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The Economic History of Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe, 1250 - 1750

Topic No. 4 [9]:

**Urban Governments, Guilds, and Gender-Related Occupations
in Late-Medieval European Towns, 1200 - 1500:**

**Merchant Guilds, Industrial Craft Guilds, and the Contrasting
Economic Roles of Men and Women in Medieval West-European Towns**

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- ** 3. Sylvia Thrupp, 'The Gilds', and
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- 4. Jacques Le Goff, Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). See in particular:
 - a) 'Labor Time in the 'Crisis' of the Fourteenth Century: From Medieval Time to Modern Time', pp. 43-52.
 - b) 'Labor, Techniques, and Craftsmen in the Value Systems of the Early Middle Ages (Fifth to Tenth Centuries)', pp. 71-86.
 - c) 'Trades and Professions as Represented in Medieval Confessors' Manuals', pp. 107-21.
- 5. Barbara A. Hanawalt, ed., Women and Work in Pre-Industrial Europe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). See in particular:

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- c) Maryanne Kowaleski, 'Women's Work in a Market Town: Exeter in the Late Fourteenth Century', pp. 145-64.
- d) Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women in the Crafts in Sixteenth-Century Lyon', pp. 167-97.
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- * 9. Martha C. Howell, 'Citizenship and Gender: Women's Political Status in Northern Medieval Cities', in Mary Eler and Maryanne Kowaleski, eds., Women and Power in the Middle Ages (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1988), pp. 37-61.
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11. Jacqueline Hamesse and Colette Muraille-Samaran, eds., Le travail au moyen âge: une approche interdisciplinaire, Actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve, 21-23 mai 1987, Université Catholique de Louvain: Publications de l'Institut d'Études Médiévales: Textes, Études, Congrès, vol. 10 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1990). Of rather limited use; but see below, section C. on the Low Countries.
- * 12. Steven A. Epstein, Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). See in particular chapter 4, 'Guilds and Labor in the Wider World', pp. 155-206; and especially chapter 5, 'Labor and Guilds in Crisis: the Fourteenth Century', pp. 207-56.
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- f) Stephan Epstein, 'Introduction to Part II', pp. 76-81.
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- h) Eric Mielants, 'The Role of Medieval Cities and the Origins of Merchant Capitalism', pp. 111-39.
- i) Peter Stabel, 'Urban Markets, Rural Industries and the Organisation of Labour in Late-Medieval Flanders: the Constraints of Guild Regulations and the Requirements of Export-Oriented Production', pp. 140-57.
- j) Michael Limberger, 'Early Forms of Proto-Industries in the Backyard of Antwerp? The Rupel Area in the 15th and 16th Centuries', pp. 158-73.
- k) Bruno Blondé, 'Introduction to Part III', pp. 175-77.
- l) Mateos Royo, 'Municipal Politics and Corporate Protectionism: Town Councils and Guilds in the Kingdom of Aragon in the 16th and 17th Centuries', pp. 178-97.
- m) Carl A. Hoffmann, 'Labour Markets between the Distribution of Trades in the Countryside and the Loss of Economic Centrality in Towns in the Holy Roman Empire: Examples of Proto-Industrial Areas in Early-Modern South Germany (Baden, Bavaria, Swabia, Württemberg)', pp. 198-217.
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- * 26. Maarten Prak, Catharina Lis, Jan Lucassen, and Hugo Soly, Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power, and Representation (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006).

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 - (a) chapter VII: 'The Guild Merchant', pp. 264-307.
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 - (b) 'Medieval Gilds and Education', pp. 92-99.
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- * 7. Sylvia Thrupp, 'The Grocers of London: A Study of Distributive Trade', in Eileen Power

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C. Continental Europe: France, Low Countries, Germany, Spain, Italy

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QUESTIONS:

1. Define the nature of guilds in late-medieval western Europe: in institutional, legal, political, and social terms.
2. How had guilds evolved or changed from the 11th to 14th centuries in medieval north-western Europe: and how did they change subsequently in the late Middle Ages (i.e. ca. 1300-ca. 1500)?
3. In late medieval western Europe, what was the relationship between urban governments on the one hand and merchant and craft guilds on the other? How did such relationships change over the course of the later medieval era?
4. What was the role of women in late-medieval crafts and craft guilds? Did women ever succeed in becoming 'masters' in any crafts, apart from their role as widows of masters? Did they every succeed in occupying any positions of power in medieval craft guilds? What barriers did they face? How do you explain the organization of some purely female guilds?
5. What were the chief differences between merchant and craft guilds? How were each type typically organized. In each, and particularly in the latter, what were the roles of: master, journeyman, apprentice? How were such guilds, mercantile and craft, governed?
6. Discuss the aims, objectives, and policies of late-medieval guilds: economic, social, cultural, religious, and political.
7. More precisely, what were the purely economic objectives of late-medieval guilds, merchant and craft, in terms of: creating local (urban) monopolies; controlling production and marketing; controlling prices; controlling entry into the profession or craft; regulating or stabilizing incomes; quality controls, etc.
8. To what extent were late-medieval guilds, especially craft guilds, successful in pursuing such policies, particularly in terms of:
 - (a) control of or support of their urban governments; support from or opposition from princely or national governments.
 - (b) the nature of the product or service supplied
 - (c) control over both input and output markets: i.e. the degree of monopsony and monopoly powers that could be exercised. Compare those guilds producing for the local market and those producing for regional or international markets; those utilizing local inputs and those importing inputs.
 - (d) current economic trends: booms and depressions, in particular those of the late-medieval 'Great Depression.'
9. Were late-medieval guilds obstacles to economic progress and development: were they necessarily opponents of individual economic initiative and enterprise; to technological innovation?
10. How did the urban textile guilds of the late medieval Low Countries differ from 'typical' craft guilds of this era?

11. In what respects may late-medieval guilds be seen as ‘ancestors’ of modern labour unions and/or professional associations: in what respects are there similarities in organization and policies?