeck hosted a meeting of delegates from the Hansa towns (the *Hansatag*) to discuss trade problems in Flanders. The delegates agreed to impose an embargo against Flanders which succeeded in restoring the league's trade privileges in 1360. A second group action against Denmark in 1361-70 eventually led to the League hiring a fleet and army, which forced Denmark to agree to a favorable treaty. The league embargoed Flanders again in 1388 and succeeded in renewing its privileges, despite disputes among its members about participating in a total embargo.

The league continued, primarily as an economic union to protect German trade in the North Sea, Baltic, and with Flanders and England. In England, the Germanic Hansa had evolved from three separate merchant hansas founded by Cologne in the 12th century, and by Hamburg and Lübeck in 1266-67. The three merged in 1282; they became part of the town-based Hansa in the late 14th century. The unified Hansa was able to maintain an exemption from various wool taxes and customs levies, and its members were able to form their own guilds in England, provided that they elected a native Englishman as the head of all the Hanseatic guilds in England. Germanic Hansa guild halls were found in London, Boston, and Lynn. (In this regard, the Hansa was unique. Italian merchants, although more numerous and prosperous in England, were unable to form any long-term associations to obtain or retain economic rights, because the rivalries between the Italian city-states precluded that level of cooperation.) There was another Hansa in Flanders, normally in Bruges except during two 14th-century disputes when the merchant community relocated to Dordrecht in Holland (1358 and 1388-92).

The League began to decline in the 15th century due to increased competition from English and Dutch merchants, growing piracy, shifting trade patterns with Poland and Lithuania, stronger Germanic landholders, and dissention within and among the League towns. During the early and mid-15th century, Anglo-Hansa tensions were high over English demands that its merchants in the Baltic have the same privileges as Hanseatic merchants in England. Merchants from both groups were harassed. Ships were attacked by pirates, particularly in the waters around England and France. In 1468, Anglo-Hansa tensions led to a trade war. England seized Hansa merchants and their goods. Cologne broke away from the Hansa in an effort to protect its own trade. Hansa privateers seized both French and English ships, leading to a trade war with France in 1470. Privateers from each faction attacked each other's shipping and warships. By 1473, all sides were tired of the trade

disruption and began to negotiate. The trade war ended with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1474. England reconfirmed the Hansa's privileges; the Hansa made promises of reciprocity of privileges for English merchants in the Baltic. Cologne made its peace with the Hansa in 1476. The Treaty did not end tensions between England and the Hansa, but hostilities were lessened and trade resumed. English trade privileges in the Baltic remained a contested issue, which was still unresolved in 1500.

The Hansa collapsed in the 16th century due to competition with England and the Dutch, shifts in trade towards the Americas, increased pressure from German territorial rulers, and the Catholic/Protestant battles of the Reformation.

RECORD KEEPING

In the late 12th and early 13th century, there was a significant increase in the written records made and kept by rulers and merchants alike. By the middle of the 12th century, the English monarchy began keeping copies of key documents. Other monarchs and major landholders followed. By the 14th century, monarchs and major landholders depended on their archives and records to understand and enforce their rights.

Towns followed the same trend. They kept a variety of records including contracts, legal judgments, and their own charters. Each had its own official seals to mark documents and prevent fraud. Seals and important documents were kept in a chest with several locks. The keys were divided among officials to prevent fraud. Worn-out seals were kept in the archives; new ones were introduced with a small ceremony. Several towns used Franciscan monasteries to store their documents. Occasionally, rioters would threaten to destroy a town's records, especially those concerning debts.

Larger towns had some form of official record keeper. Italian towns had a chancellor to draft and preserve statutes and legal records. Key documents, like a charter, were sometimes drafted and signed in a public ceremony to ensure that they were accepted by the community. Major officials had their own nota-

ries who submitted copies of all records to the local chancery. Townspeople came to private scribes and notaries to record their deeds, marriage contracts, and wills, some of which were then taken to the town hall and marked with an official seal.

In Italy, towns began collecting and copying important documents into books (*libri iurium* or *libri privilegiorum*). To some extent, these books were a counterpart to northern European town charters, documenting the city-state's territorial and political rights. Towns also began collecting and publishing their statutes. Ferrara's was written on the walls of its cathedral in 1173. The podestà of Milan had its statutes codified in 1216. Genoa's podestà did likewise in 1239. Over time, the statutes accreted changes and clarifications, and had to be periodically checked by an appointed statute inspector for accuracy.

Preserving records was important. Finding information in records was more complex. Universities began to develop indexes and concordances to help scholars find materials within books. Some papal inquisitors organized their records geographically, to make it easier to find rural recidivists. They also left generous margins where subsequent investigators could make follow-up notes. The organization of merchant and urban records varied – for many it was hard to spot trends or find older information.

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

Most towns had an executive and legislature, the nature of which varied by time and by country. Some towns had a mayor (either elected or appointed by a landholder) who was assisted by a council drawn from among the town's leading merchants and artisans. Other towns were governed by a council of elected officials with no executive.

Podestàs, Captains, and Councils

Italian city-states went through several phases of governance. The earliest phase was a popular assembly (the commune), led by appointed counselors. As towns grew larger and urban government more

> Seals and important documents were kept in a chest with several locks.

HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE

Ambitious people sought political offices for a variety of reasons, including the chance for financial gain and social advancement. In most of Europe, office holders could favor their friends and family by appointing them to offices or hiring them to supply urban needs. Office holders interacted with other political leaders, which gave them a chance to seek higher political offices and find marriage alliances and favorable apprenticeships for their children.

On the other hand, a public official's salary rarely compensated for expenses. The time spent serving in public office was time away from the official's own business and family. An official spent time and money on elections, meetings, and travel for the community's business. Often he had to host and entertain visiting dignitaries, maintain an appropriate staff, and provide food and entertainment for traditional ceremonies. The office holder was often personally liable for any financial irregularities; accounts were generally audited annually or at the end of his term, whichever happened first.

In Italy, many office holders were hired from allied towns in order to maximize their impartiality. They served under a variety of social restrictions, sometimes prohibited from visiting or dining with any local resident outside of official functions to avoid any appearance of favoritism.

The podestà was a man of at least 30 years, who typically served a term of six months. Often he was a noble, precluded from participating in his own city's government, but allowed to be an executive in other allied city-states' governments. The podestà was almost always a foreigner (a citizen of another Italian commune), so chosen because he had no stake in local politics and could be trusted to fairly administer the town's affairs. Some communes even forbade the podestà to eat with local citizens or to accept gifts from them to avoid favoritism. Most forbade the podestà to travel more than a day's journey from the city without special permission. Siena required the podestà to remain in town for a week after his term ended while it investigated his regime, including its finances. Often, his last month's salary was withheld until the investigation (*sindacamentum*) ended satisfactorily. Verona's podestà served for 12 months, then remained for a month to assist the new podestà and undergo an investigation. If, for any reason, a podestà could not complete his term, he forfeited his salary.

The podestà usually brought his family and staff with him. His staff often included judges, knights, notaries, squires, and police, all of whom were paid from his salary. Verona required the podestà to supply 3 judges, 12 soldiers, and appropriate squires. In Siena, the city held a parade twice each month to make certain the podestà and his staff were actually present in the city. Verona, on the other hand, forbade the podestà to bring his wife, child, grandchild, or nieces and nephews into the city during his 12 month term, and he was forbidden to receive gifts from, or dine with, citizens.

The general council and its smaller executive body passed legislation and handled most local governance. Most decisions required a simple majority vote, often by secret ballot. Members put a white ball (favorable) or a black ball (unfavorable) into a box. Certain decisions required a supermajority – a vote to go to war in Siena required a ¾ majority vote on three separate days, and any councilor who spoke in favor of war was obliged to serve in the campaign himself. The executive body, discussed below, was, in theory, chosen by lot, but the elections were likely rigged to allow the same names to reappear.

Councilors generally had to be citizens, at least 30 years old, and literate. Magnates (nobles) were usually excluded as were judges, notaries, and phy-

demanding, the popular assembly became first a legislature, and then often a bicameral legislature. When local leaders proved unable to settle disputes between factions, they created an appointed executive, a podestà, who summoned and presided over the legislature, acted as a judge, and occasionally commanded the military. Over time, that too proved unsatisfactory. Podestàs, although not locals, were from similar social classes to the town elites. A third entity, the Popolo, was created, which theoretically included a wider segment of the population than the legislative councils. The Popolo, led by its captain, often supplemented the council/podestà system. Finally, when that too proved unsatisfactory, many towns turned to *signore* (lords) to govern urban factions.

sicians (perhaps because of their close ties to noble families). In many communes, councilors could not hold successive terms and could not serve if a close relative, business partner, or factor served on the same council. In some communes, councilors could not simultaneously head major guilds, or serve in certain offices. Councilors were often chosen by lot from a pool of eligible men drawn from each urban district. In Florence, the names were placed into a leather bag (*borse*) and drawn in a public ceremony. Historians who have analyzed councilors' names in many city-states suggest that the repetition of the same names indicates that election cheating and fraud was widespread.

At first, Italian communes were small enough to be governed by general assemblies of all of their members. A small number of consuls were elected to handle day-to-day affairs. As the commune grew, the general assembly often grew unwieldy. Executive councils of six, nine, or ten members were found in various Italian communes. In Siena, the Nine were immune from ordinary criminal prosecution during their six-month term. After 1323, they had immunity from prosecution for major crimes, and protection against torture for 10 years after leaving office.

The Popolo or People was a quasi-government. (Venice was unique in not having a Popolo.) It was governed by a council of elders (*anziani*) made up of guild elders and representatives from the town's districts. The Popolo was led by a Captain, a foreigner like the podestà. Over time, many Popolos gained control of their communes' finances and defense. In some places, they assimilated the commune entirely and replaced the podestà and council.

Guelf and Ghibelline

Italian city-states often included various parties or associations that followed guild and family lines. In Brescia, there were the Rivola and the Coglioni; in Cremona the Barbarasi ("clean-shaven") and the Capelleti ("hairy"); in Mantua, the Poltroni and Calorosi; in Reggio the Palude and the Correggio; in Vicenza the Vivaresi and the Counts of Vicenza; and so on. Members of various parties were allied by marriage with parties in other communes. Party loyalty even spread into the clergy, where bishops, priests, monks, and nuns were partisans of one faction or the other.

In the early 13th century, many of these parties coalesced into the Guelf and Ghibelline factions. These parties were, at their most basic, supporters of the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire respectively. As with other aspects of Italian city-state politics, the full situation was far more complex. In effect, many cities had organizations (parties) of supporters for each faction in the complex struggle for control of northern Italy. Supporters showed their allegiance by symbols, like a particular color or style of clothing, or by gestures, like how they cut their fruit or drank their wine. The parties fought among themselves. When one assumed dominance, the other was exiled to join supporters in neighboring cities. The exiles plotted their return. If they managed it, they then exiled their foes.

The struggle led to one of the bloodiest battles in northern Italian history. On September 4, 1260, Florence and Siena led their respective allies into battle near Montaperti (the "hill of death"). The Sienese Ghibellines were triumphant. Some commentators estimated that 10,000 soldiers were killed, 15,000 Florentines were taken prisoner, and the Florentine carroccio (see p. 107) was captured. Florence briefly fell to the Ghibelline party, which exiled its Guelph rivals. Within ten years, after several Guelph victories, the Guelphs regained power in Florence and Siena and exiled their Ghibelline foes.

In 1300, the Guelph party, having soundly defeated its Ghibelline foes, split into a White and Black faction. (The original cause for the division was said to be part of a family feud in the Cancellieri family of Pistoia.) The two parties became associated with local politics. In Florence, the White Guelphs, allied with the Cerchi family, controlled the city in 1300. The Black Guelphs were associated with the Donati family. A series of violent fights broke out, which led to leaders of both factions being banished. Many of the White Guelphs returned in 1301. In 1302, however, the Black Guelphs had regained political power and forced their White Guelph rivals (including Dante Alighieri) into exile. In 1364, Florence enacted a law stating that anyone who appealed to the pope or his legate or the cardinals would be declared a Ghibelline and exiled from the city.

Over the course of the 15th century, the parties died out, their rivalries becoming subsumed in other struggles for control of the various city-states and the rise of signorias.

Guilds

Guilds were one of the iconic features of medieval towns. They evolved to solve typical commercial problems – guaranteeing a minimum standard for safety and quality of goods sold in the town's market and those produced for export; creating a collective voice for manufacturers in town government and in negotiations with other towns; providing a system for debt collection and enforcement of contracts, particularly those involving other towns; guaranteeing the good conduct of merchant-members while traveling to other towns; providing some security for members' widows and orphans; and providing burial services and someone to remember the dead in prayers.

In its most common form, a guild was an organization of manufacturers in a specific trade which protected their interests by controlling manufactur-

altar candles or perform other religious duties. By the 9th or 10th century, "guild" had become associated with merchant and artisan groups, often with fraternal, social, and charitable functions. Whether the social groups evolved into economic ones, or vice-versa, is debated among historians.

A typical town might have dozens of guilds. Padua had 26 guilds in 1277. There were over 40 in 13th century Genoa. Rome, on the other hand, was not a major commercial or manufacturing center and had a mere 14 in the early 15th century. Generally, there was a guild for each major trade in the city. Construction workers like masons, carpenters, and stonecutters each had a guild. Non-construction wood-workers often had a separate guild. Food producers like bakers, brewers, and butchers had their

ing standards and the ability to sell that good within the town. However, "guild" was a broad term. It could also refer to many kinds of associations and clubs whose members held communal feasts, religious ceremonies, and had oaths between the members.

The word "guild" or "gild" is old. In the 5th century, it referred to Frankish soldiers' sacrificial feasts. In Carolingian France, gilds could be drinking groups, mutual aid groups, and/or organizations to maintain

own guilds. Textile manufacturers had at least one guild. Merchants might have a guild; specialists in spices yet another. Lawyers and notaries might belong to one guild; doctors and apothecaries to another. In some areas, guild membership was exclusive; in others, a merchant or vendor might be a member of multiple guilds.

Where a town had multiple guilds, they tended to compete for prestige and political power. Competition

HOLDING GUILD OFFICE

Guilds appointed various officials to handle administrative and inspection duties. This was not always a popular task. Guild charters frequently allowed the guild to fine members who avoided appointment to guild offices. This suggests that members regarded the task as an onerous distraction from their own businesses and families. Opportunities for patronage and social advancement were limited.

An officer's role included administrative and ceremonial duties. It is unclear whether office holders received any pay for their work, or were compensated for their expenses, or whether officers were expected to pay any expenses and costs from their own pocket. Guilds audited their own records, although office holders, unlike civic officials, were rarely required to have sureties to guarantee their good conduct.

was expressed in numerous ways. In Chartres and other cities, guilds donated stained glass windows to the cathedral, competing over the best artisans for the project. Guilds also used public feasts and festivals as a way to demonstrate their wealth and importance. The most direct demonstration was the guild's participation in parades and processions – each guild member dressed in his finest livery, showing the guild's wealth and numbers. Some guilds also sponsored musicians and actors for public performances at feasts and festivals.

Each guild was a local monopoly. It controlled the conditions for becoming an apprentice in a trade, the duration of apprenticeship, and the conditions for becoming a master. Guilds regulated work hours and conditions to ensure quality and to reduce competition among their members. As guilds assumed more regulatory duties, they developed statutes and bureaucracies of officials and internal courts. They sponsored group religious activities and provided benefits for injured members, widows, and orphans. Some held funeral Masses for their members. In Florence, guilds even supplied the city's fire brigade.

Guilds helped their members minimize their transaction costs. They helped members find producers and customers by limiting competition with-

in the town and negotiating trade deals with other towns. They reduced negotiation costs by standardizing weights and measures, and guaranteeing minimum standards for members' wares. They also helped reduce enforcement costs by sponsoring urban courts and helping members collect debts from foreign customers and suppliers.

Guilds were also mutual protection societies. They stood together to protect individual members from extortion, violence, and unfair competition. They routinely sent representatives to landholders demanding satisfaction for members robbed in the landholder's domain, and to other towns demanding satisfaction for cheated members. They imposed trade embargoes on those who wronged their members.

Guilds tried to control labor costs. Generally, conservative leaders discouraged innovations that might give some guild members unfair advantage over others. They also tried to increase revenues by increasing the quality of the town's goods, and thus the price they could demand.

THE MEDIEVAL BUSINESS CYCLE

Towns, by their nature, were trade centers. Often, a new town had few industries. As they became successful, they attracted more workers, who drove up the cost of living, rents, food prices, and thereby wages. This led to social unrest. Merchants responded by moving their trade, when possible, to smaller towns, where wage costs were lower and there was less unrest. Of course, the new town would quickly itself fall victim to the same cycle of increased immigration and inflation. Moreover, the old town risked a decrease in population, stagnation of its industries, and a declining standard of living. Left to itself, this problem sometimes resulted in lower wages, making the town again attractive to merchants and artisans.

WORK DAYS AND WORK WEEKS

The average work week was Monday through Saturday, sunrise to sunset, with the possibility of leaving work early on Saturday night. Workers did not work on the 40 to 50 Christian holy days scattered through the year. Many jobs were seasonal. Agricultural trades were based around the annual cycle from sowing grain to harvest. Textile trades were based around sheep sheering and transhumance (the annual migration of flocks to high-altitude pas-

tures in the summer and lower-lying valleys in winter). Most construction trades began in spring and ceased in the late fall, when cold temperatures interfered with outside work, mortar setting, and brick making. During the slow periods, many workers had a second job such as ale-brewing, selling garden produce and domestic animals, and selling crafts related to their primary occupation.

A typical work day began around dawn and ended at dusk. Typically workers had a lunch break of about an hour. Some employers even supplied a food vendor for workers who did not bring their own lunch. There was often another half-hour break in the afternoon.

Starting in the early 13th century, notaries began to note the hour of the day (such as "after vespers") on contracts and records. The Church divided its day into seven canonical "hours" (Laud, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline), which were adopted by the laity to divide its day. Thus, a town's bells might ring at Prime (6 a.m.) to start the day, again at Terce (the third hour or 9 a.m.), Sext (the sixth hour or 12 p.m.), None (the ninth hour or 3 p.m.), and Vespers (dusk). Laud and Compline, prayer services during the night, were not usually accompanied by urban bells. The day was further divided into 24 hours, 12 between dawn and dusk, and 12 between dusk and dawn. Thus, the length of an hour varied by season, and "day hours" could be longer or shorter than "night" hours. Once mechanical clocks became dependable, cities installed public clocks to toll the work day and sound the evening curfew (p. 54). Work sites also kept their own clocks and bells to sound breaks.

Workers were generally paid in cash, on Saturdays. Typically urban workers did not receive the same clothing and tool allowances given to rural workers. Instead, urban workers were expected to supply their own tools, but an employer might provide a smith to make repairs.

TYPES OF GUILDS AND OTHER REGULATED TRADES

There were a large variety of guilds in various towns. The table below, drawn from surviving records lists some of the guilds in various cities; some entries are incomplete. In some areas, guilds were divided between a small number of prestigious "major" guilds,

and a larger number of "minor guilds" Major guilds often had greater wealth and more political power than their lesser counterparts. Over time, the number of guilds tended to grow as the market supported more specialists, who wanted their own guilds instead of remaining part of a larger organization.

Artisans

The artisans' guilds were often the largest and wealthiest in a town. Their guilds included those who manufactured goods for local use and for export. As noted above, wool cloth was the most common trade good in Europe. Silk was "grown" in Italy as early as the 11th century. (To be more precise, mulberry trees were grown in Italy for silk worms to eat, and produce cocoons which were made into silk cloth.) Silk cloth was made in Bologna, Genoa, Lucca, Palermo, and Venice in the 13th century. Florence began making silk in the 14th century. By the 15th century, a dozen other Italian cities were making silk. Flax was also manufactured, but its makers rarely had their own guild.

Textile workers were the largest group of artisans in most towns, and their guilds ranged from small organizations to Florence's powerful *Arte della Lana* (wool) guild, at the heart of an international trading network, and the somewhat smaller *Arti di Por Santa Maria* (silk workers).

An artisan's guild was built from a number of small workshops. Each employed a master, his family, and one or two assistants. Among the largest recorded shop staffs is that of a London pewterer in 1456 which had 11 apprentices and 7 hired servants.

In the Italian cloth guilds, masters were limited to the *lanaioli*, investors who controlled the supply of raw wool. Other "masters" (dyers, shearers, stretchers, etc.), no matter how wealthy were merely *sottoposti* with no voice in the guild's affairs. The *Arte della Lana* also had a foreign officer who acted as an impartial judge of infractions. He employed six guards and an array of informers. The judge could fine guild members and punish, torture, or even execute errant workers. He could amputate the right hand of those in debt to the guild who had no hope of repayment. He was in effect, podestà of a quasi-independent state within the Florentine commune.

Other cloth guilds, while powerful, did not hold the same amount of power over their mem-

EXAMPLES OF GUILDS

Town	Year	Guilds
Bologna	14-15th century	Major: *Notai* (lawyers), *Cambiatori* (bankers), *Drappieri* (cloth merchants), & *Arte Serica* (silk makers). Unknown number of minor guilds.
Dublin	15th century	Bakers, Butchers, Carpenters, Glovers & Skiners, Shoemakers, Smiths, Tanners, Weavers
Exeter	Mid-15th century	Major: Tailors; Weavers, Tuckers (fullers) and Shearmen Minor: Bakers, Cordwainers, Skinners, Smiths
Florence	15th century	Major: *Arte dei Giudici e notai* (judges and lawyers), *Arte della Lana* (wool), *Arte di Por Santa Maria* (silk), *Arte di Calimala* (cloth trade), *Arte del Cambio* (bankers), *Arte dei medici, speziali e merciai* (doctors, apothecaries, & shopkeepers), *Arte dei vaccai e pellicciai* (animal skins and furs) Minor(*Arti Medie*): fourteen including butchers, shoemakers, smiths, stone-masons, & second-hand dealers
Imola	13th century	Judges, Notaries, & Doctors; Butchers; Peasants; Shoemakers; Masons & Carpenters; Hemp Dressers; Merchants; Skinworkers; Smiths & Artisans
London	1351	Butchers, Cordwainers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Grocers, Ironmongers, Mercers, Pepperers, Saddlers, Skinners, Tailors, Vintners, Woolmongers
London	1500	Armorers, Barbers, Brewers, Butchers, Carpenters, Cooks, Cordwainers, Drapers, Dyers, Fishmongers, Fullers, Goldsmiths, Grocers, Haberdashers, Ironmongers, Leathersellers, Mercers, Musicians, Parish Clerks, Pewterers, Saddlers, Skinners, Tallow chandlers, Vintners, Wax chandlers, Woolmongers
Paris	14th century	Water Merchants, Bakers, Butchers, Criers, Goldsmiths & Jewelers
Pisa	12th century	Major: order of merchants (*ordo mercatorum*); order of the sea (*ordo maris*) Minor: tanners; iron workers; butchers; furriers
Pisa	13th century	Wool-worker's guild becomes major guild. Guilds of vintners, shoemakers, & notaries recognized as minor guilds.
Pistoia	15th century	Judges & Notaries; Dealers in Spices & Money Changers; Merchants, Cloth Workers & Porters; Butchers, Leather Workers & Furriers; Iron Workers & Merchants; Stone Masons & Wood Workers; Shoemakers, Painters & Barbers; Vintners, Innkeepers & Food Vendors
Rome	13th century	13 Major including *mercatores pannorum* (cloth merchants) and *bobacterii* (agricultural guild). The mercatores were subdivided into 5 lesser guilds including one for wool merchants.
Rostock	Mid-15th century	Major: Bakers, Barbers, Bridlemakers, Butchers, Carpenters, Coopers, Fishermen, Furriers, Haberdashers, Hoopers, Linen Weavers, Masons, Pewterers, Porters, Retailers, Shoemakers, Smiths, Tailors, Tanners, Wool Weavers
Venice	Mid-14th century	52 guilds including: Apothecaries, Bakers, Barbers, Bowyers, Carpenters (house), Carpenters (ship), Cappers, Caulkers, Cobblers, Corn (grain) Chandlers, Comb (textile) Makers, Doublet-makers, Dyers, Fishmongers, Furriers, Glassmakers, Goldsmiths, Hatters, Kilnmen (brick makers), Linen & Fustian Makers, Mercers, Oarmakers, Oil Measurers, Oil Sellers, Painters, Physicians, Ropemakers, Sand Suppliers (for the city's wells), Sawyers, Second-hand Clothing Sellers, Silk Throwers, Skeiners, Spindle Makers, Smiths (ship), Stonemasons, Tailors, Wallers
York	1415	At least 57 guilds including: Bakers, Barbers, Bowers, Butchers, Cordwainers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Glovers, Goldsmiths, Hostlers, Ironmongers, Masons, Mercers, Plasterers, Parchment-makers, Potters, Saddle-makers, Sausagemakers, Shipwrights, Skinners, Smiths, Spicers, Taverners, Tailors, Weavers, Woolpackers

bers. However, each was concerned with ensuring their members' access to foreign markets by maintaining manufacturing standards and disciplining members who cut corners, used substandard materials, or behaved poorly and brought the town into disrepute.

Artists and Goldsmiths

Artists gravitated to towns, especially those building cathedrals, palaces, and other prominent buildings which would need professional ornamentation. If the town drew enough artists, they might form a guild. In a large enough town, different types of artist might each form their own guilds.

Master artists were well paid. Those that built and decorated monasteries could become lay members of the house. Some might receive incomes similar to a canon's prebend. Some were made nobles by their patrons; King Philippe IV of France made his court goldsmith, Raoul, a noble. Others became patrons to other artists, recommending them to their network of clients.

Goldsmiths were often regulated separately from other artisans. They were of higher social standing, and had wealthy clients who could assist them with political, or other, problems. Working with gold required a fair amount of skill, and capital, which allowed smiths to limit newcomers to their craft. Often, they had their own guild. In 1292, Paris had 115 goldsmiths and jewelers in its guild. London, in 1368, had 135 members of its Company of Goldsmiths. Both France and England required gold and silver smiths to mark their wares with distinctive patterns to ensure quality. In northern Italy, on the other hand, goldsmiths were less strictly regulated – Florentine smiths belonged either to the Arti di Por Santa Maria, dominated by silk workers, or to the painters' confraternity of San Luca.

Builders

The building trades were primarily local providers of raw materials, services, and transportation of building materials. In a town with a large long-term project, like cathedral construction, one-tenth of the local households might be involved in construction. In Italy, most buildings were made of stone and brick, which ensured a steady living for stone masons and brick makers. In northern Europe, stone work was less common; thus, stone masons traveled from job site to job site and organized themselves at the work site.

Builders generally worked by contract, sometimes granted after an open competition for the job. Patrons either paid a flat fee per task, or piece rates based on completed work. Towns tried to regulate certain products, like the standard size of bricks, but generally left the selection of raw materials and manufacturing standards to the guilds and their inspectors.

Apprenticeship in the building trades varied from one to eight years. Afterwards, an apprentice generally became a worker for one or more years before becoming a master. Experienced builders could go on to become architects, designing larger commissions. The most successful architects were sometimes knighted and given lands.

For the most part, builders were anonymous. Part of the problem was the scale of large projects. A cathedral architect could work full-time for his entire life, and still only supervise a small part of the work. Tradition was another problem. Patrons and laborers generally wanted to follow time-tested methods and use traditional materials, making it hard for an architect to stand out from his peers. Most innovation was in ornamentation, not in the basic structure of a building.

In the 15th century, architects began to come from other areas. Brunelleschi, Ghilberti, and Michelozzo were trained as goldsmiths. Guiliano da Maiano, Antonio di Manetto Ciaccheri, and Baccio d'Angolo were also trained as furniture makers.

Doctors

By the early 14th century, medicine was a regulated profession. Prospective doctors were examined by a panel of local doctors to ensure that they understood both theory (often including astrology) and practical techniques. The licensing board (called *protomedici* in Italy) could examine both prospective doctors and those practicing in the community. Licenses could be general, or restricted to certain kinds of illnesses, or to only basic procedures, or to only giving medicines after consulting with another doctor. Candidates ranged from university graduates, who were occasionally given limited licenses because they lacked practical experience, to those who had learned their trade as apprentices to other doctors.

Some Christian doctors were formally trained at universities like Paris, Montpellier, and Salerno. University-trained doctors were rare – Bologna only granted 65 degrees in medicine between 1419 and 1435; Turin granted 13 degrees between 1426 and 1462. Paris had only eight university-trained doctors in the mid-14th century. Some monks and priests also practiced medicine; the Church permitted this, but declared, several times, that monks should not study medicine for temporal gains. The majority of the population relied on folk healers, barbers, midwives, and surgeons.

Florence recognized a guild of physicians and pharmacists in 1246. It quickly became one of the seven major guilds of the town. Venice enacted a series of laws regulating its doctors in the early 14th century. Only doctors with a university degree, or Jewish doctors, could practice. Doctors had to attend an annual anatomy course, and monthly meetings to discuss cases.

Unlike doctors, surgeons were often regarded as artisans, not learned professionals. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) forbade the clergy from performing most surgeries, opining that it was "unclean". The Council also prohibited any dissection of human bodies for study. (In 1300, a papal decree allowed annual or biannual dissections of criminals' bodies for study.) Physicians and surgeons learned from dissections of pigs, monkeys, and Barbary apes. Surgeons also learned their trade by observation and experimentation, frequently on the battlefield. In 1210, Paris' surgeons organized the College of St. Cosme, which provided practical training in anatomy. London's Fellowship of Surgeons was formed to regulate its trade in 1368-9. Previously, London's mayors had intermittently appointed skilled surgeons to investigate complaints of poor care.

There were also barbers, sometimes referred to as barber-surgeons, who performed minor procedures such as bloodletting, removing boils, and treating non-life-threatening wounds. Barbers had their own guilds, which tried to protect their rights to practice medicine in the face of increasing efforts by doctors and surgeons to monopolize the trade.

The Church prohibited clergy from studying medicine for temporal gain in bans issued in 1130 and 1139. The Second Lateran Council noted that clergy were supposed to engage in the "cure of souls". The frequent repetition of the bans suggests that they were widely disobeyed. Some historians estimate that about 10% of doctors in the 14th century were clergy. Cleric-doctors included Pope John XII, who wrote a popular medical text in the early 13th century before he became pope; and two Italian bishops who wrote books on surgery in the late 13th century. In addition, monasteries often relied upon their members to treat their own sick with herbs and simple medicines. Clergy also often administered urban hospitals, although medical care was usually in the hands of lay physicians.

There is not a great deal of information available about medieval midwives and female doctors. There are illustrations and carvings of midwives at work. Likely, they also learned their trade by observation and experience. Some were familiar with herbs that could aid contraception or induce abortion. There are a few known female Christian doctors, including Trotula, a teacher at the University of Salerno in the 12th century, and Jacoba Felicie (c. 1322) who litigated her right to practice in Paris. Indeed, Salerno was noted for its female doctors, known as "the women of Salerno".

Merchants

Among the first guilds were those formed by merchants, which appeared in the late 11th and early 12th centuries. Early merchants' guilds included all of the town's merchants, traders, and artisans in a single organization. Over time, various groups separated into their own guilds. Sometimes the original merchants' guild dissolved. Sometimes, it evolved into a home for those who traded at a distance, often overseas. York's Company of Merchant Venturers is an example of the later form of a merchant's guild.

A general merchants' guild provided mutual protection. Travel was dangerous, particularly when transporting valuable goods. A 1334 Genoese law, for example, forbade its merchants to venture beyond Sicily or Majorca unarmed. The guild could coordinate travel to trade fairs and help individual merchants negotiate with other towns. And, like other guilds, it could coordinate reprisals against towns which defrauded or otherwise ill-treated local merchants.

Victuallars

The food trades, like the building trades, were local producers primarily selling their wares to the local market. This was the single largest occupation;

20-30% of townspeople were involved in the food trades as a primary occupation. In some areas, three-quarters of households brewed and sold some ale during the year. Urban households spent between 60-80% of their budget on food. Many supplemented their purchases with small gardens and domestic livestock like chickens, goats, and pigs.

These trades also included intermediate trades, like millers, sellers like tavern keepers, and the criers who advertised prices in taverns. As noted above (p. 11), a town imported a vast amount of livestock, fish, grain, fruit, and vegetables for its residents. Town governments were very concerned about the quality and quantity of food, and its price. Thus, towns were very concerned about the conduct of their alewives, bakers, brewers, butchers, and other food producers. Towns regulated the wastes from food production, particularly offal from the thousands of animals killed each year in slaughterhouses. They were also concerned about the risk of fire from bakery ovens.

Town inspectors reviewed the quality of meats sold. They could remove any unclean, putrid, or unfit meat from sale. Sometimes the offending butcher was sentenced to the pillory along with his substandard wares. Inspectors also checked bakers' loaves, brewers' ale and beer, and the weights and measures used by tavern keepers. Any goods sold dishonestly could be confiscated. Inspectors preferred that goods be sold in the towns' marketplaces for easier supervision; however, hucksters (often women) fulfilled a large demand by reselling bread, fish, poultry, eggs, and other small goods from house to house. Towns tended to discourage these petty merchants with prohibitions on forestalling and regrating (selling goods at a significantly higher price than they were purchased for) and fined hucksters who sold spoiled or adulterated goods.

Butchers generally had a guild. Bakers and other food trades seem less likely to have any sort of organization. In larger towns, butchers might have separate guilds for those who slaughtered beef, poultry, and pork. Some towns forbade butchers and other food traders to form a guild for fear that a guild would drive up prices and thus spark public unrest.

Towns also had a variety of merchants who prepared and sold cooked food. They were also subject to town regulations and inspections, but the vendors rarely formed guilds.

Of the various food trades, butchers were among the most prosperous. The urban populace demanded meat, but it could be hard for a customer to ensure quality, especially in smaller cuts of meat. Like all food trades, they were subject to a wide variety of regulation, but court records suggest widespread infractions. Butchers were often involved in the local livestock trade, sometimes owning shares of cattle, and renting or purchasing land to graze cattle prior to slaughter. Butchers also supplied hides to tanners and tallow to candle makers, making use of nearly every part of an animal. If butchers had a common hall, it often served as a public meat market where their wares could be displayed and sold, under the watchful eye of guild and town inspectors.

On the other hand, butchers were less popular than bakers or brewers. Their work involved the sounds and smells of animal slaughter, scalding hides, rendering fat, blood, and bile. The water used to flush their stalls carried away bits of meat, blood, and wastes, making it unfit for most other uses. Popular legends warned of dishonest butchers, and even cannibals like the *croquemitaine*, who ate misbehaving small children.

Parisian butchers tended to keep their trade within their families. In 1491, the guild's thirty-one master butchers came from eight families. The right to membership in the guild, and a share of ownership of their hall, the Grande Boucherie, passed from father to son. In other areas, butchers had a reputation for clannishness, even as they relied on journeymen and apprentices to supplement family labor. It is likely that other towns' butchers likewise tended to be more organized along family lines than other trades.

Butchers were also occasionally leaders in popular revolts. Jan or Johan Breydel, a butcher, was a leader of a 1302 revolt in Bruges. Siena's butchers and blacksmiths led a revolt in 1318. In 1413, Simon Caboche led a group of butchers and skinners to seize power in Paris. Butchers were generally one of the more prominent "lesser" guilds. Despite price and health requirements, they were usually able to make a reasonable profit, and had control over distribution of meat to regular customers. This put them in a good position to be community leaders. Butchers were also physically large men, used to heavy lifting, skilled with knives, and inured to the sight of blood, which made them imposing, sometimes frightening, figures in the community. Some communities dispersed butchers' shops and stalls out of fears about butchers' potential for violence.

TYPICAL SALARIES AND WAGES

Office	Date	Location	Amount
Alderman	1400-1450	London	None, but office carried some minor privileges
Ambassador	1460	Venice	Not more than 1/2 ducat per day
Architect	1253	Meaux	10 l./yr. & 10 s./day when on site
Architect	1261	St-Gilles	2 s. tournois/d, 100 s. on Whitsunday for clothing, meals
Bailiff	1388	London	13 s./4 d./yr.
Bailiff	1444	London	23 s./4 d./yr. and clothing worth 5 s.
Beadle	14-15th C	Winchester	1 farthing/day
Blacksmith	1490	Florence	16 lire/mo. & expenses
Branch manager (for merchant house)	1363	Florence	150 florins/yr.
Builder, master	1428	Venice	36 soldi/day
Captain, papal guard	1462	Rome	500 florin
Carpenter, master	1426	Venice	25-28 soldi/day
Carpenter, skilled	1426	Venice	20 soldi/day
Carpenter, apprentice	1426	Venice	6-7 soldi/day
Carpenter	1444	London	3 d./day, 4 d./day if not fed
Carter	1388	London	10 s./yr.
Carter	1444	London	20 s./yr. and clothing worth 4 s.
Castellan	1382	Chios	400-500 Genose pounds
Chamberlain	1419	London	10 pounds
Chamberlain's serjeants	1419	London	2 pounds
Common pleader	1419	London	10 pounds
Executioner	1323	Carcassone	20 s. per head
Foreman	1489	Florence	60 fl./year
Foreman	1490	Florence	20-22 soldi
Gaolkeeper	1130	London	5 d./day
Laborer	1294-5	Autun	7 d.
Laborer	1324	Florence	3-3 ½ soldi
Laborer	1344	Florence	4-4 ½ soldi
Laborer	1415	Florence	6-8 ½ soldi
Laborer	1444	London	2 d./day, 3 d./day if not fed
Laborer	1477	Florence	8-11 soldi
Laborer	1489	Florence	8-10 soldi
Laborer	1497	Florence	10 soldi
Laborer	1499	Florence	9-10 soldi
Mason	1294-5	Autun	20-22 d.
Mason	1352	Florence	17-20 soldi

Office	Date	Location	Amount
Mason	1345	Florence	16-18 soldi
Mason, master	1426	Venice	25-36 soldi/day
Mason, skilled	1426	Venice	16 soldi/day
Mason, apprentice	1426	Venice	5-8 soldi/day
Mason	1444	London	4 d./day, 5 d./day if not fed
Mayor	1400-1450	London	None, but office carried some minor privileges
Messenger	1431	Assisi	1 soldo/mile (within commune), 2 soldo/mile (beyond commune)
Miller, master	1380	Exeter	24 d/week
Miller, assistant	1380	Exeter	14-16 d/week
Notary (for mercenary company)	1363	Pisa	50 florins/yr.
Physician (for Papacy)	1363	Avignon	50 florins/yr.
Plasterer	1294-5	Autun	10-11 d.
Podestà	1382	Chios	1,250 Genoese pounds
Purveyor	1422	Florence	36 florins/yr.
Recorder	1310	London	15 pounds
Recorder	1419	London	100 marks
Servant	1415	Florence	9-11 florins
Servant, male	1444	London	15 s. 11 d./yr.
Servant, male	1424	Venice	23 ducats/yr. (inc. board and lodging)
Servant, male	1426	Venice	20 ducats/yr. (inc. board/ lodging)
Servant, female	1444	London	10 s. 4 d./yr.
Servant	1475	Florence	7-9 florins
Stonecutter	1294-5	Autun	20-22 d.
Stonecutter (head of major project)	1492	Florence	36 florins
Stonecutter	1494	Florence	6-7 soldi
Terrazziero, skilled	1429	Venice	1 lire/day (to lay terrazzo floor)
Town Clerk	1419	London	10 pounds
Treasurer	1431	Assisi	30 soldi/mo. (6 month term)
Waller	1324	Florence	6-7 soldi
Waller	1344	Florence	8-10 soldi
Waller	1415	Florence	12-18 soldi
Waller	1489	Florence	36 florins/yr.
Weaver	1466	Exeter	4 d/ day
Wetnurse	1438	Piove (near Venice)	14 ducats/yr.
Woolcarder	1231	Genoa	6 d/ day
Woolcarder (experienced)	1231	Genoa	8 d/ day

Jewish Communities

Most European Jewish communities were found in towns, rather than on rural manors. Those in towns around the Mediterranean tended to be larger than those in Northern Europe. Palermo's community of 1,500 Jews in the 1160s was one of the largest in southern Europe. Some of the smallest might have only a few families. Whatever their size, Jewish communities tended to be tightly linked both internally and to neighboring communities through marriage and business partnerships.

At a minimum, a Jewish community needed its own butcher trained in the proper slaughter of animals according to religious requirements; its own synagogue for worship, a *mikvah* (ritual bath), and a cemetery for burials. It might have a communal oven for preparing Passover mazzot, its own well, and a bathhouse. A sufficiently large community might have its own doctor. Often one or more members of the community were involved in pawnbroking or banking, because most other trades were restricted to Christians.

The community was often built near the local landholder's castle or fortress. Frequently, Jews were subjects of the monarch or a major landholder like the Count of Champagne, who offered protection from sporadic Christian violence in return for loans made on generous terms. Jewish neighborhoods tended to be insular, partly by choice and partly due to various Church prohibitions against Jewish/Christian interactions. Formal ghettos did not arise until after 1500.

If the community's patron was strong, it thrived. The Counts of Champagne, for example, created a major center for Jewish religion. Rashi of Troyes (1040-1106) became a noted commentator on the Talmud. Champagne's Jews were also involved in wine-making and trading. (Ideally, a Jewish community's wine should also be prepared by Jews or under Jewish supervision, but many communities had to settle for whatever wine was available.) Where a patron could not provide strong protection, or was ambivalent or hostile to the Jewish community, anti-Semitic violence flared and laws restricting the community flourished.

A community's rights might be protected by a charter. In 1084, Bishop Rudiger of Speyer granted a generous charter to its Jewish community, in which he promised the local residents a walled neighborhood and land for a cemetery. He gave them rights to buy and sell in the town, and freedom from the town's tolls. The charter specifically allowed Jews to hire Christian wet nurses and servants, and to sell surplus meat to Christian butchers. The community was allowed to resolve its own disputes; if a dispute could not be resolved, then it could be appealed to the bishop or the town's chamberlain. In 1090, the charter was confirmed by Emperor Henry IV, who added additional provisions punishing anyone who harmed Speyer's Jews; protecting homes from imperial quartering, and horses from imperial or ecclesiastical requisitions; and prohibiting forced baptisms.

Landholders assessed taxes on the Jewish community as a whole, which then had to impose and collect taxes from its members. In general, the Jewish community elected its own leaders and officials who kept the community's official seal and resolved internal disputes, including those over marriage and inheritance. It provided for education, charity for the elderly, sick, and orphans, maintained the synagogue and cemetery, and helped

hire the butcher. Some communities had a *beth din* (rabbinical court), a *parnas* (president) and *gabbai* (treasurer) of the congregation, as well as scribes and chirographers (an official in charge of seals and official documents). London's records mention a chief rabbi (*presbyter Judaeorum*) for England, an office which was part of the English Exchequer of the Jews, which kept track of the monarchy's share of Jewish moneylending. Communities tended to be oligarchic; wealthier members contributed more to taxes and fees, and had a greater voice in the community's decisions. Rabbis and scholars also often had an important voice in decisions.

In a large community, the landholder might name a bailiff to act as a liaison between the landholder and the community, and as a tax collector. In England, the royal sheriff served as protector and tax collector for the monarch. The community depended on its patron for debt collection. The landholder could forgive his own loans, or the debts owed to his political allies. If the community did not make a demanded loan, its leaders could be imprisoned.

The public did not have a good understanding of Jewish practices or theology. Christian theologians did not begin to translate the Talmud until the 12th century. Jewish theologians often dismissed Christian faith as idolatrous. Discussions were risky. In one 13th century incident, a knight attacked a Jewish rabbi who was discussing his faith in a debate with a Christian priest. King Louis IX defended the knight's attack, saying that any layman who heard his faith maligned in such a debate should "defend it only by the sword, with a good thrust in the belly, as far as the sword will go."

The Church had a long tradition of ambivalence towards Jews. On the one hand, Jews were respected for maintaining a tradition respecting the Old Testament. On the other hand, theologians disliked them for denying the New Testament. Popular biblical interpretations blamed the Jews for the Crucifixion. For many centuries, the net result was a policy of tolerance for Jews and their religious practices, so long as they were not seen to pose a threat to Christian theology. The Papacy imposed a variety of rules on European Jews, prohibiting them from having political or personal power over Christians (whom it was feared they might try to convert), limiting displays of wealth and of faith, and limiting Jewish-Christian interactions. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) required Jews and Saracens to wear distinctive badges when in public. Until the late 14th century, many communities were able to ignore this directive. During the 14th century, towns began to enforce the rule. Men usually wore a circle of yellow cloth on the left-hand side of their clothes. Women wore circular earrings and short cloaks. Children were exempt from the badge requirement. Jewish travelers newly arrived in a town often had one to ten days to comply with the rule. Those who ignored the rule could be fined by the town's courts.

In return, Church theology held that Christians should not harm Jews because of their faith, nor damage their synagogues or cemeteries. Other Church rules often required synagogues to be modest in their exterior decorations, and that religious services be quiet, so as not to disturb Christian neighbors or passers-by. Some towns forbade Jews to buy or sell meat during Lent. Sexual relationships between Jews and Christians were strictly forbidden. Jews were forbidden to convert Christians, but Christian leaders were free to try to convert Jews, and even to compel their attendance at lectures and speeches designed to convert them. Jewish cemeteries were often located outside town walls. Some towns insisted that burial processions take place at night and take routes that avoided major intersections, churches, and monasteries, to avoid anti-Semitic attacks. Armed guards accompanied the mourners. Some town statutes also forbade Jewish mourners to wearing traditional mourning dress, a right reserved to Christian bereaved.

In most of Italy, Jews could bring lawsuits against Christians in urban courts, swearing oaths on the Talmud and by Mosiac law. In other areas, it was harder for a Jew to resolve a problem without seeking his community's patron's intercession.

Jewish religious restrictions on meat preparation meant that the community used more animals per person. A specially trained butcher (*shohet*) had to inspect an animal, slaughter it in a specific way, then inspect the body again. Certain body parts could not be used, but they could be sold to Christian butchers. Selling unusable meat to Christian customers defrayed some of the costs, but it also raised the Church's suspicions. Often, the Jewish community's charter gave it the specific right to slaughter animals at its own, or a local butcher's shop, and gave the butchers the right to sell rejected meat.

As noted elsewhere (p. 89), Jewish communities were often involved in moneylending – most other professions being closed to them. Small loans, often secured by pawned goods, served an important need for credit, but also made debtors resentful of their creditors. Anti-Semitic riots frequently involved burning moneylenders' records. (In England, an 1194 royal law required debts to be registered with the Jewish community and a royal official (*chirographer*), thus creating better tax records for the crown and preventing debtors from easily destroying their records.) When the French monarchy and several counts tried to use papal concerns about Jewish moneylending to force the cancellation of loans to themselves, Gregory IX sent letters urging French archbishops and bishops to intervene in favor of the Jews to insist on the honoring of legitimate debt obligations. Two centuries later, Italian Franciscan friars tried to undercut Jewish moneylenders with non-profit banks, hoping to force Jews to convert in order to make a living. The papacy did not intervene on the Jews' behalf.

> ## Small loans served an important need, but also made debtors resentful of their creditors.

Jews were also noted as doctors. Moses Maimonides, a Jewish physician living in Spain in the late 12th century, was a prolific, influential writer. His books, written in Arabic, discussed various medical topics and commented on ancient Greek texts. Jewish immigrants from Muslim Spain and the Middle East brought translated Greek texts and commentaries by Jewish physicians to European Jewish communities. Jewish doctors seem to have mostly learned their trade through a master-apprentice system. A few were able to study in Christian universities, primarily in Italy and southern France.

Jewish doctors were well regarded. Even the Papacy, despite its various bans, had Jewish doctors at its court. There were 34 known Jewish doctors in Avignon during the Papacy's stay in that town.

Jewish women also practiced as doctors. There are a few known female Jewish doctors who practiced in towns like Frankfurt, Marseille, Paris, Palermo, and Warsaw. Female Jewish eye surgeons, who removed cataracts and treated conditions like trachoma (a parasite) and ingrown eyelashes, were often deemed the best in Europe.

Jewish communities were frequent targets of mob violence. In some towns, young boys would pelt Jewish homes with stones during the week leading up to Easter with no consequences. Town authorities would only step in if the stone throwing turned into more serious violence. (The Fourth Lateran Council prohibited Jews from traveling in the streets during the week preceding Easter.) As noted, Jewish funeral processions were also frequently pelted by stones.

Sometimes the violence was more extreme. In 1189, a group of Jews attending Richard I's coronation in London were attacked by a mob. The survivors fled, and were attacked in various towns around London as they tried to make their way home. The violent outbreak ended a year later, with the murder of a group of Jews in York in 1190. In 1096, Jewish communities in the Holy Roman Empire were attacked by Crusaders enroute to Outremere. Speyer's community escaped most of the violence, due to protection by Speyer's bishop. In 1188, the leaders of the Second Crusade tried to prevent anti-Jewish attacks, and German towns were better prepared to protect their Jewish residents.

Many Christians apparently believed that Jews actively sought to harm them. There were numerous accusations of murder, ritual sacrifice of children, ritual desecration of consecrated hosts (communion bread), intentionally spreading disease, and/or poisoning wells. Many of these accusations led to mass arrests, false confessions, and executions. In a few cases, clerical or ecclesiastical authorities investigated the claims – most concluded they were false. In some cases, the clergy bowed to popular pressure, supporting claims of martyrdom and/or miraculous protection of consecrated hosts from harm.

The false stories of ritual murder started in 1144, when English locals accused Jews of ritually murdering a missing Norwich boy. The story, and others like it, spread across Europe. Christians widely believed the lurid stories. King Henry III learned of an alleged

murder in Lincoln and entrusted the investigation to one of his knights. A Jew was forced to confess – and another 91 were taken to the Tower of London. Eighteen of them were hanged before local clergy asked for the executions to stop.

Stories of Jews allegedly desecrating a consecrated host surfaced in Paris in 1290 and spread widely. In Paris, the monarchy and local bishop apparently believed the claim and enshrined the host in a local church (see pp. 122-123). In Germany, in the summer of 1298, a local knight was inspired by an allegation of host desecration to lead a mob to kill 21 Jews in Roettlingen and to attack other communities over the following summer. The Holy Roman Emperor was unable to suppress the attacks. In 1336-38, John Zimberlin, a German tavern-keeper, led an anti-Jewish mob against communities in Alsace.

All of this pressure led some Jews to convert to Christianity. It was a one-way process. A convert who relapsed could be excommunicated by the Church and executed by civil authorities. Some Jews converted out of sincere religious beliefs. Some converted to marry a Christian spouse. Wealthy Jews sometimes converted to protect their family's position from anti-Semitic laws. Beggars sometimes converted to receive greater charity from churches, but rarely bettered their situation significantly. A few enterprising crooks called *Iucchi* (several times baptized) even went from town to town claiming to be repentant Jews and getting gifts from the Christian community when they were baptized. Jewish society disapproved of converts, but generally maintained social and business ties. Christians often regarded converts with suspicion about the sincerity of the change, and of relapse into their old faith.

Southern Italy was an exception to many of these trends. Jews and Muslims had longstanding communities at the time of the Norman Conquest of Sicily. Palermo's community of 1,500 Jews in 1160s was one of the largest in Italy. Jewish merchants were widespread in the South, and not as focused on money-lending as in the North. Jewish artisans in Palermo were active in wool and silk making and trading. In 1221, Frederick II signed an edict requiring Jews to wear a distinctive orange sign. Later, he revoked the requirement, allowed new synagogues to be built, and favored Jewish immigrants from North Africa. In 1231, he formally confirmed a series of royal protections for Jews and Muslims, including the ability to bring lawsuits in royal courts. Unfortunately, a series of popular attacks between 1290-1294 destroyed most of the southern Jewish communities. When Aragon captured Sicily, the Aragonese crown reimposed the distinctive sign; however, the crown otherwise encouraged Jewish communities to flourish.

In several nations, Jewish-Christian relationships reached a point where the monarch expelled the Jewish community en masse. England expelled its Jews in 1290, France in 1182-98, 1306-15, and 1394, Spain in 1492, and Portugal in 1497. A number of Jews fled to Sicily and southern Italy. Exiles could take their personal property, but their real estate was confiscated by the monarch. Those that remained behind either converted, or were executed. Some continued to practice their faith in secret until the restrictions were lifted centuries later.

Society

Thus far, *Town* has discussed urban life through its structures. In this chapter, the focus turns to the roles and rituals of the townspeople themselves. Townspeople were divided in many ways: by guild, by parish, by neighborhood. At the most basic level, however, a town's inhabitants were divided by their legal rights as foreigner, resident, or citizen.

Foreigners were those who visited the town from outside, regardless of whether they traveled for a day from a nearby farming village or for a month from a distant foreign land. Foreigners had very few legal rights except those they might have as a landholder's vassal, as a member of the clergy, or as a visitor from a town that had negotiated a trade treaty with the host town. Urban residents suspected foreigners of all manner of misdeeds, frauds, and crimes; it was hard to trust someone who had no references or local contacts.

Most townspeople were mere residents. Residency had its privileges, including the ability to transform a serf into a free person. A serf was a farmer with limited rights: he or she was effectively a landholder's property and was required to work for the landholder, for free, for a number of days each year. Serfs were not slaves; they could not be sold to another landholder unless the underlying land was also transferred, and they had other customary rights. A serf could buy his or her freedom or go to a town. Under English law, a serf's unchallenged residence in a town for a year-and-a-day precluded the serf's former landholder from claiming him or her. Similar customs applied in France and the Holy Roman Empire. In order to invoke this privilege, the serf needed to register his

residence with town authorities. If the serf came from a neighboring landholder, the town might refuse to register him, and report his presence under agreements between the town and its neighbors.

Citizenship entailed more privileges and rights. The most important right was the ability to trade in the market without paying taxes or tolls imposed on non-citizens. It was also a prerequisite for holding most municipal and many guild offices. One could become a citizen by being born to citizens, by purchasing the right, or by receiving it as part of becoming a master of a prominent guild. Prospective citizens usually had to be sponsored by existing citizens, to reside in the town for at least a year, and to own a minimum amount of property. Milan required five years continuous residence, plus ownership of 500 florins worth of fixed goods for a new citizen. Siena demanded a fee, and that the new citizen build or own a house within the town worth at least 100 livre. Once gained, citizenship could be lost if the townsperson were convicted of various serious crimes.

In an age before identity documents, townspeople recognized each other's status by clothing, language, and behavior. Urban life was surprisingly intimate. Townspeople frequently crossed paths on the streets, in churches and shops, in the market, or at public wells. They knew each other by name, reputation, guild, and family. Births, marriages, and deaths were neighborhood events. Strangers and new immigrants stood out, a subject of gossip and scrutiny.

It was difficult for a townsperson to escape their neighbors' eyes and ears. Streets were narrow. Residences abutted each other. Windows were left

open whenever possible for light and ventilation. Sounds of quarrels and conversations traveled easily. Townspeople shared informal codes of conduct designed to protect each others' privacy and avoid inadvertent insult. One had to be careful to avoid being rude, being overly curious, or openly displaying too much emotion. People tried to eat quietly and in moderation, to share food, and to be circumspect at church and in public squares.

CLASS

Townspeople were also divided by social class. A town's classes included the usual medieval division of nobles, clergy, and commoners, then divided commoners into the wealthier guild masters and merchants, workers, and the poor. There is little sign that these subdivisions were conscious of themselves as separate classes. Workers, for example, might ally across trades during a worker's rebellion such as the *Ciompi* in Florence and Siena, or the *Maillotins* in Paris, but generally, they were more likely to rally around their parish, neighborhood, or trade. Rebellions tended to start in one area, usually among the numerous cloth manufacturers, then spread spontaneously to other workers with similar grievances against their employers and the urban government.

Clothing

The style and materials used in one's clothing were key clues to social standing, which was particularly important in larger towns, where residents were less likely to know people beyond their neighborhood by sight. In the late Middle Ages, authorities tried to legislate these cues with sumptuary laws that fined those who wore clothing too ornate for their social class. The clergy also railed against conspicuous consumption in clothing and accessories, chiding those who flaunted their success.

An English sumptuary law of 1363, for example, forbade artisans from buying or wearing cloth that cost more than 4 shillings; their cloth could not be made of silk, silver, or gold, nor could it include fur other than cat, fox, lamb, or rabbit. An artisan's clothing could not be embroidered; accessories could not be made of silver or gold.

Squires whose lands and rent were worth less than 100 pounds, and their wives, had much the same restrictions as artisans, except that their clothes could cost up to 4 1/2 marks. If the squire's lands and rent was worth 200 marks or more, he and his spouse could wear clothing costing up to 5 marks. In addition, a squire was allowed to wear silver, could use any fur except ermine or letuse (snow-weasel), and could have gems on his headdress. Merchants who had goods worth 500 pounds were equivalent to the lesser rank of squires. Those who had goods worth 1,000 pounds were equivalent to the greater rank of squires.

Knights whose lands or rent were worth up to 200 pounds could wear clothing worth 6 marks. They could not wear gold, ermine, or gems except in their headdresses. A knight worth 400 to 1,000 marks could wear anything except ermine and gems on his clothing.

Higher nobles could wear gold and purple silk. Ermine and letuse fur was reserved for the royal family and nobles possessing more than 1,000 pounds.

In 1463, a new English sumptuary law made it illegal for anyone except for higher nobility to wear gold or sable fur. This law also prohibited styles as well as fabrics. Knights, and urban leaders such as the Mayor of London, could not wear velvet or purple silk. Those who were not knights, London's aldermen, or mayors of other towns, could not wear velvet, satin, or ermine. Tailors were prohibited from making clothing that did not cover a male client's buttocks. Shoemakers could not make shoes with points more than two inches long. (Apparently, the law was widely disregarded. A new version was passed in 1482 with different restrictions, but the same basic class categories.)

Prostitutes and Jews were often required to identify themselves with badges of a specific size, color, and shape, worn on the outermost layer of clothing. In addition, both groups were often fined for wearing clothing deemed too ornate for their disfavored status.

The Poor

About one-tenth of the population were beggars without a trade or family to support them. Custom distinguished between those who were unemployed but able to work, and those who were unable to work. The able-bodied poor were seen as unworthy of charity. Churches and secular charities rarely gave money or alms to anyone who seemed employable, sometimes encouraging the able-bodied to return to rural farms. The crippled, infirm, and insane, on the other hand, were given charity. Beggars gathered, some-

times in the hundreds, to collect food, clothing, and coins distributed on feast-days, festivals, or funerals. Unless prohibited from doing so, beggars also sought charity by gathering to beg along roads and public plazas, and near churches.

Some of the more-or-less able-bodied poor likely survived by hustling – intermittent work such as reselling food, running errands and carrying messages, cutting hair, making minor repairs, caring for household livestock, and as wetnurses or babysitters. Hustlers might also be hired to scare away prostitutes and drunks, and protect property from vandalism and theft. Hustling was sporadic work, and often vulnerable to a "street tax" from local toughs, aldermen, or even priests, who helped their parishioners find work and/or laborers. In some towns, hustlers stood at the market cross each morning hoping to be hired. Urban officials might seek bribes to allow hucksters to survive without being fined for forestalling and regrating (selling goods at a significantly higher price than they were purchased for) or selling spoiled or adulterated goods.

Popular stories portrayed beggars as clever liars, vindictive, distrustful, debauched, and ungrateful to their benefactors. Many were suspected of exaggerating or faking infirmities and injuries to avoid honest work. Other stories alleged that beggars avoided any chance of a miraculous cure that might force them to then earn a living. Rarely were they portrayed in a sympathetic way.

At times, towns tried to get rid of their beggars, and solve rural labor shortages at the same time, by expelling vagrants. In August, 1418, for example, London's authorities ordered vagrants to leave and help with harvests. Another expulsion order was made in November, 1475. It is unclear what effect either order had in the long term.

In 1405, Milan established the *Officium Pietatis Pauperum*, a board of clergy and lay people led by the Vicar-General of the diocese, to shelter the poor and presumably separate the deserving poor from liars and vagrants. In 1442, Bresca created a large hospital to centralize its charity to the poor. (England similarly began to centralize and reform its hospitals in 1414.) In 1477, Venice tried to restrict its Scuola (religious confraternities) from distributing money to the poor who were not members of the organization. Scuola could make donations to monasteries and convents, to prisoners, and to a foundling hospital.

IMMIGRANTS

Most medieval towns could not sustain their own populations by birth alone. Disease was endemic, creating high rates of urban and child mortality. Towns depended on immigrants for labor and as customers. In Pisa, for example, around 1260, between one-half and two-thirds of the population were immigrants to the town.

Most immigrants were rural farmers from within a twenty-mile radius of the town. Rural people immigrated to the town for many reasons. Nobles and higher-ranking clergy came for the town's commerce and to make contacts with royal or ecclesiastical courts. Rural artisans sent their children to town as apprentices to specialize in skills that were infrequently in demand on rural manors, and with hope of the child becoming a master. Some peasants and serfs came because there were too many in their family for their lands to support or they had no hope of inheriting their parents' land. Immigration increased when harvests were poor or there was a surplus of agricultural labor, driving down wages. Others came in hopes of finding better work as urban servants or in workshops. Towns also hosted short-term immigrants and visitors such as students, pilgrims, courtiers, and those pursuing lawsuits in urban or ecclesiastical courts.

Tax records suggest that most people came to towns from the surrounding smaller market towns. The majority traveled less than twenty miles, often coming from a village or smaller market town within a six to eight mile radius. Those who dwelt near a town would be most familiar with its dialect, customs, and measures. They would be most likely to have a relative or acquaintance in the town who could provide temporary lodging and help them find a job.

Despite the need for a constant flow of immigrants, residents and citizens were suspicious of newcomers. They were feared as competitors for jobs and for political favors. Newcomers who did not have established ties of family, guild, and parish were unknowns, and thus hard to trust. Some commentators, such as Dante, also blamed immigrants for a moral decline in the community.

Servants

Servants were often a sub-class of immigrants. Wealthy urban households had between one and

six household servants, often distant rural relatives hired to perform domestic chores, care for animals, and tutor children. In England, most servants were young adults, typically 12 to 26 years old, who traded their labor for wages, the experience of town life, and a basic education in literacy and arithmetic. Many youths returned to their homes after a few years and used their savings to help them afford marriage and a family. Others remained, becoming an artisan or merchant's apprentice in the town. In Italy, it was rare for young women to work outside the home; female slaves from the Black Sea were imported as domestic servants.

In England, servants were usually hired for one year terms, often from Michelmas (September 29) to Michelmas or based around Martinmas (November 11). At the end of their term, they could stay, or go elsewhere in hopes of higher wages or better work. Those seeking new work might gather at the town's marketplace at a fair around Michelmas. Often employers hired their own distant relatives, or relatives of trusted servants, or those they knew from their guilds or parishes. Larger towns may have had formal, or informal, employment agents (*recommandresse*, Fr.).

Some historians suggest that because more young English women were able to work as servants outside their homes and villages, they were able to learn a bit about their employers' trades and to save money for marriage, thus giving them greater financial independence than their peers in other countries.

Slaves

Slavery was illegal in much of Europe, and uncommon where it was legal. The Church required that slaves be "infidels", heretics, or not baptized. Some Italians purchased non-Christian slaves from Muslim merchants. Most came from the Black Sea region or the Balkans; relatively few were Muslims or from sub-Saharan Africa. Most slaves were women purchased as domestic laborers. In the aftermath of the Black Plague when labor was scarce, most northern Italian households had at least one female domestic slave. Slaves were often freed during their lives and were provided with some financial help from their former owners upon manumission.

MUSLIMS

Their King, William [II], is admirable for his just conduct, and the use he makes of the industry of the Muslims. … He has much confidence in Muslims, relying on them for his affairs, and the most important of matters, even the supervisor of his kitchen being a Muslim; and he keeps a band of black Muslim slaves commanded by a leader chosen from amongst them. … The King possesses splendid palaces and elegant gardens, particularly in the capital of his kingdom, al-Madinah [Palermo]. In Messina he has a palace, white like a dove, which overlooks the shore. He has about him a great number of youths and handmaidens, and no Christian King is more given up to the delights of his realm, or more comfort and luxury-loving. William is engrossed in the pleasures of his land, the arrangement of its laws, the laying down of procedure, the allocation of the functions of his chief officials, the enlargement of the splendor of the realm, and the display of his pomp, in a manner that resembles the Muslim kings.

– Ibn Jubayr, 1185

Muslims infrequently appeared in Christian European towns. From the 7th to 11th century, Muslim sailors raided Mediterranean coastal villages and towns. Later, Mediterranean merchants traded frequently in Muslim ports, but very few Muslim merchants came to European ports. (Islam discouraged Muslims from trading in infidel ports.) Christian rulers and merchants sent embassies to Muslim lands, but very rarely did Muslim envoys visit Europe.

Sicily was one of the few places where Muslims lived in a Christian kingdom prior to the reconquest of Spain. It had been a Muslim kingdom when it was captured by the Normans in the late 11th century. At that point, some 60% of the Sicilian population was Muslim. The Normans uprooted the Muslim landholding patterns and imposed a northern French feudalism over the existing patchwork of local custom and tradition. Jews and Muslims paid special taxes, but were each allowed to be judged by their own leaders under their own laws. Arabic, French, Greek, and Latin were all used in official documents and on coins. Greek, Jewish, and Muslim administrators retained important posts in the Norman administration. The posts themselves had titles ranging from Judiciar and

Seneschal to Baiulo, Cadi, Catapan, Emir, Logothete, and Strategos.

For about a century, Muslims were able to live in relative peace in Sicily. There was a low level of violence from Norman and Lombard settlers, but many Muslims held offices in the royal court. During a period of unrest in the mid-12th century, Muslims suffered from Sicilian mobs. When King Henry IV died in 1197, his son Frederick was crowned as king at the age of three. During his youth, his regents were unable to prevent major landholders, including Sicily's Muslims, from asserting their independence.

In the early 13th century, King (and Emperor) Frederick II had to subdue Sicily's Saracens. Many were led by the emir, Ibn 'Abbad, who held the mountains of central Sicily. In 1222, the emir and his sons were captured, then hanged in Palermo. The major battles were over by 1225, but raids continued for at least five more years. Thereafter, Frederick II sent nearly 20,000 Muslims to found a colony at Lucera in southern Italy. Another uprising in 1243 led to the deportation of Sicily's remaining Muslims to Lucera. There, the Muslims opposed the Angevin (French) conquest of Sicily in 1269. Lucera was besieged and starved into surrendering. The Angevins expelled Lucera's Muslims in 1300, selling many into slavery, and turned their mosque into a cathedral.

In Spain, Muslims in conquered lands were generally offered a choice of converting or leaving. Many left for North Africa. Those who were able to remain unconverted were subject to heavy taxes and limited legal rights, and were forced to wear a distinctive badge. As the Spanish monarchs became more able to enforce their laws, they required their subjects to convert – forcing the departure of the remaining Muslims. By 1502, all openly practicing Muslims had left Spain. Some of the converts, known as Moriscos, continued to practice their faith in secret.

> As the Spanish monarchs became more able to enforce their laws, they required their subjects to convert – forcing the departure of the remaining Muslims.

WOMEN

> *God did not make woman from man's head for her to dominate him, nor from man's foot for him to tread her underfoot; but from his side so that he might hold her close to his heart and cherish her.*

> *– Peter Lombard, Bishop of Paris (d. 1160)*

Women's roles in medieval society were often better than is popularly believed, and this is especially true of urban women. Urban women generally had greater legal rights and economic opportunities than rural women. Many European women could be citizens of towns in their own rights, although it was uncommon for one to do so. The maxim that town air made one free of feudal obligations applied to both men and women. Town laws often provided stronger property and inheritance rights, and punished rape more seriously.

Women worked in a variety of trades, either as partners with their spouses, as widows, or, less commonly, as guild members in their own right. They were strongly associated with textile trades as spinners and carders of wool. Some were weavers, although due to the cost of a loom, many did so as wives or widows of male weavers. In France, some towns had female textile guilds. Others were active as seamstresses, laundrywomen, and as sellers of second-hand clothes. Women were also strongly associated with many food trades as alewives, brewers, fishmongers, innkeepers, and hucksters selling small amounts of poultry, bread, eggs, cheese, and other goods. Butchers' wives and daughters often made blood pudding and tallow candles. Women were small retail shopkeepers (institrix), hucksters, and peddlers. In several areas, women were noted for operating ferries and small boats. Jewish women frequently owned pawn shops. Almost all midwives were women and there were a few rare female doctors and surgeons.

One of the common features of many of these trades is that they did not need expensive tools or materials. A woman with little access to capital or credit could support herself in these. As wives and widows, women were more likely to have access to marital property, and thus the resources to operate their husbands' trades as his partner, in his absence, or after his death.

In larger towns, women were sometimes wholesale traders or merchants (mercatrix). Letters of credit and Italian partnerships allowed female investors to profit from trading ventures without leaving their homes. One Genoese source suggests that women were involved in 12% of seafaring venture contracts, providing 14% of the capital in the first half of the 13th century. Women entered into contracts and collected debts while their husbands traveled, or were ill. In some areas, a married woman who was a member of a guild or trade in her own right (femme sole) might be treated as if she were single or widowed.

Notwithstanding a high rate of mortality in childbirth, urban women tended to outnumber men by a ratio of 1.2 or 1.3 to 1. The surplus of women available for marriage, or widowed, was even greater than it appears – some 30-40% of a town's population were clergy (who could not marry), and the majority of clergy were males. Unmarried women and widows became a significant portion, 8% to 38%, of a town's taxpayers.

Florence was an exception to this trend. Florentine women, it appears, had fewer legal rights than their English and French counterparts or women in other Italian city-states. Among the wealthier classes, Florentine women were more likely to be virtually cloistered in their homes, and to have their rights to their dowry and inheritance restricted.

NEIGHBORHOODS

The ties between neighbors were the second-strongest urban link, after that of family. To some extent, the two overlapped. Families, especially wealthy families, tended to cluster around the house of the most prominent member, or around the same street, or the same parish church. Immigrants tended to settle in neighborhoods with others from their home town or region. Immigrants tended to intermarry, which resulted in neighborhoods interlinked by family ties. Similarly, artisans and merchants' shops tended to cluster in the same neighborhood. Because masters often lived above their shops, family and professional links intertwined.

The link between family, work, and parish resulted in neighborhoods where everyone knew each other. Neighbors congregated for childbirth celebrations, marriages, death vigils, and funerals. Children played together in the streets. Young women could walk around without fear of harassment or assault; although in parts of Italy, wealthy daughters were confined to their homes to watch street life from upper story windows. Houses tended to be dark and stuffy, so women tended to spin wool sitting on a stoop. As noted above, sound carried easily in urban neighborhoods. In the event of an accident or violence, someone was likely to respond to a cry for help.

Neighbors were likely involved in webs of mutual obligations. Successful neighbors were expected to help their neighbors with loans and jobs as well as support the parish church and local charities. Underemployed people worked for each other as servants and laborers. On the one hand, such ties helped the community survive. On the other hand, individual members might feel nervous about venturing beyond their neighborhood for work, fearing that if they failed they would be left without patrons, allies, creditors, clients, and suppliers. If they returned to their old neighborhood, some might fear their peers would think they were less trustworthy because they had abandoned the community.

Basic units of urban government formed around wards, which were essentially collections of neighborhoods. Wards were also the focus for competitions like races and even mock-wars between groups of young men.

RITUALS OF LIFE

The family was an important part of urban life, particularly in Italy. Marriage cemented alliances between families. Inheritance passed on the family's wealth to the next generation. Family contacts made it easier for an immigrant to find work in a town, and for town residents to support each other through illness or bad fortune. Guild membership tended to pass from father to son, sometimes creating an interlocking series of family alliances within a profession or guild.

Birth

The infant mortality rate was high, perhaps as much as 30-50%. Often children were baptized soon after birth; however in northern Italy, baptisms were typically held en mass each year at Easter, and later at the Pentecost vigil as well. In an emergency, any person could perform a baptism if there was no available priest. Church councils recommended clergy explain the appropriate words and actions in multiple sermons each year.

Women tended to have many children. In the early 14th century, between 5,000 and 6,000 children were baptized each year in Florence (population about 90,000). An analysis of Italian wills suggests that when a will was drawn (often when the father was in his 30s), the couple had 1.9 to 2.5 surviving children.

There was a basic division between legitimate children (born within marriage) and illegitimate children. Illegitimacy was a serious stigma on both mother and child, but a father could chose to recognize an illegitimate child as an heir.

Children generally stayed close to their mothers through infancy and childhood. If a mother did not have enough milk to feed an infant, she might hire a wet nurse. Urban mothers also often hired rural wet nurses so that their children could avoid urban disease and might be more likely to survive. Sadly, rural wet-nurses do not seem to have statistically decreased infant mortality. Children generally wore a long robe without underclothes, and often had amulets to ward of illness or the "evil eye". At around age 14, male children generally were apprenticed or became servants. Female children often became servants at around age 12, learning domestic skills and earning money for a dowry.

Generally, when a child was baptized, its parents chose godparents, in theory to help instruct the child in their faith. The role of godparents varied by region and era. Often they were seen as future patrons, and as allies to the parents' family.

Marriage

Here I take Janet to my wedded wife for farer for lather for better for wars in sekens and in helth and holy kirk wil it ordaynd and thereto plight I the my trowth.

Here I take Thomas for to my wedded husband to holde and to have at bed and at burde for fare for lather for better for wars in seknesse and in helth to deth us depart and holy kirk wil it ordaynd and therto plyght I the my trowth.

*– Wedding Vows,
Wakefield, 1480*
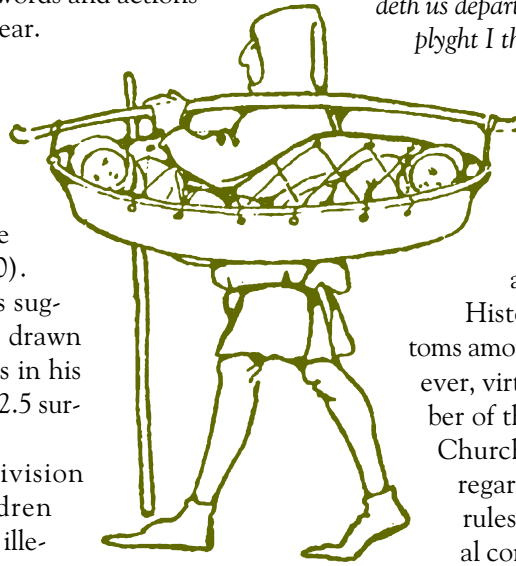
Marriage, and the ties it created between families, were important factors in urban life for moderately wealthy and wealthy families. Historians know less about marriage customs among the less-wealthy urban classes; however, virtually every adult who was not a member of the clergy was expected to marry. The Church had jurisdiction over any litigation regarding marriage and divorce. Under its rules, a marriage required the verbal mutual consent of both parties. A promise could be made for the future, and became effective when the relationship was consummated. In order to prove a marriage in ecclesiastical court, however, the couple needed two independent witnesses.

For most couples, the marriage itself tended to be a simple religious ceremony carried out at the church door of the couple's parish. The ceremony was generally proceeded by public announcements called banns. Depending on the wealth of the couple and their families, the ceremony might have been preceded by a large betrothal party several months earlier, and followed by a dinner afterwards. During the ceremony, the couple often exchanged tokens such as gloves or silver rings. Both the betrothal party and dinner were a celebration and an opportunity to display the newly allied families' wealth and power. (Then, as now, the volatile mix of families, guests, and flowing wine could cause insults and incidents that could turn into lifelong feuds.)

Among moderately wealthy and wealthy families, a marriage was a way to create or seal economic, political, and social opportunities. Prestigious families tried to improve their prospects by "discovering"

impressive genealogies and stories of their ancestors. Generally, men did not marry until they had a sufficient income to provide for a family. They often married younger women who were deemed more likely to survive the rigors of childbirth. In some regions, a man would not marry until the death of his parents, when his inheritance provided sufficient capital for a family. In many regions, women did not marry until they had a sufficient *dowry* – property given by the bride and her family to the couple. Some Italian towns created public funds to help parents save a sufficient dowry for their daughters, and to help impoverished women raise a dowry for themselves.

Most marriages were arranged by the couples' family. The church prohibited child marriages, although child betrothals were allowed. The church also prohibited marriages between close relatives, and between a child and his or her godparents' family. Town law sometimes enforced a family's control over marriages. Apprentice contracts often gave the master the right of approval over the apprentice's marriage or allowed the master to end the contract if the apprentice married. Couples who married without their parents' consent might find their inheritance rights limited, or even be disinherited. One English town even banned those who married without approval from its borders for two years and fined them two marks.

In Italy, husbands tended to be much older than their wives, who were expected to bring a considerable dowry into the marriage. In parts of England, husbands tended to be only a few years older than their wives, who had often spent time as servants to earn enough money to start a household.

Once married, the couple might expect to live together for about 12 to 16 years before one died. Urban families tended to be smaller than their rural counterparts. This might be due to relatively late marriages, high infant mortality, abortion, and contraception. During the marriage, the husband had legal control over most of the couple's assets. Wives in some towns had protected legal rights to their own dowry, jewelry, and clothing, and sometimes to a portion of the family's property. Wealthy families often had a marriage contract which specified control over property and inheritance rights. Among the merchant classes and in some artisan professions, husbands traveled frequently for business, often for long periods. Thus, wives were allowed to collect debts, receive credit, buy and sell goods, and handle the family's business as needed.

Towns generally did not punish a husband for physically abusing his wife or children so long as the injuries were not too serious. Wives could be punished for adultery or bearing an illegitimate child. If a husband had intercourse outside of marriage, it was a sin, but one often treated lightly by the Church.

Divorce was rare and difficult. It was usually easier for the unhappy couple to live apart within the same city. However, if a separated spouse openly took a lover, the adulterer might be banished from the town, as well as punished by the Church for the sin. Wealthy, powerful families could seek to have a marriage annulled. With sufficient resources, a family might "discover" that an inconvenient marriage was, in fact, prohibited due to a distant family tie and thus seek an annulment. In one of the most famous examples, Louis VII of France was allowed to divorce Eleanor of Aquitaine on the grounds of consanguity (they were cousins), although the relationship may have been "discovered" when Eleanor did not bear any sons by Louis. Eleanor then married Henry II of England (also a cousin), and became the mother of Henry III, Richard I, and John I.

Death

As noted, the urban mortality rate was high. Many infants did not survive their first year. Disease and accidents killed many more before they reached their teens. Life expectancy for adults was in the 30s to 40s.

The deathbed could be a crowded place. Ideally, a Christian would receive the last rites of confession, communion, and anointing with oil while still conscious and able to understand the ritual. Dying in a state of sin, or worse, excommunication, could lead to eternal damnation. Thus, a priest was often present to administer last rites and hear a final confession. A notary might be present to write, or amend, a will, with particular attention to bequests in satisfaction of past sins and misdeeds. Those with sufficient wealth might have a physician present. The deceased's family and friends might visit and pray. However, if the deceased were ill with plague, he might be alone. One Italian testator left a bequest of fresh fruit to be left out for the flies in the marketplace each year because they had been his only attendants in his last days.

At a person's death, a priest was notified to sound the "death bell" of his parish's church. Wealthy persons hired criers to announce the death and ask for prayers on the deceased's behalf. The body was physically prepared for burial – washed, shaved (for men), and dressed in an appropriate shroud. Prayers were said over it.

Often there was a wake, typically held in the deceased's home, where family and neighbors could come, say prayers, mourn, and pay their respects to the family. Funerals were usually held quickly after the death. A typical funeral for a moderately wealthy townsperson included the sounding of the parish death bell as the body was brought from home to the church on a bier, a funeral Mass (with a gift for wax candles and for the Mass from the deceased, and funds, food, or clothing distributed to the poor who came to the funeral as mourners), then a procession to the cemetery for burial. In Italy, the procession to the church and from the church to the cemetery might be accompanied by loud public wailing, particularly by the deceased's female relatives (*pianto*). Italian city-states tried to limit the volume and number of mourners through sumptuary laws, with limited effect.

The dead were typically buried in cemeteries, although a few prominent persons were buried in cathedrals and parish churches. Chartres cathedral is one of only a few cathedrals which does not have any tombs in it. Other cathedrals and churches were filled with tombs and family chapels, often accompanied by religious art and religious items decorated with the arms or names of parishioners who wanted to be remembered. Many churches had a cemetery nearby. In 12th – 14th century France, some cemeteries had a *lanterne des morts*, a tall stone tower with a lantern, which was lighted on certain feasts and vigils. There was often an altar at its base. If the cemetery was not near a church, it often had a mortuary chapel. A cemetery frequently had an ossuary where the bones of the dead might be safely stored – either because the deceased could not afford burial, or when graves were moved to make room for the newly deceased.

The cemetery was a sacred space. Criminals and the unbaptised were not allowed to be buried in consecrated ground. Often there was a small unconsecrated plot for unbaptised babies. Those who died in obvious sin, for example, by suicide or in a duel, were often left with their bodies exposed near the cemetery. Executed criminals were buried near the gallows. Heretics could not be buried in consecrated ground – if heresy was discovered after death, their bodies were exhumed.

In a few cases, the deceased's body might be buried in several places. When Bertrand Du Guesclin, the Constable of France, died in 1380, his body was first embalmed in the county of Auvergne. His entrails were buried in a church in nearby Le Puy and his body began its journey back to his birthplace in Brittany. Enroute, the body continued to putrefy. His flesh was separated from his bones and buried in Monteferrand. In Le Mans, a royal officer insisted the body be sent to Paris to be buried in the cathedral of St-Denis. Only Du Guesclin's heart was buried in his birthplace, a church in Dinan, Brittany.

If the deceased were particularly saintly, the body might be hidden to prevent relic hunters from stealing parts. St. Francis' body was hidden by one of his followers shortly after his funeral in Assisi. (The body was found in 1818.)

After the burial, the deceased's family often held a funeral dinner. Sometimes, dying persons made provisions for Masses to be said after their deaths, either for a set number of days, on various holy days, or on the anniversaries of their deaths.

Generally, the deceased's parish received one-sixth to one-quarter of the deceased's estate as a form of death tax. Some Italian communes insisted that the deceased's estate include charitable "donations" (typically 20 s.) for favored charities like a hospital, or cathedral construction, or urban needs like a city's walls. One commune, Arezzo, ordered citizens to bequeath sums to its cathedral's construction. If a notary did not remind the testator to leave the bequest, he could be fined 20 s., and the estate fined 40 s. (Surviving wills suggest the order was widely ignored.)

The remainder of the deceased's estate passed by custom, or by will. By the 14th century, written wills were more common among merchants. The will, recorded by a notary, generally included various specific bequests and donations. Some bequests were conditional. A testator might give property to his children, with the provision that his wife could use it during her life, and the children could not sell or rent it while she was living. Property might be given to a church on various conditions for its use, with

provision to give it to another church if the conditions were broken.

The dying often made bequests for Masses to be said for them after their death. Early theologians had written about purgatory as a way station for souls on their way to heaven. The University of Paris discussed purgatory in the 12th century. The doctrine was adopted by the Council of Lyon in 1274. Under this doctrine, the living could speed a soul's journey by offering prayers or performing charitable acts on the deceased's behalf. Thus, the dying had an interest in donating money for memorial Masses and prayers. To attract people (and their prayers) to memorial Masses, some merchants paid for criers to announce memorial Masses or for the church's bells to be rung. Others arranged for alms to be given to the poor both at their funerals and at memorial Masses. A few merchants even hired pilgrims to make a pilgrimage on their behalf.

Inheritance

Given the high rates of urban mortality, and the typical gulf in ages between men and women at marriage, inheritance was a significant concern for moderately wealthy and wealthy families. European inheritance customs varied widely. They affected family structures, which in turn affected business succession after a master's death. Rural and urban customs often differed within the same area. Land could be difficult to subdivide. For nobles, land also came with military duties that would become moot if too diluted by many heirs. Cash and businesses were easier to divide among many heirs. Cities could supervise guardianships and wardships for surviving minors. Widows had more options for support. They were often supported by their husbands' guilds. In some places, a widow maintained a right to continue her husband's trade and could become a member of his guild (if any). In other places, she could continue to operate the business through a male relative or a journeyman.

Typically, if a husband survived his wife, he generally received all of his wife's property (subject to the Church's share). If the wife was the survivor, then she normally received a specific share of the family property as her own; the rest was divided between the Church's inheritance tax, the couple's children (if any), and the husband's relatives (if the couple did not have children). Often, the estate was given to male relatives; daughters were provided for in their dowry. If there were no close male relatives, then property might pass to daughters.

In England, a deceased husband's estate was divided into thirds: one-third to the Church for the good of his soul, one-third to his wife, and one-third to his children in equal shares. The widow's share (*dower*) remained hers until her death, at which point any remainder reverted to her husband's heirs. If a widow with minor children remarried, her new spouse would hold 2/3 of her former spouse's estate (hers and her children's) – an attractive prospect for many suitors.

In Italy and Flanders, on the other hand, the widow had a right to the property she brought into the marriage (*dowry*), but was otherwise dependent on her husband's family. She generally had care of her children, but legal custody was held by her husband's family. Some widows were forced by their husbands' heirs to return to their birth families, leaving their children in the care of their husband's kin.

ORPHANS

Often children lost one or both parents while still minors. In London, the orphaned, or semi-orphaned, child of a citizen became a ward of the Mayor. He assigned a guardian to care for the child and the child's share of his parent(s) estate. The guardian was often a relative, but one who would not inherit if the child died. Guardians were required to have sureties for the value of the child's estate. (A surety was a promise by another person or persons to repay the estate in the event of the guardian mishandling funds.) He also had to account to the Mayor's office for the child's property when the child reached the age of majority. If the child was destitute, the city often provided for his care.

> The living could speed a soul's journey by offering prayers or performing charitable acts.

In 1198, Pope Innocent III ordered convents to install foundling wheels, revolving stone compartments, which allowed mothers to anonymously donate unwanted infants to the church. Foundlings might be given to other couples for adoption or raised as monks or nuns.

THREATS

By eight o'clock there was such a crowd at the baker's door as one could never have believed without seeing it. Poor creatures! Trying to get bread for their poor husbands away in the fields or for their children dying of hunger at home – neither for their money nor for all their crowding could they get any after that time; then you would hear said wailing and weeping all over Paris, sad lamentations and little children crying "I am dying of hunger!" In the year 1420, you might see all over Paris here ten there twenty or thirty children, boys and girls, dying of hunger and cold on the rubbish heaps.

– Anon. Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris (c. 1420)

Towns thrived on peace and stability. They could not exist without an agricultural surplus to feed their residents, laborers to make goods, and peaceful trade routes to their markets. Unfortunately, peace and stability were rare things in the 11th to 15th centuries. Towns had to react to natural disasters, fires, and conflicts which could cause dramatic changes to their resources and markets.

Disease

Disease and malnutrition were endemic in the Middle Ages, especially in towns. Between the two, the urban death rate generally exceeded its birth rate, leading towns to need a constant influx of new immigrants just to maintain their size. There were a variety of common diseases, which were more-or-less taken as given by the population. Extraordinary diseases or serious outbreaks could cause significant panic and urban disruptions. The problem was compounded by medieval medical theory, which did not understand how germs spread, and offered few successful remedies for illness.

For the most part, town water systems provided some protection against diseases like cholera, dysentery, and typhoid. Medieval doctors did not understand how these diseases occurred, but urban rulers tried to separate drinking water from water used to dispose of human and animal wastes.

Influenza (the common flu), malaria (*ague* in England), measles, smallpox, and typhus were common seasonal diseases. Urban residents lived in close quarters, which allowed influenza, measles, smallpox, and typhus to spread easily. Fortunately, survivors of measles and smallpox thereafter were immune to future outbreaks. Doctors did not understand the link between mosquitoes and malaria, but did understand that marshy air was unhealthy. Unfortunately, towns needed rivers for water and trade, and urban residents needed to leave their windows open for ventilation. Wealthy urban residents tried to avoid such diseases by spending summers on rural lands.

Scurvy was a problem for towns distant from the Mediterranean and trade routes for citrus fruits. During the winter, food that provided vitamin C was scarce, leading to mild scurvy and its muscle pains. Urban residents were also at risk of vitamin A deficiencies when they could not get fresh milk.

Leprosy

Although leprosy is perhaps the least contagious of communicable diseases, it was greatly feared. "Leprosy" covered a variety of disfiguring diseases, any of which could cause the sufferer to be expelled from the community and sent to live apart. He or she could only interact with the rest of the population in very limited ways, and depended greatly on charity.

In 1320, a leper named Guillaume Agasse confessed to a papal inquisition that he and a group of 40 other lepers had met at Toulouse and agreed to poison all the people in their region of France. Agasse was imprisoned for the remainder of his life. As the news of the confession and alleged plot spread, lepers were arrested and executed. Forty-nine were killed in Uzerche. In 1321, the French crown claimed jurisdiction over the lepers. They could be arrested and tortured to determine whether they were involved in the plot. Those who confessed were either imprisoned in leprosaries or executed by burning at the stake. Their property was to be confiscated and sold to benefit the crown. When local authorities objected to the royal claim, the monarchy relented and recognized the rights of local landholders to investigate claims

and confiscate the property of those who confessed. Others lepers were killed by mobs who had heard and believed in the improbable and unlikely plot.

The Black Plague

The Plague, or Black Death, was a critical turning point in urban history. The Plague started in Asia and traveled along various trade routes until it reached Europe in 1347. Within a few years, the disease had spread across all but the most isolated areas in Europe, killing millions. After the first outbreaks, Plague returned periodically. The impact was enormous – between a quarter and two-thirds of Europe's population died from the Plague in the mid to late 14th century. The deaths had drastic effects on medieval demographics, religion, art, society, and politics.

Urban areas were especially vulnerable to Plague, which could be carried by infected travelers. Many imposed quarantines – 40 days in isolation for any person or place suspected of plague exposure. (The incubation period for Plague is 1 to 6 days, but local governments took no chances.) Arriving ships, and even high-ranking visitors, were routinely quarantined during an outbreak. Towns limited or prohibited public gatherings to limit the disease's spread. Once Plague reached a town, it was highly infectious, spreading both by air, and by the bite of infected fleas.

The Plague caused massive social disruptions. Every family lost at least some of its members. The survivors had to provide for widows and orphans, transfer the property of the deceased, and find successors to undertake military and commercial obligations. Surprisingly, European society was able to function despite the massive losses. Fiefs, towns, and royal courts continued to function. Buildings, farms, and even whole villages were abandoned, but the survivors concentrated in new locations and rebuilt as the society recovered.

Survivors demanded higher wages for their work, leading to, for example, the English Ordinances of Labourers (1349) and Statute of Labourers (1351), which made it illegal for workers to demand higher wages than those paid before the Plague. (They also made it illegal to give alms to able-bodied beggars). A few workers were fined each year under the statutes in hopes of deterring others from demanding higher wages. However, the effort was doomed to failure. The decreased supply of workers, and increased demand for the survivor's work, inevitably drove prices higher.

Towns found that, with the decline in population and trade, they could not pay their pre-Plague taxes. Many asked for, and received, temporary reductions. Towns also had increased risk of fire from abandoned buildings, which were destroyed if no owner could be found. Town buildings and walls were frequently neglected for a time because the town could not afford the labor to maintain them.

Famine

Towns were obsessively concerned about maintaining adequate supplies of cheap grain. Florence, for example, imported grain from Sicily, North Africa, Greece, and (via Genoa) the Black Sea region. For the most part, town precautions worked. Tales of urban starvation during a famine are far less common than those of rural starvation, even after several successive bad harvests in the same region.

Towns could encourage rural suppliers by offering shelter to their rural neighbors (and their grain stores) during wars and unrest and by cancelling the *gabelle* (import tax). Remittances on taxes were often for a short period (typically 4 to 15 days) to encourage farmers to quickly bring their goods to the urban market.

When those measures failed, however, the result was starvation and sometimes riots. Famine was one of the least common reasons for urban rebellion, and towns were quick to try to restore order with distributions of grain from their reserves. If that failed, however, the government was likely to fall. In 1353, the people of Gaeta rioted following prolonged food shortages, killing twelve merchants. In 1368, four successive governments fell in Siena after a famine, despite the execution of more than 400 "troublemakers" by urban leaders

Rural Uprisings

A rural tax rebellion had similar effects to a famine – the supply of food was interrupted, combined with trade route disruptions that could make it hard to bring alternative foods into town. There were sporadic rural uprisings throughout the Middle Ages. For the most part, these were relatively small in scale and

time. Often they were brutally suppressed by local landholders, sometimes with the aid of urban leaders. In a few cases, the rebels were able to force reforms, although often several ringleaders were executed during the struggle.

In the 14th century, there were a series of larger scale rural uprisings in England, Flanders, France, and Italy, generally sparked by regional and/or urban landholders attempting to raise tax revenues. At times, urban workers joined the rural farmers in a series of rebellions, occasionally driving the urban government from the town. In most cases, the rebellious government soon collapsed, unable to manage the necessary trade to keep the town thriving. In a few cases, the rebels restored displaced or exiled leaders, and the new regime was able to govern for a time.

Fire

By their nature, urban areas were particularly prone to fires. Buildings were often made from wood. Streets were narrow, with buildings crammed one atop another. Often they were filled with flammable furnishings and inventory. Urban residents used fire for heating, light, and manufacturing, creating numerous opportunities for accidents. Add to that a persistent risk of lightning striking tall buildings, especially cathedrals. If not quickly extinguished, a fire could easily destroy a large part of a town.

Towns tried to limit fires by establishing building codes concerning walls, chimneys, and roofs. Trades that used a great deal of fire, like glassblowers, blacksmiths, and potters, were banished to outlying districts. Venice set its glassblowing on an entirely separate island.

The town watch was charged with watching for fires and responding to outbreaks. Some towns had rudimentary firefighting organizations comprised of specific households or trades. Some, like London, required households to keep containers of water handy, and made sure each neighborhood had ladders, hooks, and chains to pull down houses or walls to create fire breaks.

After a fire destroyed three-quarters of Toulouse in 1463, Louis XI came to the city and remitted the city's royal taxes (*tailles*) for one hundred years to help the city recover. He also pardoned a group of bakers who had been blamed for accidentally starting the blaze.

Interdict

An interdict made all of the target's subjects into heretics. The target and his subjects were denied most or all sacraments. (During the 1208-13 interdict in England, priests still baptized babies and gave last rites.) All Christians were prohibited from lawfully trading with or assisting them, and could break contracts with them with impunity. (Not all trading partners observed these customs, preferring to maintain discreet trade relations during the usually short period of an interdict.) The target's property, wherever it was, could be lawfully seized by other Christians. The target's person could also be arrested.

The Papacy could place a person, a town, or even an entire kingdom under interdict for disobeying its commands. A bishop or other higher clergy could impose an interdict on a person or town within his jurisdiction. The Papacy placed interdicts on France for several months in 1200 in response to a dispute over Philip II Augustus' attempt to divorce his wife; England in 1208-13 in support of the papacy's preferred candidate as Archbishop of Canterbury; and the city-state of Perugia in 1369 in response to its refusal to submit to the papacy. (In a somewhat more serious step, the Pope excommunicated all of the citizens of Venice in 1202 because of their actions in sacking Zara during the Fourth Crusade. The excommunication was lifted in 1204 following the successful capture of Constantinople.)

Often, an interdict resulted in intense popular pressure on the offending landholder or monarch to make peace with the clergy. John I retaliated for the interdict by raiding some closed churches and selling off their treasuries to raise cash. The Pope excommunicated him. Finally, John I made peace with the Papacy and allowed the papacy's preferred candidate to become Archbishop of Canterbury, in part because King Philippe II of France was preparing to invade using John's excommunication as a pretext. The popular unrest caused by the interdict may have been part of the reason for the barons' discontent which led to the Magna Carta in 1215.

Natural Disasters

Earthquakes, floods, and major storms were all possible threats to a town. Italy, in particular, was (and is) prone to earthquakes along geologic microplates. The most severe earthquakes occurred in the

Apennine Mountains (primarily in central Italy), in the Alps, and in Sicily and Calabria. Etna, Stromboli, and Vesuvius, three of Europe's active volcanoes are also in Italy. For the most part, there was little a town could do about earthquakes except clean up the debris and rebuild afterwards – earthquake-resistant building methods were beyond medieval technology.

Floods were also a constant risk. Rivers might flood annually in spring when the snow melted in the mountains. Heavy rainfall or spring ice dams could also produce floods. Towns tried to mitigate flood damage by building dikes and embankments, dredging channels, and keeping drainage ditches clear. In some areas, towns tried to build dams and canals to divert flood waters, but doing so required control, or at least influence, over the lands upstream of the town.

It was not uncommon for storms to damage buildings. Heavy winds sometimes posed a danger to cathedrals, whose large walls were not always sufficiently braced for the stress. High heat could kill dozens in poorly ventilated houses. Abnormal cold could also kill those who had trouble affording sufficient fuel for fires.

Historians have not discussed urban efforts to recover and rebuild from large-scale disasters during the Middle Ages. Property insurance did not yet exist, which suggests that building owners and others affected by a disaster had to rebuild and replace their losses from their own resources. Presumably communities sought help from their neighbors and trading partners and took out loans in order to rebuild.

Urban Uprisings

Viva lu popolu! (Long live the people!)

Urban uprisings were more common than rural uprisings. Most arose during times of general unrest and uncertainty. They could be sparked by worker discontent, supply shortages, overly harsh governance, or a political fight between factions. In 13th century Flanders, there were a series of rebellions by local weavers and fullers against the French counts over workers' rights, taxes, and working conditions. The rebels succeeded in winning, and retaining, the right to be citizens of their towns, to form their own organizations, and to serve as elected officials.

In 1378, Florence was host to the Ciompi, a rebellion led by the city's wool workers and their allies against the wool guilds and the local government.

The workers formed their own organization, the *popolo minuto*, and their own guilds. By creating guilds, their members could become citizens, elect members of Florence's government, and serve in town offices. They also sought changes in taxes, debt collection, the *Monte*, and the exchange rate between Florence's gold and silver currency systems. The rebels' government lasted for 48 days, but two of their guilds lasted for four years thereafter.

The uprising itself could be deadly. In 1375, Perugia rebelled against its papal governor, resulting in a 19-day siege of the papal castle by the populace and dozens killed in the street fighting.

The aftermath could be far worse. Normally, a rebellion's leaders risked torture and a public execution. Supporters risked fines and exile. But sometimes, the response was much more severe. In 1377, Cesena's townspeople fought a group of papal mercenaries occupying the town and killed several soldiers. The papal governor told the townspeople that if they surrendered their weapons and fifty hostages, they would be pardoned for the incident. After the townspeople complied, the Cardinal governing the town ordered the mercenaries to kill the inhabitants and plunder the town. Over the course of three days, eight thousand of the town's population of 25,000 were killed. All of the town's clergy, except for 24 Franciscans, were spared. The survivors were forced to ransom themselves. Those who successfully escaped, an estimated 15,000, took refuge in neighboring towns until the conflict ended.

WAR

Towns were indirect participants in wars: manufacturers of armor and weapons, and sources of tax revenue. Landholders founded towns in part to convert their manors' agricultural surplus into cash, which could be used to buy horses, armor, weapons, and mercenaries. Towns were also a source of forced loans to enable landholders to prepare for war or pay ransoms.

Merchants, while often able to afford a knight's equipment, did not have the training to lead urban militias or levies into battle. Instead, they preferred to spend their wealth on mercenaries. Towns suffered when their trade routes and agricultural sources were disrupted. Refugees often came to towns, increasing crowding, and the demand on

limited resources. Soldiers passing through, or billeted in town, brought with them disease and were frequently accused of assaulting local women. When armies pillaged the fields and villages around a town, prices for food, fuel, and goods soared. Residents were pressed into duty watching the walls and streets, leaving them tired and frazzled. Urban rulers confiscated goods needed to supply defensive armies and raised taxes. In the worst years, food was so scarce that wolves might enter a town at night to dig up and eat corpses and anyone sleeping outdoors at night.

On the other hand, war could be good for business. It provided a market for armor, weapons, and myriad equipment. Merchants purchased the army's plunder, often doing better in barter than if the army paid for its needs with cash. Banks profited from loans to warlords, assuming, of course, they could collect the principal later.

From an adversary's point of view, towns had long been attractive targets. The walls and gates were generally less secure than those of a castle, and its population often more willing to surrender to a sufficient show of force. Few towns were provisioned with enough soldiers to defend their walls and keep order. Its merchants and churches held a great deal of wealth; prominent inhabitants could be held for ransom.

For the northern Italian city-states, hostilities were nearly constant from the 11th century through the 15th century and beyond. Armed conflicts did not tend to last long – any city-state that became too powerful risked having its rivals band together in a league against it. Leagues generally collapsed from internal rivalries shortly after the status quo had been restored. Hostilities also often involved raids. Armies rarely followed upon victories, contenting themselves with plunder, symbolic insults, and negotiated settlements.

Italian city-states each had a *carroccio*, a brightly painted cart which served as a rallying point for its forces. It was both a secular and religious symbol, frequently stored in the cathedral or baptistery itself. The cart carried the city's banners and an altar for religious services and last rites. It was often decorated with images of the city's patron saints. Leaders could stand on the cart to survey the battle and issue orders. The carroccio was protected by its own volunteer company, which was expected to fight to the

ABROAD AT WAR

Merchants who were in a foreign land when it went to war with their home were in a precarious situation. The *distrain* custom allowed their goods to be seized to repay local merchants for goods lost to piracy or pre-war seizures by their countrymen. Ships in port were seized; those at sea prey for pirates and privateers. Merchants could be detained, their goods seized, and debts owed to them forgiven. Once war began, captured enemy property was a legitimate spoil of war; no reimbursement could be claimed.

Generally, merchants were given a short period to leave a country with their goods before hostilities commenced. If they were not able to depart, the campaign season was relatively short. Merchants could try to get home during seasonal lulls in the fighting, or travel home through uninvolved countries. Truces generally allowed merchants to come and go, but if one were attacked, the breach of safe-conduct was not a cause to resume hostilities.

death to prevent its capture. If captured, the victorious city would often strip its foe's carroccio to its frame, then display the remains in its cathedral or baptistery as both war trophy and offering to the victor's patron saints.

Bandits

During war or unrest, armed men often set up extra tolls along major roads to extort money from merchants. Historians do not have many details of historic bandits, but a study of modern brigands might shed some light on historical practices. When bandits set up multiple tolls on the same road, each toll might be relatively small, but the cumulative cost may exceed the wages of the carters or sailors transporting the load. Tolls rise with proximity to a town or trade center. The merchant thus has progressively stronger incentives to pay the toll to avoid hassle and protect their cargo. If there is a crackdown on illegal tolls, the number of tolls will fall, but the amount demanded by each will rise. The merchant will save, but not as much as he might hope – perhaps a third of his prior expenses.

Mercenaries

Mercenaries were common in European wars. Monarchs considered them more dependable and better trained than feudal vassals or peasant levies. Foreign mercenaries could also be used to suppress domestic foes, although mercenaries were often suspected of not pursuing their patron's foes with sufficient aggression.

Locals did not like mercenaries, especially those billeted in their homes. One of the clauses of the Magna Carta (1215) required the king to "remove from the kingdom all foreign-born soldiers, crossbow men, servants, and mercenaries who have come with horses and arms for the injury of the realm." As described above, Cesena's residents revolted against a group of Breton mercenaries employed by the papacy in 1377, leading to the death of 8,000 of the town's 25,000 inhabitants, an infamous massacre even by the standards of the day.

Mercenaries were also hard to control. During lulls in the Hundred Years War, unemployed mercenaries became a virtual plague in France. In 1360, bands of them in Southern France formed a "Great Company" of as many as 12,000 soldiers, a force larger than the English army of the time. Then, as in the Italian civil wars, mercenaries took to threatening to siege towns and then withdrawing to another area for a sizeable ransom.

The northern Italian city-states were almost constantly at war in the 13-15th centuries. The cities became concerned about their internal violence, and sought to disarm their militias. They were wealthy enough to replace them with mercenaries often hired from northern Europe. The mercenary leaders were known as *Condottieri* because of the complex *condotta*, or contract, they signed on behalf of their company. Normally, the city-state negotiated with the company's leader, who in turn hired other groups as subcontractors to meet the patron's needs. The contract specified equipment, duration of service, where the company's general could live, travel and visit (to avoid contact with foes who might bribe or suborn him), division of ransom and plunder, and so on. Contract negotiations could take weeks or months.

Once hired, city officials (*collaterali*) inspected the company, its soldiers, and its equipment to ensure compliance with the contract. Horses were branded to make sure that lesser mounts were not substituted after the inspection. Collaterali could fine captains if they found a company was not complying with its contract. Customarily, the captain-general received his baton of command at the end of the negotiations and inspections and was presented to the community in a parade. While in the field, officials continued to inspect the company at agreed-to intervals. If the patron chose not to re-hire the company, generally the contract precluded it from working for its employer's foes for an agreed-to period (typically six months).

In theory, mercenary captains were independent of local politics, fighting based on their pay, not for loyalty to any particular city. Mercenary captains were paid well. In 1467, one earned 60,000 ducats a year in peace and 80,000 ducats a year in war from Milan (the salary included payment to the captain's soldiers and officers). Another earned 50,000 ducats in peace and 80,000 in war in 1481. Captains were also offered titles, estates, and marriages in hopes of attracting and keeping the best. A peacetime force might number 8,000 to 10,000 professionals. In war, this force would be augmented by others, including militias. A mercenary company included not just the soldiers and officers, but treasurers, notaries and lawyers to handle contracts and records, priests, servants, cooks, barbers, surgeons, prostitutes, and camp followers.

For a city-state, mercenaries had their own risks. The city generally had to provide subsidized food and supplies for the company when it was not in the field. It also had to provide shelter, which often meant that an idle company would set its tents outside of the city, or a smaller town or village. Thus, the city-state had an incentive to send its mercenaries into battle with its neighbors where they could forage for supplies and would not cause disruptions at home. In the field, the city-state worried that its company might be defeated, leaving it vulnerable, or might be bribed into betraying it. In 1364, for example, Florence bribed the Pisan companies into withdrawing from a siege for about 100,000 florins. In 1427, Venice suspected that one of its captains, Carmagnola, had betrayed it to Milan. It had him arrested and tortured. When he confessed to secret agreements with Milan, Carmagnola was executed in St. Mark's Square. Mercenaries could also become involved in internal politics. In 1478, the Perugian mercenary captain, Gian Battista de Montesecco was involved in the Pazzi family's failed assassination attempt against Florence's Medici family. When the plot failed, Gian Battista was captured, tortured, and beheaded. The other conspirators were also tortured and executed.

Militias

Urban militias, like peasant levies, were comprised of locals who volunteered or were, in effect, drafted into military service. They had few skills, but were often given the best armor and equipment the town could provide, and their equipment was adapted specifically for defending a town from its walls and fighting in its narrow streets. Militias thus preferred crossbows and early handguns to longbows and swords – these required skilled makers, but were relatively easy to use. Towns which had control over their countryside could also raise rural levies to shore up their defenses.

Militias were normally organized by neighborhood or by guild. In Siena, each neighborhood was responsible for creating its own company. Between 1255 and 1349, it had between 18 and 43 companies of ten men (the number of "neighborhoods" fluctuated over time). Each company had its own captain, a standard bearer, and a notary/treasurer. It was equipped with war axes, crossbows, shields, and lanterns for the men. Evidently, Siena had little faith in its militia – it spent vast sums of money bribing mercenaries employed by its rivals not to attack it.

SIEGE

Urban leaders tried to avoid being the target of a siege. Many changed sides at the approach of a large army, or tried to bribe it to continue onwards. If that failed, towns manned their walls and waited.

A siege was a contest between the defenders and the attackers to see whose supplies ran out first, or whose numbers fell faster to disease. The defenders had often already stripped as much food as possible from the countryside during the army's advance and had burned whatever they could not take. Thus, the attacker had difficulty foraging for supplies. On the other hand, the defender already had a large and restless population to feed, and also had to care for numerous rural refugees.

If it seemed that the town would succumb, its leaders had to decide whether to surrender or fight. If the town surrendered, it could expect a certain amount of looting, pillaging, rape, and assault, but the opposing force's leaders promised to do their best to restrain their troops. If, on the other hand, it fell to an attack, then the attacking army could loot as it pleased, often burning buildings and raping and killing hundreds of residents.

In some cases, surrender was not an option. For religious or political reasons, the opposing force was determined to take the town by force. Hundreds, or even thousands, might be killed and the city's major buildings burned.

CONCLUSION

At the close of the 15th century, towns and cities were thriving. However, the focus of trade was shifting from the traditional Italian centers to Atlantic ports. The Portuguese had rounded Africa and were trading directly with Asian spice suppliers. Portuguese and Spanish ships were sailing across the Atlantic. They would soon be joined by explorers from many nations.

Europe was also on the verge of significant social changes – the Italian renaissance, the introduction of the printing press, the pending religious wars of the Reformation, and the rise of powerful nation-states. The Reformation limited or eliminated many of the Church's legal privileges and its control over towns. More centralized governments standardized laws, money, weights and measures, and other signs of towns' autonomy. In northern Italy, city-states were changing from communes to oligarchies or dictatorships.

Not all of the changes were progressive. Women's ability to earn an independent living began to decline in the 15th century, a trend which accelerated in later years. In 1446, for example, Elizabeth Baret, an unmarried woman, was admitted to the franchise of Norwich as a weaver of worsted fabric. Almost fifty years later, in 1511, Norwich's worsted weavers excluded women from their trade, claiming they did not have the physical strength to produce quality cloth. Similar restrictions could be seen in other trades – growing standardization, larger businesses and industries, and changes in culture tended to drive many women out of the market and made it harder for unmarried women and widows to survive.

Towns and cities endured and thrived after 1500, but they became integrated more closely into regional and national governments, and thus became very different from their independent-minded medieval ancestors.

Timeline

410	Rome sacked by Visigoths
455	Rome sacked by Vandals
627	King Dagobert founds the St-Denis fair near Paris
669	Muslims raid Sicily, capture Syracuse
741	Fire damages York's cathedral
763	Fire destroys York
847	Fire in Rome
858	Normans burn Chartres, France
859	Normans devastate Noyon, France
861	Normans devastate Noyon, France and Pisa, Italy
866-67	Vikings capture York
885-85	Norman siege Paris over winter
896	Earthquake in Rome
897	Earthquake in Rome
911	Norman attack on Chartres, France driven back
925	Norman attack on Noyon, France driven back
938	Large amount of silver, lead, and copper ore discovered at Rammelsberg in the Harz Mountains of Germany
962	Fire damages London
969	Châlons-sur-Marne, France, captured by king
982	Fire in London
994	Vikings attack London
1004	Muslims raid Pisa
1008	Jews in Rouen, France, massacred
1011	Muslims raid Pisa
1017	Truce of God movement to encourage inter-Christian peace begins
1020	Fire at Chartres
1022	King Robert of France orders 13 Cathars burned at Orleans
1026	Jews in Rouen, France, massacred
1050	Flood in Ferrara, Italy
1066	Norman Invasion of England
1069	Failed commune revolt in Le Mans (one of the 1st in France); revolt in York leads to devastating fire
1073	Townspeople of Worms, Germany, expel bishop and welcome Emperor Henry IV into town
1075	Danes plunder York
1077	Fire in London
1084	Robert Guiscard captures Rome from Holy Roman Emperor; Normans sack the city

1087	St. Paul's in London destroyed by fire
1091	Major storm flattens 600 homes and a bridge in London
1092	Fire in London
1095	First Crusade begins
1096	Jewish communities in Holy Roman Empire attacked by crusaders; bishop of Speyer successfully protects its Jewish community with his militia
1098	Cistercian order founded
1102	Fire in Venice
1110	Fire in London; medical school founded at Salerno
1112	Uprising in Laon over suppression of commune by crown and bishop; bishop killed, fire damages cathedral, town virtually abandoned; Uprising's leaders arrested and executed in 1114-15; commune granted by crown in 1128
1117	Louis IV of France sieges Amiens with aid of local merchants; Earthquake in Tuscany, Italy
1119	Amiens commune controls city for French monarchy; University of Bologna founded; Templar order founded
1123	First Lateran Council
1128	Fire in Sens, France
1130	Henry I allows London to choose its own sheriff (Privilege is withdrawn and re-granted in later years)
1131	Fire in Bologna destroys cathedral
1132	Fire in London
1135	Fire in London
1137	Fire in Amiens, France; Construction begun on St-Denis near Paris (first Gothic cathedral); Fire in York
1138	Vesuvius erupts
1140	King Roger II of Sicily enacts first known requirement that doctors be examined and licensed by their peers
1144	First accusation of Jewish ritual murder of boy made in Norwich
1146	Earthquake in Rome; first mention of Paris butcher's guild
1147	Second Crusade begins
1159	Fire in Milan destroys one-third of city
1162	Milan burned by Frederick I Barbarossa
1163	Council of Tours orders confiscation of heretics' goods

1167	Arno floods Pisa 9 times in one fall; serious malaria outbreak in Rome
1169	Earthquake in Sicily
1170	Peter Valdo founds the Waldensians; flying buttresses first used in construction of Reims cathedral
1171	Jews massacred at Blois following allegation of Jewish murder (no victim found)
1173-74	Famine in Pisa
1174	Fire in Canterbury, England
1177	St-Bénézet bridge built at Avignon
1179	Third Lateran Council
1184	Fire in Sens, France
1186	Philippe II Auguste paves Paris' streets
1188	Fires in Arras, Beauvais, Moissac, Poitiers, Provins, Rouen, and Troyes
1189	Count Raymond V gives liberties to Toulouse; Third Crusade begins; London passes Assize of Buildings (early building code)
1190	Jews massacred in York
1191	Emperor Henry VI invades Naples, unsuccessfully sieges city
1193	Henry FitzAilwin becomes first mayor of London
1194	Fire in Vincenza; fire damages Chartres cathedral
1195	Flood at Auxerre
1196	William FitzOsbert leads revolt in London against tax levied for ransom of Richard I (FitzOsbert hanged later that year); Flood in Paris
1201	Fourth Crusade begins
1200	Student riots at University of Paris
1202	A Pisan merchant begins to widely disseminate the *Liber abaci* (Book of the abacus) which explained "Arabic" numerals; Venice excommunicated for its part in Fourth Crusade attack on Constantinople
1205	Flood at Caen
1206	Earthquake in Bourgone and Limousin; flood in Paris
1207	Earthquake in Anjou
1209	Albigensian Crusade begins; Béziers destroyed by Crusaders; London bridge completed (stone replacement for 1C wooden bridge)
1210	Riot at Chartres
1212	Major fire in London; Famine in Sicily
1213	Flood at Limoges
1214	Earthquake in Normandy
1215	John I grants London the right to elect its own mayor; Fourth Lateran Council; Riot in Chartres
1216	Flood in Paris
1218	Fire in Amiens, France; Albigensian crusaders siege Toulouse
1219	Flood in Grenoble
1220	Dominican rule approved
1221	Tornadoes damage area between Paris and Beauvais
1222	University of Padua founded; Earthquake in Bologna damages cathedral
1223	Franciscan rule approved; earthquake rocks Venice on Christmas Day; earthquake in Aquitaine
1224	Frederick II founds University of Naples
1227	Famine in Sicily
1230	University students temporarily leave Paris; Tiber floods Rome
1231	Series of tremors strike Rome, part of Coliseum collapses; Emperor Frederick II enacts rules for licensing doctors, including lists of suggested books to study
1232	Townspeople in Worms, Germany, destroy town hall rather than surrender it to bishop; Bristol has first water pipes laid
1233	Fire in Tours, France
1236	Emperor Frederick II investigates and denounces claim made in Fulda that Jews used blood of Christian children in Passover rituals (Pope Innocent IV will issue letter repudiating same claim in 1247)
1237	London develops conduit bringing fresh water from Tyburn
1241	Lübeck and Hamburg sign treaty to coordinate resistance to highway bandits between the Elbe and Trave estuaries
1245	Douai, Flanders, enacts first legislation against residents organizing to strike against their employers
1247-48	Emperor Frederick II sieges Parma
1251	*Pastoureaux* uprisings near Paris
1252	Florence first issues the gold florin; Parma's butchers lead revolt against town government
1253-58	Chartres cathedral chapter flees unrest
1254	Louis IX orders expulsion of prostitutes from all French towns and villages and confiscation of all belongings including clothing (The order is singularly ineffective)
1255	Lübeck and Hamburg sign currency alliance
1256	Urban revolt in Genoa
1260	Flagellant processions in northern Italy

1261	Council of Lambeth requires each bishop to maintain one or two ecclesiastic prisons in his diocese
1262	Bishop Walter von Geroldseck defeated by Strasbourg city militia on the field of Hausbergen; Riot in Hereford, England, against its bishop results in virtual siege of cathedral district and eventual negotiations over privileges
1264	Simon de Monteforte, leader of a baronial opposition to Henry III, forms a proto-Parliament at Westminster in London
1266	Urban uprising in Florence
1267	Bologna cobblers revolt and set fire to the podestà's palace after arrest of one of their members for adultery
1268	South tower of Sens cathedral collapses
1272	Riot in Norwich over clerical privilege protecting accused murderers leads to townspeople setting fire to its cathedral (damaging it) and killing several monks; the crown sided with the bishop, executing 30 arsonists, suspending town privileges for 3 years, and levying a large fine.
1273-79	Orvieto builds aqueduct
1274	Verona burns 174 Cathars at Sirmione near Lake Garda
1276	Flood in Rome
1277	Genoese ships first sail around Spain to Flanders
1278	Fire in Chester
1280	Uprising ("blue nails") in Flanders; Flood in Cremona & Mantua
1281	Mayors killed in separate tax revolts in Rouen and Provins, France
1282	Sicilian Vespers (uprising in Sicily against the Angevin monarchy); Lübeck, Wisby, and Riga enter alliance to promote peace in the Baltic
1284	Partial collapse of Beauvais cathedral
1285	Fire in Florence; riot in Arras
1287	Genoa breaches Pisa's harbor at battle of Meloria, destroys several warships, and carries off parts of the harbor chains as trophies
1288	Cologne militia defeats archbishop's forces at Worringen; Fire in Boston
1290	Jews expelled from England
1292	Tax revolt in Rouen, France; King Philippe IV abolishes Rouen's commune
1293	Fire in Florence
1294	Flood in London
1296	Flood in Paris; Fire in Carlisle
1297-1304	Rural revolts in Flanders against King Philippe IV of France
1298	Fire in Strasbourg destroys 355 homes and damages cathedral; 21 Jews killed in riot in Roettlingen after allegations of host desecration, local knight led anti-Jewish mobs against neighboring regions
1301	Fire in Florence; uprising in Magdeburg, 10 guild leaders burned alive
1303	Fire in Florence destroys 1,700 buildings
1304	Fire in Florence
1306	Bologna's butchers revolt and depose papal legate and his allies in favor of a government led by the guilds; Paris artisans revolt over manipulation of coinage, king executes 23 leaders; Jews expelled from France
1307	King Philippe IV arrests the Templars
1308	Revolt in Strasbourg
1309	Mercanzia (guild court) founded in Florence; Papacy moves to Avignon
1311	Flagellant marches in Pisa, Lucca, and San Miniato
1312	Templars suppressed in England
1313	England creates wool staple system
1314	Unrest in Lucca causes silk workers to begin to illicitly emigrate; Lucca offers bounty for murder of illicit emigrant silk workers
1315	Jews return to France after the payment of 22,500 livre with an agreement for an annual payment of 10,000 livre
1315-18	Famine in England, northern Europe caused by series of bad harvests
1320	French crown fines Jews 150,000 livre (later reduced to 75,000 livre) after mass hysteria resulting from alleged plot by Jews, conspiring with Spanish Muslims and lepers, to poison wells; Paris' Belleville aqueduct in use supplying fountains
1321	Harsh winter in England; Shepherd's Crusade (rural rioters march through southern France and Spain killing Jews and lepers); University faculty and staff temporarily leave Bologna
1322	Local landholder burns town of Recanati to the ground over local bishop's accusations of witchcraft and idolatry and town's defiant response; Jews again expelled from France (allowed to trickle back in after 1350)
1323-28	*Jacquerie* uprising in northern France; rural uprising in Flanders against Count Louis of Nevers, suppressed with aid of French crown
1325	Fire in Vicenza destroys one-quarter of the city

1326	Florence orders two magistrates to make bronze cannons and iron shot (one of the 1st mentions of firearms); anti-Italian riot in London
1327	Riots in London against Edward II
1331	Peaceful demonstration in Parma (8 days of dancing and shouting) leads to tax reduction and peace treaty between Parma and Lucca
1332	Patrician feud in Strasbourg leads to general uprising and revolution, greater participation by guild leaders in government; flood in Pisa
1333	Arno river floods Florence; fire in Verona
1340	Hundred Years' War begins; plague and fire in Florence
1341	French crown first imposes a *gabelle* on salt (all salt had to be sold to a royal officer (*gabellier*) who would hold a monopoly on its sale to the public)
1342	Flood in Zurich
1343	Peruzzi bank fails when Edward III of England defaults on loans totaling 600,000 florins; urban uprising in Florence; Storm damages Amalfi and Ravello
1344	Bardi bank fails likewise due to Edward III's defaults on loans totaling 900,000 florins
1345	Revolt in Ghent, Flanders, results in angry mob killing its captain general
1346	Bad harvest in Florence
1347	Cola di Rienzi's revolt in Rome
1348	Black Plague begins; Earthquake in Venice and Verona
1349	Revolt in Strasbourg led by butchers leads to greater participation by craft guilds, city's Jews burned; earthquake in Perugia, Rome, and central Italy; Ordinance of Labourers attempts to regulate English wages
1350	Jean II of France publishes sanitary code
1351	Statute of Labourers attempts to regulate English wages
1353	Riot in Gaeta
1355	Rebellion by cloth workers and others deposes Siena's government
1356	Golden Bull in Germany regulating town alliances
1357-58	Paris uprising under Etienne Marcel; *Jacquerie* uprising in countryside
1358	Amiens, France captured by King Charles the Bad; first mention of German Hanseatic League of Towns
1359	Milan suppresses popular revolt in Pavia
1360	English siege Paris; Pont-Saint-Esprit captured by mercenaries and held for ransom
1361	Pope Innocent IV bribes mercenaries to raise siege of Avignon and assist papal allies in northern Italy; plague (Grey Plague) in London; University of Pavia founded
1362	Hurricane destroys wooden spire of Norwich cathedral
1363	White Company of English mercenaries forces truce between papacy and Milan; thus unemployed, the Company is hired by Pisa to harass Florence
1364-84	*Tuchins* revolt in rural southern France
1367	Confederation of Cologne; White Company, on behalf of the Papacy, captures Assisi.
1368	Series of rebellions in Siena due to famine; Plague in London
1370	Cloth workers rebel in Perugia against high taxes from struggle between town, papacy, and rural nobles; Venice enacts fines on illicitly emigrating silk workers
1371	Second rebellion by cloth workers in Perugia drives town government out, replaced with papal governor; rebellion in Siena (Company of the Caterpillar) over grain prices leads to minor government reforms; England sacks Limoges leaving only the cathedral standing
1373	Earthquake in Verona
1374	Famine followed by flooding in Florence; burgher riot in Brunswick
1375	Third rebellion by cloth workers in Perugia results in return of original town government; harsh winter in Italy; Plague in London
1375-78	Florence and Papacy at war (War of the Eight "Saints")
1376	Bolognese rural peasants sneak into town, attack the papal legate, and spark restoration of local government
1377	Mercenaries burn port of Boulogne; Cesena's population massacred in retaliation for minor uprising against papal troops billeted in town
1378	Great Schism begins with two rival claimants to the Papacy (one in Rome, the other in Avignon); *Ciompi* (wool worker) revolt in Florence
1379	Weaver's uprising in Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres
1380	Butchers' revolt in Lübeck
1381-82	Uprising in Flanders against Count Louis II, rebels briefly capture Bruges
1381	Peasant's Revolt in England; Arezzo captured by mercenaries
1382	*Maillotins* uprising in Paris; *Harelle* uprising in Rouen

1384	Fire in Strasbourg; Butchers' uprising in Lübeck
1385	Two fires in Cambridge destroy 100 homes; Peasants storm Parma and destroy tax records
1386	Flood in Pistoia
1386-90	Countryside disturbances in Piedmont and Savoy (*tucchini*)
1388	German princes defeat town alliances of the Upper Rhine at Döffingen
1391	University of Ferrara chartered by papal bull; Jewish neighborhood in Seville destroyed, many Jews forced to convert, violence spread to other areas of Castile and Aragon.
1393	Flood in Paris destroyed Petit Pont
1394	Jews expelled from France
1401-04	Rural revolts in Florentine condato
1403	Papacy leaves Avignon; Revolt in Riems; English merchants expelled from Danzig
1404	Flooding in Flanders
1405	Riot in Rome forces Papacy to briefly flee
1407	Flood in Paris destroys Petit Pont and Pont St-Michel; cold winter causes ink to freeze on the quill in northern France
1408	Church council in Pisa attempts to resolve Great Schism, but ends up furthering discord by electing a third pope
1408-16	Lübeck divided between two rival governing councils
1413	*Cabochein* (butchers') revolt briefly seizes control of Paris
1416	French crown demolishes Parisian butcher's historic market and hall (*Le Grande Boucherie*), and revokes the butchers' guild's privileges as punishment for backing his rivals in a civil struggle.
1417	Council of Constance ends Great Schism with the election of Martin V; Fire in Senlis damages cathedral roof and bells
1418	Henry V captures Senlis, Evreaux, and Rouen
1419	Flood in Ferrara; Florence orders beheading of illicit emigrant silk workers and large fine for anyone abetting them
1420	Filippo Brunelleschi begins construction on dome of Florence's cathedral; flood in Rome; wolves reported scavenging in Paris at night
1421	Parisian butchers finish rebuilding their hall (a three-year project)
1427	Gypsies first arrive in Paris and are soon ordered to depart by the Bishop
1432	Flood in Paris
1437	Revolt in Bruges

1437-40	Famine in northern Europe caused by series of bad harvests
1438	Siena begins manufacturing silk
1439	Wolves reported to kill a dozen people in Paris
1440	Siena complains that Florence conspired to destroy its new silk industry by, among other things, trying to bribe masters and journeymen to burn their looms and emigrate to Florence
1444	Venice's Rialto bridge collapses under weight of crowd watching a procession
1450	Francesco Sforza captures Milan; King Charles VII gives Lyon royal monopoly on silk manufacture in France; Johannes Gutenberg invents his first printing press in Mainz, Germany
1451	Revolt in Ghent
1453	Hundred Years' War ends
1457	First printing press appears in Italy
1462	Brunelleschi's dome completed in Florence
1463	Lightning sets fire to spire of Norwich cathedral causing severe damage; Fire in Toulouse destroys ¾ of town
1466	Sicily charters Jewish university
1467	Flood in Mantua
1468	Burgundians destroy Liège; English Privy Council orders arrest of all Hanseatic merchants in England
1468-74	Hanseatic League at war with England over merchant privileges
1470-74	France declares war on Hanseatic League over Hansa trade with England during Hundred Years' War
1474	Venice creates first patent protection for inventors, violators fined 100 ducats; Treaty of Utrecht resolves dispute between England, France, and Hanseatic League
1475	Jewish community in Trento destroyed after inflammatory preaching by Franciscan friar alleging a ritual murder of a local boy
1481	Flood in Mantua followed by locusts
1486	Jews expelled from Vicenza
1488	Crusade against Waldensians in north-eastern France
1492	Jews expelled from Spain and Sicily
1494	French threats to Florence result in revolt
1495	Flood in Rome
1498	Fra Savonarola burned at the stake in Florence
1499	Genoa creates magistracy to control illicit emigration of silk workers, with power to impose fines up to 500 ducats; Flood in Paris destroys Pont Notre-Dame

Appendix I: Paris

I am in Paris, in that royal city where the abundance of natural gifts not only captivates those who dwell therein, but invites and attracts those who are afar. Just as the moon surpasses the stars in brightness, so this city, the seat of royalty, raises its proud head above all others. It is situated in the midst of a delightful valley surrounded by a crown of hills which adorn it in emulation of Ceres and Bacchus. The Seine, that superb river which comes from the east, here flows level with its banks and with its two branches forms an island which is the head, the heart, and marrow of the entire city. The two suburbs extend to the right and left, the smaller of which would be the envy of many cities. Each of the faubourgs is joined with the island by a bridge: the Grand pont facing the north in the direction of the English Channel, and the Petit pont which looks towards the Loire. The former, large, rich, and bustling with trade is the scene of busy activity; innumerable boats filled with merchandise and riches surround it. The Petit pont belongs to the logicis (students of logic) who cross or walk upon it while debating. In the île, alongside the palace of the kings ... stands the hall of philosophy, where study reigns as sole sovereign, a citadel of light and of immortality. That île is the eternal home of the seven sisters, the liberal arts, it is there also that decrees and laws resound from a trumpet of most noble eloquence; there, finally, bubbles the fountain of religious learning ...

– Guy of Bazoches (c.1180)

Paris is one of the largest and clearest examples of a subject town. It was the home of the French monarchy, and was the largest European town never to have its own government or charter. By using the chapters of this book as an outline for a discussion of Paris, one sees more clearly the problems of an urban government divided between the monarchy, the bishop, and the university; and of a city used as a revenue source, with a limited voice for the merchants and artisans who generated that revenue.

AGRICULTURE

Paris was built along the Seine river, about 280 miles from the Atlantic. The Seine's current was moderate, providing steady power for water mills and allowing for boat traffic from the English Channel to the east and from Flanders and Burgundy to the north and west. It was also close to the Loire, which provided river access to central France. The Seine provided fresh fish, often sold near the Grand-Pont or Pierre-à-Poissons (a street near Châtlet). Fresh sea-fish caught in the English Channel was shipped by cart overnight to Paris using relays of horses. The provost of Paris prohibited these relays, the chasse-marée, from being stopped or hindered on their journey. Brined, salted, and smoked fish was shipped at a more leisurely pace.

There were several islands in the Seine near Paris. The largest, the Île de la Cité, was the original site for Roman Paris. Several smaller islands upriver from the Île were used for cow pastures, and sometimes for judicial duels and executions.

Paris was surrounded by good agricultural land, ensuring a bountiful food supply during most years. It drew its grain primarily from the north and northwest, in an area of about 625 square miles in an arc from Poissy in the west to Meaux in the east. Some

Paris

A – *The Temple*
B – *The Bastille*
C – *St-Pol*
D – *Hotel de Ville*
E – *Place de Grève*
F – *St-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie*
G – *Les Halles*
H – *The Louvre*

I – *Notre-Dame Cathedral*
J – *Bishop's Palace*
K – *Île Market*
L – *Palais des Rois*
M – *Tour de Nesle*
N – *Le Petit Châtelet*
O – *Ste-Geneviève*
P – *St-Germain-de-Près*
Q – *St-Victor*
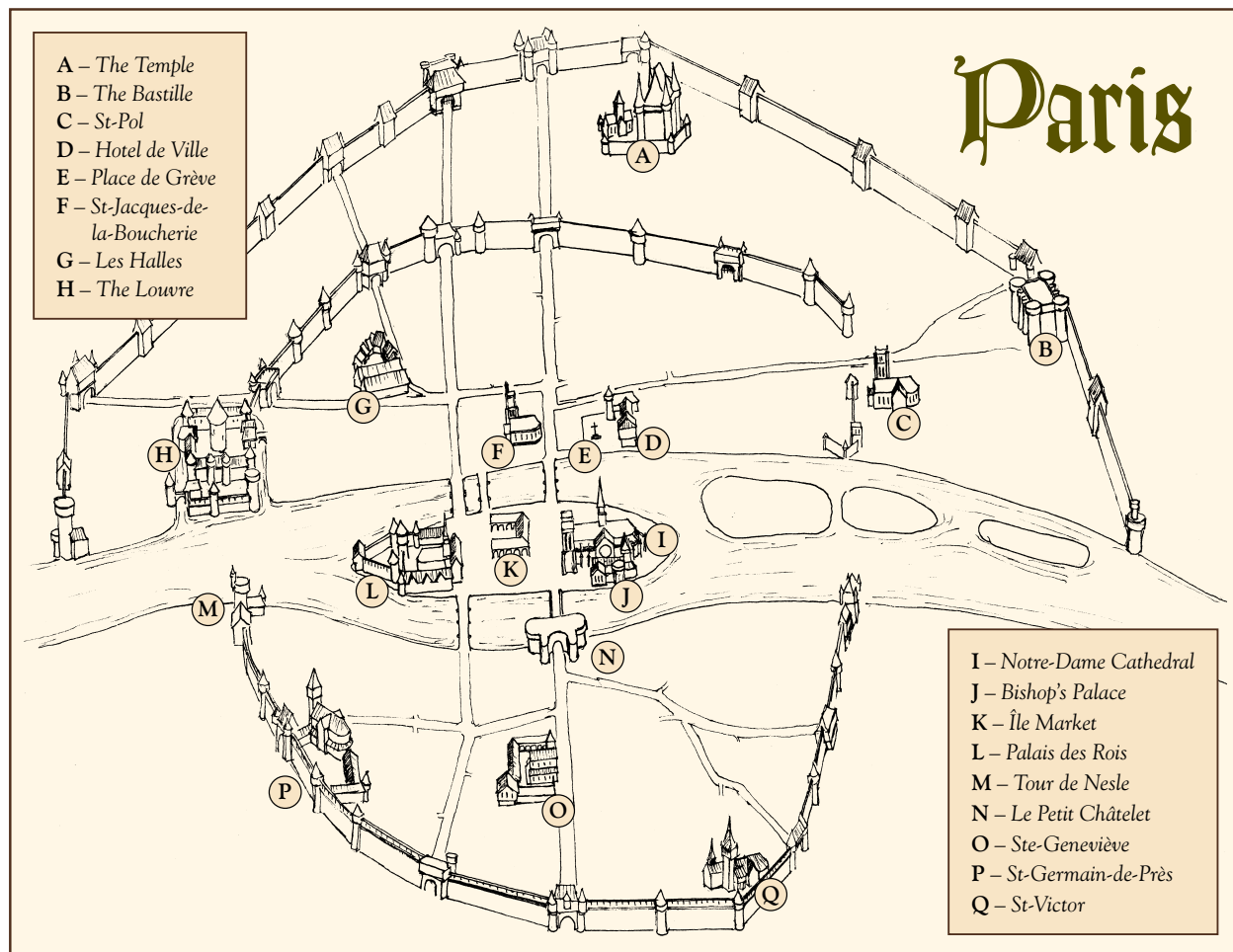
bakers ground their flour and made their bread in market towns (bourgs) and villages within a day's cart travel of the city, then shipped the loaves to market in Paris.

Parisians consumed a large amount of meat. By one estimate, in the 14th century, Parisians consumed 3,420 sheep, 514 oxen, 306 calves, and 600 pigs per week. On the Easter Fair (held from Holy Tuesday to Good Friday), two to three thousand hams were sold. Cattle and sheep were often driven to Paris, fattened up from their journey in monastic fields around the city (grandes prairies), and then butchered either in the fields or in the city's butcher shops. Pigs wandered freely in the Parisian streets until 1131, when one ran under the legs of the king's son's horse. The horse threw the young man, who died the next day. King Louis VI forbade anyone, other than the monks of the abbey of St-Antoine (the patron saint of pigs), to allow their pigs to wander Parisian streets. Parisians could keep pigs at home in their yards or gardens.

ARCHITECTURE

Paris was built on the right (north) and left (south) banks of the Seine, divided by the central Île de la Cité. There were several bridges connecting the city, several of which were lined with shops and homes. There were also water mills beneath the Grand Pont which connected the Île to the Right Bank.

Notre-Dame Cathedral was, and is, one of the most famous buildings in the city. Construction began in 1163 under Bishop Maurice de Sully, who wanted to build a church in the style of the new cathedrals at St-Denis, Senlis, and Sens. Some of the stone needed for the new cathedral was mined from tunnels under the city (see p. 22). The choir was consecrated in 1182. Notre-Dame was part of a large complex of ecclesiastical buildings known as la Cité Cléricale or la Cloître which occupied the eastern end of the island. The For l'Evêque, the court of the bishops of Paris, was on the Right Bank. The bishop's provost managed his portion of the city,

imprisoning criminals in a prison within the For. The area around Notre Dame was immune to the King's Justice; no officer of the Châtlet could enter the Cloître. The portals of Notre Dame were, however, used as a place of judgment and punishment.

At the other end of the Île was the Palais du Roi, the royal administrative center. It included Sainte-Chapelle, a small chapel built by Louis IX (St. Louis) in the early 13th century. Sainte-Chapelle cost the King forty thousand livres tournois, a vast sum that did not include its reliquaries and ornaments. Philippe IV the Fair constructed the Conciergerie, a sumptuous palace on the Île. On February 22, 1358, Étienne Marcel led a mob into the apartments of the Dauphin at the Conciergerie and slew his counselors in front of him. When he regained control of the city, Charles V moved to the more defensible Louvre, which became the new royal residence.

During the late 14th and 15th centuries, the crown and several monarchs built fortified palaces in the city. Charles V built St-Pol (or St-Paul), known for its orchards, gardens, and menagerie. Duke Jean of Burgundy (Jean Sans Peur) built a citadel-palace, the Hôtel d'Artois. His rival, the Duke de Berry, built the fortified Tour de Nesle on the Left Bank.

Paris was protected by a series of walls and gates. It was also protected by the Louvre and Nesle fortresses on the western side of the city. The Tour de Nesle held one end of a chain which stretched across the Seine to the Louvre. During peacetime, the chain was kept slack during the day, and raised at night to prevent smugglers from bypassing tolls. The Petit Châtlet guarded one bridge to the Cité. The fortress was the official residence of the provosts of Paris and sometimes used as a prison.

CHURCH

Notre Dame was one of the most famous churches in Paris, but it was not the only powerful religious center. Its rivals included the University of Paris (see p. 119), the Augustinian abbey of Ste-Geneviève, the Benedictine abbey of St-Germain-de-Près, and the Knights Templar's Temple. Each of these major churches owned land in and around Paris creating a tangle of legal privileges and juris-dictions, jealously fought over among the religious communities and with the Parisian government.

One of the oldest religious centers in Paris was the Augustinian Abbey of Ste-Geneviève, founded in 510 and named for a pious woman credited with saving the city from Attila the Hun. Its rival, St-German-des-Prés, a Benedictine abbey, was founded in 542. Both abbeys were initially outside of the city walls and slowly became incorporated into the growing city. In the 12th century, the Templars became an important faction in Parisian finance and politics. Their primary administrative and banking center, the Temple, was built on the northern fringe of the city in 1147. The Order also controlled a great deal of land within the city. The Templars were destroyed in 1254 after a dispute with the French king.

The church of St-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie (11th century) was the traditional starting point for pilgrimages to Santigo de Compostelle in Spain. Pilgrims had their staves blessed, and their friends wished them well. From there they walked across the river, past Notre-Dame, and along the Rue St-Jacques to the twin towers and drawbridge of the Port St-Jacques. From there, a road led south, eventually reaching Santiago de Compostelle.

Finally, there were two important churches on Montmatre, the highest hill in Paris. The name Montmatre was derived from the Mound of Mercury, although local legend referred to the martyrdom of St. Denis and two other men in the third century. All three were beheaded on the mount. According to legend, St. Denis picked up his blood-covered head and walked two miles to the site of the St-Denis cathedral, the first major Gothic cathedral and necropolis of many French kings. The hill's two primary churches are the Church of St-Pierre, built on the site of a Merovingian church in the mid-to-late 12th century, and the convent of the Filles Dieu, founded by St. Louis in 1226. Condemned prisoners on their way to the Montfaucon gallows stopped at the convent to kiss a crucifix hanging on the east wall of the church. They were anointed with holy water, and given bread and wine.

The University of Paris was a major part of the city's religious life. Its leaders battled with Paris' bishop over the university's privileges and immunities, leading to several pointed conflicts. In 1219, the Franciscans founded a house for students at the University of Paris, and soon became important

members of the University's faculty. Similarly, the Dominicans became important faculty members at the University starting in the mid-13th century.

COMMERCE

The Right (northern) Bank of the Seine was, and is, the heart of Paris' commerce and manufacturing. In 1292, Paris had over 130 regulated professions – 18 dealing with food and firewood; 5 in building and construction; 22 in metallurgy; 22 in cloth and leather; 36 in clothing and accessories; 10 in house furniture; 3 in medicine; and 15 in banking and other professions. Merchants purchased a license (métier) from the crown and were subject to guild and royal inspectors. The watermen's guild was the most politically powerful guild, followed by the butcher's guild from which several prévôtes (provosts) were drawn.

In the late 14th and early 15th centuries, northern France was frequently a target of rival English and French armies fighting the Hundred Years War. Paris' trades declined both because of the disruptions to trade routes, and due to internal chaos in Paris as the monarchy and its rivals struggled to control the city. The city's weaving industry declined in the 15th century because their uncarded cloth could not compete with carded rivals in Flanders and other nearby towns. Its dyer and silk-making industry declined in the 15th century when the French court, and its courtiers, increasingly spent time in palaces along the Loire instead of in Paris. Many workers moved to towns closer to Loire palaces.

Paris had three major markets, on the Île, at Place de Grève, and at Les Halles. Place de Grève was primarily the city's river port and a place where day laborers looked for work. Les Halles, a major produce market, became a covered marketplace starting in 1183.

Paris was the home of the Templars' major bank, the Temple, which made it a major center for European banking until the Order's demise. Philip II Auguste and other monarchs kept the royal treasury at the Temple until Philip IV destroyed the Order in 1254. (The Templars' treasure was then confiscated by the monarchy.) Paris was also home to the two Lendit Fairs in nearby St-Denis, and the Saint-Germain Fair (see p.45).

CRIME PREVENTION

Philip II Auguste organized the city's watch. His administrator, the prévôt-balli, controlled a group of guards, often derisively referred to by the public as ribauds or ribauz. An unimpressed public nicknamed the prévot de Paris the roi de ribauds. The prévôt was assisted by commissaries-enquêtes (magistrates), sergents, and a watch (le guet). The prévôt also had his own bodyguard (la douzaine).

The watch was organized by guilds. Each guild was expected to provide a certain number of personnel for three-week tours of duty. There was also a royal watch. Both watches were commanded by the chevalier du guet. The captain could refuse any person he deemed unfit for duty and impose a fine. When this led to abuses under the English control of Paris, an ordinance required the captain to accept any healthy male over 20 years old who was well known in his neighborhood or village.

There was also a militia organized by neighborhoods (quatiers). Neighborhoods elected a Quartenier, who commanded its militia and portion of the watch. The Quartenier was assisted by dizainiers, who commanded groups of ten men. Cinquantiniers were captains of groups of fifty men.

Crime, by most accounts, was rampant. By the 15th century, Paris was the home of the Beggar King and his band of organized criminals (see p. 58). François Villon, a clerk, wrote a series of poems about one group of Parisian bandits, who he called Coquillards (Brothers of the Cockle-Shell), in the jargon of that group. Villon particularly warned the Brothers to be wary of the Archers, presumably the prévôte's guards.

During times of particular unrest, the prévôt ordered Parisians to keep lit lamps in their front windows at night and to keep vessels of water nearby in case of fire. Chains were set in the streets and bonfires kept at major intersections. Many Parisians ignored the order, barricaded their doors, and kept weapons near their beds.

Criminals were often executed at the Montefaucon gallows. The gallows included sixteen large stone pillars with wooden beams between them. Criminals were hung from chains on the beams, and their bodies left to rot. Fifty to sixty corpses were commonly displayed at once. When a new criminal was hung, the oldest body was thrown into a charnel

pit in the center of the foundation. The stair leading up the foundation was barred by a gate and guarded to keep relatives or "sorcerers" from stealing the bodies. In rare cases, and during portions of the Hundred Year's War when travel from Paris to Montefaucon was dangerous, criminals were executed at one of Paris' market places. Jean Hardi, accused of trying to poison King Louis XI, was drawn and quartered in Place de Grève in 1473. Jacques d'Armagnac, the Duke of Nemours, was beheaded in Les Halles for treason in 1477. Jacques de Molay, grand master of the Templars, and two other men were burned alive on a small island in the Seine in 1314 on charges of witchcraft and heresy.

During the unrest of the Hundred Years War, Paris was described by an anonymous chronicler known as the Bourgeois of Paris as a very lawless place. Robbers and bandits raped, robbed, and murdered people in the streets and in their homes. Beggars confessed after torture to kidnapping and mutilating children. Newborn babies were kidnapped from their parents and held for ransom – the kidnappers threatening to let them die unbaptized if not paid. Women were forced into prostitution to earn enough money to survive and feed their children. Robbers and bandits caught by the watch were quickly executed, but the sense of the anonymous bourgeois' chronicle is that no one could or would maintain order in the city.

EDUCATION

Paris had a noted cathedral school, La maîtrese, the choir of Notre Dame. The choir included twelve boys and six men who were taught to sing in the cathedral. Their music set a standard for a large part of Western Europe.

Paris was also the home of the University of Paris, one of the largest universities in Europe. At its height, it may have had 5,000 students and faculty, who comprised a tenth of Paris' population. Even after the Hundred Years War and the Plague, it had about 3,500 students and faculty in the mid-15th century. The University controlled many aspects of urban life around it. It licensed book makers and sellers. It set the maximum rent on apartments rented to university members.

For the most part, students made individual arrangements to pay their teachers a fee (collectae).

The teachers and the students' nations paid rent and maintenance for their buildings. Administrators were paid from fees derived from various examinations and promotions. When the university encountered an unanticipated fee, such as to resolve a dispute about its privileges or to send an ambassador to the papacy, it took a special collection of its students and faculty (contributions pro debitis universitatis) — sometimes the amount varied by the university member's income; at other times it was a fixed fee.

As mentioned above, the university set a maximum on rents charged to the university community. Often the landholder rented the building to a master, who in turn lived in part of the building and sublet the remainder to his students. The landlord often obtained pledges or a security deposit from the master, and could not seize the students' goods in satisfaction of any unpaid rent. The master, in turn, obtained pledges or a security deposit from students, and could collect unpaid rent through the university's courts.

ENTERTAINMENT

The French monarchy often staged large celebrations in Paris in honor of coronations, knighting of the king's sons, and weddings, as well as smaller celebrations to honor visiting dignitaries or mark important events. In 1313, for example, Philip IV held an eight-day festival to honor his sons' knighting. The feast began with the ceremonial entry of Philip IV's daughter Isabelle and her husband, King Edward II of England into Paris. The couple was entertained at a royal banquet while Philip's sons spent the night before their knighting in prayer and fasting at Notre Dame. On Pentecost Sunday, the young men were knighted and Philip IV held another banquet. During the next week, a series of processions, banquets, displays, plays, and street festivals ensued, involving Paris' clergy, guilds, and notables. On Thursday, the kings of France, England, and Navarre all promised to go on Crusade, joined by a large crowd of nobles and townspeople. (The promised crusade did not occur – Philip died in 1314.)

In addition to the usual major religious feasts, Paris had a procession in honor of Ste-Geneviève on January 3, when her relics were taken from her church and processed around Mont-Ste-Geneviève, past Notre-Dame cathedral, and back to her church.

If the king was in Paris, he and his court were part of the procession. Other processions were also held during times of strife, disease, famine, and whenever the king was seriously ill. There was also a popular midsummer bonfire held in Place de Grève on the feast of St. John. In some years, members of the royal family or important officials lit the fire.

There were also less grand entertainments including various ball games (such as a predecessor to tennis), animal fights, and competitions (including climbing a greased pole to win a purse or animal).

Parisian entertainment involved several guilds. Paris was a center for musicians. In 1292, at least 19 musicians lived near St-Josse church. The Confrérie de St-Julien des Menestriers, a professional craft guild of travelling musicians, was formed in 1321 and eventually had its own church and lodging house.

The Confrérie de la Passion was a troop of merchants and artisans recognized by a royal letter-patent in 1402, which regularly performed mystery plays (generally scenes from Scripture) and donated its profits to charity. There were two other groups of actors performing in Paris at around the same time. The Clercs de la Basoche were a group of lawyers who performed comedies (religious and social allegory plays) at the Palais de Justice. The Enfants sans Souci were sons of merchants who performed political satires at the Hôpital de la Trinité, the Halle aux Poissons, and sometimes in the open in market places. The Enfants had to share their profits with the Confrérie de la Passion, which had a monopoly on theater performances in Paris.

Like other major cities, Paris had municipal prostitutes, confined by Louis IX to streets on the Right Bank.

FINANCE

The French crown was actively involved in the city's finances. By one estimate, in the 1290s, Paris provided 14% of the monarchy's revenue. In return, the crown paid for improvements like stone stalls at Les Halles and several sets of defensive walls and castles. Philip II Auguste paid for a wall on the Left Bank (1200-1215); Parisian merchants paid for a wall on the Right Bank (1190-1209). Charles V built a larger wall on the Right Bank in the 14th century.

Parisians paid an annual royal fee (tailles) based on their income from commerce. The taille had evolved from an arbitrary tax assessed on unfree persons prior to 1200 into a system of taxes levied on urban residents by their own government, then paid to the monarchy in a lump sum. To assess the tax, royal collectors went to each house in the city, noting the occupant's name, occupation, and the amount they paid based on their income from trade or crafts. Nobles, royal officials, clergy, and university members were immune from this tax.

French urban finances were complicated by royal demands for money. The monarchy (or any major landholder) could demand feudal aids from its vassals for the knighting of the landholder's eldest son, for the marriage of his eldest daughter, for ransom if captured, and if he went on crusade. At

Year	Amount	Conditions
1328	400 men-at-arms for 3 months (18,000 l.)	Payments stopped if peace broke out; monarchy not to seek additional tax for that conflict
1340	450 men-at-arms for 4 months (20,250 l.) if king or his son personally went to war	Monarchy not to ask for additional aid for 1 year
1345	500 men-at-arms at 6 months (33,750 l.)	To be raised by sales tax on wine and grain
1348	15,000 men-at-arms for 6 months (81,000 l.)	Many other royal taxes suspended for that year

times, these aids could be demanded in rapid succession, which could create a large sudden demand on a town's budget. Fortunately, a large city like Paris could negotiate the terms and schedule of its payment with royal officials. The monarchy and major landholders could also demand emergency war aids – either soldiers or money to pay for mercenaries. Often this was invoked through the arrière-ban, a general summons of all who could give military service, excluding the elderly and children, women, and those in certain critical occupations.

Those who did not want to personally serve could pay a fee.

Towns often made their payments contingent on the landholder personally leading their forces, or on an actual conflict – the tax would be repaid if the enemy did not attack. To provide some idea of the amounts in involved, for the decade preceding the Hundred Years War and the first decade of the conflict, Paris promised to pay the following:

Paris funded its payments through a sales tax of 4 *d./l.* (1½%) to be paid by all of its residents. In 1341, Paris allowed the crown to directly collect its 1½ percent sales tax, but was able to keep up to 25% of the revenue to maintain its own defenses. Starting in 1347, the crown began to collect and keep the entire tax. The royal sales tax began to rise from 1347 to 1360, eventually reaching 12 d./l. (5%). Paris continued to raise money for its own defenses, but does not appear to have made the sorts of specific promises seen in 1328-48 in later decades.

In the 13th and 14th centuries, the monarchy became involved in a series of wars, which it financed through increased taxes. This led to an economic decline in Paris. The crown tried to revalue the currency, reducing the amount of silver in each coin, and ordered merchants not to accept coins minted by its foes. The 1306 revaluation provoked a riot. The crown crushed the riot, hanging the leaders. Unrest continued, making revaluations a risky policy for the monarchy.

GOVERNANCE

Paris was the largest European subject-city which never had its own government or charter. This led to weak civil institutions which were badly strained by crises, such as a period during the Hundred Years War when a weak monarchy and its Armagnac rivals struggled with the Burgundians and their English allies for control of the city.

Paris' government was primarily divided between the king's representative, the prévôt, who lived at Châtlet, and the Bishop of Paris, who lived in his palace near Notre Dame on the Île de la Cité. In the late 13th century, Paris' merchants were able to elect a second prévôt, who was also a royal official, and had his own home in the city. His records were likely kept in the Châtlet.

Jurisdiction over Paris' left bank was divided between the crown, Notre Dame, the University of Paris, and the monasteries of Ste-Geneviève and St-Germain-des-Pres. In 1222, Philip II Auguste and the bishop agreed to a treaty, *Forma Pacis*, which settled various conflicting legal and economic disputes between the monarchy and Paris' religious leaders.

The monarch was based on the Île de la Cité until the mid-14th century, when Charles V moved his court to the Louvre. Towards the end of the 14th century, the monarchy began to reside outside of Paris, first at Vincennes, and later in castles along the Loire. Under Philip II Auguste and his successors, the Île became the home of the royal archives, the chancery, and the Parlement of Paris (a law court).

Paris had long been administered by a royal appointee, the prévôt (later prévôt-baili), generally a merchant who purchased the position from the monarchy. In 1190, when Philip II Auguste went on Crusade, he entrusted supervision of Paris' administration to six Parisians from the watermen's guild. The six men were ordered to audit royal accounts for Paris and other parts of the royal lands three times a year during the king's absence. In 1260, King Louis IX (St. Louis) created a municipal council by appointing leading members of the watermen's guild as aldermen (*échevins*). The échevins in turn chose a merchant's provost (*prévôt des marchands*).

High taxes provoked unrest. In 1282, a new tax led to a popular revolt (the *maillotins*) against tax collectors and money-lenders. The monarchy (then led by a regency) declared martial law and executed over 100 rioters. The *échevins* were abolished, and the *prévôt des marchands* was merged into the royal prévôte. The guilds were also curbed to reduce their power and influence as rivals to the royal administrators. Slowly, Paris began to regain its liberties in the late 14th century.

In 1355, Paris' delegation to the Estates-General pushed for an investigation into corrupt royal officials. Paris' provost, Étienne Marcel, pushed for concessions from the dauphin during Jean II's captivity. In January, 1358, Marcel later led a mob into the Conciergerie and killed two important courtiers in front of the dauphin. Marcel then sent groups of Parisians to destroy fortresses and manor houses around Paris which could be

used as bases for attacking the city. Two of his lieutenants, Pierre Gille (a grocer) and Jean Vaillant (the provost of the mint) separately allied with the forces of Guilliam Cale (leader of the Jaquerie uprising) to attack local fortresses. Other towns such as Amiens, Beauvais, Orléans, Rouen, and Senlis, followed Paris' lead, allying with the Jacquerie to destroy local manor houses and castles. Charles II of Navarre allied with Marcel, then betrayed and killed Cale. Marcel was killed in a Parisian uprising against him in July, 1358 and Paris made peace with the dauphin.

In 1392-1422, a struggle broke out between the Duke of Burgundy and the Duke of Orléans for control of the monarchy. In 1405, Duke Jean of Burgundy took virtual control of Paris. He restored power to the guilds, including the watermen's guild, re-created the *prévôt des marchands*, and granted liberties to the University. Duke Jean particularly favored the city's butchers, and made a group of them part of his personal bodyguard. Unfortunately, his allies proved unreliable. Claude Caboche, a butcher, led a revolt in 1413. Jean was forced to flee the city in the wake of Caboche's brief revolt.

Jean's rivals, the Armagnacs, took control of Paris for five years. They proved so unpopular because of their inability to maintain order and protect trade routes and food supplies that the Burgundians were welcomed back in 1418. Paris fell under the control of a gang led by Capeluche, an executioner. Jean himself was assassinated in 1419; his heir allied with the English. Henry V of England was crowned at Notre-Dame in 1420. English garrisons took control of the Louvre, Vincennes, and the Bastille. When Henry V died, his regent, the duke of Bedford, took control of Paris. In 1429, Jeanne d'Arc led an attack on the city and was wounded by an archer. Paris remained under English control.

The ongoing war caused the Parisian economy to virtually collapse. In 1436, Paris allied again with France, allowing the French army into the city. Although the crown recognized Paris' government in 1450, it manipulated Parisian elections in favor of its candidates. The city economy remained in decline during the 15th century. The university lost much of its luster and pre-eminence. The city became more an administrative center than an economic power.

GUILDS

Paris had a large number of guilds, chartered by the monarchy. Many were small, specialized groups which might have only five or six members. There were also larger, more powerful guilds like the bakers, butchers, and the watermen.

The Seine was the home of Paris' water merchants or watermen's guild, who held a royal monopoly on all river traffic between Paris and Mantes since 1171. Oddly, given the importance of this guild, there is relatively little material about its structure or membership. There are records showing that anyone else who transported goods through this area was required to share half of his profits with the water merchants. The guild could confiscate all of the transported goods of anyone caught violating this rule.

JEWS

The Parisian Jewish community existed from at least the 5th century. In 1119, it founded a synagogue and *mikvah* (ritual bath) on rue de la Juiverie. The community also had a cemetery on the Left Bank near rue de la Harpe, and owned its own flour mills. Jews were protected royal vassals, but suffered from intermittent persecution and violence. Jews were expelled from the city for brief periods in 1182-98, 1306-15, and 1394. One synagogue was converted into a church, La Madeleine, in the 12th century. Each Friday in Lent it dedicated the office of Good Friday to the conversion of the Jews.

In the 12th and 13th century, Paris was a major center for Jewish education. Benjamin of Tudela referred to it as *Ha-ir Hagedolah*, "that Great City." Juda ben Issac (Rabbi Sire Léon) lectured to scholars from around Europe. In the 12th century, theologians began to translate the Talmud and study its role in Jewish theology. In 1230, Nicolas Donin, a Jewish convert to Christianity from southern France, alleged that the Talmud contained blasphemies against Christianity. King Louis IX confiscated a large number of Talmudic books in 1240 and ordered them translated and examined. A trial was then held by theologians from the University of Paris. A number of northern-French rabbis testified. The Talmudic books lost. In 1242, Pope Gregory IX ordered them to be burned – 24 cartloads were burned in Place de la Grève.

There were various legends of Jewish offenses against Christians (see pp. 91-92). In 1290, it was

alleged that a Christian woman repaid a debt to a Jewish pawnbroker by giving him a consecrated host. The pawnbroker was said to have tried to destroy the host by dropping it into boiling water. When it then assumed a human shape, the man tried to cut it into pieces causing a rush of blood. After various attempts to destroy the host, the man was discovered, arrested, and burned at the stake. The host was saved, and kept at the church of St-Jean-en-Grève. The pawnbroker's knife was kept as a relic at Les Billettes. King Philip IV and the bishop of Paris apparently believed the story and helped build an appropriate site for the host at St-Jean. The story became a popular subject for mystery plays and St-Jean-en-Grève became crowded with pilgrims. At first, Jewish leaders tried to refute the outrageous claims. When that failed, many leaders urged their community to maintain a low profile and avoid conflicts with Christians, particularly during the emotionally-charged Lent season.

Society

Paris was traditionally divided into three parts, Le Quarter d'Outre-Grand-Pont or La Ville (the Right Bank), Le Quarter d'Outre-Petit-Pont or L'Université (The Left Bank), and Le Quartier de la Cité or La Cité (Île de la Cité). It was subdivided into various neighborhoods (*quartiers*) – sixteen of them at the time of Charles V's 14th century wall. It does not appear that the neighborhoods played an important part in Paris' politics or that there were strong neighborhood rivalries.

Paris' highest classes included the monarchy and royal court, nobles who built second homes to be near the court, its bishop and various distinguished clergy, and noted academics teaching or studying at the University. These, in turn, created a demand for luxury goods made locally or imported from across Europe, as well as for household servants and staff. Many laborers and merchants migrated to Paris for work. Like other cities, its birthrate could not overcome its high mortality rate, so it depended on immigrants from across France.

About a tenth of Paris' population was poor, subsisting on casual labor, prostitution, petty crime, and begging. Paris' poor could seek charity from various parish churches, hospitals, convents, and even colleges. There were a variety of charities supporting impoverished widows, but far fewer that aided impoverished elderly men. Parisians did not have the northern Italians' obsession about dowries, but the city did have charities which provided dowries to poor girls. Charities also provided lodging, food, and apprenticeships for orphans and poor children.

Threats

Paris faced its share of disease, including outbreaks of the Plague in 1348, 1360, 1374, and 1400, mumps in 1414, scarlet fever in 1418, and smallpox in 1433 and 1438. Unlike Venice, Paris did not appear to have created a municipal office to try to control disease, quarantine the sick, or otherwise limit disease. It, like other cities, did regulate food quality and price, supervise the condition of its wells and water pipes, and try to control waste disposal.

The biggest threat to the city was war. At various points, England controlled the nearby duchy of Normandy and threatened to invade Paris. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the French monarchy expanded Paris' defenses. The later set of walls proved useful during the Hundred Years War when rival armies raided the areas around the city, sometimes briefly encircling it or laying siege. The raids resulted in unrest and uncertainty in the city, as well as shortages. In 1410, Armagnac supporters burned many of the towns around Paris – grain prices rose from 18 to 20 sou per *setier* (about two gallons) of flour to 864 or 960 sou per *setier* for several months. During the following years, as English, Armagnac, and Burgundian forces raided the villages around Paris, prices intermittently soared, and trade and wages fell. Food, farm animals, and game became scarce. Wolves were reported to swim across the Seine to dig up corpses in the graveyards to eat and even to attack women and children. One notorious wolf, called *Courtaut*, was hunted as if it were a bandit or mercenary captain.

War and high taxes led to urban unrest and occasional uprisings like Marcel and Caboche's revolts and the maillotins' uprising. The town government tried to quell unrest, executing those they thought might cause trouble. During the Hundred Years' War, Parisians wore various sashes and badges in support of which ever group controlled the city. The city's government sent out skirmishing parties to suppress bandits and mercenary companies and sometimes escorted shipments of grain into the city.

Appendix II: Venice

Rich with gold, but richer still in reputation;

Strong in her wealth yet stronger in her virtue;

Built on Marble, yet more firmly based on civil concord;

Surrounded by the salt sea, but made safer by her saltier counsels

– Petrarch

Venice is an odd example of a medieval town. It was, in many ways, an exception – a city built on islands in a salt-water lagoon; a city wealthier than many monarchs; and an oligarchy which never fell to an invader or local tyrant. Its nature leaves open many questions, such as how its numerous residents were fed and provided with sufficient fresh water. Was its fragmentation into hundreds of small islands a cause for its multiple small institutions instead of a small number of larger ones? How did it avoid much of the factional politics and labor unrest that plagued mainland city-states? Unfortunately, this appendix is limited by its sources and can only outline some of these issues.

AGRICULTURE

Venice is unique – it is a city built on islands entirely surrounded by a salt-water lagoon. At first glance, the site hardly seems promising. The fresh water problem alone (p. 14) was daunting. A lack of a river also meant a lack of water power to power mills; Venetians may have used hand mills to grind their grain into flour, or relied on transporting flour from mainland mills. (Venice did experiment with tidal mills and windmills in the lagoon, but these were not a major source of flour.) The lack of power for fulling mills and limited fresh water, may also partially explain why Venice did not develop a major woolen cloth manufacturing industry.

But the lagoon provided fish and salt for trade and a strong defense against invaders. It was studded with shoals, some shallow enough for wading, others deep enough to allow ships to pass. During war, the channel marking posts were removed, making access by any other than a native difficult. In 1379-80, a Genoese fleet seized Chioggia, a port at the southern end of the lagoon, which was the closest any medieval invader came to threatening Venice itself.

The location was very favorable for trade. The lagoon was at the mouth of the Adige and Po rivers, which provided trade routes deep into northern Italy. It was near the east alpine passes from Italy to the Holy Roman Empire. It was also at the head of the Adriatic Sea, which allowed Venetian ships to dominate trade along the east coast of Italy and the Dalmatian coast. In fact, Venice regarded the Adriatic as its own. Its Captain of the Gulf (*capitaneus culfi*) led a small group of ships to inspect any vessel in the Adriatic for contraband. Armed vessels (which could describe many merchant ships) could be treated at the Captain's discretion as pirates. During grain shortages, Venice's ships would seize food cargos from any vessel its warships encountered north of the Otranto Strait.

Venice generally obtained its food and fuel from the Italian mainland, along the Dalmatian coast, and from Sicily. In 1224, it created a Grain Office (*offitiales supra granum*) to monitor the city's grain reserves. (The office would later evolve into a government treasury.) There were a few gardens in the town itself and on the lagoon islands. Chioggia, a port on the south end of the lagoon, provided salt. When Venice held significant territory on the mainland (*terrafirma*), it could obtain food and fuel from those colonies, although it also had to defend them from its mainland rivals.

ARCHITECTURE

Venetian architecture is, of course, influenced by its sandy soil. Venice's early buildings were modest two-story wooden structures roofed with straw thatch. Most had two front doors, one facing land, the other a canal. The *campi*, the fields behind the houses, were used as gardens, boat storage, and for keeping animals. They later evolved into market squares. After a series of disastrous fires, particularly one in 1106, brick and stone structures began to replace wooden ones. Stone, however, is heavy. A stone building had to be supported by wooden piles driven into the mud, which made construction more expensive.

Venice

A – *Murano*
B – *Isola di San Michele*
C – *San Giovanni e Paolo*
D – *Ca d'Oro*
E – *Rialto Bridge*
F – *San Salvador*

G – *San Stefano*
H – *The Doge's Palace*
I – *Basilica of San Marco*
J – *The Campanile*
K – *The Arsenal (Shipyard)*
L – *San Pietro*
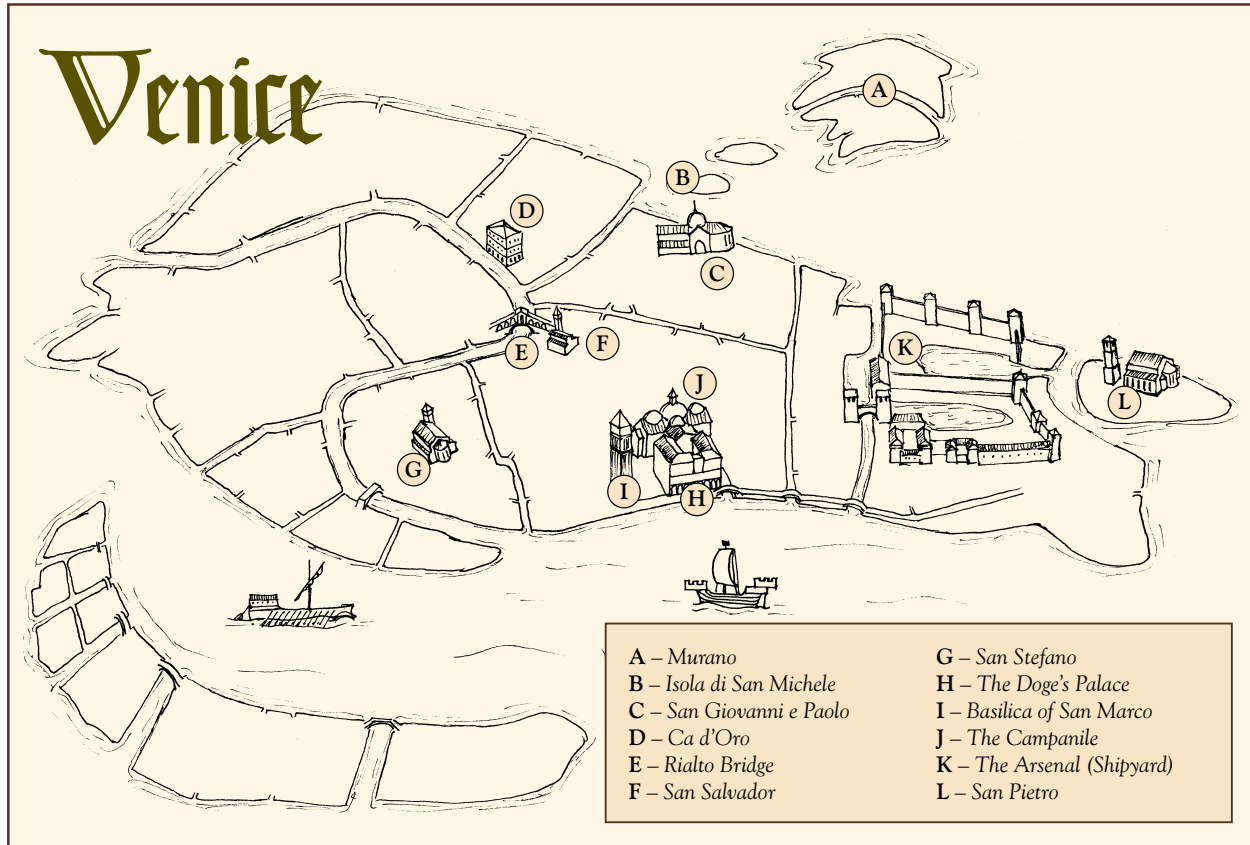
A typical merchant's home built prior to the 14th century was two stories tall. The ground floor was used for commercial business and storing goods. The upper floor contained the family's living quarters. As the city grew more crowded in the 14th century, wealthy families drove the necessary piles to support three and even four story buildings. Again, the first floor was generally used for commercial purposes. The upper stories were used as a residence.

As the city grew, the waterways between its islands were slowly filled in and became canals. The *Piovego*, a city office established in the 13th century, was responsible for maintaining the streets and canals, approving private bridges, maintaining public ones, and approving new construction. Wooden and later stone bridges spanned some of the canals, but each island was to some extent self-sufficient, with its own church, wharf, and small market. Streets and plazas were slowly paved, creating a maze of canals, streets, and walkways. The early narrow paths and wooden bridges provoked frequent arguments over the right of way. The wooden Rialto bridge collapsed in 1444 under the weight of a mob of spectators watching a procession for a Ferrara noble.

The cities' major buildings include the Doge's Palace, the Basilica of San Marco, the Campanile (a 60' bell tower near San Marco), and the Arsenal (a major municipal shipyard).

In the early 12th century, *ancone*, shrines to the Virgin or parish patron, began to appear on the corners of canals and principal *calli* (streets). In 1128, the Doge ordered that each be lit with a lamp, to be maintained by the parish priest, and paid for by the Republic. Venice thus became the first European city to have rudimentary street lighting.

CHURCH

Venice has long been associated with St. Mark, and had a reputation for religious tolerance. By legend, St. Mark was blessed by an angel during a stopover on the islands of Rialto on his way from Aquileia to Rome. In 828, two Venetian merchants returned from Egypt with what they claimed was St. Mark's body, stolen from his Alexandria tomb under the noses of Muslim customs officials. The merchants

brought the relics to the doge, who was often seen as the head of Venice's religious community. The doge built a church for the relics, which was consecrated in 832. The Basilica San Marco was officially the doge's private chapel, but it was also a major site for religious festivals and feasts. St. Mark, symbolized by a winged lion, was the Republic's protector.

Venice's bishopric was created in 775. Its bishop was a member of the city's governing Grand Council. At first each separate island was its own parish. By 1200, its parishes had consolidated into sixty separate parishes whose priests were elected by the parishioners. It had numerous monasteries, friaries, convents, and hospitals. Parish churches, and San Marco, were enriched with relics taken by Venetians during the Crusades, particularly during the sack of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade.

Venice had intermittently stormy relationships with the Papacy. It traded heavily with Muslim ports, often in defiance of a papal ban on goods of military importance, like lumber. It also traded in slaves from Muslim areas and the Black Sea. The city was placed under interdict in 1202-04 as a result of the Crusaders' attack on Zara; in 1284-89 for failing to respond to a papal call for support in the Sicilian Vespers uprising in Sicily and for later refusing to allow clergy to preach a crusade against Peter of Aragon; in 1309-1313 during Venice's war with neighboring Ferrara; and in 1484-85 during another war between Venice and Ferrara (allied with Florence, Milan, and Naples).

COMMERCE

Venice was a major trade center for lumber, salt, grain, spices, and other trade goods. It was involved in the wool trade, although it did not have a major wool manufacturing industry, and sent merchants to the Champagne Fairs. Its widespread trading interests created alternating rivalries and alliances with Byzantium, Egypt, Genoa, Norman Sicily, Pisa, and its neighbors on the Adriatic coast. At times, it founded colonies along the Adriatic and Mediterranean. In the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, Venice virtually conquered Byzantium, seizing colonies along the Adriatic and Aegean. For most of its history, Venice did not control large parts of the Italian mainland. In the 14th century, it gained control over Padua, Treviso, Verona, and Vicenza and areas around those towns, which drew it into mainland Italian strug-gles, particularly with Milan. Venice was an unofficial member of the anti-Imperial Lombard League and often served as its banker. Relations with the Papacy were marked by intermittent struggles over Venice's trade with Muslims; its half-hearted support for Crusades in Outremere; and its diversion of the Fourth Crusade to attack Byzantium.

To maintain control over its commerce, Venice's city government had a strong hand over its guilds and trade. Ships that did not meet its standards, for example, were not allowed to join its trade convoys. As noted above, Venice did not have a river to power mills or to provide large quantities of fresh water for washing or dying cloth. Thus, its industries tended towards high-value, rare goods like glass and silk. Its shipyard, the Arsenal, was a unique center for ship construction and maintenance.

Venice's Salt Office managed trade in that valuable commodity. Chioggia produced a fine-grained salt. Coarse grained salt was imported. In 1250, Ferrara and Mantua agreed to make Venice their sole supplier of salt. In 1281, Venice began paying merchants a subsidy on imported salt. This profit allowed merchants to ship other goods at a discount, undercutting their rivals. Venetians paid a very high price on imported salt, but the subsidy allowed their merchants to dominate other trades. The Office also collected a fee on the sale of salt, which it used to finance the government. Venice sought to control Mediterranean salt producers, destroying salt works on Crete, acquiring the Cervia salt works, and making Cyprus into the second-largest salt producer in the Mediterranean. (Genoa controlled the largest producer, on the island of Ibiza).

Venice had a virtual monopoly on high-grade glass made using Syrian methods. In 1291, glassmakers set up shop on the island of Murano, where their furnaces would not spark fires in Venice itself. Any worker with knowledge of the Syrian secrets who tried to leave Venice was considered a traitor and could be executed. Venice was also one of the first Italian cities to manufacture silk cloth. In 1370, Venice prohibited its silk workers from leaving the city to reside in another town, with or without their equipment. Violators were fined 300 (journeymen) to 500 (masters) lire, and imprisoned for up to a year. Sailors and boatmen could be fined for transporting silk looms or other tools out of the city. Anyone who instigated a silk maker's departure could also be

fined 500 lire, jailed for a year, deprived of citizenship, and/or banned from public office for five years. Unlike Lucca, Venice did not offer a bounty for killing a fugitive silk maker; nor did it execute attempted emigrants like Florence.

Venice also had powerful banks, located at the Rialto and San Marco. There, depositors could transfer funds between their own accounts and those of their creditors and debtors, creating, in effect, a system of checking accounts. Many transfers were made by oral order, since the banking area was close to the main markets. With permission of the banker, depositors could even sometimes overdraw their accounts by small amounts temporarily. The Great Council only required bankers to keep a small reserve, but they did have to pay any demand within three days. They also had to keep their transfer records current with all other local banks.

CRIME PREVENTION

Venice was large, hard to patrol, and difficult to seal off. Disorder was common at night, often near brothels, bathhouses, and inns. In response, the city created a watch which, by the 14th century, had one patrol officer for every 250 urban inhabitants. The city also relied on anonymous denunciations placed in collection boxes (see pg. 54).

The *Signori di Notte* and *Cinque alla Pace* patrolled the Rialto marketplace. The Cinque alla Pace, a watch of five merchant-aristocrats, each assisted by 8-12 armed men, handled petty crime. The Signori di Notte was a watch of one merchant-aristocrat per neighborhood (*sestiere*), each assisted by 16-20 armed men. By the late 14th century, the *Signori di Notte* investigated homicides, robbery, sodomy, and other serious crimes.

In 1320, the Council of Ten (see p. 129) created its own watch, the Capi di Sestiere, composed of six merchant-aristocrats (one per sestiere), each accompanied by eight armed men. It was expanded in 1328 to two merchant-aristocrats per sestiere each accompanied by twelve armed men. The Capi di Sestiere, in turn, appointed two captains for each neighborhood, who were in charge of the militia (composed of every able-bodied Venetian male).

Three *Avogadori*, wealthy citizens appointed to two-year terms and assisted by a staff of notaries and clerks, investigated and prosecuted serious crimes such as homicide and rape. Few of the Avogadori were themselves lawyers; the post was often assigned for political reasons. The staff did most of the day-to-day work. The Avogadori also complied Venice's laws into periodic registers and capitularies.

Serious cases, including many homicides, were brought to the *Giudici di Proprio*, a panel of three lawyer/judges. Premeditated homicides were investigated by the Avogadori and heard before the Council of Forty (see p. 128). Unusual or extremely serious cases were heard by the Doge and his six counselors.

EDUCATION

Venice did not have private schools for children. Most learned through apprenticeships or private tutors. It had a school of medicine established in 1368. The University of Padua was the closest such school to Venice. When Venice controlled Padua, Venetian university students were required to attend Padua's university. In 1470, Pope Paul II (himself a Venetian) granted university status to one of Venice's schools.

ENTERTAINMENT

Venice had several major festivals, including Ascension Day (see p. 63), the feast of San Marco, and the Purification of the Virgin. There were also festivals celebrating the election of a new doge, state funerals for noted Venetians, and receptions for important visitors.

The eight-day festival of the Purification of the Virgin was also a commemoration of Venice's victory over a group of 10th-century pirates who had kidnapped a group of twelve brides. During the festival, the Doge visited the church of Santa Maria Formosa, families and neighborhoods held banquets, and dowries were given to a group of poor women. At the end of the festival, a statue of Mary was carried in a procession to the cathedral (San Pietro), then to San Marco. The festival ended in 1379, during the war with Genoa, but the Doge continued to visit the church on the feast of the Purification.

Public executions were also a form of entertainment. Typically, the criminal was taken by boat or through the streets across the city to the scene of the crime. There, a herald announced the crime before the executor typically amputated the criminal's right hand and hung it on a chain around the criminal's

neck. Then he was taken back across the city to the Plaza San Marco and hung between its columns. (After 1382, murderers were decapitated instead of hung.) In extreme cases, the criminal was drawn and quartered, with the body parts displayed at different points around the city.

FINANCE

Venice had a large centralized bureaucracy and had to impose high taxes and tariffs to support its shipbuilding and civil service. It primarily depended on indirect taxes and tariffs, rather than income or property taxes for its routine expenses. It collected a 1% tax at the Rialto and dei Tedeschi markets on every wholesale transaction. It also taxed wine, salt, meat, oil, and other goods. Like other Italian cities, it had a public debt fund (Monte Vecchio), which it created in 1262. In 1453, Venice finally began to impose direct taxes to pay for various wars on the mainland and naval struggles with the Ottoman Turks.

Urban finances were handled through the Grain Office, which had expanded from its original role into a state bank handling both municipal finances and deposits from ordinary Venetians. The Office collected a tax on wine and wood, as well as some export licenses, which provided some funds for its activities. It also held dowry investments, which later evolved into a separate fund.

To give some idea of Venice's wealth, Doge Tommaso Mocenigo wrote in 1423 that the city received 750,000 ducats a year from its own taxes and tariffs, 464,000 ducats per year from the Terrafirma, and 376,000 ducats per year from its overseas colonies. (This was significantly more than the income of the entire kingdom of France.) Of that, it spent 26,000 ducats on government salary, 155,000 ducats on interest on its debts, 90,000 ducats on the Terrafirma, and 200,000 ducats on its overseas colonies. Much of the rest of the money was available to fund its military for Venice's struggles with the Turks and other foes.

GOVERNANCE

By legend, Venice was founded at the stroke of noon, Friday, March 25, 421 CE by three consuls sent from Padua to establish a trading post on the islands of the Rialto. Historical records mention the election of the first doge by a popular assembly, the *Arengo*, in 697. Whenever it was formed, it was the oldest free town in Europe until its defeat by France in 1797. Venice avoided losing its republic to a signore because, in part, its government was obsessed with preventing any one person, family, or faction from becoming too dominant.

The basic structure of Venetian government began with its popular assembly. The Arengo became defunct as a practical matter in the 12th century, and was formally abolished in 1423. In its place, Venice created the *Maggior Consiglio* (Great Council) in 1172. The Councilors held office for one year and were nominated by two representatives from each of the six *sestieri*. The Great Council then appointed all the chief officials of the state. By 1297, the Great Council was, in theory, open to any Venetian, but membership was practically limited to those wealthy merchant-aristocrats (nobles) from important families. In 1296, there were 210 members of the Council. A few years later, every adult male in the ruling merchant-aristocracy could sit on it. By 1340, it had 1,212 members. The Council's limited membership provoked some resistance. In 1300, a group of twelve conspirators tried to enter the chamber and assassinate several councilors responsible for the restrictions. They were caught, tortured, and executed before they could harm anyone.

As in other city-states, a large legislature proved unwieldy. A smaller council, the *Quarantia* (Council of Forty), was created in the 12th century. For the most part, the Forty served as Venice's legislature and, on occasion, as a court hearing the most serious cases involving members of the merchant-aristocracy.

The Arengo, and later the Great Council, selected the city's executive, the Doge. A doge was appointed for life; his role varied from executive to ceremonial figurehead. He was forbidden to travel outside Venice; to marry a foreigner; to have his children or personal officers hold public positions other than ambassador or naval commander; or even to choose his official councilors. His salary was little more than an honorarium. The doge was assisted by a group of councilors called *Signoria* or *consiglietto*.

In 1172, the election system changed; the doge was then chosen by a committee of eleven electors, who were chosen by the Great Council, and presented to the populace. In 1178, it was changed again. Instead of 11 electors chosen by the Great Council, the Council selected four of its members, who would

nominate 40 electors, each of whom must receive votes of three of the four councilors and not more than one of which could come from a single family. By 1268, the system had become far more complex: In a 10 step system, the Great Council chose a group of electors by lot, who chose another group of electors, which was reduced to a smaller number by lot, which then chose another group of electors, and so on, until the last group nominated the doge for approval by the Assembly. The entire complex system was designed to limit the influence of family factions in the doge's selection.

In 1312, the Great Council created the Council of Ten as a temporary response to a coup attempt. By 1334, it was a permanent body. Members of the Ten were elected for a single year term by the Great Council. Councilors could not be reelected until another year had passed, during which any abuses would be investigated. Two members of the same family could not sit at the same time. The Council had three heads, the Capi dei Diecti, who were sequestered during their month long term. Finally, the Council was, at first, powerless to act without the Doge and his six councilors. It met daily; its members were unpaid, but venality or corruption was punishable by death.

> The Council had significant power ... it could punish anyone for suspicious speech or meetings.

The Ten had significant power to suppress unrest and conspiracies. It could punish anyone for suspicious speech or meetings. It limited who could carry weapons. It regulated drinking and gambling. Its agents watched over inns, taverns, and other places where conspirators might gather. Its members were chosen from the Senate by the Great Council; they had to be over age 40, and had to come from different families.

The balance of power between the Ten, the Forty, and the Doge varied. In 1355, the Ten and the Forty ordered the execution of Doge Marin Falier, who was accused of conspiring against Venice. In 1456, the Ten ordered the deposition of another Doge, which was seen as overstepping its role. Its authority was cut back, for a time.

Like other towns, Venice distinguished between citizens and residents. It was not easy to become a citizen (*cittadini*) if one was not the legitimate child of a citizen. A foreigner needed to live in Venice or its dominions as a law-abiding taxpayer for 25 years. Citizenship *de extra*, which allowed one full protection outside the Republic, was even harder to obtain, usually it was given for singular skill or merit. Citizenship brought commercial privileges and the right to be treated as a Venetian under law and not as a foreigner. Only citizens could be members of Venice's councils and could hold many public offices. Citizens were given a monopoly of office in the *Scuole Grandi*, the largest, wealthiest, and most prestigious confraternities in the city.

Venice also had to manage several major trade colonies, particularly in the wake of its success in the Fourth Crusade. The details of its colonial administration are beyond the scope of this book. In general, it appointed doges for major colonies who reported back to the Council of Ten and the Doge.

GUILDS

Venetian guilds were numerous and relatively weak. The Justices (*Giustizieri*), who were appointed by the Great Council to oversee the guilds, held the statutes of 52 guilds between 1218-1330; Florence had only 21 guilds during that time, Bologna only 13. The three Justices enforced standard weights and measures and decided market disputes. Guild leaders (*gastaldo*) were elected by the guilds, subject to the Justices' approval. Some historians suggest that having the Justices supported Venice's stability by providing a neutral body to resolve guild disputes.

The guilds did not have a direct role in government, although their leaders were often part of Venice's merchant aristocracy. The guilds had a ceremonial role when a new doge was crowned; each guild made a presentation of its finest wares to the new doge.

Merchants and artisans were generally members of both a guild (*arte*) and an associated religious confraternity (*scuole*). The Scuole performed religious and charitable services for its members and their fam-

ilies. The scuole and guilds did not always overlap; sometimes a scuola's membership was broader than its associated guild and there were some scuole which were not associated with any guild. Each scuola was generally associated with a parish church, which became the guild's church as well.

JEWS

There are few records of Jews in Venice prior to the late 14th century. In 1382, Venice eased its restrictions on lending money at interest in order primarily to provide more credit to its less-wealthy residents. Several Jewish moneylenders opened businesses in the city. In 1388, the Great Council required Jewish moneylenders to make loans to the poor of up to 30 ducats per person (if the lender had money available), secured by a pledge. In 1394, the Council enacted series of restrictions, prohibiting Jews from living in Venice for more than 15 days at a time, and requiring male Jewish visitors to wear a badge. (It is unclear whether the prohibition included Jewish doctors, or just moneylenders.) The badge requirement was extended to Jewish women in 1443; in 1496, it was changed to a yellow hat. In 1408, Venice banned Jews from holding religious services in private homes upon penalty of fines and jail for both the Jewish worshipers and the Christian homeowner. (The ban was rescinded in 1464, but Jews were not allowed to have a synagogue.) Christian women, including prostitutes, were fined for having sexual relationships with Jewish men.

SOCIETY

Venice was divided in many different ways. One of the basic divisions was by neighborhood. In 1171, Venice organized its parishes into six administrative districts (*sestieri*). Cannareggio, Castello, and San Marco were located on the right bank of the Grand Canal. Dorsoduro, San Polo, and Santa Croce were located on the left bank. This led to a rivalry between the three districts closest to the mainland (Cannareggio, San Polo, and Santa Croce) and those closest to the ocean (Castello, Dorsoduro, and San Macro). Local myths traced the division to the founding of Venice by settlers from the mainland and those from the lagoon's many islands. Another legend traced the feud to a mid-15th century bishop, who granted his home parish an exemption from inheritance taxes. Others claimed the exemption, which

led to a fight with the next bishop. Bishop Polo was, by legend, killed by a mob near a canal later called Malcanton. Thus, a feud developed in the late 15th century between the supporters of the bishop's neighborhood (the Castellani) and those blamed for his murder (the Nicolotto), which became fused with an ongoing feud between the Arsenal's shipbuilders and local fishermen. The feud would become much stronger in succeeding decades, provoking large public battles between the factions on Venice's bridges and in its squares.

Venice also had the traditional divisions between foreign residents, residents, citizens, and the highest rank of merchant-aristocrats (called "nobles"). By the late 14th century, Venetian society was highly stratified and it had become difficult for newcomers to break into the upper ranks. There were twenty or thirty great families at the top of the society, and another hundred who were members of the Great Council. These were sometimes divided into the *case vecchie* (older families claiming descent from the original settlers of Venice) and the *case nuove* (new families primarily rising to wealth in the 13th century). A few families were admitted to the highest ranks in 1310 and 1381 as rewards for their members' loyalty and service to the city. Beneath this level were wealthy citizens (cittadini), further subdivided into native Venetians and those who had acquired citizenship. To keep track of the highest rank, the aristocracy registered marriages and births of legitimate children in the *Libro d'Oro* (Golden Book), a custom copied in other cities and Venetian colonies.

While those who were not members of the highest rank were excluded from many offices, they were able to obtain prestigious posts such as in the Arsenal or as part of the leaders of the Capi di Sestiere.

Venice's leaders were obsessed with order and control of their city. They were able to restrict power to an increasingly elite hereditary "nobility" composed of the city's wealthiest families.

The poor received charity from Venice's five *Scuole Grandi*, each a religious confraternity comprised of 500 to 600 members. The Scuole Grandi were also known as *Scuole dei Battuti* because their members publicly scourged themselves on ceremonial occasions. Scuole created small hospitals and almshouses in the 14th century. Some restricted their almshouses to those who had been members of a Scuola for five years, except in cases of extreme need.

Any recipients of its charity had to attend all of its religious processions. The Council of Ten restricted Scuole's charity to their members, prisoners, the Pietà foundling hospital (founded in 1346 to match foundlings with wetnurses), and to monasteries and convents. Venice, unlike its peers, did not create a large central hospital or a Monte di Pietà. Instead it had about 30 small hospitals and numerous almshouses.

Venice, like other city-states, tended to sequester its wealthy women at home. Its wealthiest families were concerned with providing dowries for their daughters, although it did not have a specific Monte for that purpose.

The Doge's wife, the Dogaressa, held the only office for a woman in an Italian city-state. Her role was limited, unlike a noblewoman, she could not rule as a widow after her husband's death, or as a regent for a minor child. Nor could she exercise her husband's powers during an illness or absence. On the other hand, her ceremonial and symbolic role was recognized in a part of the doge's oath of office which she swore to uphold. The Dogaressa, unlike a podestà's wife, was forbidden to write letters, make appeals, or otherwise try to exercise influence for others. One key difference may be that podestàs typically served for only a year, while a dogaressa held office for her husband's life and thus would have more opportunity to grant patronage if she were able to do so. If a doge was not married or became widowed during his office, his marriage to a foreigner had to be approved by the Great Council. Similarly, the Great Council had to approve a marriage of his children or grandchildren to foreigners. By the 13th century, electors disfavored a doge candidate whose wife was not Venetian.

THREATS

As a trade center, Venice was one of the first European cities struck by the Black Plague. At the height of the outbreak in 1348, some 600 people a day died. Boats took the bodies to outlying islands for burial. Fifty major families were completely destroyed; Venice lost 3/5ths of its population. After a series of plague outbreaks in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, Venice created the *Provveditori alla Sanità*, a public health office, in 1459. Its three commissioners had the power to take whatever steps they deemed necessary to prevent plague outbreaks. They helped enforce the quarantine on incoming ships and regulated begging and immigration. The Provveditori also regulated lodging houses with a reputation of catering to rogues, vagabonds, and other undesirables. In 1459, it limited each lodging house to a maximum of four lodgers. In 1498, it created a system to license all lodging houses. It was one of the first ports to require incoming ships to be quarantined to slow diseases.

Venice was often at war, sending military ships to patrol the Adriatic and escort its trade convoys, suppressing pirates along the Dalmatian coast, and later protecting its Mediterranean and Aegean colonies and its mainland territories. For most of its history, Venice did not have significant mainland holdings and did not need to hire large numbers of mercenaries. When it did need a large army, it hired condottieri because it feared that a native-born general might be more likely to attempt a coup. It also had a militia. In 1303, it required its citizens to practice archery, and sponsored three annual competitions to inspire practice. The Venetian militia defended the city's territory against Milan's invading forces in 1438.

Venice was at war with the Papacy over its neighbor Ferrara in 1308. The Papacy responded, as was becoming increasingly common, with an interdict, which was pronounced on Maundy Thursday, March 27, 1309. Venetian goods were seized; assets were confiscated; ships were attacked and plundered. Only ships in Egyptian harbors were safe. A crusade was proclaimed against Venice, which most of the northern Italian towns joined. To dampen popular unrest, the government decreed that it was an offence to carry arms. The Doge's foes, led by Bajamonte Tiepolo, planned a coup for the Feast of St. Vitus (June 15). The plotters were betrayed and a violent summer storm broke up their coordinated attack. The coup was barely able to entrench itself in one quarter. Tiepolo agreed to a 4 year exile in Dalmatia in return for his surrender. His house in S. Agostino was torn down after his departure and a column raised to mark his crime. Another conspirator's house was turned into a slaughterhouse. The interdict was finally lifted in 1313 after a payment of 9,000 florins.

In 1400, Venice felt threatened by Padua, then under control of Francesco Carrara. Venice allied with Milan to capture Padua, Treviso, Verona, Vincenza, and other nearby towns. Venice struggled with Genoa in four major wars from 1257 to 1380. It also fought the Ottoman Turks from 1423 to 1503, eventually losing many of its overseas colonies.

'This here ye mair chamberleyns & gudemen that I fro' noweforthe shall be trustye and true to the Kynge our Sou'eyne lord to this Citie of York And ye same Citie & shall saue and maynteyne to oure saide sou'eyne ye Kynge and his heyres and successors And all the ffrauncheys & fredoms of ye saide Citie maynteyn & upholde at my power & Counyng wt my bodye & my gudes als ofte tymez as yt hathe myster of helpe so helpe me god and holy dome.

'And by this buke Ye shall be obeyynge to ye mair & shirriff of this Citie yt er or shall be for ye tyme beyinge & justifyed after ye lawe accustumez & ordynauncez of yis same Citie. And no man knowe yt usez byyng or sellynge in ony crafte or occupacon as Maistr & not franchesst but ye shall make it knowyn to ye mayer Chamberleyns or the Common Clerk for the tyme beynge. Nor ne gudes of Anie Straunger ne of man unfraunchest ye shall not avowe for youre owne by ye whilk the Kyng or the Mayor & Shirraff myght lose ye Tolles custumez chargez or ony oyer maner of Dewtez yt longys unto theyme. The counseyle and privatez of this sade Citie ye shall kepe. And all thees poyntez & articlez afore Rehersyd ye shall hold enenst yowe and for nothinge lett. But ye shall so do. So helpe you God and Holy dome & be this buke.'

— Oath of Citizenship, York 14th century.

York was the second-largest city in England and a major center for wool trading during most of the middle ages. It provides a good example of a large chartered city with an important archbishopric. It was the administrative capital of England several times in the late 13th and in the 14th centuries; Edward I first moved his court there in 1298, so that it would be closer to him during his campaigns in Scotland. In 1396, Richard II made the city into a county in its own right and allowed it to elect its sheriff.

York was founded by the Romans in 71 CE. They departed in the 5th century, leaving it primarily in the care of its archbishop. By the 8th century, York had become a prosperous trade center. In 866-67, it was captured by Vikings who held it until 1055. In 1068, William I captured it, and built a castle there. The town tried to rebel against William three times over the next year. In the aftermath of the third attempt, the Normans burned and destroyed many buildings in reprisal, creating a famine in 1070-71.

Over the next three centuries, York became a major center for wool trade between northern England and Flanders. In 1379, two-thirds of English wool was exported through York. When York hosted the royal court, it became an even stronger center for trade, briefly rivaling London. By 1500, York's trade had been surpassed by other towns like Bristol and Norwich, but it remained a significant economic center.

AGRICULTURE

York lies at the junction of the Ouse and Foss rivers in the center of a large plain. The Ouse, a tidal river, was navigable by small ships up to York itself. At the start of the 14th century, it had numerous bakers, brewers, butchers, fishmongers, and other vendors supplying its inhabitants. During the 11th and 12th centuries, shad and graylings disappeared from the Ouse. Both species were sensitive to pollution, suggesting rising levels of unhealthy urban effluent.

York, like Paris, prohibited townspeople from allowing their pigs to wander the streets. A law of 1301 allowed anyone who caught a pig loose in the streets to kill it and have his choice of the meat.

The city consumed a fair amount of meat, but it was illegal to graze cattle within 6 miles of the city center. Instead, merchants in the shambles (the butcher's neighborhood) sold hay to fatten up cattle before slaughter.

York's wealth derived from its location near areas favorable for sheep herding, although sheep were rarely found in the city itself. Instead raw wool came to York to be shipped overseas, or processed into cloth for export.

ARCHITECTURE

Many of York's buildings were made from wood or half-timber construction. A few, such as its cathedral and some prominent churches were made from stone imported from limestone quarries a few miles west of the city.

York was best known for its cathedral, the Minster of St. Peter, which was first built in the mid-7th cen-

A – *The Minster of St. Peter*
B – *Monk's Bar*
C – *Merchant Taylor's Hall*
D – *Foss Bar*
E – *Bootham Bar*
F – *St. Leonard's Hospital*
G – *St. Mary's Abbey*
H – *Church of St. Helen*
I – *Guild Hall*
J – *Market*
K – *Church of All Saints*
L – *Merchant Adventurer's Hall*
M – *Walmgate Bar*
N – *Fishergate Bar*
O – *Royal Castle*
P – *Ouse Bridge*
Q – *Micklegate Bar*
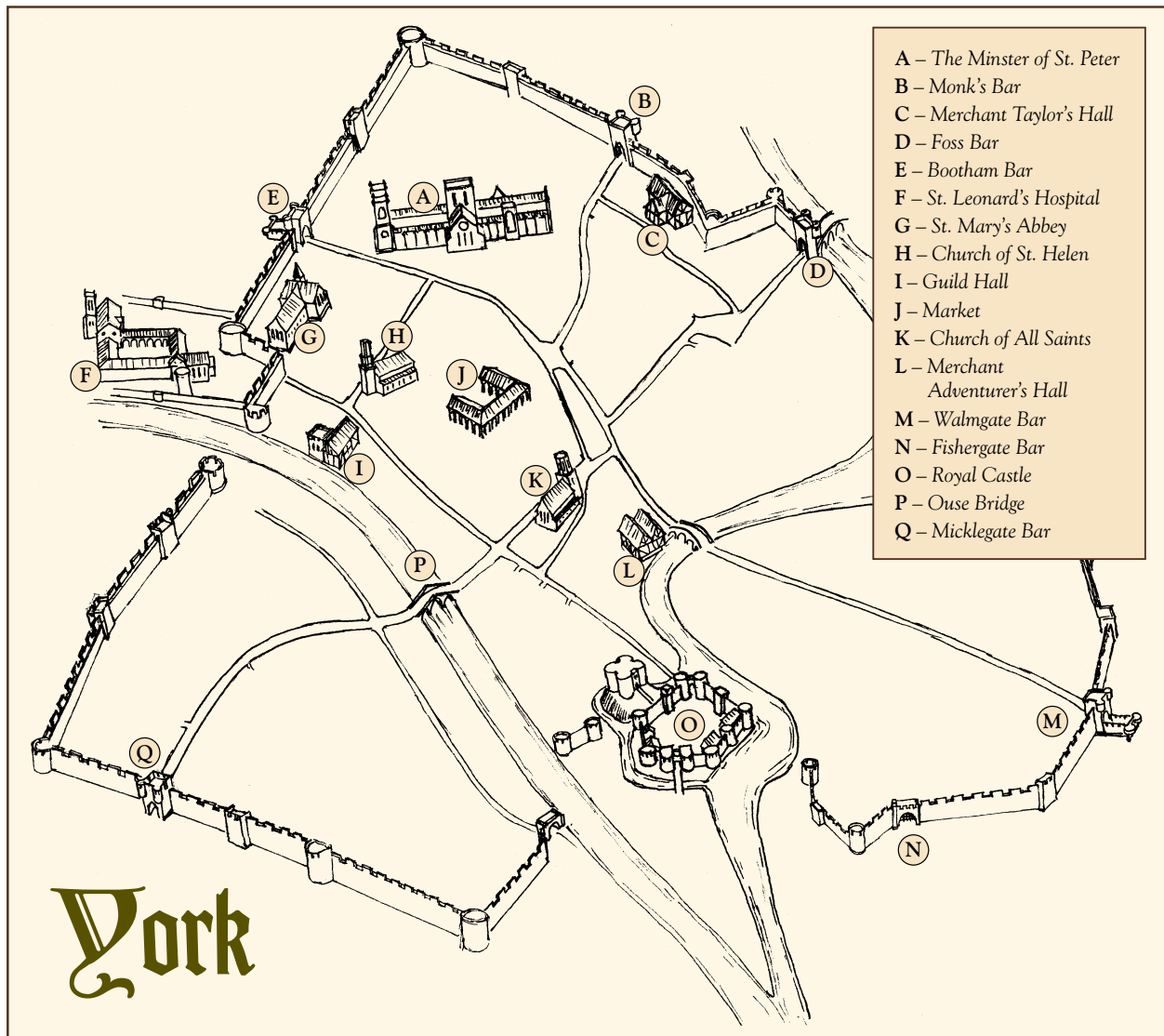
tury. The first cathedral was damaged by a fire in 741, rebuilt, and again destroyed by a fire in 1069. It was rebuilt, then damaged by fire in 1127 and repaired. Major reconstruction began in 1220. The resulting church, completed in 1472 was the largest cathedral in England for its time and the second-largest Gothic cathedral by volume in Europe.

The Benedictine abbey of St. Mary's was founded in 1055 as a church dedicated to St. Olave. William I refounded it as St. Mary's in 1088. The church may have been built over an Anglo-Saxon village, Earlsburh. The abbey was rebuilt from 1271-1294. It covered 13 acres and was one of the largest, and wealthiest in England. Within its walled enclosure, the Abbey had full legal rights, subject only to the monarchy and the papacy.

The Church of All Saints, one of over 40 parish churches in York, was said to be the site where St. Cuthbert was consecrated Bishop of Lindisfarne. It was one of the wealthiest parishes in York, and the burial site of several mayors and Lord Mayors.

The Church of St. Helen was built on the site of a Roman temple to Diana, and was the parish church of the stained-glass-window makers who worked on the Minster.

St. Leonard's Hospital, another of York's prominent institutions, was founded in 937 and rebuilt in 1089, and again in the mid-12th century.

York's fortifications were another important part of its architecture. York's first walls were built by the Romans. Later walls were built in the 12-14th centuries, finally enclosing an area of 263 acres. (They did not

completely enclose the city; a marsh and lake protected one side.) The walls themselves stood on an earthenwork rampart, a style unique in England.

The walls had four large gates called Bars: Bootham Bar, Monk Bar, Walmgate Bar and Micklegate Bar; and one smaller gate: Fishergate Bar. Merchants paid their tolls at the gates, which were also used to display the bodies of those executed for serious crimes.

York was also protected by a royal castle. William I built a castle, the Old Baile, on the south-west bank of the Ouse in 1068. After a local rebellion, William I built a second, larger castle of timber and earthworks at junction of the Ouse and Foss. The new castle was protected by a dam, which created a moat, a large pond called the King's Pool, and a mill pond. (The large pond became a royal fishery, limited to use by the crown's officers and, later, the Carmelite Friars.) Both castles were destroyed during an uprising in 1069. The garrisons were killed; the commanders and their families taken hostage. When William I restored order, he rebuilt and improved both castles. The castle's wooden keep was burnt down again in 1190, during a massacre of York's Jews who had taken shelter in it. In 1200, John I visited York, and ordered improvements using stone instead of wood. In 1245-59, the main castle gained a stone keep, later called Clifford's Tower. The castle was damaged in a flood in 1315-16, and quickly repaired in preparation for Edward II's war with Scotland in 1319-20. By 1478, it had fallen into serious disrepair. In 1487, the city's Lord Mayor wrote to Henry VII about the decayed state of the castle and the city's walls.

York's important commercial and civil buildings included the Guildhall built in 1256 and rebuilt in the 15th century, the Merchant Adventurers' Hall built in 1358, the Merchant Taylors' Hall built around 1400, and St. Anthony's Hall, built in 1446-53. There were several flour mills, including a group of four near the castle on the banks of the Foss river.

There was a single bridge across the Ouse. In the mid-12th century, the existing wooden bridge was replaced by a stone bridge that had shops and houses on it. There was also only one bridge over the Foss, likely made of wood until the 15th century, when it was rebuilt with stone. It also had shops and houses on it, as well as a small chapel dedicated to St. Anne.

Regular building lots were narrow. A typical house in Coppergate was about 14 feet wide and 25 feet long; it sat on a lot only 18 feet wide with a small garden in the rear. York prohibited anyone from dumping excrement, filth, or animal manure in the streets. It ordered surplus lumber removed and gutters and drains cleaned regularly.

CHURCH

The most powerful clergy in York was its archbishop, who was also the Primate of Northern England. The bishop held 23 manors, and was responsible for hundreds of parishes in and around the city. Within the city, there were several monasteries and hospitals, four friaries (Augustinian, Carmelite, Dominican, Franciscan), and over 40 parishes.

The Minster was the second-most-important cathedral in England, but it was not a major pilgrimage center. It did not hold many important relics, and its only major shrine was to Archbishop William Fitzherbert, a local saint canonized in 1227. In 1396, Richard II improved its pilgrimage prospects by donating a relic of the Holy Innocents to the cathedral. The Minster could also boast that its baptismal font was built over the well where Edwin, the king of Northumbria, was baptized in 627.

York's archbishops varied in their dedication to their pastoral role. William Fitzherbert, the Archbishop canonized in 1227, collapsed during a Mass and died. Some legends said that he had been poisoned by Cisterican monks who opposed his appointment as archbishop. His distant successor, Richard Scrope, became famous, or perhaps infamous, when he supported Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland in a rebellion against Henry IV in 1405. Henry IV had Scrope executed for treason in June, 1405, despite his status as a member of the clergy, and the objections of his own Chief Justice, Sir William Gascoigne. Scrope's body was buried in the Minster; several prominent clerics sought to have him canonized. Pope Gregory XII threatened Henry IV with excommunication over the execution, but made peace with him in 1408. Scrope's tomb became a popular pilgrimage destination.

Relationships between the town and its churches varied. York struggled with St. Mary's over the abbey's claims regarding the Bootham neighborhood and the Bootham market. Edward III tried to resolve the dispute in 1354 by deciding that the Marygate neighborhood belonged to York and Bootham to the Abbey, but the dispute continued to simmer. St. Leonard's hospital's traditional right to one *thrave* (24 sheaves of about 30" diameter) of grain per ploughland in the region

(*Petercon*) provoked ongoing disputes with all of the regions' farmers. In 1371, the Franciscans argued with the city's butchers over disposal of their wastes in the Ouse upstream of the friary. And, of course, there were disputes over the right of the church to grant sanctuary to criminals and debtors. The church of St John of Addle had a large brass ring on its door which someone seeking sanctuary had to grab and hold until allowed into the church.

COMMERCE

York was, for many centuries, the most important trade center after London. It was a major center for the wool trade; its merchants traded their wares in the Baltic and Flanders. In 1326, it was one of nine towns with a wool staple; wool for export could only be bought and sold at a staple town. By royal charter granted by Henry III and confirmed by Edward II in 1312, York's citizens were immune to tolls and stallage fees in England. However, by 1450, York's fortunes had begun to decline, in part due to hostility between England and the Hanse, which made trade more difficult. It also faced more competition from other English ports.

York had two mints. The Archbishop's Mint predated the Conquest. In 1279, Edward I created a royal mint in York's castle. In 1344, the royal mint was allowed to make both gold and silver coins.

Until the mid-15th century, York's fairs were all associated with its churches. The archbishop had a right to hold a Lammas fair from Vespers on the Vigil of St-Peter-ad-Vincula (St. Peter in Chains) (July 31) to the Morrow of the Feast, and had jurisdiction over the city during the fair. The archbishop held a merchant's court (Pie Powder Court) during the Lammas Fair; its jurors were generally merchants using the fair. During a ceremony at the start of the Fair, the city's sheriffs turned their rods of office over to the Archbishop's officers, who became Sheriffs of the Fair. The Clerk of the Ouse Bridge Jail gave the keys to another officer named by the Archbishop for the fair. The Bishop then swore in his jurors and announced the opening of the Pie Powder Court.

In 1449, Henry VI granted York its first municipal fair, to be held for five days starting on Whit Monday. This fair became known as the Whitsun Cattle Fair.

In England, the monarchy exercised significant control over local markets. It appointed a Clerk of the Markets in each major town to collect tolls and stall fees,

ensure that weights and measures were fair, and enforce the Assize of Bread and Beer. York's market clerk was appointed by the town and had to strictly enforce royal standards. York had several permanent markets. Its two major market places were "Thursday Market" and Pavement. *Marke Skyre* was held in Pavement three days a week for the sale of grain and food. Thursday Market was held in that market place two days a week to sell cloth and other goods. There were two markets for fish: one for freshwater fish held at King's Staith at the foot of Ouse Bridge and one for saltwater fish held on Foss Bridge. Poultry was sold on the Ouse Bridge.

THE STAPLE

Under the 1326 Staple Law, wool for export had to be bought and sold only at a "staple" town; of which York was one. In 1353, the law was amended so that wool could only be sold *for export* at a staple town; York was one of fifteen such towns.

Wool for sale had to be weighed and sealed by the mayor of the Staple. Each staple town also had its own court, which resolved disputes about credits, debts, contracts, and even crimes arising from wool transactions. Thus, York had an official registry for merchant debts. A Staple creditor and debtor could enroll a debt for a fee (often 1/2 d. per l. of debt up to 100 l., 1/4 d. per l. for larger debts). The debtor of a registered debt had a very hard time escaping payment for a default. After 1362, even non-merchants could register debts on the official register in York and a few other Staple towns. There was a separate set of registered debts under the Statute Merchant, which required the seal of the debtor, mayor, and city clerk, and cost 1 d. per l. in general, and 1/2 d. per l. at fairs. Creditors were supposed to cancel debts on payment, but often did not do so, leading to disputes over whether a registered debt had been paid.

CRIME PREVENTION

There is not much surviving information about the structure of York's watch or what specific problems it faced with criminals. It is likely that the parishes and wards policed minor infractions. Serious matters would be referred to the royal sheriff. The wards and parishes probably managed disputes over street repairs, encroaching buildings, clogged drainage ditches, and waste disposal.

In England, homicides were investigated by the royal coroner. He was required to view every corpse if

there was a suspicion of violent death, and then interviewed the deceased's family and neighbors to find out why the deceased died and who was responsible for the death. In 1301, York required its physicians to notify the mayor if they treated someone who had been wounded. This law was unique in England at the time.

Serious crimes were heard by the sheriff's court. York's 14th-century charters transferred that right to local officials, including its sheriff and its justices-of-the-peace. Disputes and violations of guild ordinances were heard by the guild searchers, aldermen, justices-of-the-peace, and the mayor.

The royal castle was used as a jail, as early as 1205. In 1210, John I had several Irish hostages from his war with Ireland held at York. The royal sheriff also had some jurisdiction over the jail at St. Mary's Abbey. There were a number of escapes from the royal castle – twenty-six prisoners escaped together in 1298. When jailers discovered the missing prisoners, they raised a hue and cry. Those who were recaptured were immediately beheaded. The sheriff, John de Byroum, was convicted for allowing the escape, but given a royal pardon. In 1307, Edward II ordered York's sheriff to seize the local Knights Templar and hold them at the castle. Templars from other areas were also brought to York. In 1310, a local council considered the evidence against the Templars. Those who did not confess their guilt were tortured on the rack. Instead of being executed, the Templars were sent to a monastery near York to do penance for their errors. A year later, Archbishop Graveston released most of them from the sentence of excommunication. The order itself was dissolved in 1312.

The city had several gallows, gibbets, and stocks. The Ainsty scaffold, a traditional execution site, was near the Micklegate Bar, These gallows and their nearby fields later became known as the York Tyburn (named after London's Tyburn gallows), and were used to burn condemned heretics as well. The heads and other body parts of important executed criminals were displayed on the Micklegate bar. The Archbishop had his own gallows near the Fosse Bridge. St. Mary's Abbey and St. Leonard's also each had their own scaffolds, having each been given the right of justice over their tenants.

York likely had problems with smuggling, although most of that activity would have taken place at coastal ports like Hull. Over time, royal trade regulations, and an export licensing system, became more complex, making smuggling and bribery increasingly attractive and dangerous. Local merchants were appointed as customs officials and commissioners. Some were caught smuggling or aiding their relatives and neighbors. If a smuggler was caught, the smuggled goods were valued by other merchants and sold, the profits going to the crown.

EDUCATION

York had a cathedral school, several friaries, and several libraries. It did not have a university. The cathedral chapter and its chancellor asserted the right to license grammar masters in the city. It had a distinguished grammar school, St. Peter at York Minster, which was founded in the 7th century. St. Leonard's hospital had a grammar school which was founded some time before the mid-14th century. St. Clement operated a school for girls in the 14th century. Various cathedral canons held small household schools, as did some parsons and vicars.

ENTERTAINMENT

York first observed the feast of Corpus Christi in the early 14th century. It was an established celebration by 1376. In 1399, there were complaints about the expense of staging Corpus Christi plays. The council limited the plays to twelve stations, starting at the priory of the Holy Trinity in Micklegate and ending at the Pavement marketplace to reduce the number of locations and the processional route. In 1408, a Corpus Christi guild was formed to manage the procession itself. In 1417, the town rescinded the limit of 12 locations, and allowed those who wished to host a play to bid for the privilege. In 1426, the city set the procession on one day, and the plays on the following day to reduce unrest and disturbances associated with the celebration. Its cycle of plays became famous and was duplicated in other cities.

The 1301 ordinances prohibited prostitutes from staying in York, and punished any prostitute who kept a brothel within the city with imprisonment for a year and a day. Otherwise, York seemed to tolerate prostitutes, who tended to live near Aldwark and St. Andrewgate and near Grape Lane by the Minster.

FINANCE

York's aldermen and mayor raised money for the city from various local taxes and tariffs. It owned and rented various properties, including stalls on the Ouse and Foss bridges. At times, York raised taxes by par-

ish, charging wealthier parishes more than less-wealthy ones. It also raised money from the fee charged to freeman who wished to become citizens by entering the franchise of the city. Starting in 1251, it also charged *murage*, a tax intended to pay for building and repairing the city walls and castle, although sometimes a portion was used for other purposes.

In 1212, York was granted the rights to collect its own property taxes (the fee farm) in return for an annual payment of 160 pounds to the monarchy. The sum was paid each year until it was partly remitted in the late 15th century. A portion of the fee was paid to local officials and institutions on the monarchy's behalf; often less than 10 pounds was paid to the royal exchequer.

> In the Hundred Years War, the monarchy asked York to make large loans to it to pay for the war.

During the Hundred Years War, the English monarchy asked York, like many English cities, to make large loans to it to pay for the war. The city raised some funds from royal taxes (the fifteenth, the tenth and poll taxes) and the rest from special taxes and private loans. Here, as elsewhere in England and France, the fiscal demands led to conflicts. In 1380-81, rioters laid siege to the Guildhall, and forced the city's mayor into exile. In response, the monarchy fined York 1,000 marks in 1382 for a pardon for the unrest. Afterwards, York scaled back its fiscal commitments to the crown, limiting them to military ventures against the nearby Scots.

GOVERNANCE

York was divided between three major factions: the archbishop, the royal sheriff (representing the crown), and the city's councils and mayor. The Minster controlled its own building and neighborhood, as did St. Mary, St. Leonard, the Holy Trinity Priory, and a dozen other clerical institutions and buildings. The sheriff controlled the royal castle, Davy Hall (the offices and prison of a royal forest official), and a few other royal buildings. The rest belonged to York's civil government. The division of jurisdictions led to various legal, and sometimes physical, clashes, between the clergy and the town over its rights. In 1260, the city was placed under papal

interdict when it hung a woman who was a tenant of the Minster. In 1264-65, York's archbishop placed the city under interdict when a group of men from St. Mary's were killed.

York's civic government was derived from its charter. It received its first charter from Henry I. Its rights were reconfirmed by John I in 1212. In 1189, Richard I granted York freedom from various local trade fees, for a payment of 122 l. 6 s. 8 d. Edward I punished York for a dispute by taking over its management in 1280-83, 1290, and 1292-97. After each interval, he restored the city's customary rights. In 1312, a charter restricted the rights of the king's justices in eyre (who generally heard disputes about forestry laws) and gave all persons living and trading in the city the same rights as citizens regarding tallage and other charges. In 1316, a charter protected York from certain special rights of the king's clerk of the market. In 1327, it was protected from the royal court of the verge (a special court with jurisdiction within a 12 mile radius of the royal household), an important right because York was then intermittently host to the crown and the royal household during struggles with Scotland.

York sought new charters in 1393 and 1396. York's rights were reconfirmed in 1378. Both charters had been negotiated when Richard II had moved the royal court temporarily to York from London in 1392 and 1395. The 1393 charter allowed York to elect its own justices of the peace, rather than rely on royally appointed justices, and to obtain lands. It also allowed the mayor and any two of the twelve aldermen to hear and punish criminal felonies and other serious cases. The 1396 charter made York a county in its own right, which allowed it to have its own two sheriffs, which could hold their own monthly court; the city could collect various fines and fees; and it obtained jurisdiction over several areas including land disputes, trespass, and contract disputes.

In 1405-06, Henry IV withdrew York's right of government after a rebellion by the Percy family. The rights were regained a few years later and consistently re-affirmed during the remainder of the 15th century.

Merchants, not guilds, dominated York's civic government. Most of its office-holders were members of

established families and prominent professions. During the 14th century, 34% of the men who served as bailiffs were merchants. During the 15th century, 48% of the sheriffs were merchants. During the 14-15th century, 79% of York's mayors were merchants. There was some prejudice against certain occupations – butchers frequently served as chamberlains, but rarely as sheriff, and none was known to have served as alderman or mayor. Innkeepers, too, rarely held high office in York.

A merchant was eligible to become a chamberlain within 6-10 years after becoming a member of the city's franchise, a bailiff or sheriff within two to three years after that, an alderman within six years, and a mayor within four years. If the merchant became a member of the franchise at 21, he might hope to have served as mayor by the time he was 45. (Most died around age 50 or 60.) Older candidates had an advantage because their businesses were stable, and the candidate could be concentrating on his office without worrying about business matters. The candidate also had acquired enough wealth to maintain his office by having sufficient servants, wearing appropriate clothing, and providing expected feasts, generally at his personal expense.

York's government was based around an elected mayor, supported by several councils. The mayor's office may have predated the city's first charter, given by John I in 1212. In 1369, Richard II gave York's mayors the title of Lord Mayor, making them second in importance to London's Mayor himself. The mayors, generally chosen from and elected by the Council of 12 (aldermen), served for 1 year terms. In 1343, the Council of 12 mandated that no person could be re-elected to the office. In 1365, it prohibited a candidate from being re-elected within eight years of holding the office. By 1392, no candidate could be re-elected until each of the 12 council members had served a term as mayor.

The retiring mayor summoned the "searchers" of each craft (guild officials appointed to police other guild members) on January 14 to ensure that each craft's members would attend an election at Guildhall on the next day. The artisans nominated two aldermen, neither of whom had been mayor twice or served as mayor in the preceding five years. The nominations were given to the mayor and council, who picked one candidate by secret ballot. The candidate with the highest votes was announced on February 3. In 1489, there was a minor change – the artisans selected 3 candidates, none of whom had served more than twice or had served in the preceding 6 years.

The mayor was assisted by three bailiffs, each serving one-year terms. Staring in 1357, the bailiffs each picked their own successors, who each had to have two pledges and had to be approved by the mayor and the general council. In 1396, when York became a county, the bailiffs were replaced by two sheriffs elected by the council. In 1494, the council required that the sheriffs have previously served as chamberlain. The chamberlain was elected by the incoming mayor and by the council. After 1475, a chamberlain had to have previously served as a bridgemaster.

By the late 14th century, York had three legislative councils: one of 12 aldermen; another of 24 office holders such as the chamberlain, bailiff, and mayor; and one of 48 representatives of the "common" people. Aldermen were associated with the city's six wards; two from each ward served on the highest council. The candidates were chosen by councilors, who were elected by parishes within the wards. Aldermen served until they died or were too ill to attend meetings. Vacancies were filled by the remaining aldermen from the council of 24. After 1418, new members of the 24 had to be chosen from ex-sheriffs.

In addition to the mayor and the aldermen, each parish (subdivisions of the six wards) elected its own officers, made its own by-laws, and levied and collected taxes. It elected councilors to govern it and constables to both keep the peace and respond to fires. Each parish kept hooks and buckets to fight fires in the parish church, which also contained a chest with the watch's armor and weapons.

GUILDS

York had a plethora of guilds. It had long been a center for leather and cloth workers, and a major center for bell making. Its first guild was the Gild Merchant, an association of traders first mentioned in a charter from Henry II in 1256. The Gild Merchant may have evolved from a Gildgarth, which is mentioned in a record from 1080.

By the 14th-15th centuries, the number of guilds had grown to over 50. In 1305, York was fed by 36 bakers, 70 breweries, 45 butchers, 35 cooks, 50 fishmongers, 9 fish forestallers, 45 hostelers, 37 poulterers, 27 regrators (middlemen), and 26 taverners. Its other guilds included the weavers, butchers, girdlers, and vintners. One neighborhood, the market street near the butcher's guild, was known as the Shambles because of the large numbers

of butchers who had their benches, the shambles, there to sell their meat.

In 1363, the English crown passed a law requiring each merchant or craft guild to appoint two of its members as "searchers" to prevent other guild members from agreeing to secretly horde goods and inflate prices. The seachers were supervised by the royal justices-of-the-peace. In 1393, York gained control of this system when its charter allowed it to elect its own justices of the peace. By 1400, the searchers had become enforcers of guild monopolies. By the mid-15th century, the craft guilds' searchers were the members of the council of 48.

In addition to its craft guilds, York had three large religious guilds, including the one responsible for the Corpus Christi plays, ten smaller religious guilds based in parish churches, and a couple of guilds based in religious orders. Religious guilds paid for the burials of members and their families and for memorial Masses, as well as supporting their host churches or orders.

JEWS

There may have been a settlement of Jews in York during its Roman days, but there are few surviving records of early Jewish settlement. A group of Jewish scholars may have come to York in the late 11th century with Archbishop Gerard, who, like several scholars of his time, was interested in Hebrew manuscripts and early Church history. In the late 12th century, there are records of Jewish moneylenders in York who replaced Christian lenders.

In 1180, York's Jewish community of 150 or more was led by Josce and Benedict, two moneylenders who had made loans to the monarchy. It also included three noted scholars, Rabbi Yomtob of Joigny, Rabbi Elijah, and Josce. These four leaders became central when an anti-Jewish riot which had started at Richard I's coronation in London in 1189 led to a series of anti-Jewish massacres in other towns during the following year.

In March, 1190, rioters looted and burned Benedict's house, killing his family. Josce led the Jewish community to the shelter of the royal castle. When the royal constable left on an errand, the community refused to let him return, fearing he would betray them. The constable and the sheriff gathered men to storm the castle. The Jews held the castle for several days, until the besiegers brought siege engines to the site. On March 16, 1190 (*Shabbat ha-Gadol*), Rabbi Yomtob led the community

to commit mass suicide. Some sources said he killed 60 before taking his own life. A few survivors were promised mercy, but were then killed by the besiegers when they left the castle. The community's houses were sacked and then destroyed. The crown dismissed the constable and the sheriff, but was unable to identify most of the rioters. They were not punished.

Jews returned to York in the early 13th century. At that time, all English Jews were under the direct protection of the monarchy. In 1218, Henry III ordered York to protect the Jews and enforced the law that made them subject only to a royal justice charged with custody of the Jews. In 1290, Edward I expelled Jews from England.

SOCIETY

York's population, like that of many towns, was divided between its residents and those who were full citizens. By the late 14th century, between a quarter and a third of York's inhabitants were citizens. A citizen could engage in trade without paying tolls, could hold political office, and paid certain taxes. A person could become a citizen by birth to a citizen, by paying a fee of around 20 s., or by completing an apprenticeship (generally lasting at least 7 years) in a local guild. The Mayor and Aldermen could also give citizenship as a reward for service to the city. Freemen had to take an oath, a version of which is quoted at the start of this chapter. Women could become citizens, and were required to do so if they wanted to carry on certain trades.

About a third of households were led by a master artisan; most of the remaining two-thirds of households were those of journeymen and other working artisans. One-third of merchant households in the late 14th century had servants, generally two.

York also had a small population of non-English inhabitants, called aliens. In 1459, a municipal law required all aliens to live in a single inn, the Bull on Coney Street. The mayor could give specific people permission to live elsewhere.

York, like many cities, had a high urban mortality rate. A quarter to half of children died before reaching age 21. If they survived childhood, York's adults had a reasonable chance of surviving into their 50s or 60s, which was somewhat better than in many towns.

Many families were not able to have legitimate male heirs in more than two successive generations. In the absence of a male heir, merchants left their

estates to illegitimate male children, or to nephews. Merchant families also tried to ensure their success and survival by a web of marriage alliances with their peers. Widows, by custom, received a third of their husband's estate as dower. Another third of the estate was reserved for any surviving children. The last third was typically given to charity or other specific bequests. York did not have a dowry fund like Italian city-states, but dying merchants sometimes left bequests *ad maritagium*, for impoverished girls.

York's women worked as barber-surgeons, cappers, chapwomen, cloth sellers, cooks, freshwater fishers, fishmongers, ironmongers, listers, parchmentmakers, stringers, and vinterness. They rented shops from the city council and managed their own businesses. Some were citizens. Married women were not allowed to carry on a trade, independent of their husbands, without first becoming citizens in their own name.

THREATS

Although well fortified with walls and a royal castle, York was rarely directly threatened. In the late 13th century, hostilities between England and Scotland flared. York became an administrative headquarters for English military campaigns. Scottish raiders intermittently struck near York. In 1319, the mayor led the city's forces into a disastrous confrontation at Myton on Swale. The English army had to retreat from its siege of Berwick to protect the city. In 1322, the city was again briefly threatened, but not attacked. The intermittent presence of the royal army caused various conflicts between townspeople and soldiers, including riots in 1318 and 1327.

In 1380-81, rising taxes sparked a revolt. In November, 1380, the town rose against the mayor, John de Gysburn (or Gisburne), and drove him from the city in protest of new royal demands for money. The riot was led by a group of 6 butchers, 4 weavers, 3 drapers, 2 tailors, and several other tradesmen. The rioters broke into the city's guildhall, compelled a merchant, Simon de Quixlay, to swear to be their mayor, and compelled the councilors to swear their loyalty to the new mayor. Shortly thereafter, York's butchers protested a new tax of a penny per week on their stalls (*schamel* toll). The city's rulers argued that the tax was a longstanding custom which had not been recently enforced. Twenty of the leading rioters were arrested and briefly imprisoned in the Tower of London.

In the summer of 1381, the Lord Mayor of London killed Wat Tyler during a meeting with Richard II and ended the Peasants' Revolt. When news of Tyler's death reached York, rioters attacked several church buildings including St. Leonard's hospital, and the Franciscan and Dominican friaries. A month later, John de Gysburn led an attack on Bootham Bar and rode through the city trying to rally his allies. Five of his supporters were seized and imprisoned. Sporadic violence between de Gysburn and de Quixlay's supporters continued in 1381-82. De Quixlay was re-elected as mayor in 1381, 1382, and 1383. De Gysburn did not hold office again in York and died in 1390.

The city was besieged in 1489 during a rural uprising protesting higher taxes. The Walmgate and Fishergate Bars were burned, but the city was not taken.

York often provided ships for the English monarchy. The crown had few warships of its own. Often it requisitioned or hired merchant ships, which were then adapted to transport soldiers, horses, and supplies. From 1350-1400, York supplied at least 62 merchant ships for naval use. The monarchy also granted captains licenses to outfit their ships to "defend the realm", provided any booty was evenly shared between the crown, the privateer, and the ship's soldiers. Other captains were licensed to arrest pirates who attacked English merchants. Some captains avenged losses to French and Hanseatic rivals as unlicensed pirates.

The monarchy could also order towns to build ships for it, at the towns' expense. In 1294, Edward I ordered a total of 30 galleys from various towns, including York. In 1372 and 1377, the crown asked York and other cities to build warships called barges and balingers (rowed ships with masts) for the Hundred Years War. When these ships were not in use by the crown, the town's merchants could use them for trade. In return for this aid, York and other cities received confirmations of their charters in 1378-79.

Merchants trading overseas protected themselves from privateers by purchasing safe-conducts and export licenses. Ships traveled in convoys for mutual protection; many hired armed men to guard them on their journey. Others purchased insurance (*bottomry*) – a merchant could take out a loan for a cargo or to repair a ship; if the ship arrived safely, the loan was repaid with interest (often 12-15%); if the ship was lost, the loan was forgiven and no interest was owed.

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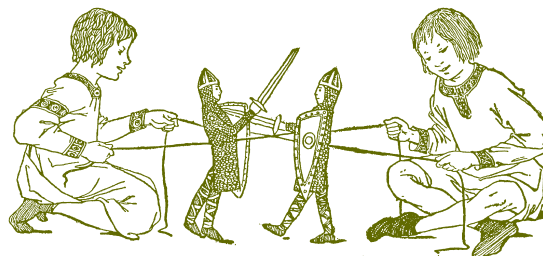
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