

The Rise of Cities



**BEFORE
YOU
READ**

Reach Into Your Background

Think about the jobs the people in your community do.

How did they train for these jobs? Keep your answers in mind as you read this section.

Questions to Explore

1. How did the Roman Catholic Church influence life in the Middle Ages?
2. How did the growth of trade affect life in the Middle Ages?

Key Terms

clergy
excommunicate
guild
apprentice
chivalry
troubadour

A city's buildings tell a lot about what the city's people value and believe in. In modern times, for example, skyscrapers make a statement about the importance of big business in today's society.

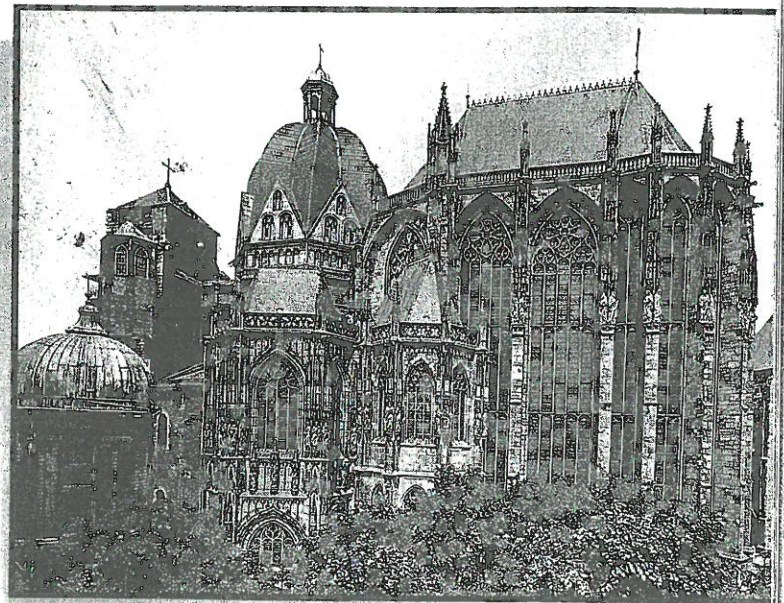
Medieval cities also had buildings that soared above the rest. These buildings, however, had nothing to do with business. The grandest building in any medieval city was almost always a cathedral—an especially large church. It made a statement about the importance of religion.

The word *religion* in Europe in the early Middle Ages usually referred to the largest and most powerful religious organization of the time, the Roman Catholic Church. It had so much more influence than other religions that it was usually called simply “the Church.”

The Church in the Middle Ages

Why was the Church so powerful? During the Middle Ages, life was short and hard for many people. They were comforted by the Roman Catholic belief that they could enjoy the rewards of heaven after death if they lived good lives. The clergy, the men who performed the services of the Church, helped people follow Church rules about how to live. The clergy performed marriages and funerals. They blessed the sick

▼ The cathedral in Aachen, Germany—the burial place of Charlemagne—was built in the late 700s. The large section on the right was added in the 1300s.



A Church Service

In this painting, made in Spain in the 1200s, a priest (on the left, holding a jug) performs a baptism. This ceremony symbolically washed away the man's sins and signaled the start of his new life in the Church. The clergy were deeply involved in people's lives, from birth to death. **Critical Thinking** How did services like baptisms and funerals help add to the Church's influence?



and the dying. The clergy also listened when believers came to church to confess their wrongdoings. In the name of God, the clergy then forgave the believers for the wrongs to which they had confessed.



Glass for the Glory of God The grandeur of cathedrals was increased by the use of stained glass in windows. Richly colored pieces of glass were pieced together by craftworkers to show scenes from the Bible. The windows took many years to create and were very expensive. Rich nobles and merchants gave money to the Church to pay for these windows. Their gifts to the Church were meant to show that they were good Christians and that they deserved to go to heaven.

The Church in Everyday Life The Church was also powerful because it took on many of the jobs government does today. In the United States, leaders have always been careful to keep government and religious organizations separate. For example, the government is not allowed to adopt a national religion or to support the activities of any religion. Nor are religious organizations allowed to run the government.

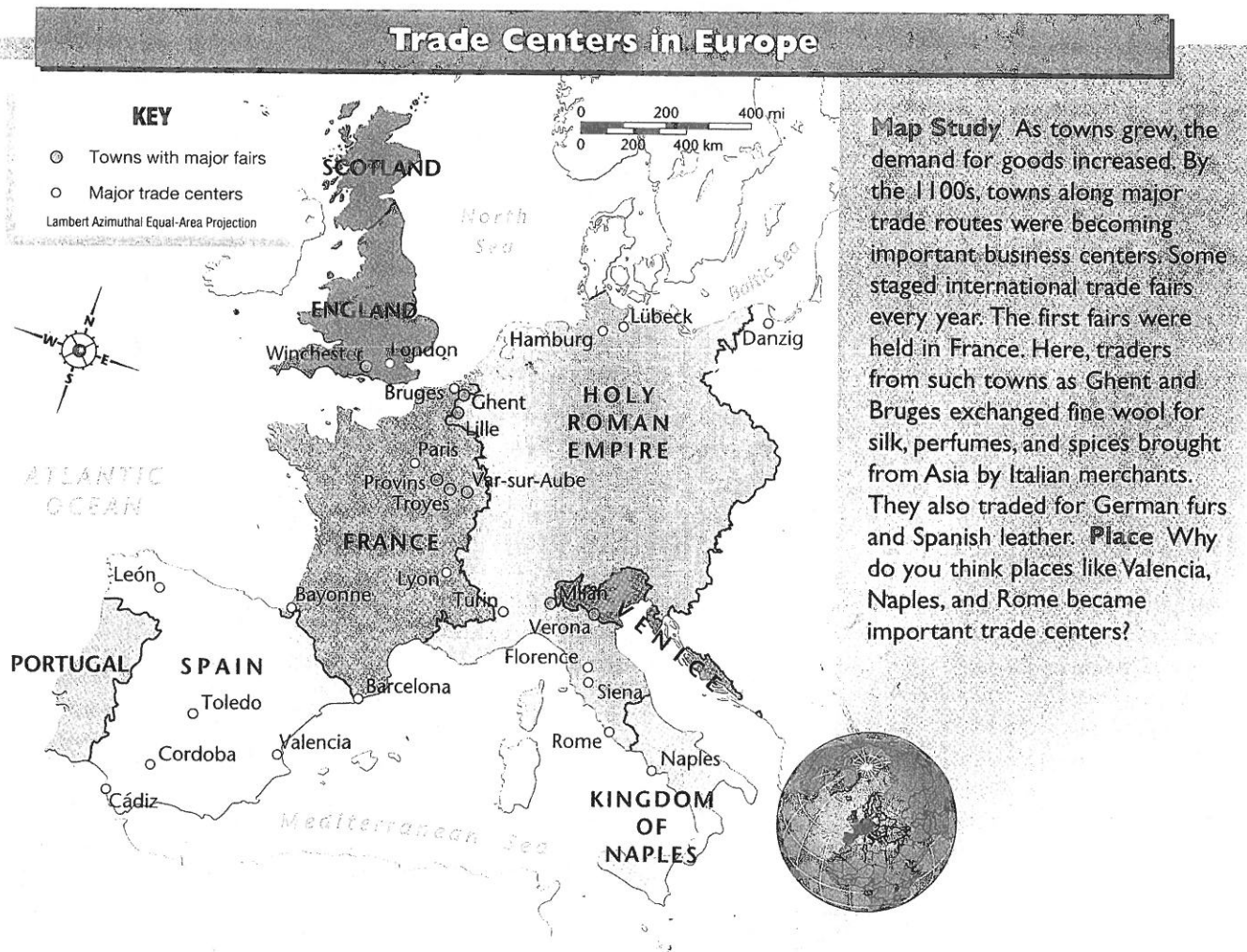
In the Middle Ages, the Church made laws and set up courts to enforce them. It gained great wealth by collecting taxes. It also took fiefs from lords in exchange for services performed by clergy. These Church lands were farmed by men and women who dedicated their lives to serving the Church. The men were called monks, and the women, nuns. These monks and nuns developed better ways of growing crops and tending livestock. In this way, the Church helped to improve the economy of the Middle Ages, which was based on farming.

The Church as Peacekeeper High Church officials also exercised great political power as advisors to kings. The Church helped limit warfare among feudal lords. When a lord rebelled, the Church could threaten to excommunicate him, or prevent him from taking part in Church life. A lord seldom ignored this threat, because if he were excommunicated, no one would associate with him.

Towns Grow as Trade Revives

By about A.D. 1000, the strong governments created by the Church and powerful lords had restored some order in Europe. This order meant that populations could grow. Many manors became crowded. Providing food and clothing for everyone who lived on the manor became difficult. Many lords gladly allowed peasants to buy their freedom. These farmers and craftworkers set up small communities outside the manor. As more people moved to them, these communities grew into towns.

The Rise of a Middle Class Many peasants who left the manor to work in towns saw their lives improve. They made enough money to pay for more than their basic needs. Some even became members of the middle class, a group between nobles and peasants. The middle class included merchants, traders, and craftspeople. Serfs still bound to the manor heard these success stories and longed to move to the towns. Some saved their money and bought their freedom. Others simply ran away.



A Medieval Market



Angkor Wat: An Asian Capital When London and Paris were growing into cities, Angkor Wat (AN kor waht) was already the capital of a huge empire in Asia. The Hindu rulers of the Khmer empire founded Angkor Wat in A.D. 802. For more than 300 years, the city grew. Each ruler built more magnificent temples than the ruler before him. Then, in about 1431, the Khmer capital was abandoned and a new capital was built. The ruins of Angkor Wat are in what is today the country of Cambodia. Visitors have described its temples as "grander than anything in Greece or Rome."

Most medieval towns had a market where local and foreign goods were sold. This scene shows grocers at work. Carpenters, barbers, butchers, bakers, and other tradespeople also might have stalls at the market. **Critical Thinking** How are medieval markets similar to the places you shop? How are they different?

Towns Grow Along Trade Routes The increased law and order in Europe also meant that trade routes and waterways came into use again. Merchants traveled to Africa and Asia to buy valued goods. They gathered at river crossings and along highways to sell their goods. Before long, towns sprang up in these locations. The map on the previous page shows where these trading cities arose.

Life in Towns and Cities

By 1400, some towns had as many as 10,000 people. Town life was not at all like manor life. Townspeople were not self-sufficient. Instead, like our society today, town life was based on the exchange of money for goods and services.

The Growth of Guilds In every city and town, merchants and craftworkers formed associations called guilds. A guild included all the people in town who practiced a certain trade. Thus there was a guild of

weavers; another of grocers; and another of masons, or people who worked with stone. Each guild made rules to help its members earn good wages. The guilds set prices and prevented outsiders from selling goods in town. They also set standards for the quality of goods. Those who belonged to guilds paid dues. This money was used to help needy members, or to support the families of members who had died.

Women also worked actively in the guilds. Girls became apprentices in guilds for weaving, papermaking, surgery, and so on. An **apprentice** is an unpaid worker being trained in a craft. Women often joined the same guild as their fathers or husbands. Because they were familiar with the family craft, they often kept the shops in which finished goods were sold.

Between the ages of 8 and 14, a boy who wanted to learn a certain craft became an apprentice. He lived and worked in the home of a guild master. After seven years, the boy became a journeyman. He traveled from town to town, working with different masters. In time, guild officials examined the journeyman's work. If it met their standards, he could join the guild.

Overcrowding and Disease Organizing guilds helped medieval people improve their lives. Yet there was much they did not know about making healthy cities. Cities often had walls for protection,

READ ACTIVELY



Connect How is your education different from that of a guild apprentice?

A Master and His Apprentice



At the left of this picture, an apothecary, or maker of medicines, checks his books. In the center, his apprentice weighs out a prescription for a customer. On the right, a worker, possibly a journeyman, grinds powders with a mortar and pestle. Journeymen often were not well paid. Also, it might take them several years before they could win acceptance into a guild and become masters themselves.

Critical Thinking Why do you think the guild system was set up?

so space in them was limited. Houses were crowded together, streets were filthy with waste thrown from windows, and sicknesses spread quickly.

One disease, the Black Death, wiped out a third of Europe's population—that's one out of every three people—in just four years. The Black Death was another name for bubonic plague, a disease spread by fleas on rats. By the time victims noticed the swellings and black bruises that were symptoms of the disease, it was too late. Death usually followed quickly. As one French clergyman wrote, "He who was well one day was dead the next." At its height, the Black Death claimed 800 people each day in the city of Paris. It would take centuries for people in Europe to begin to make their cities clean, healthy places to live.

▼ This 1300s painting shows the people of Tournai, a city in what today is Belgium, burying victims of the Black Death. About 40 million Europeans were killed by the bubonic plague.



Medieval Culture and Learning

Despite the hardships, medieval life was not all a struggle for survival. The growing cities attracted traveling scholars, and young men flocked to cathedral schools to hear their lectures. By 1200, many cathedral schools had become universities with full-time scholars. Students studied subjects such as grammar, reasoning, and mathematics. Some even went on to higher studies in philosophy, law, or medicine.

Writing about chivalry blossomed in the Middle Ages. Chivalry was the name for the noble qualities knights were supposed to have. A knight was supposed to be brave and loyal and do heroic deeds to win the love of a worthy woman. Traveling performers called **troubadours** (TROO buh dorz) wandered from place to place singing about the chivalrous deeds of knights for their ladies.

SECTION 2 REVIEW

1. **Define** (a) clergy, (b) excommunicate, (c) guild, (d) apprentice, (e) chivalry, (f) troubadour.

2. Why was the Church so important to people during the Middle Ages?
3. What major changes took place in medieval society as trade became more important?

Critical Thinking

4. **Drawing Conclusions**
(a) What might a serf gain by escaping to town? (b) What would the serf lose?

Activity

5. **Writing to Learn** Do you think a young person should be expected to start learning a trade between the ages of 8 and 14? Write a paragraph expressing your views. Give reasons for your answer.