**Resurgence (Rebirth) of European Trade and Cities**



**I. Historical Circumstances/Context**

During much of the Middle Ages, European life was very orderly and predictable. Many though that the arrangements between serfs and nobles would last forever. But here were also challenges to the great powers of the nobles. Serfs were unhappy and restless. As the crusaders learned, there was another world outside the manor. Serfs now looked to the towns. In the thirteenth century, these towns became magnets for many serfs. Some serfs bought their freedom. Others simply ran away from the manor. All were looking for a new life. Former serfs were attracted by the openness and variety of the jobs offered in the towns. However, the great differences between life on the manor and that in the town could be both exciting and terrifying.

*. . Then, just as the Crusaders had been inspired at least in part by commercial (business) motives, those 200 years of constant coming and going between East and West obviously gave trade a tremendous boost. Merchants, studying the itineraries [routes] of the cross-bearers [crusaders] who paved the way, discovered the most direct routes between eastern Mediterranean ports and the heart of Europe. Venice was a particularly active port of entry for goods imported from the Middle East and India. From there the goods traveled a well-established route through the Brenner Pass, up the Rhine to Brussels and then north to the Baltic Sea. Many a town which lies along this course owes its existence to a brisk demand for exotic wares from the East by medieval Europeans. . . .* Source: “Legacy of the Crusades,” Aramco World

**What were the historical circumstances that led to the decline of feudalism?** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**II. Rise of Towns/Cities**

*. . In a word, Europe was turning from a developing into a developed region. The growth of industry meant the growth of cities, which in the eleventh and twelfth centuries began to abandon their old roles of military headquarters and administrative centers as they filled with the life of commerce and industry. Some, like Genoa, once Roman villages, mushroomed, while others, like Venice, appeared out of nowhere. Still others, calling themselves simply “New City” (Villanova, Villeneuve, Neustadt), were founded by progressive rulers. Instead of growing haphazardly (randomly), they were built on a plan, typically a grid pattern with a central square, church, and market buildings. Beginning in tenth-century Italy, businessmen and craftsmen in many cities established what they called “communes,” declaring themselves free men who owed allegiance (loyalty) only to a sovereign who collected taxes but otherwise left them alone. Astute lords granted charters exempting city dwellers from feudal obligations—“so that my friends and subjects, the inhabitants of my town of Binarville, stay more willing there,” sensibly explained one lord. Under the rubric “Free air makes free men,” even serfs were declared emancipated if they maintained themselves in a city for a year and a day. . . .*Source: Frances & Joseph Gies, Cathedral, Forge, and Water Wheel: Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages, Harper Perennial (adapted)

**According to Frances and Joseph Gies, what wasimpact of the growth of European cities on medieval European people, places and/or societies?**

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**III. Guilds**

Living conditions in the first cities had low standards buildings were poorly constructed, homes lacked basics such as water or toilets, and goods like rotten meats were sold in markets. At first there were few laws to improve these conditions. Over time workers became organized and created groups that ensured better quality of goods, these groups were called **guilds**. Guilds formed to improve many of the problems that developed as these cities grew. Eventually guilds improved the quality of goods so much that the cities they came from became known throughout the world for their goods. Each guild represented workers in one occupation, such as weavers, bakers, or goldsmiths. Guild members cooperated to protect their own economic interests. For example, France for its champagne, Italy for cheeses, Switzerland for its chocolates and Germany for its sausage.

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**According to the document, how did the guilds change production of goods?**

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**Directions: Using EVIDENCE from the document, complete the following task:**

***Comparison:***

* Student will identify ***similarities or differences*** between the ideas presented in the document.
* Student will explain the similarities or differences in the ideas presented in this document. Student must use **evidence** in their response.

*In this story, a serf who has bought his freedom thinks to himself about the dangers and pleasures of the new life in any English town.*

**Leeds 1230**

Has it only been seven days since I left the manor to come to Leeds? Everything seems such a blur. So much has happened in one short week. I paid the lord of the manor for my freedom, and I had such strange feelings. It was odd that he was happy to accept a little money from me after so many years of work and service. Perhaps he won’t miss my crops and tax payments. Night is falling it is the worst time for me. I am afraid. The room is hot and stuffy. I feel as though I am choking. The air here in the city is not as fresh as it was on the manor because of the amount of people here and the garbage and waste that sometimes piles up. I’d like to go outside for a walk, but I don’t dare to. People warned me that there are robbers hiding in the shadows. There is no one to protect me. I have no friends yet, and I can’t afford to buy a weapon to protect myself. I thank God when daylight comes. I like to walk through the crowded marketplace and watch the people working at their trades. I see them making helmets, saddles, coats of armor, spurs and swords. Others are dyeing cloth or melting gold and silver and making cups and jewelry. There’s a fair almost every day. People come from all over to buy these wonderful things. On the manor we never had access to such luxurious things. If we needed something we had to make it ourselves and we did not have I have asked many people for a job. Today a cloth merchant told me to come back to his shop tomorrow. I hope he will take me on as an apprentice, then he will teach me about the cloth trade. I will be part of his family and live in his house. The manor was never this interesting, but I was safer there. Often, I long for the sights and smells of the land and the harvest. My home was small, but I never felt shut in. I miss my friends and relatives. How I wish I had someone to talk with! Enough of this dreaming. I must stop thinking about days past. The way of life on the manor is dying; there’s nothing there for me. This is where I am going to stay. There is excitement and liveliness here in Leeds that I never saw on the farm. There are thousands of people, which make it more crowded than on a manor but most of these people are doing great things. There are people to meet and people to know. I will make friends with many of them; I will find a woman to love. I am going to learn a trade and earn enough to live well. When I marry, I am not going to have to ask Lord Cecil for his approval. My children will be free. I am not afraid any longer. There is much more life than death here. I will live and die a free man.

**1A. Identify and explain TWO similarities *OR* TWO differences regarding life on the manor versus life in the towns.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| **SCORE OF 1:** | **SCORE OF 0:** |
| Identifies and Explains TWO similarities ***or*** differences regarding the ideas about the treatment of people in society using the document | * Only identified and does not explain OR only identifies and explains one similarity or difference. * Did not use evidence relate to information in the document * Provided incorrect information. * Did not answer the question (no response). |

**HOMEWORK:** **Rise of Towns & Cities Stimulus Multiple Choice Questions**

**Directions: Using your handout and notes from today’s lesson, actively read the questions below and answer the questions.**

Q1. **The town was a centre of attraction and diffusion, but above all it was a centre of production. The town was a crossroads and a terminus [last stop]: through contracts, meetings and exchanges it could play a major creative role... - Jacques Le Goff, *The Fontana Economic History of Europe: The Middle Ages***

**Which statement would this passage best support?**

1. Towns were important in an emerging international economy.
2. Economic self-sufficiency was reinforced by the revival of towns.
3. Crossroad locations limit the functions of towns.
4. The culture of towns discourage new ideas.

**Q2. Which heading completes this partial outline?**

**I. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

* **People become more aware of the outside world.**
* **Merchant and craft guilds help commericial centers grow into cities**
* **Trade routes develop to supply the growing demand for new products**

1. Seljuk Turks dominate Europe
2. Democracy ends in Eastern Europe
3. Feudalism Declines in Western Europe
4. Religion becomes a Powerful force in Europe

**Q3. In this passage, what impression does the author give of the guildsmen?**

***“A Haberdasher and a Carpenter, a Weaver, a Dyer and Tapestry Maker were with us, too. All clothed in the same uniforms—that of a great and dignified guild. Their gear was all freshly and newly adorned (decorated); their knives were mounted not with brass, but entirely with silver; their belts and their purses were beautifully made in every respect.”***

1. They are wealthy and proud of it

2. they are violent criminals who are concerned with security

3. they feel inferior to the other pilgrims

4. they are best of friends