

CHANGES IN MEDIEVAL SOCIETY

OVERVIEW: Church reform and The Crusades lead to great changes in Europe. While the church was attempting to Unify a fractured laity using reforms, Holy Wars and Construction of great “Cities of God” through Cathedrals, other changes were unintended effects.

- I. A GROWING FOOD SUPPLY**
 - a. Peasants switched from ox power to horse power: 3x more work done
 - i. Plow
 - ii. Wagons
 - iii. Deforestation as more fields were produced
 - iv. Markets grew, so cities grew
 - b. The three field system
 - i. Moved to letting one field go fallow out of three as opposes to one in two
 - ii. Greater amount of food supply
 - iii. Healthier population—population boomed
- II. THE GUILDS**
 - a. Unions of Merchants met to control wages, prices and trade networks
 - b. Artisans followed setting standards and prices on skilled goods
 - c. Manufacturing resulted as guilds grew
 - d. More products were produced and prices were regulated
- III. COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION :Growth of Mercantilism/Capitalism created a fast growing trade system**
 - a. Fairs and Festivals lead to markets across European cities
 - i. Self sufficient Manors began to dissolve as people specialized
 - ii. More people moved to the cities where they could get all of their daily needs without having to produce it themselves
 - iii. Capitalists/Investors invested in products they could sell for more profit
 - b. Business and Banking
 - i. Bills of exchange created trade currency rates
 - ii. Credit eliminated carrying large cash amounts
 - iii. Trading Firms and Association formed with Capitalists moving commodities and goods using exchange and credit to make money
 - iv. Usury, or making loans for profit was at first considered a sin, but these taboos were relaxed as Christians entered the banking business
- IV. URBAN LIFE**
 - a. Between 1000 and 1150 population jumped from 30 to 42 Million
 - b. Paris had a population of about 60,000 but this was very rare
 - c. Most towns/burgs had populations between 1,500 and 2,500
 - d. Streets were narrow, filled with animals and waste

- e. No sewers meant most people dropped their waste in the gutter
- f. Most people rarely bathed due to lack of water
- g. Houses were cramped and dim
- h. Wood structures created huge fire hazards
- i. Serfs could escape from manors and if they lived in a city for a year and a day, were not bound to the Manor any more by law
- j. Towns were lost to the Nobles in favor of the Burghers, Merchants with Capital Power
- k. Established regulations for towns, levies and taxes

V. REVIVAL OF LEARNING

a. Muslim Connection

- i. Many Scholars went to Spain to study in Muslim Libraries
- ii. Jews who knew ancient Greek helped them translate the Greek Classics including Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
- iii. Lead to sudden boom of studies in Science, law, philosophy, mathematics, and other fields
- iv. Brought Muslim superior technology in ships, navigation, and weaponry to Europe

b. Universities

- i. Not buildings but meetings of scholars originally
- ii. Paris and Bologna first, but eventually including Oxford and Salerno by 1100 AD.
- iii. Sons of well to Burghers and Artisans
- iv. Most degrees were in political science or theology
- v. Move from Latin into Vernacular for scholarly work...away from the Latin of the Church
- vi. Dante's *Divine Comedy* and *Inferno*
- vii. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

c. Thomas Aquinas and Medieval Philosophy

- i. Could you follow Greek Classics and still hold faith in the Bible?
- ii. Aquinas argued that most basic religious truths could be argued through logic: *Summa Theologica* used Aristotle's principles
- iii. Followers became known as scholastics
- iv. Scholastics used classic thought to debate many church issues
- v. Will lead to democratic revival