

## Analyzing image 2

### **Towns**

“Town life was distinct from country life; the two were separate, though interdependent, worlds. There were many manifestations of rural life in the city: gardens, herds of livestock, even farms within the city walls. Yet townsmen saw themselves as distinct from country folk, and country folk viewed the cities with suspicion and envy.”

Source: <http://history.boisestate.edu/westciv/medsoc/22.shtml>

### **What makes a town?**

“Some [...] say that to have a town you need a market, a charter (a legal document granting rights or privileges) and a jury of 12. Others [...] say that you need burghers and a mayor instead of a reeve (a reeve looked after the affairs in the medieval village), and defences, such as a town wall.”

Source: Historic Hertfordshire Online ([www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk/index.htm](http://www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk/index.htm))

### **Money**

“Hand in hand with the growth of towns came the growth of a money economy. This is one of the reasons medieval lords encouraged the growth of towns on their land. Traders could be charged rent and tolls. Barter was often still used in villages, but with more trade taking place, people started using coins. [...] The growing supply of money, especially of smaller denominations [...], aided the growth in towns.”

Source: Historic Hertfordshire Online ([www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk/index.htm](http://www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk/index.htm))

### **The River**

“The river [...] is the topographical centre and economic motor of the city. [...] While some merchandise only passed through Paris, the Seine was the major route for delivering construction material, firewood and food supplies to the city. These products were sold in fairs and markets, which extended the sphere of influence of the city throughout the surrounding region.” [translation]

Source: Paris.fr [http://www.paris.fr/portail/Environnement/Portal.lut?page\\_id=1314&document\\_type\\_id=5&document\\_id=2177&portlet\\_id=3142](http://www.paris.fr/portail/Environnement/Portal.lut?page_id=1314&document_type_id=5&document_id=2177&portlet_id=3142)

**Technological advances in agriculture**

During the Middle Ages, solutions were found to the problems of low agricultural productivity and rudimentary tools. The use of iron in the manufacturing of tools enabled the development of new tools such as axes, harrows, ploughs with iron shares and scythes, which made it easier to clear land, plough and harvest. Horseshoeing and the use of horse teams increased the efficiency of animal energy in farming. Three-field crop rotation, a new agricultural technique, increased agricultural output, as did windmills, which were used to mill grain, and watermills, which were used to press olives and grapes, brew beer, full wool, etc. All these new inventions led to growth in both agricultural output and population.

**Burgs or boroughs**

Burgs, the medieval forerunners of cities, sprang up along trade routes or major waterways. They were fortified places, where merchants and artisans lived and practised their crafts in shops or workshops. Their narrow roads were often overpopulated and were not always very clean. Burgs offered safety to their inhabitants thanks to their walls. The single gate was guarded and locked at night to keep out undesirables: bandits, thieves, strangers, etc. Burgs also offered freedom to peasants who wanted to escape from their feudal lords. They were important trading and religious centres, often enriched by the presence of a cathedral. However, burgs were small and their confined and unclean quarters led to the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics.

**Merchant bourgeoisie**

The term “bourgeois,” “burgess” or “burgher” literally means citizen of a burg and was originally used to refer to all the inhabitants of a burg. The meaning of the word eventually evolved to mean merchants and bankers, who were generally well-off and gained the power to administer the burg. They were the ones who levied taxes and set prices and wages. They were rich and owned buildings and land. Their financial status and the rights they granted themselves often provoked the anger of the poor. The merchant bourgeoisie lived in luxurious, richly furnished houses. Their clothes were made with the best cloth and often adorned with fur.

Here is the image you will analyze  
in the computer lab during your next class.



Detail from the frontispiece to *De Regimine Principum*  
by Giles of Rome (c. 1243-1316), Bibliothèque nationale de France  
<http://classes.bnf.fr/ema/grands/659.htm>