Economics 301Y1

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

READINGS: arranged in the chronological order of publication.

A. **General: Crafts and Guilds in Later Medieval Europe**


   b) ‘Labor, Techniques, and Craftsmen in the Value Systems of the Early Middle Ages (Fifth to Tenth Centuries)’, pp. 71-86.


e) Martha C. Howell, ‘Women, the Family Economy, and the Structures of Market Production in the Cities of Northern Europe during the Later Middle Ages’, pp. 198-222.


b) Jean-Pierre Sosson, ‘Some Thoughts on Mediaeval Towns and the Division of Labour during the so-called Pre-Corporative Period’, pp. 19-32.

c) Adriaan Verhulst, ‘On the Preconditions for the Transition from Rural to Urban Industrial Activities (9th-11th Centuries)’, pp. 33-41.


t) Martina De Moor, ‘The Occupational and Geographical Mobility of Farm Labourers in Flanders from the End of the 19th Century to the Middle of the 20th Century’, pp. 292-304.


B. England


2. George Unwin, Industrial Organization in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries 1st edn. (London, 1904):
   (b) chapter II: ‘Differentiation of Classes within the Craft Gild’, pp. 41-69.

   (b) chapter VIII: ‘Craft Gilds’, pp. 308-439.

   (a) ‘The Medieval City’, pp. 49-91.
   (b) ‘Medieval Gilds and Education’, pp. 92-99.
   (c) ‘London Tradesmen and their Creditors’, pp. 100-16.


23. Heather Swanson, Medieval Artisans: An Urban Class in Late Medieval England (Oxford:


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


49-84.


35. David Nicholas, ‘Child and Adolescent Labour in the Late Medieval City: A Flemish Model in Regional Perspective’, English Historical Review, 110 (November 1995), 1103-1131.


D. The Role of Women in Crafts, Craft-Guilds and Urban Society during the Later Middle Ages


e) Martha C. Howell, ‘Women, the Family Economy, and the Structures of Market Production in the Cities of Northern Europe during the Later Middle Ages’, pp. 198-222.


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 occupynng 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?