ECO 2210Y

TOPICS IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF LATE MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE EUROPE, 1260 - 1600

Topic No. 13: **Guilds, Towns, and Women in the Late-Medieval European Economy**

**READINGS**: in chronological order of original publication, except for reprints.

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.


29. Franco Franceschi, Oltre il ‘tumulto’: I lavoratori fiorentini dell’Arte della Lana fra Tre et Quattrocento, Biblioteca di storia toscana moderna e contemporanea, Studi et documenti no. 38 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1993).


B. **England**


   (b) chapter II: ‘Differentiation of Classes within the Craft Gild,’ pp. 41-69.
   (c) chapter VIII: ‘The Antecedents of the Trade Union,’ pp. 196-227.

(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.


C. **Continental Europe: France, Low Countries, Rhineland, and Italy**


1700 (London, 1940).


21. Martha Howell, *Women, Production, and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities* (Chicago,


   g) Michel Hébert, ‘Travail et vie urbaine: Manosque à la fin du Moyen Age,’ pp. 147-74.


27. Jean-Paul Peeters, ‘Het register van de Brusselse lakengilde uit de jaren 1416-1417: een getuigenis van de praktijk der gereglementeerde draperie in de stad Brussel tijden de late middeleeuwen,’ Bulletin de la commission royale d'histoire, 158 (1992), 75-152.


36. 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 Textile Guilds in the Low Countries and England**


E. The Role of Women in the Late-Medieval European Economy: in Crafts, Craft-Guilds and Urban Society


5. Margret Wensky, Die Stellung der Frau in der stadkölnischen Wirtschaft im Spätmittelalter (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1980).


** 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.


27. Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, New Approaches to


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?

12. Apart from the question of guilds, as described above, discuss and analyse the other roles of women in the urban economies of late-medieval western Europe; and in particular their economic, social, and political relationships with men in these tasks or occupations.

13. Why did women perform if not most, certainly a majority, of the labour tasks in the later-medieval textile industries, and yet rarely enjoyed guild organizations or respected economic status in these occupations?

14. Discuss the Howell thesis on the role of women in both guilds and the late-medieval urban economies in western Europe.