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STANDARDS OF LIVING IN THE COMMUNE OF NAMUR, 1263-1429

by

Grace Lucile Wakelin

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Centre for Medieval Studies
University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

Standards of Living in the Commune of Namur, 1263-1429

submitted by Grace Lucile Wakelin

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Many factors contributed to a favourable standard of living in Namur during the Dampierre period: primarily, its geographical location, its political history and its ecclesiastical affiliation.

Chapter II deals with the administration of the commune, an oligarchy under the count but sensible of the commune’s ancient charter of freedoms. Minting was a privilege which the count did not delegate, but while he profited from debasing the coinage, he was moderate compared with the excesses of some French kings and Flemish counts. The financial policy was directed either towards re-building town fortifications against the threat of Liège or satisfying extraordinary comital demands. Its legal system, however, was a better safeguard of Namurois welfare.

Chapter III discusses the role of the magistracy in maintaining public order and sanitation, and the contribution of beguines and tertiaries to the care of the aged, ill and infirm. Lepers were segregated but not quarantined. The role of the regular and secular orders of the Church was also important. Its schools, solemnities, festivals and processions all promoted the solidarity of the commune. So also did the pastimes of the Namurois, the description of which concludes the chapter.
Chapter IV describes the different classes of townspeople, with descending degrees of privilege: count, aristocracy, bourgeoisie, artisans and marginals. Shelter, clothing and food varied with rank.

Chapter V concludes that the Namurois were fortunate in being spared major wars and famines, if not recurring plague. Society was stratified and yet there was some opportunity to improve one's lot. There was for most people some of that "capability" identified by Amartya Sen as the most important mark of a desirable standard of living. And if we judge the worth of a society by the care given to its pauperes, medieval Namur enjoyed a better standard of living than larger, industrial cities in the North.
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Preface

In writing this dissertation, I am indebted to a number of people: primarily, to my mentor, Professor John H. Munro, who first turned my eyes towards Belgium and who has given me invaluable guidance and assistance; to Professor Raymond Van Uytven of St. Ignatius University in Antwerp, who first directed my attention to the possibilities for research in Namur; to Mme Renson in the Namurois archives, who gave me both help and friendship; and especially, to Mme Paulette Chaudière of the Bibliothèque Universitaire Moretus Plantin in Namur, who over three years has continued to search out and photocopy data for me. Her help has been indispensable.

Some brief explanatory notes will be useful to the reader unfamiliar with various kinds of measurement in medieval Namur.

1. Calendar Year

Various year datings were used in Namur in the Middle Ages. Under Philip the Noble (1196-1212), the year began on 25 March, Annunciation Day, as it did in neighbouring Hainaut, with which Namur was closely associated. In the second half of the thirteenth century, however, under Guy of Dampierre, Namur adopted the “style de Pâques”, following Liégeois practice, and archiepiscopal dating at Cologne. The next change occurred when the bishop of Liège, Adolphe de la Marck, decreed that throughout the diocese, the year 1333, which had begun at Easter, would end at Christmas, and that henceforth the style of the Nativity would be followed, and this system lasted until the late sixteenth century, when Namur and other jurisdictions of the Spanish Low Countries adopted 1 January as the beginning of the year, as decreed in 1575 by King Philip II. All
dates in this study have been adjusted to the new style of Gregory XIII, ordained 24 February 1581/1582.¹

2. Measures of area

In medieval times, these units varied in size throughout the county, although their relationship was fixed.²

100 petits verges............1 journal or arpent of 23.65 ares³
4 journaux...................1 bonnier of 94.61 ares

It is convenient to think of a bonnier as between one and one-half and three acres.

3. Measures of quantity (dry)

12 dizaines....................1 setier........30.23 litres rasé
                                  ..............35.88 litres comblé
8 setiers.........................1 muid........18.2 bushels
                                  ..............241.87 litres rasé
                                  ..............287.01 litres comblé⁴

4. Measures of quantity (liquid)

1 pinté.........................one-half litre
4 pintes.........................1 lot (2 litres)
1 setier of wine...............ca. 30 litres⁵

5. Money

See Appendix 2.

6. Abbreviations

AEN - Archives de l'état de Namur
ADN - Archives départementales du Nord

³ An are was approximately 100 square metres.
⁴ See Léopold Genicot, L'économie rurale Namuroise au Bas Moyen Age (1199-1429), Namur, 1943, p. xxxiv.
⁵ A setier was also a measure of the area for which a setier of seed was required.
AGR - Archives générales du Royaume
Annales: ESC - Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations
ASAN - Annales de la société archéologique de Namur
Cart. Nam. - Jules Borgnet, Cartulaire de la commune de Namur
RBPH - Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire
RN - Revue du Nord
INTRODUCTION

Although the history of Namur dates, archaeologically speaking, from neolithic times, its written history was late in appearing. There are no Namurois medieval chroniclers such as Gislebert of Mons (died 1224), or, in the case of Liège, Jean de Hocsem (1279-1349), Jean le Bel (ca. 1290-1370) and Jean de Stavelot (1388-1449). The earliest Namurois historian is Paul de Croonendael (ca. 1541-1621). Not until the nineteenth century did distinctively Namurois historians appear. Foremost of these in time was Jules Borgnet (1817-1872). A brief account of his work will explain the enormous debt that all students of Namurois history owe to him.

In 1848, Borgnet was named keeper of the archives of Namur. These were stacked in cartons or in bundles tied up with cord, or piled loose on the floor in unheated and badly lighted rooms in the Palais de Justice. The authorities grudgingly provided some shelving and tables. Passionately attached to Namur and its history and a brilliant paleographer, Borgnet began to sort through mountains of archives. At the same time, he was constantly on the watch for archives that he might buy. A used-clothing dealer had some in a consignment from a country castle; book-binders in the town sold him others, and as the efficacy of his work became known, private collectors offered, by donation or sale, some of their manuscripts. Constantly, he had to contend with the Minister of the Interior who wished to take the cartularies of the collegiate churches to Brussels, and with other officials to secure the return of Namurois archives lodged in Brussels, Paris, Liège and Germany.
As he sorted, he transcribed documents of prime interest; he published sixty-five of these, dating from 1118 to 1340, in his *Cartulaire de la commune de Namur*, volume I. Ninety-four more followed, covering the period 1343 to 1428, in volume II, published in 1878 by his successor, Stanislas Bormans.

In 1845, Borgnet founded a society for those interested in Namurois history; he acted as secretary. The first edition of its journal *Annales de la société archéologique de Namur* appeared in 1849 and contained an article by him on the leper hospital, *Les Grands-Malades*. Thereafter, he was a frequent contributor to the journal. In addition, he was happy to help scholars who came to consult the archives, which were now open on Thursdays from 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m., with room for three or four scholars at a time. In 1857, he was named professor of history and geography at the Athénée royal de Namur. During all this time, he worked single-handedly in the archives. Not until May 1869 was an assistant appointed.

Jules Borgnet died in 1872, a few weeks before his fifty-fifth birthday. His work in the archives was continued by other brilliant historians, the afore-mentioned Stanislas Bormans, D.-D. Brouwers, Ferdinand Courtoy, Félix Rousseau and Jean Bovesse, amongst others. In 1930, the archives were moved to their present location in a former cold-storage depot behind the railway tracks. But if the neighbourhood lacks style, the building is capacious and well-constructed of brick and reinforced concrete. It now houses over 75,000 manuscripts and a reference library of some 10,000 volumes.\(^1\)

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\(^1\) The story of the Namurois archives has been told by Jean Bovesse in "Un centre de recherches historiques. Le dépôt des Archives de l'État pour la province de Namur". *ASAN* 49 (1958), pp. 85-160.
My indebtedness to these Namurois historians is indicated in the bibliography. Most of them contributed articles in the *Annales* on a wide range of topics: politics, social and ecclesiastical history, law, administration, commerce and industry, money and finance, medicine and folklore. One, like Jules Borgnet, is in a class by himself.

That is Léopold Genicot (1914-1995), the dean of Namur's economic historians, whose work best illustrates in Namur the word *conjoncture*, that is, the effect of the concurrence of different kinds of events, political, economic, spiritual and intellectual, upon a particular period. While he contributed articles to many learned journals of western Europe, his *chef-d'oeuvre* is the magisterial three-volume study of *L'économie rurale namuroise au Bas Moyen Age*, published in 1943, 1960 and 1982.

Although I stand on the shoulders of such giants as these, nevertheless I offer what they have not attempted: a sustained study of the standard of living in the commune of Namur during the reign of the counts of the House of Dampierre from 1263 to 1429. Many of the factors determining that living standard are objective and measurable; some are not. For example, the temperament of the Namurois is identifiably different from that of their volatile neighbours to the north, who show traits of exaggerated emotionalism, their compulsion toward public display of feelings, their vital ambiance darkened by uncertainty, marked by poverty and misfortune.² I have briefly touched upon this, especially in my account of their folk customs and in my final comments in chapter V.

Another important factor in the standard of living in Namur in the late Middle Ages is the

² Jacques Toussaert. *Le sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du Moyen-Age*. Paris, 1963, p. 494: "... émotivité excessive, instabilité, besoin d'exteriorisation, décor de vie noirci par l'incertitude, marqué par l'indigence et l'adversité ...
contribution of the Church. This enormous topic can be here no more than merely acknowledged.

The physical geography of Namur at the confluence of the Sambre and Meuse rivers and the protective rocky height of Champeau account for the first settlement. Later, events in Carolingian times led to the "split personality" of Namur, drawn to France by ties of language and politics, and to Liège and Cologne by ecclesiastical connections. The princely bishops of Liège, many of whom followed the example of the warrior bishop Notger (972-1008), frequently intruded politically in Namur, twice causing grievous damage by invasion in 1319 and again in 1430.

The administration of Namur under its counts was oligarchic and moderate, and they generally honoured the Namurois charter of freedoms, which pre-dated 1121. There was none of the bloody, desperate, political battles that marked the fourteenth-century history of Flanders. Namur did not suffer the class wars of Ghent, nor was the Hundred Years' War fought on Namurois soil.

Namurois civil and criminal law was also moderate, given that, as was usual in the Middle Ages, there were seven capital offences. Theft and wounding were the most common crimes, and both were severely punished, if not by death, then often by exile or judicial pilgrimage. Family ties were strong and demanded retributive justice. Fathers were held responsible for the crimes of their children living under the paternal roof.

Notwithstanding the moderation of its administrative and legal systems, it was nevertheless expected that the county should yield a rich living to the count. Thus, in Namur, the populace was subjected to aides on special occasions and to forced loans or subsidies to cover extraordinary expenses such as comital military adventures. From none
of these levies was there any appeal. But the most lucrative of the count's powers lay in
his absolute control of minting. Debasement of the coinage often brought him huge sums
of money in seignorage, although it is doubtful if any Namurois count reaped the excessive
rewards of Count Louis de Male of Flanders. In the absence of mint accounts, we cannot
make comparisons.

The counts of Namur did not make any significant impact on the daily life of the
Namurois, other than through their financial impositions and through the inflation that
usually resulted from their debasements. In Chapter III, we see that the magistracy was
directly responsible for the daily welfare of the townsfolk in the fields of public health,
hospital management and law, both civil and criminal, particularly as it concerned women
and children. The Church too made an important contribution: the selfless work of the
beguines who ministered to the pauperes of society, the service of tertiaries in the
hospitals, the maintenance of schools and the daily ministrations to the faithful in the
parishes. In the shaping of the year by the customs of its festivals and solemnities, less
capable of objective measurement than its other contributions, the Church underpinned
society and strengthened family and communal solidarity.

Because such important scholarship in the twentieth century has come from
economic and social historians, there is a desire to measure where measurement is well-
nigh impossible. Moreover, secular and anti-clerical attitudes of today cause some
historians to mistrust the work of the medieval Church. Some may assert that the Church
took more than it gave and grew rich at the expense of superstitious folk. Others grant
that most of the wealth of the Church came from donations rather than from exactions, but
counter that admission by the belief that the gifts were at best motivated by selfish hopes
of eternal life or were at worst camouflaged sales. Such opinions are apt to distort the historian’s view of the mentalité of the Middle Ages.

Yet most would acknowledge the truth of Marc Bloch’s statement that the fear of hell was a dominant fact of the Middle Ages. The repeatedly stated reason by the testator for a donation or a bequest was for the salvation of his soul and in reparation for his sins. It occurs with the frequency of stock phrases, but that does not negate the possibility that the donor’s motives also included pity and love. To the allegations of some historians that donations were actually dons onéreux, a quid pro quo for some hidden benefit to the donor, Léopold Genicot responded with strong denial. He also found that generally, religious institutions in the county of Namur were small and poor, except for the abbey of Floreffe, and that the Church’s land holdings about 1250 represented only 10 or 11 per cent of all the land of the county, unlike the great ecclesiastical holdings in England, France, and what is now Germany.

Besides donations, the Church in Namur was supported by tithes and fees, the object of much discussion and controversy in our time. Giles Constable maintained that those who believe that tithes were felt to be oppressive, and therefore hated and evaded, base their attitude more on “contemporary prejudice than on medieval evidence”. There is an interesting case, mentioned in Chapter III, of a dispute in 1406 over increased fees in

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3 Marc Bloch, La société féodale. Paris, 1939, p. 135. “... comment ne pas reconnaître dans la peur de l’enfer, un des grands faits sociaux du temps?”
4 See Léopold Genicot, L’économie rurale I, p. 43. He did not name the historians.
5 Ibid., pp. 38-39.
6 Giles Constable, “Resistance to Tithes in the Middle Ages”, The Journal of Ecclesiastical History 13 (1962), pp. 172-185. The quotation occurs on p. 174. The significant phrase here is “in the Middle Ages”. There was growing resistance to the Church by the late fourteenth century as the groundswell of the Reformation mounted.
the parish of Saint-Michel. Never slow to respond to a perceived injustice, the parishioners complained and were sustained by an episcopal investigation.

When, in Chapter IV, we consider the differences in shelter, clothing and food among the various strata of the commune, we are on less controversial ground, but we remain hampered here, as in other areas, by lack of documentation. There has been much interest, following World War II, in finding ways to identify and measure the components of an adequate standard of living and to define the term "poverty". Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins gave us the concept of a "basket of consumables" that could be earned in a given number of work-hours. More recently, Professor Peter Townsend at Bristol and Professor Amartya Sen at Oxford have disagreed sharply about the following question. Is the standard of living determined by measuring its different physical components in one group as compared with another (Townsend's view)? Or is it a question, as Sen maintains, of judging a person's deprivation or empowerment in absolute terms? Were I to adopt Townsend's view, I should be confronted with two insuperable obstacles: the lack of documentation in Namur, and the task of comparison with similar levels of society in other localities. In Chapter V, I have followed Sen's opinion, which accords with my own, to reach the conclusion that the Namurois in the Dampierre period enjoyed an acceptable standard of living.

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CHAPTER 1

The Genesis of the Commune: Geographical Setting, Ecclesiastical Affiliation and Political History

Between the deeply meandering Sambre river flowing from the south-west and west, and the broader Meuse flowing from the south, there is a tableland of some seventy hectares called Champeau, which ends in a rocky spur, thrusting like the prow of a ship towards the confluence of the two rivers. The headland drops, almost sheer, 135 metres to the left bank of the Meuse, and falls away less abruptly to the right bank of the Sambre. It is here on Champeau that the history of the city of Namur began over two thousand years ago.

Neolithic hunters roamed the forests above the rocky cliffs along the Meuse and sheltered in caves along the river’s edge. Later Bronze age people have left many artifacts and ornaments on Champeau. Here too, Caesar in 57 B.C. met and defeated the Aduatuci whose walls of stone bristling with sharp palisades were no match for Roman siege-towers.¹ In Merovingian times, a mint at “Namuco” produced gold coins. In Namur, as in France, the Merovingian mayors of the palace favoured the establishment of abbeys, which they endowed with lands, notably at Fosses (650) and Moustier (660) on the upper Sambre, and at Andenne (692) on the Meuse. Namur survived third- and fourth-century barbarians and ninth-century Normans. In 954, in the face of Hungarian invasions, the monks of the abbey of Brogne fled with their precious relics of Saint Gérard to the safety

of the portus of Namur, that is to say, the merchant quarter in the triangle of land where the Sambre and the Meuse meet.²

Lack of documentation has hampered historians who wish to theorize on the size of Namur in those early days. Some have sought enlightenment through the terms vicus, oppidum and castellum that occur in some ninth-century texts.³ But different chroniclers have used these terms in different ways. Consequently, all we can say, as Georges Despy remarked, is that between approximately 750 and 950, there was a small urban district of a few hectares at the confluence of the two rivers, with a fortification on the rocky spur above, and some occupation, extent unknown, of land on the left bank of the Sambre.⁴

The name “Namur” has also given rise to much speculation. One of the most fanciful explanations, rooted in folk-lore whose origin can only be hypothesized, has it that Saint Materne (actually a bishop of Trèves in the fourth century, but presented as being a disciple of Saint Peter) came to the Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse on an evangelizing mission. The settlement was then called Sédrochie, after a certain Sédroch who had established himself and his followers on the rocky heights. There stood a temple to the god Nam who uttered oracles from a crevice below. His priests had set up a huge stone altar across the Meuse, where human sacrifices were offered. The story goes that the saint entered the temple, challenged Nam and bade him henceforth to keep silence (“Nam mutum”); at that very moment, across the river, the sacrificial knife miraculously dropped from the high

² In 1902, 2,556 people were recorded as living in this area when it was cleared to make roads and parkland. See Félix Rousseau, Namur, ville mosane, 2nd edition, Brussels, 1958, p. 33.
priest’s hand. All the people of Sédrochie were baptized and their habitation was henceforth known as Namur.⁵ A nineteenth-century historian, Canon C.G. Roland, believed that the name came from a certain Nam or Namu who rebuilt the town after it was sacked by Normans.⁶ Victor Tourneur, however, finds the Merovingian name Namuco rooted in the Celtic word nam, meaning “a place to rest”, that is, a river valley or coomb, and this is the etymology now accepted.⁷

Rivers have often provided the transportation needed for a settlement; indeed, as Robert Lopez observed,⁸ the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic for a city is a circle circumscribing a cross of equal lengths, which represents a fortified place where crossroads of communications meet. Thus, Namur with its rivers and rocky heights enjoyed, from earliest times, a privileged position. The Meuse rises in the uplands of Bassigny about 24 kilometres from Langres in south-eastern France, and flows north through Verdun and Sedan. Through the upper Meuse, one could reach the Saône-Rhône network and Lyons. In its middle course, it crosses the French Ardennes, flowing north to Namur and then east to Maestricht and Cuyk, and west to the estuary south of Dordrecht; a tributary, the Nieuwe Maas, flows past Rotterdam to the Hook of Holland and the North Sea. The more modest Sambre finds its source in the hills of Thiérache; its upper waters connect with the Somme-Oise rivers leading to Paris. From its source, it flows north and then east to Namur where it joins the Meuse. Along the Sambre and its tributaries, there

⁵ One often hears this lively story in Namur. It may have sprung from the imagination of pious monks of the tenth century, seeking to give Namur an apostolic cachet. See Félix Rousseau “La légende de Saint Materne et du dieu Nam à Namur” in A travers l’histoire de Namur, du Namurois et de la Wallonie, ed. Marcel Van Audenhove, Brussels, 1977, pp. 29-69.
⁶ See his article, “Toponymie Namuroise”. ASAN 23 (1899), pp. 243-254.
were in early medieval times no fewer than twenty-seven important ecclesiastical establishments, at each of which a lock was built to channel the river in order to power a mill. It was the opinion of Maurice Arnould that the river was not navigable in medieval times upstream beyond Maubeuge (124 kilometres from Namur) and below only by means of eleven locks to control sharp drops and swift currents. Nor was the Meuse any easier a route. Three times the width of the Sambre, it was dotted with islands which caused dangerous shallows and treacherous currents. Yet it was fordable, notably at the Ile de la Plante one kilometre south of Namur, and at Maestricht. Nevertheless, Rousseau suggested that the Mosan settlements owed their birth to that river, pointing out that from Dinant to Namur to Huy to Liège to Maestricht, the interval was 30 kilometres, which was a day’s journey downstream for boatmen.

Namur was also the centre of important land routes. One road ran north-west from Arlon to Nivelles on the river Dyle, which joined the Scheldt; another road ran from the south-west through Couvin to Wasseiges. There, it connected with the great Roman road, called the Chaussée de Brunehaut, from Bavai in the west, passing through Gembloux (18.5 kilometres north of Namur) to Tongres, seat of Roman administration, and on to Maestricht and Cologne. From Bavai, roads also ran north to Boulogne and south to Reims and thence to Lyons. But during the twelfth century, a new road was formed from

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8 Robert S. Lopez, "The Crossroads Within the Wall" in The Historian and the City, Oscar Handler and John Burchard, eds., Cambridge, Mass., 1962, p. 27.
9 Notably, Fosses in 650, Malonne, founded by St. Bertuin in 651, and Moustier in 660.
12 Brunhilda was a sixth-century Visigothic princess married to Chlotar II of Austrasia. Between her and Fredegund, mistress and then wife of Chilperic, king of Neustria, there was a deadly enmity, as there was between the two principalities and later between Brunhilda and her Austrasian nobles. In 613, she was taken prisoner, tortured, tied to a wild horse and dragged to death.
Cologne to Ghent and then to Bruges, giving impetus to towns along its route -
Tirelemont, Louvain, Brussels and Alost - and signalling the pre-eminence of Flemish
industry and the importance of a route to the North Sea.13

The county of Namur enjoys a temperate climate although there is some snow in
winter; it has an average annual rainfall of one metre. These factors permit two crops per
year. North of the city in medieval times were the fertile plains of Herbatte and Champion
watered by the Hoyoul streams, and its many rivulets, before they joined the Meuse
downstream from Namur. Here the chief crops were spelt (the most important bread
grain), oats and legumes. Of greater agricultural importance was the extensive plain of
Hesbaye lying north of the Sambre and Meuse and extending from the Forêt Charbonière
to Maestricht. It was, and still is, the most fertile land in Belgium, consisting of rich brown
loam.14 This area, about half of which was the domain of the count, raised spelt, oats,
woad15 and legumes, as well as providing some pasturage for horses and cattle and some
vineyards, all of which were largely for domestic consumption. Famines were rare.16

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13 See Félix Rousseau, La Meuse, pp. 210-211 and note 1. Henri Pirenne was the first historian who
emphasized the importance of a route from Cologne to the sea, and who determined its origins.
14 See F.J. Monkhouse. A Dictionary of Geography. London, 1965, p. 188. This soil, which the French
call limoneux, was laid down in inter-glacial, or immediately post-glacial, times by winds which carried
the finer elements of glacial deposits westwards, primarily to Belgium, but also on farther to the Paris
basin and Brittany. It occurs in Belgium in depths of up to seventy feet.
15 Woad was an important crop in the Hesbaye and supplied mills operating by water or by animals in
the northern part of the county. See André Joris, “Les moulins à guêde dans le comté de Namur pendant la
seconde moitié du XIIIe siècle”. Le Moyen Age 65 (1959), pp. 253-278.
16 Léopold Genicot. La crise agricole du bas moyen âge dans le Namurois, Louvain, 1970, pp. 10-14,
lists in columnar form the occasions of calamities (epidemics, bad weather, revolts, wars and deaiths)
which struck all or part of the county from 1350 to 1500. There were deaiths, consequent upon heavy
rains, in 1315, deaiths and plagues in 1361-1363, and famine caused by the war of 1430, but on the
whole, one is struck by how little the Namurois suffered compared with people in the industrial northern
cities.
South of the city, the terrain was rocky with steep descents to the Meuse. Quarries abounded, both limestone and the distinctive dark blue-gray granite of Namur. Easily accessible iron and copper deposits were exploited from Merovingian times; dense forests\(^\text{17}\) provided the fuel for smelting, and scores of small, swift streams, the water power. Yet the little valleys of Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse also contained extensive farmlands, much of which belonged to the numerous abbeys along the Sambre.

Here, then, was a commune of favoured geographical location, fortified by nature, at the crossroads of land and water routes, and with a hinterland providing adequate food as well as raw materials for industry. Yet it remained a small town and, indeed, the only one of any size, in a second-rate county.\(^\text{18}\) In the north, however, Ghent had a population of as high as 64,000,\(^\text{19}\) Ypres and Bruges had more than 20,000 people, and there were sixty other towns in western Europe with populations of 10,000 or more. Certainly, Namur lacked close access to the sea and the symbiotic relationship of English wool and Flemish cloth workers. But there was another limiting factor and it was ecclesiastical.

The county of Namur lay in the bishopric of Liège and in the archbishopric of Cologne. To understand the reason for this ecclesiastical affiliation, we must recall the struggles which followed the division of Charlemagne’s empire at his death in 814.

\(^{17}\) D.-D. Brouwers, *L'administration et les finances du comté de Namur du XIIIe siècle au XIVe siècle*, series 1. vol. 1. *Cens et rentes du comté de Namur au XIIIe siècle*, Namur, 1910. p. 186. gives the total number of *bonniers* of forest in the county in 1265 as 10,544. The area of a *bonnier* varied between 1.5 and 3 acres. Oak was, and still is, the commonest Namurois wood.

\(^{18}\) Henri Pirenne in his *Histoire de Belgique*, I. 2nd ed., Brussels, 1902. p. 264, estimated the population of the town of Namur at 8,000 at the end of the thirteenth century, based on the valuation of the county undertaken by Philip the Fair in 1294. But in “Une ville en 1422” in *Namur, le site, les hommes*, p. 79. Léopold Genicot estimated it at between 5,000 and 6,000. It would appear that decimations of plague were not countered by birth rates and immigration.

disastrous Frankish policy of splitting the realm amongst the sons was continued by Louis the Pious who divided his kingdom amongst his sons, the most powerful of whom was Charles the Bald. The struggle of the brothers was temporarily resolved in 843 by the Treaty of Verdun, which again divided the empire into three parts. Lothair, a grandson of Charlemagne, received the long middle kingdom whose western boundary generally followed the Rhône, the Saône and the Meuse, from the Mediterranean almost to the North Sea, including Aachen and most of modern Belgium. Over the next hundred years, this realm, known as Lotharingia, swung between France and Germany. Eventually, in 925, Henry the Fowler, the first of a new line of Saxon rulers, won the allegiance of Lotharingian nobles, and in 939, his son, Otto I, annexed Lotharingia to Germany. Hence, the county of Namur, lying in Lotharingia, looked east rather than west, to the see of Liège, to the archbishopric of Cologne, and to the political aegis of the emperor. Liège controlled the right bank of the Meuse, so that Namur was unable to expand across the river to the rich plain of Jambes, but was contained by the left bank of the river and hemmed in by the steep cliffs that were both a fortification and a restraint.

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Ottonian emperors sought to control the unruly princes of their kingdom by establishing what came to be called the Imperial Church. At the head of every bishopric, they placed men on whose fidelity they could depend, and rewarded them with gifts of lands, forests, fishing rights, tolls, fairs and other revenues. Significant for Namur was the appointment of Notger to the see of Liège (972-1008). The first in a long line of warrior-bishops, Notger made Liège a fortified city with a

20 I think that this term was first used by Henri Pirenne in his Histoire de Belgique I, chapter 3, p. 60.
magnificent cathedral dedicated to Saint Lambert, and an imposing episcopal palace of stone, a fine fortress with more solidity than elegance, as Godefroid Kurth remarked. In 974, Otto II conferred on his faithful servant the right to levy tolls, to establish a market and to mint his own money. Successive emperors confirmed the bishop’s immunity and his growing accumulation of Namurois abbeys with their domains. To Fosses and Hastière already in the possession of Saint-Lambert by about 907 were added Gembloux, Notre-Dame de Namur, Brogne and Malonoe. Sometime between 1018 and 1070, the abbey of Florenne with a large number of villages passed to the Bishop of Liège, and in 1070, Emperor Henry IV conferred upon Bishop Théoduin of Bavaria the town of Dinant with its castle, tolls and market rights, as well as the power to mint. The abbeys of Brogne, Hastière and Notre-Dame de Namur remained, however, part of the county of Namur, probably because the counts, beginning with Berenger in 907, succeeded in getting themselves declared avoués, sworn to protect in their own lands the possessions of a neighbouring prince usually hostile to them. The Imperial Church withered away after the Concordat of Worms in 1140; and Otbert (1091-1119) was the last bishop of Liège

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22 These gifts were confirmed by charters which have been published by Stanislas Bormans and E. Schoolmeesters in Cartulaire de l’église de Saint-Lambert de Liège, vol. I, Liège, 1893, p. 10 and ff., and summarized by Félix Rousseau in Henri L’Aveugle. Liège, 1921, p. 23, n. 3.
23 Following the injunctions of St. Paul (e.g. Col. 3:2, 1 Tim. 6:5. II Tim. 2:4), the clergy were not to concern themselves with secular business, nor were they to associate themselves with bloodshed in war or in justice. They therefore confided such tasks to a layman, a guardian of their affairs, called an avoué, whom they reimbursed with various revenues.
24 See, for example, the charter of Henry the Blind to the abbey of Brogne, 1154, wherein he swore, in the presence of the bishop of Liège, to maintain all the abbey’s rights and privileges in all its lands, and to accord to its inhabitants the same liberties enjoyed by the bourgeois of Namur, in Félix Rousseau, Actes des comtes de Namur de la première race, Brussels, 1936, pp. 22-30. However, D.-D. Brouwers in Cens et Rentes I, p. xviii, n. 1, considered an avouerie often to be merely a step in virtual ownership, citing how Emperor Henry V (1106-1125) had to intervene on several occasions against the excesses of Count Godefroid of Namur. See also Léopold Genicot “Entre l’Empire et la France” in Histoire de la Wallonie, Toulouse, 1978, p. 127.
appointed by the emperor. He was followed by Frederick of Namur (1119-1121), whose election was secured by political pressure and influence, different in kind but not in degree from that exercised by the emperor. By this time, the county of Namur was little more than an enclave in the principality of Liège. Not surprisingly, therefore, the history of the commune itself is marked by war with Liège. A brief summary of that history will furnish the necessary base for a study of living standards in Namur during the reign of the House of Dampierre (1263-1429).

While much of the early history of Namur is obscure, its history from the second half of the tenth century is more fully documented. The counts of the première race, as they are called, begin with Berenger (907-937), although there is some doubt that he actually resided in Namur. The names of these counts are listed below. While the rule passed uninterruptedly from father to son, there are hiatuses in their dates. From Berenger to Albert II, we have dates only when the ruler is mentioned for the first or last time. From Albert III on, documentation provides the dates of accession and death.

Berenger v.907-v.937  
Robert I v.946-v.974  
Albert I v.981-1011  
Robert II v.1013-1018  
Albert II v.1031-v.1063/4  
Albert III v.1063/4-1102  
Godefroid 1102-1139  
Henry the Blind 1139-1196

Some of these counts merit mention. Albert II, about 1047, founded the chapter of Saint-Aubain as a counterweight, it would seem, to the ancient collegiate church of Notre-Dame, located in the oldest part of the town, between the Meuse, the Sambre and the

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25 This is the opinion of Georges Despy in “L’agglomération urbaine”, p. 66.  
26 See Appendix 1 for a complete list of the counts of Namur.
rocky face of Champeau. It belonged to the bishop of Liège, the count being no more than the avoué. Here is another example of the ecclesiastical rivalry which marked the history of Namur. Clearly, the count wished to establish a collegiate church of secular canons of which he would be the sole master, and which would be the centre of the religious life of his town. He located it in a suburb on the left bank of the Sambre, on the site of an ancient oratory said to have been founded by Pope Cornelius in the first century, trumping the claim of Notre-Dame to have been founded by Saint Materne. Later, it would comprise a cluster of important civic and ecclesiastical buildings, enclosed by a fortified wall.  

While the penetrations of Liégeois bishops into Namurois territories continued to be ratified by the emperors and continued to provoke serious conflicts, Namurois counts sought aggrandizement by advantageous marriages. So, Albert III married Ida, widow of Frederick, Duke of Lower Lotharingia, who brought to her new husband the lands which became the county of Laroche. Yet in 1070, when Emperor Henry IV ceded to the cathedral chapter of Liège the castle, minting rights, tolls and market of Dinant, the bishop did not, strangely, exercise his jus monetae, while Albert continued to do so. Some of his extant coins show the fortified stone bridge of Dinant, built in 1080 by agreement of Albert, the bishop of Liège, and Godescalc, abbot of Walsort, of which abbey Albert was avoué.  

Indeed, from 1076 to 1087, Albert, as vice-duke of Lower Lotharingia, was its most important lord. His eldest son, Godefroid, was married about 1087 to Sibylle, daughter of the count of Château-Porcien, whose lands Albert bought; and in 1099, he obtained the county of Brugeron in the Hesbaye.  

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27 When the diocese of Namur was formed by the bull Ex injuncto of Pius IV, dated 11 March 1561, Saint-Aubain was designated the cathedral church.
28 This charter dated 1 September 1080, is published in Félix Rousseau, Actes, pp. 92-95.
Godefroid's marriage to Sibylle led to a cause célèbre. While her husband was away fighting, she began a life of wantonness and took as her lover Enguerrand de Coucy, older than she and notorious for his immorality. Pregnant and terrified of her husband, she fled for safety to Enguerrand, with whom she lived as his concubine, not without numerous passing affairs. Godefroid's revenge was fearful. He relentlessly ravaged the lands of Enguerrand and others who had enjoyed Sibylle's favours; every man whom he caught was blinded, mutilated or hanged. He must have obtained an annulment of this marriage, however, for in 1109 he was married to Ermesinde of Luxembourg who brought him, in her dowry, the revenues of the county of Longwy (now in France just south of the Luxembourg border). Of this marriage, there were two sons, Albert, who died young about 1127, and Henry, who succeeded to the county, as well as three daughters, all of whom made important marriages; the youngest, Alice, became the wife of Count Baudouin IV of Hainaut.

When Henry, called the Blind, became count in 1139, the House of Namur had reached its apogee, comprising the counties of Namur, Luxembourg, Longwy and Laroche, and Durbuy, on the River Ourthe in what is now the province of Luxembourg. In addition, Henry was avoué of the three richest abbeys in Lotharingia, and inheritor, from his mother, of the town of Maestricht. But his marriages, like those of his father, caused trouble. His first wife, Laurette of Flanders, left him about 1162 to enter a nunnery and the marriage, childless, was dissolved. Now, some fifty years of age and worried about the succession of the county, in June 1163, at Heppignies, in a convocation of his vassals, he

\[29\] Saint Maximin in Trèves, Eternach in Luxembourg and Stavelot-Malmédy in Liège.
\[30\] He had, however, pledged the town to the emperor for 1600 marks of silver.
ceded to his sister Alice, to her husband, the Count of Hainaut, and to Baudouin, their eldest son, all the allods which he had inherited, retaining, however, the income thereof until his death.31 This charter designated the allodial, but not the feudal, succession to Henry. In 1168, still hopeful of an heir, he married Agnes, daughter of Count Henry of Guelders, who promised to pay the emperor the necessary sum to redeem Maestricht.

When, after four years, he had still failed to do so, Henry returned Agnes to her father. He had not slept with her.

Ten years later, in the winter of 1182-83, Henry fell gravely ill and his nephew, Baudouin of Hainaut, came to visit him. Henry had lost the sight of one eye in childhood and now he lost the use of the other. Old, ill and blind, without wife or child, Henry now determined to confirm Baudouin in his feudal inheritance.32 On 1 April 1184, the solemn investment took place at Gerpinnes per cespitem et ramum.33 There remained the necessary confirmation by Frederick Barbarossa, which was made on 11 March 1184, and at the same time, the emperor raised the lands to the status of a marquisate, fusing all the allods into a single principality and making Baudouin a prince of the empire.34 To counteract this threatening association of Hainaut and Namur, the duke of Brabant and other enemies of Baudouin sought to reconcile Henry with his wife, Agnes. They succeeded and mirabile dictu, in July 1186, a daughter, Ermesinde, was born. By law, she was entitled to her father's allods and, in the absence of a son, other things being equal, to

32 Félix Rousseau, Actes, pp. 55-58.
33 That is, by the transfer of a clod of earth and a wooden rod. If the vassal wished to break the commitment, he came before his lord and broke the rod in his presence.
34 Heretofore, the five counties had lacked cohesion, linked only by the person of the count, each keeping its own judiciary and economic autonomy.
the feudal succession as well. But other things were far from being equal. There were two steps that Henry should have taken: to obtain permission from the emperor for Ermesinde’s succession, and to recompense Baudouin in some way. He failed to do either. Instead, he concerned himself with finding a suitable husband for Ermesinde. His choice was Henry II, Count of Champagne, who was betrothed to Ermesinde in July 1187 at a great assembly of vassals at Namur in the cemetery of Saint-Aubain, the location adding weight to the solemn oaths of allegiance. The affront to Baudouin was insupportable.

With the tacit approval of the emperor, who feared the “French connection” in Namur, Baudouin invaded the county in 1188. He was accompanied by his devoted chancellor, Gislebert of Mons, who recorded the reasons for Baudouin’s invasion and his regret over the ensuing pillage and fire - the usual sequence of events in medieval warfare. The war dragged on, interrupted by periods of truce, with Baudouin in firm command of Namurois territory on the left bank, and Henry ensconced in Luxembourg. To break the stalemate, Henry led an expedition against his nephew, but was defeated on 1 August 1194 at Noville-sur-Mehaigne. Baudouin died in December of the following year, and the county of Namur passed to a younger son, Philip, called the Noble (1196-1212). In August of 1196, Henry the Blind also died. Soon afterwards, his daughter

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35 The Count of Champagne did not come to the support of the Namurois. In 1191, he went on crusade, and the following year, he married the daughter of the king of Jerusalem where he died in 1197. Little Ermesinde, still in Champagne, was returned to her father.

36 See La chronique de Gislebert de Mons, ed. Léon Vankindere. Brussels. 1904. pp. 215-222. Gislebert’s mention of nine rolls of cloth, both wool and linen, taken amongst the booty, has given rise to much speculation about a twelfth-century drapery industry in Namur. On this, see Georges Despy, “L’agglomération urbaine”, p. 77, which suggests that this booty signifies trade in cloth rather than an industry.
Ermesinde married a Lorrainer, Thibaut of Bar, who attempted to re-take his wife’s lands in September 1197, but was repulsed.

The Treaty of Dinant signed on 26 July 1199 marked a turning-point in the affairs of Namur, for it partitioned the lands of Henry the Blind between Thibaut and Ermesinde on the one hand, and Baudouin, count of Flanders and Hainaut, and his brother, Philip the Noble, on the other. Ermesinde and Thibaut kept, as a fief of Hainaut, the counties of Laroche, Durbuy and Luxembourg and a good deal of Namur territory on the right bank of the Meuse (the later provostship of Poilvache). The rest of the Namurois went to Philip. The waters of the Meuse from Revin to Andenne, which hitherto had belonged to Namur, were now shared between the two signatories. The result was a serious reduction in the county of Namur. With no male heir to Henry the Blind, the counts of the première race came to an end. Philip the Noble, dead at age thirty-seven, also lacked an heir. With his death in 1212, the county passed to his sister, Yolende, who had married Pierre of the House of Courtenay.

While the history of the county was complicated because neither Henry the Blind nor Philip the Noble had male heirs, that subsequent history was also entangled because Yolende and Pierre de Courtenay had seven daughters and five sons, four of the latter becoming counts of Namur.\textsuperscript{37} It was further complicated by their involvement in the affairs of Constantinople. We recall that it was Philip the Noble, the second son of Baudouin V, who inherited Namur in 1196. The reason was that the eldest son, Baudouin VI of Hainaut and IX of Flanders, took part in the fourth crusade. In 1204, in Santa Sophia, he was

\textsuperscript{37} The second son, Pierre, entered the Church. The other four played short but active parts in the history of Namur.
consecrated emperor. The next year, he was taken prisoner at Adrianople and died in obscure circumstances. The imperial crown passed briefly to his brother Henry who also died suddenly in 1216. Next, it was offered to his brother-in-law, Pierre de Courtenay.

He and Yolende set out with their escort for Rome where they were crowned emperor and empress of Constantinople. The empress, who was pregnant, completed the journey from Brindisi by ship; her husband, on the other hand, made the fatal mistake of travelling overland. In the mountains of Albania, he fell into an ambush, his troops were massacred and he was taken prisoner. He died in captivity sometime in 1217-1218.

Yolende, named regent, was delivered of a son, Baudouin, late in 1217, but in 1219, she too died.

Three of her sons had been left in Europe. Philip, the eldest, was content to be count of Namur (1216-1226), but the second son, Robert, accepted the eastern crown. However, his reign, too, was both short and ineffectual. When he died in 1228, the youngest son, Baudouin, was a lad of ten. Again, the empire was governed by a regent, John of Brienne, until the boy came of age.

Meanwhile, the fortunes of the de Courtenay family in Namur were not much better. Philip took part in the Albigensian crusade and contracted a fatal disease in 1226.\(^{38}\)

As Philip was unmarried, Namur passed to his brother, Henry, who himself died in 1229. The last son of this unhappy family was Baudouin, now eleven years old, in Constantinople. But there was an older sister, Marguerite, who had married Henry, Count of Vianden; Namur passed into their hands, although the succession was hotly challenged

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\(^{38}\) Félix Rousseau, in Namur, ville mosane, pp. 56 ff., to which I am indebted for this short account. says of the disease only that it was “la maladie contagieuse qui décimait les croisés” who were besieging Avignon.
by Ferrand of Portugal, husband of Countess Joan of Flanders (1205-1249). He took arms and marched to Floreffe, which he burned in the customary manner. An accommodation was made; he and his wife kept two castles near the border of Hainaut, and the rest of the county was held by the Viandens until 1237.

In that year, Baudouin de Courtenay attained the age of twenty-one. He was already known in the west, having been kindly received by the French king, Louis IX (1226-1270), who dreamed of another crusade to the Holy Land. To raise an army and try to bolster up his tottering eastern empire, Baudouin pawned the county of Namur to the French king for £50,000 parisis, and returned to Constantinople. He was crowned emperor as Baudouin II in Santa Sophia in 1239. But he was back in Europe again in 1246-1247, knocking on doors for money, and reminding the Namurois that he was still their count by staying from time to time in the castle in Namur. His wife, Marie of Brienne, also kept alive the needs of Constantinople. Beloved by Blanche, the queen mother, Marie lived at the French court until the old queen’s death in 1253. Then she took up residence in Namur where she sought to support her husband’s eastern cause by means of subsidies that only she had authorized.

The Namurois, however, had enjoyed a charter of freedoms, now lost, from at least the early twelfth century (see p. 29). They responded to the despotism and fiscal oppression of Empress Marie by revolt. It began, according to the lively account of the

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39 Golzinne and Viesville with their dependencies. Ferrand renounced his claim to these before his death in 1233.
40 La chronique de Rains, ed. Louis Paris, Paris, 1837, cap. xxx, p. 224, recounts how Pope Innocent IV gave him a thirty-year tithe, and his aunt, Queen Blanche of France, contributed £20,000 to his cause.
41 Félix Rousseau, Namur, ville mosane, p. 62, refers to an act of 12 June 1247, drawn in Namur, in which Baudouin set out the disposition of the county. Should he die or be taken prisoner. The county was to be under the guardianship of the king of France.
chronicler of Rains, with unruly sons of Namurois aristocrats who gave rise to numerous complaints. Going about in rowdy bands of a dozen or so, they would frequent taverns, drink their fill and then force someone of petty lignage to pay their bill, and if he refused, they would set upon him and take his money by force. The empress complained to the parents of these youths, commanding that their sons be corrected, which the parents promised to do. But the outrages continued. Again, acting despocratically and without recourse to the magistracy, the empress instructed her bailiff to arrest these young ruffians. Attempting to do so without sufficient support, he was set upon and killed. Enraged, the empress summoned all the bourgeois, demanding that a number of them stand surety with their lives and goods until the murderers were handed over. They refused, and it would appear that she lacked the power to enforce her command, for soon afterwards, the bourgeoisie invited Henry Blondel, the son of Ernesinde, to receive their fealty. This he gladly did, for he had never ceased to consider the Treaty of Dinant as a mere truce in the struggle of his mother and himself to recover the county. In December 1256, Empress Marie fled to France, and Henry entered Namur with an army. But while the town was his, the castle officer and garrison remained loyal to Marie and managed to withstand a long siege. Finally, however, on 22 January 1258, famine forced capitulation.

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42 See La chronique de Rains, cap. xxx, pp. 226-227. This account is followed almost verbatim by Jules Borgnet and Stanislas Bormans in Histoire de la commune de Namur au XIVe et au XVe siècles [sic], Namur, 1876, pp. 51-55. Félix Rousseau, in Namur, ville mosane. p. 63, cautions against what he calls "cet épisode...légendaire". Nevertheless, in his Légendes et coutumes du pays de Namur, 2nd ed., Brussels, 1971, pp. 88 and ff., he describes companies of young men, called "la jeunesse", who took part in local patronal festivals, demanding therefor their "dreschéen", that is to say, plates of meat and litres of wine. Well into the 18th century, in outlying villages, they demanded payment of a filletage or valtonage of every girl or youth respectively, who married a stranger, and they were prepared to extract it by force.
Henry Blondel was master of the county, and Namur and Luxembourg were reunited as they had been under Henry the Blind. So ended the House of Courtenay in Namur.

On 25 July 1261, Constantinople and its “Venetian Empire” fell. Baudouin escaped and until his death in 1272, he wandered about the courts of Europe, nursing his dream of support for a war of re-conquest. It was a futile hope. He was obliged in 1262 to commission his son Philip to sell or pawn Namur. A buyer was found in Guy of Dampierre, who offered £20,000 parisis. Henry Blondel was no match for the army of Guy. By a peace concluded in 1264, Guy, now a widower, agreed to marry Isabelle of Luxembourg, daughter of Henry Blondel, who gave her the county of Namur as a dowry. and it was further agreed that the children of Guy and Isabelle would inherit Namur, to the exclusion of Guy’s children by his first marriage. So began the reign of the House of Dampierre in Namur.

By the late thirteenth century, the waning feudal system in western Europe had produced a tangled underbrush of allegiances and affiliations. Consequently, on the lower levels of vassalage, lords could find themselves pulled in conflicting directions when their feudal obligations did not correspond with their own perceived best interests. Likewise, when lords sought aggrandizement of their holdings through conquest or through favourable marriages, their strategies might be blocked by their overlords. Such was the predicament of Guy of Dampierre in Flanders, with significant consequence for Namur.43

Guy was born about 1226 to Marguerite of Constantinople, Countess of Hainaut and later also of Flanders, by her second marriage to William of Dampierre. Marguerite

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43 The count of Namur was the vassal of the German emperor, but as count of Flanders, he was the vassal of the French king. The county of Namur was a fief of Hainaut.
had been married in 1212, however, to Bouchard of Avesnes by whom she had borne two sons, John and Baudouin. That marriage was annulled on the grounds that Bouchard, like many younger sons, had been promised to the priesthood, and the two boys were declared bastards by Gregory IX in 1237, although recognized as legitimate by the emperor.\textsuperscript{44} John, the elder of these two, considered himself, with some justification, as the rightful heir to Flanders and Hainaut. The dispute was resolved in 1246 by Innocent III and Louis IX, who decided that John of Avesnes should rule Hainaut and Guy of Dampierre, Flanders. Between the two half-brothers there remained bitter enmity.

Like his mother, Guy also had two marriages, first to Mathilda of Béthune by whom he had three sons and three daughters, and following her death (as agreed in 1264), to Isabelle of Luxembourg. Of this union there were also three sons as well as five daughters, the former guaranteeing uncontested succession and the latter bolstering and extending his sphere of influence by their advantageous marriages.

In 1265, Guy ordered a census of his newly acquired county, which was to bring him an excellent financial return well in excess of 10 per cent per annum.\textsuperscript{45} His motive in ordering the census appears to have been to establish himself firmly as ruler in the county, which had suffered a half-century of absentee lords and civic unrest, and to make unequivocal the revenue due him. In 1266, he further solidified his position by constituting a company of one hundred crossbowmen. These were all bourgeois, sworn to the service

\textsuperscript{44} Yielding to pressure, Marguerite in 1222 left Bouchard, who had been excommunicated, and married William of Dampierre the following year.

\textsuperscript{45} From D.-D. Brouwers, \textit{Cens et Rentes I.}, pp. 1-186, I have calculated that Guy’s income from the county, excluding dues in kind, \textit{tailles}, \textit{bans}, \textit{corvées}, court fines, \textit{mortmain} and \textit{formorture}, as well as income from vineyards and forests (none of which were evaluated in the census), amounted to some £2,000 parisis per year. It is beyond the scope of this work to evaluate Guy’s income from Flanders.
of the count and the town; their unique status was indicated by their denomination, not as a guild, but as a grand serment. Like other bourgeois, they were exempt from feudal dues, but unlike their peers, they paid two deniers louvainois per year as bourgeois tax instead of two sous, and they were excused from watch duty. Moreover, when military need arose to take them out of the town, they received twelve deniers louvainois per day as well as free cartage of their equipment, whereas other bourgeois got neither.\textsuperscript{46} Guy appears to have needed no stronger military support in Namur, for his rapport with Louis IX and then Philip III was excellent. Both supported him against the House of Avesnes and any latent threat from Brabant or Liège. Indeed, they helped to make him the most powerful prince in the Low Countries, which status he enjoyed at the accession of Philip IV in 1285. Thus, while Guy was exercised by the turbulent factions of patriciate and artisans in Flanders, Namur gave him quiet enjoyment of his substantial income. In 1268, for example, after a disagreement between Guy and the bourgeois, the latter, “to ensure his peace and love”, agreed to pay their count a fine of £1,000 louvainois in five half-yearly instalments of £200 each.\textsuperscript{47} Since the town did not possess such a large sum, the mayor was authorized to levy a tax of two deniers louvainois on every setier of wine and one denier louvainois on every hanap of beer sold in the city during the following year.\textsuperscript{48}

Guy’s rapport with Philip IV remained good during the early years of the king’s reign. In 1289, a marriage was proposed between Guy’s son, John, and Blanche of France.

\textsuperscript{46} Their charter was published by Jules Borget in Cartulaire de la commune de Namur, vol. I, Namur, 1871, pp. 46-48.

\textsuperscript{47} At this time, £1000 louvainois = £1500 tournois (approx.) = £1200 parisis (approx.).

\textsuperscript{48} It is difficult to identify these measures. According to Léopold Genicot in L’économie rurale I, p. xxxiv, a setier rase of grain contained 30.23 litres, but the setier was used for liquid as well as dry measures. It would appear, therefore, that this tax fell on importing or manufacturing merchants who doubtless passed it on to the populace. The decree is published in Cart. Nam. I, pp. 49-50.
sister of Philip IV, the terms of which were formally drawn up in November 1290. But Philip was meddling in Flanders and his intervention in Ghent in 1287 enabled its Council of XXXIX there to flout Guy. By 1293, war had broken out in Guyenne between Edward I and Philip, and it appeared that an imminent English invasion would come through Flanders. At this point, on 31 August 1294, Guy contracted, by the Treaty of Lierre, the marriage of his daughter Philippa with Edward’s eldest son, believing that he could maintain the neutrality of Flanders, and that, if necessary, Edward would support him against Philip. On 2 September 1294, Philip ordered a census of the income of Namur, ostensibly to verify the terms of the betrothal of John and Blanche. On 28 September 1294, Philip summoned Guy and his wife to Paris on a pretext and restrained both of them there until Philippa was handed over to him to be raised with his children. On 9 January 1297, ambassadors of Guy presented his manifesto of grievances against Philip: the arrest of Philippa and Guy’s humiliating confinement, the alliance of Philip with Guy’s arch-enemy, John of Avesnes, Philip’s monetary ordinances, and his prohibition of Flemish commerce with England. Guy’s allegiance to Philip IV was broken. In September, Philip invaded Flanders. Despite the failure of Edward I to make good his promise of military and financial support, the old count fought on, assisted by various truces, but finally in May 1300, he capitulated. He and his sons, Robert of Béthune and William of Crévecourt, arrived in Paris as prisoners five days before the marriage of Blanche to the Duke of

50 D.-D. Brouwers, Cens et Rentes I, pp. 187-291. The total valuation per year, exclusive of dues, land sales, court fines and minting, was £13,804. The kind of pound was not stated.
51 She died in the Louvre in 1306.
Austria. Held first at the Châtelet, they were later sent to separate French castles. Guy went to Compiègne where, according to Funck-Bretano, he lived like a great lord on an annual pension of £6,000 parisis. He died there, 7 March 1305, just before the ravages of the Treaty of Athis-sur-Orge (1305).

Meanwhile, the people of Namur patiently paid their dues and went about their business - with one exception. In 1293, while Guy was in Flanders, the commune rebelled for two reasons which can be clearly inferred from the so-called “accord” reached between Guy and the town in December of that year. First, the Namurois asserted that Guy “may not and cannot punish or govern except insofar as the laws of the town permit”. These laws, which Guy had sworn to uphold, were set forth in a charter (now lost to us) pre-dating 1121, when Godefroid founded the abbey of Floreffe and guaranteed to its people the same rights as Namur enjoyed. The townsfolk were proud of their freedom from arbitrary taxes and legal decisions of their counts and had last defended their rights forty years earlier, against Empress Marie. Second, they contended that they were free of the duty of ost et chevaussée (military service at the call of the lord). The cens et rentes of 1265 made no mention of this service for the town of Namur, although it was specifically spelled out as a due from every other town, village or hamlet in the county. If, however, so the townsfolk asserted, they did answer the lord’s call to defend their town or county or even some private concern of the lord, they were entitled to be paid their expenses.

53 The betrothal of Blanche and John was never formally abrogated.
55 For an account of the French-Flemish war, see Henri Pirenne, Histoire de Belgique I, pp. 367-382, which is sympathetic, of course, to Flanders. For an interesting account of the Treaty of Athis, see Hans Van Werveke. “Les charges financières issues du traité d’Athis (1305)” in RN, 32 (1950), pp. 81-93.
56 Baron Frédéric de Reiffenberg, Monuments, p. 264.
Doubtless, they thought of their brother bourgeois in the crossbow company, who had several perquisites, including per diem pay. Guy rejected both of these claims. Clearly angry that the peace of the town was disturbed, he was swift and harsh in his sentence. There were, he said, deeds which could have turned to danger, although there was no mention of loss of property or life. Henceforth, no assembly of the commonalty might take place without the permission of himself or the mayor. Two of the ringleaders were sentenced to judicial pilgrimages to Saint Nicholas in Bari and might return to Namur only at Guy’s pleasure. Five more were sent to Saint James of Compostela, seven to Saint Giles in Provence. Twelve, who by their names appear to have been artisans, were banished for life, and fifteen more for three years, all to be gone by sunrise the following Sunday. One can only conjecture how their lives must have been shattered. We do not know whether the bourgeois were permitted to commute their pilgrimages into fines.58

In view of all the foregoing troubles of Guy, it is not surprising that in 1298 he named his eldest son, John, count of Namur. John had taken part in the Flemish victory at Courtrai in 1302, but after 1305, he espoused the winning French faction and in 1308, he married Marguerite of Clermont, granddaughter of Louis IX and cousin of Philip IV. But Marguerite’s health was frail. She died early in 1309 and the next year, John married Marie of Artois who gave him seven sons and four daughters.

Like his father, John spent most of his reign outside of his county, while his wife and children lived in one or other of the comital castles in Namur. And against him, as against his father, the citizens of Namur rebelled in 1313. Paul de Croonendael, Namur’s

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58 See the sentence of Guy in Baron Frédéric de Reiffenberg, Monuments, pp. 266-269.
earliest historian, writing in the sixteenth century, remarked, “L’on dict que l’occasion fut la grande exaction dont il [John] travailloit ses subjectz...” 59 Like the rising of 1293, it took place during the count’s absence, but this time, the rebels were armed. They besieged the castle on Champeau where the countess and her children were living, and then were themselves besieged in the town by the arrival of John, assisted by the count of Looz. The town was taken and the citizens humbly and publicly acknowledged their guilt.60 The punishment, proclaimed 24 September 1313, was fourfold. First, sixty men, whom John would choose, were sentenced to pilgrimage to Saint James of Compostela, ten each year, beginning at the next mid-Lent. Second, twenty-four other miscreants were to be imprisoned at the pleasure of the count and at their own expense. Third, a committee of bourgeois would investigate claims of property damage, and finally, the whole town was fined £8,000 tournois, two-thirds of which would come from a taille on each inhabitant, and one-third from a tax on imports.

While John had no more trouble with his Namur commonalty, he was considerably exercised by a small-scale but costly war which began towards the end of 1319 with skirmishes between the fiercely rival towns of Dinant and Bouvignes. To support Dinant, the bishop of Liège sent a sizable army, which besieged Bouvignes unsuccessfully from June to August of 1321. John responded by ravaging the Liégeois lands of the Hesbaye and inflicting heavy damage at harvest-time. The war dragged on until November 1322 when a truce was reached. The bishop of Liège excommunicated John for his destruction and pillage of church property and the chapter at Liège instituted a suit at the papal court

against John, which he countered. Finally, in March 1326, this long and costly process was settled by arbitration. John had to return the goods and revenues which he had seized and pay a heavy indemnity for the damages which he had caused. It is not known to what extent he was able to foist this penalty onto his Namurois subjects.

John continued his active military life. In 1328, he was at the battle of Cassel, supporting the French against the Flemish insurgents. He had also cherished for some time, as his father had done, the project of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and had received papal approval for it, to be accompanied by his young son, Guy; but in Paris early in 1330, he suddenly fell ill and died on 26 January.

Of three of his four sons who became counts, there is little to say. They were all without legitimate offspring, and they were all adventurers who passed their lives outside of Namur. John II (1330-1335) made two expeditions against the pagan Prussians and died upon his return from the second. Guy II (1335-1336) campaigned briefly in Scotland with the English king and died at age twenty of wounds sustained at a tournament in Flanders. His biographer describes him as utterly disinterested in public duties, a man who loved high living and adventuring, and who prodigally spent the revenues of his county.61 Philip III (1336-1337) accompanied his sister, Blanche, to Sweden for her marriage to Magnus II, and then set out for the Orient, one presumes on pilgrimage. However, scarcely had the company disembarked at Cyprus, when the citizens of Famagusta fell upon it, apparently enraged by its excesses, and massacred the whole troop.62

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The saying that the grandsire founds the fortune, the son enriches it, and the grandson squanders it, was certainly not true of William I, the fourth son of John I and the grandson of Guy of Dampierre. His comital rule lasted fifty-four years (1337-1391), largely in peace and prosperity. Such was not the case, however, in France and Flanders, and William was closely associated with French interests. Most notably, he lent 20,000 moutons d'or (£26,600 tournois) to Rouen (at 11 per cent interest) as that town's contribution to the ransom of the French king, John II, captured by the Black Prince at Maupertuis. He had an income for life of £1,000 parisis from Philip VI, plus £400 parisis per month for his military service. He and his son, with their mercenaries, fought with the French against the Gantois rebels and the English at the battle of Roosebeke in 1382.

Surnamed "the Rich" and with good reason, William owed a great deal of his wealth to his wives: first, Jeanne, only daughter of John of Avesnes, whose dowry amounted to £50,000 tournois, and second, Catherine of Savoy, widow of a Visconti lord of Milan, who brought to William the proceeds of the sale of her lands in 1359 - 160,000 gold florins. Of this marriage, there were two sons. William was also enriched territorially. In 1344, his mother, Marie of Artois, had purchased the Poilvache and its

63 Joseph Balon, "La contribution de Guillaume le Riche, comte de Namur, à la rançon du roi Jean II (1360)". Namarcum 20 (1943), p. 7. The total amount of the ransom was 400,000 écus philippes. As the mouton d'or and the écu philippes were at par, William I in fact lent one-twentieth of the whole ransom.
64 In 1350, the gold Florentine florin was worth £1.5.0 tournois; see Peter Spufford, Money and Its Use in Medieval Europe, Cambridge. 1985, p. 292. Thus, Catherine brought to William the enormous sum of £200,000 tournois or £160,000 parisis.
dependencies for 27,400 Florentine florins,\textsuperscript{65} and at her death in 1366, these lands passed to William.\textsuperscript{66}

While the young count was in Burgundy for his wedding to Catherine in March 1352, the peace of his reign was briefly broken by a revolt of the guilds, led by the weavers, for a cause which we do not know; but it was quickly put down. The count and his council of nobles together with the mayor and town officials were assembled at the castle, in the Salle de l’impératrice (named for Empress Marie), whither came the guilty, bare-footed and bare-headed, to kneel for sentencing. Twenty-one, including one woman, were banished at the pleasure of the count for their lawlessness and their defamatory remarks about the “exalted jurisdiction and lordship of our dear lord”. Fourteen others were sentenced to judicial pilgrimages; these were the elected heads of weavers, tailors, cartwrights, iron-workers, saddlers and mercers. Two were especially singled out, one for incitement to revolt, and the other for taking the boats of foreign merchants. They were declared beyond the jurisdiction of the law; their lives, bodies and goods lay in the hands of the count.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65} D.-D. Brouwers. \textit{Cens et Rentes} I, p. xix. The purchase price was equal to £34,250 tournois.

\textsuperscript{66} Edouard Bernays’ article “Marie d’Artois comtesse de Namur, dame de l’Ecluse et de Poilvache”. \textit{ASAN} 37 (1925), pp. 1-81. describes her will on pp. 78-81. Besides generous gifts to her children, her ladies-in-waiting and her servants, she made bequests to every church in Namur and to the Franciscans and Croisiers there, as well as to every abbey in the county. She also left gifts to all the churches in the towns which lay in her dowry in Flanders, and to four hospitals there. To each of the Franciscan houses in Huy, Dinant, Nivelles and Bruges, she bequeathed 500 Namurois florins (£500 tournois) and on the day of her funeral. 500 poor people in Namur received a florin each. She directed that her funeral was to cost 1,200 old écus (approximately £1,596 tournois) and that 1,000 old écus (approximately £1,330 tournois) were to be spent for her marble tomb in the Franciscan church in Namur. See AGR, Chartes de Namur, no. 960.

\textsuperscript{67} Jules Borgnet and Stanislas Bormans. \textit{Cartulaire de la commune de Namur}, vol. II, Namur, 1873, pp. 18-23.
The revolutionary climate which swept over western Europe in the second half of the fourteenth century spared Namur from the excesses suffered by France and Flanders. However, a conjunction of factors in Namur caused outbreaks of civil violence in the 1360s. There was a dearth in 1361-1363, and the plague, which had largely passed over Namur in 1349, struck with ferocity in 1361-1362, in 1382, and again in 1399-1400. In addition, special taxes had been enforced, beginning in 1357, to pay for new town fortifications. In 1363, there was a conspiracy and short-lived revolt against the count; a bourgeois was killed, but peace was soon restored. In November of 1366, a more serious disturbance occurred. Many artisans conceived the notion that the grain hall was to be torn down and the grain carried away. A mob gathered and assaulted the collector of the grain tax as well as a moneyer. That night, fortified by iron-workers and cartwrights, the townsfolk threatened to break into the house of a bourgeois who they suspected had grain from the hall stored on his premises. Again, judgment was swift and efficacious; seven ringleaders were banished, to be gone from the city by dawn on Christmas Day.

But relations between Namur and its neighbouring counties remained peaceful with the single exception of the so-called Battle of Meefe in 1384. A certain Ruffin Pellette, a Lombard, had pledged himself to another Lombard, named Lukin de Chastelneuf, for a sum of money which he needed quickly. Then Lukin signed the note over to the town of Huy. When the note became overdue, the town of Huy summoned Pellette to appear

68 See Léopold Genicot, “Crisis: From the Middle Ages to Modern Times” in Cambridge Economic History, vol. I, ed. M. Postan, Cambridge, 1966, p. 694. In commenting on the decline in land rents and the “price scissors” effect following the Black Death, Genicot remarks that rents also fell “even in Namur, which had been spared by the first great outbreak of pestilence...” However, Jeanne, the first wife of Count William I, died of plague in 1350.
69 Cart. Nam. II, p. 82, n. 1.
70 Ibid., pp. 78-81.
before a court in Meefe, which was a Liégeois enclave in the north-western corner of the county of Namur. Meanwhile, Pellette notified the Namurois authorities that he, a bourgeois of Namur, was to be tried by a Liégeois court. It was clearly an affront to Namurois authority and privilege. A force of Namurois was sent to block the roads leading to Meefe, and when a small troop of Liégeois soldiers appeared, it was ambushed and fourteen of the party were killed. Reprisals escalated with burnings and seizures of persons, livestock and other goods. The bishop of Liège laid an interdict on Namur. Eventually, after a great deal of damage suffered on both sides, the hostilities were ended by arbitration; prisoners were exchanged, ransoms were annulled and - what was the crux of the whole affair - the town of Huy agreed that Pellette should appear before a Namurois court. As for the fourteen Liégeois killed, the arbiters sentenced, for each one, four Namurois to go on pilgrimage at a total estimated cost for each foursome of seventy-five gold French francs. Each Liégeois family decided to accept the gold francs in recompense for the deaths of their kinsmen.71

There was one more, minor, civil rising in January 1371, whose cause we do not know, but which involved the whole of the commonalty except the mayor, échevins and sergeant. It was settled by Robert, the count’s brother.72 For the rest of William’s reign, there was, outwardly at any rate, concord in the town, which fostered the growth of trade and industry. Of this and of the administrative and financial policies of William, we shall have more to say later.

71 I am indebted for this account to an article by Joseph Balon, “Les causes juridiques de la bataille de Meefe en 1384” in Namurcum 24 (1949), pp. 24-27. The gold French franc was worth £1 tournois. See Peter Spufford. Money and Its Use, p. 413.
72 Cart. Nam. II, pp. 82-86.
William II (1391-1418) continued the custom of his uncles, John II, Guy II and Philip III, in jockeying about Europe, supported by his county which, in his early days, he rarely visited. At the age of seventeen, just having been knighted, he was taken prisoner at the battle of Bastweiler in August 1371. His ransom of 37,400 Brabant moutons, towards which his father lent him 18,000 moutons, was paid in part by 8,000 moutons given to him by his Namurois subjects. In an aide of 30 November 1383, he and his brother were given 6,000 florins, payable over seven years, to settle debts contracted in their journeyings. He also enjoyed an annual income of 2,500 moutons from his father. In many respects, he was like his father. He married twice, first in 1384 to Marie of Bar, a granddaughter of the French king, John II; a wedding gift of 1,500 moutons from his Namurois subjects was made possible by a forced loan levied on two hundred persons. Seven years later, widowed, he married Jeanne of Harcourt, cousin of Charles VI, of whom he was a close friend and confidante. He was also highly valued by the duke of Burgundy, who made him governor at Antwerp and at Malines. He did not, however, entirely neglect his Namurois subjects. He made his Joyous Entry into Namur in October 1391, and received a war horse worth some 500 moutons. A month later, Jeanne of Harcourt was also formally welcomed and given gifts worth 500 French francs.

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73 Ibid., p. 88. "... c'est assavoir un double d'or du dit pays pour deux de dis moutons."
74 Ibid., pp. 133-134, n. 2. This diploma, now lost, is known to us only through a reference in Paul de Croonendael. The florins are identified as "florins à moutons". The comptes de la ville for 1383 are missing.
75 AEN. Comptes de la ville. 1386 (unspecifed) cited by Jules Borgnet, "Des corps des métiers et des serments de la ville de Namur depuis les origines jusqu'à l'avènement de Philippe le Bon, 1429" in Messager des Sciences historiques et Archives des Arts de Belgique, Ghent, 1847, p. 99 and note 1.
Two catastrophes occurred during his reign. In 1400, there was another outbreak of plague so severe that the school of Notre-Dame was abandoned and demolished, and the ground used for a cemetery.\(^7\) In February 1409, there was a disastrous flood. Three of the four city gates collapsed. The portcullis of the part of the castle at the foot of Champeau was swept downstream. Portions of the city walls, recently completed, were destroyed, as were wharfs, boats, warehouses and their contents. The bridge over the Sambre was washed away. Loss of life was small, but the material loss was crippling and it had not been recovered when William II died, childless, in 1418.

His brother John succeeded him. This younger son of William the Rich was married but without legitimate children, and burdened with years and debts. He had spent much of his time and money at the French court and in travel, even to Asia and Africa. Desiring to provide for his illegitimate son, Philip, he determined to sell Namur.\(^8\) But there were other reasons. His brother William had spent large sums of their father’s riches on military expeditions, and had borrowed heavily. The town’s fortifications were still seriously inadequate and war with Liège was again threatening. John held it essential to arrange the transfer of the county before his death in order to spare it the trauma of invasions by neighbouring princes. He found an eager buyer in Duke Philip the Good in his capacity as count of Flanders.

The terms of the treaty, dated 16 January 1421, specified \textit{inter alia} that John would enjoy the usufruct of the county and would retain his palaces in Ghent and Namur, but he was forbidden to levy any new taxes or, so valuable were the woodlands, to cut any wood.

\(^8\) This is the reason suggested by Joseph Balon in \textit{La maison de Namur sur la scène de la grande histoire 1196-1429}, Namur, 1948, p. 65.
particularly the great oaks. Philip gained control over the Namur coinage, receiving two-thirds of the seignorage, with one-third going to John, whose share would, however, revert to Philip upon John’s death (in 1429). Philip guaranteed that all governors, captains, bailiffs, receivers or mayors would be only Namurois or Flemish. He also guaranteed to protect the county against any war or damage resulting from the treaty. The purchase price was 132,000 écus à la couronne, with a down payment of 27,000 écus and the balance payable in three equal instalments each Christmas, 1421-1423. From the down payment, John settled his fine with the Bishop of Liège and received his quittance.

Like the Treaty of Dinant in 1199, which partitioned the county, and like the purchase of Namur by Guy of Dampierre which linked Namur with Flanders, this sale marked another turning-point in the history of Namur. It was no longer a principality, although a small one, but rather one more state in the-now emerging Burgundian amalgam, and its chief town was no longer the seat of counts.

Conclusion

Throughout the middle ages, the small size of the county was an advantage, for it posed no threat to its neighbours and promised no great prize to predators. Even so, it was rich enough in agricultural land, forests, iron deposits and stone quarries to satisfy its own needs. Its rivers provided transportation for its commerce, and water-power for its mills. Because its principal town lacked an industrial base to entice immigration, its

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79 There are authentic copies of this document in Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, Lille and Namur, following the principle that a registered duplicate of an important document was kept at the place where it was drawn or signed. The purchase price of the county represents nearly £277,200 parisis, over thirteen times what Guy I had paid for it.
population remained small and largely acquiescent, unless its customary laws were threatened.

After the tempestuous history of some of the earlier counts, the reign of the House of Dampierre provided peace and stability for the Namurois. Each count promised to honour the unwritten prerogatives of the commune when he made his Joyous Entry and took his oath on the relics of Saint-Aubain, in the open air for all to see. Significantly also, he took his oath before representatives of the townsfolk made their promise of allegiance. On only five occasions from 1263 to 1429 did the Namurois, with justification, repudiate that allegiance, and each time, it was with little loss of life or property.\(^\text{80}\)

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\(^{80}\) Risings of citizenry: 1293, 1313, 1352, 1363, 1371.
CHAPTER II

Administration, Money and Finance, Law

While geographical, ecclesiastical and historical factors both restricted and protected the commune and affected its quality of life, a more direct influence on its standard of living in late-medieval times was exercised by its administration, finance and law. Participation in town government was extended, but financial policies continued to be made by the count and the magistracy, and were largely governed by the needs of defence rather than by the exigencies of war, as in France and Flanders. Further, whenever the laws of the commune were revised, the changes seem to have been accepted by the populace as protective and just.

Administration

We do not know which count first appointed an executive who came to be known as the mayor. Perhaps the office pre-dated Berenger (v.907-v.937) when counts were still living on the Motte-le-comte\(^1\) in the fertile Hesbaye, where there was a ready supply of food, and perhaps they then recognized the need for a representative in the portus of Namur. Nor do we know when the mayor came to have assistants called échevins.\(^2\) The earliest named mayor is one Thomas in 1159. Later, from 1213 to the 1260s, there are occasional references, in charters and decrees, to mayors who are identified by name with

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1 For a discussion of this comital domain, see Henry Demeulder. "Le développement de la ville de Namur des origines au début des temps modernes". ASAN 47 (1953), pp. 127 and ff.

2 The word échevin is best rendered by the English "alderman": it is still used in Quebec.
the title of *villicus*, but not until 1268 do we find for the first time the title “mayeur et échevin”. ³ By statute, he had to be at least twenty-four years of age and a legitimate son from the highest ranks of the bourgeoisie or of the aristocracy. Chosen by the count, he held office during the count’s pleasure, sometimes for life and sometimes re-appointed after periods of retirement. ⁴ On the other hand, Henry de Revin, mayor in 1283 and 1288, was one of the leaders of the revolt against Guy of Dampierre in 1293 and was sentenced by Guy to a judicial pilgrimage to Saint James at Compostela. ⁵ Yet in the census of the county dated 2 September 1294, ordered by Philip IV, Henry’s name appears as échevin and former mayor and as one of the wise and trustworthy men who would scrutinize the findings of the census-takers. Much had evidently been forgiven.

As members of the upper stratum of society, the earliest mayors enjoyed an income from their lands. Later, they profited from commercial activities, especially the wine trade, or from such industries as quarrying and metal-working. ⁶ The mayor did not receive a fixed stipend, but he did enjoy a large number of perquisites. He had a share in the fines from the magistrates’ court over which he presided, as well as a portion of seizures ordered by that court for bad debts. He was remunerated *pro rata* for every case he heard and he collected fees for a number of official duties such as taking oaths, witnessing and registering documents, affixing the communal seal and attesting the boundaries of a

⁴ Massart Colle, for example, was mayor for ten years from 1389 to 1399 and again from December 1402 to April 1412, with substitute mayors appointed from time to time by him or by the count.
⁵ *Cart. Nam. I.* p. 102.
⁶ According to Léopold Genicot, most of the rich men in Namur were involved in the wine trade; some of them were importers-exporters and some sold wine from the ground floor of their great houses. See “Entre l’empire et la France”. p. 153. Documentation on quarrying and metal-working before 1350 is slight according to Genicot’s “L’industrie dans le comté de Namur à la fin du moyen âge (1350-1430)” in *Namurcum* 21 (1946). p. 49.
property. He received a share of the levy on imported wool and collected a fee for verifying its weight. From the commune each year at All Saints (1 November), he received three setiers of wine (about ninety litres) and at Christmas, four pairs of gloves. From at least 1235, he paid an annual sum to the count for his office. A later mayor, Colars Lorens, who held office from 7 March 1378 to 22 May 1383, acknowledged two days after his swearing-in that he had lent the count two hundred gold French francs (£200 tournois) when he became échevin, and three hundred gold French francs upon his becoming mayor. He declared that if he died in office, without being removed by the count, one hundred and fifty francs of the loan would be forgiven, and Lorens' heirs might lay claim to three hundred and fifty francs only of the total loan of five hundred. It was quid pro quo; both parties prospered.

The mayor was assisted by échevins, originally six in number, the mayor, also an échevin, being the seventh. Like the mayor, they were chosen annually on St. Andrew's Day (30 November) by the count from among the bons gens, that is, rich bourgeois with private incomes. They shared to a lesser extent in all the perquisites belonging to the mayor. To this oligarchy, controlled by the count, was entrusted jurisdiction over the civil and criminal law of the commune and of the area around it. Originally, they met in the

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8 In April 1235. Henry of Vianden and his wife Marguerite, countess of Namur, endowed a chapel at Géronsart with one hundred silver sous per year, and ordered the sum to be paid annually from the mairie, that is, from the fee due to the count by the mayor. See Cart. Nam. I. pp. 31-32. The census ordered by Philip IV in 1294 values the mairie at £400 tournois per year. See Cart. Nam. II. p. 133.
9 Cart. Nam. II. pp. 119-120.
10 The privileges of the commune and the jurisdiction of the magistracy extended beyond the walls of the town to the surrounding countryside and its hamlets. This area, called the banlieue or the franchise, was progressively extended as the town itself became larger. In May 1364, the magistracy fixed the boundary at "une liwe (one league, about three miles) tout atour et environ de la ditte ville de Namur." measured
open air near the present cathedral of Saint-Aubain in a designated area overshadowed by a planting of trees, but from 1213, the chapter of Saint-Aubain permitted them to erect a small building, designated as an **appentitium**, up against the wall of the cathedral. By 1285, the magistracy had rented from the cathedral for thirty sous louvainois per year a piece of land near the oratory of Saint-Remy in the Place Saint-Remy at the foot of the Grand Marché, where they built a modest house known as the Cabaret. On the ground floor was the concierge and probably also the moneyers’ workshop that Guy established in February 1283. Above, was the wood-panelled échevinal chamber where justice was done, communal decisions made and accounts audited. It was, however, too small for annual public assemblies, which took place in the church of the Franciscans. The Cabaret, which was in fact the first **hôtel de ville**, was demolished in 1514 together with the oratory of Saint-Remy.

All the acts, decisions and contracts issued by the magistracy were recorded or executed by a clerk (later called the **greffier de la ville**). He was a receiver for small rents and revenues such as, prior to 1357, those from vacant lands adjoining the walls, for which he gave public account each year, and he was entitled to certain fees and perquisites like those, but lesser, of the **échevins**. Like the other members of the magistracy, he took

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11 **Cart. Nam. I.** pp. 70-76.
12 **Cart. Nam. I.** pp. 75-78.
13 Jules Borgnet and Stanislas Bormans, *Histoire de la commune*, p. 189, note 2, associate the word with “cabane” and offer a brief description of it.
14 **Cart. Nam. I.** pp. 58-66.
his oath of office immediately after appointment. In his case, however, the position went
to the highest bidder, subject to comital approval, the price of the office being part of the
count’s revenues. If he needed clerical assistance, he paid for it himself.\footnote{17}

Another official group of ancient origin was that of the \textit{quatre jurés}, named for life
by the count,\footnote{18} to oversee certain financial concerns such as determining the apportioning
of taxes paid by individuals for special assessments or subsidies. In 1357, when Count
William I authorized the magistracy to take control of the vacant lands around the walls,
he stipulated that it might act only after consultation with the \textit{quatre jurés}\footnote{19} By 1364,
their number had grown to seven; they served for one year and at the end of their term,
they proposed a slate of twelve from which the magistracy selected seven.\footnote{20}

Thus, the magistracy consisted of men appointed by the count or approved by him;
therein lay the possibility of abuses of power. The decisions and actions of the \textit{échevins}
were, practically speaking, inviolable; they were protected by the law known as \textit{desdits
d’échevins}, by which anyone who injured an \textit{écchevin} in the exercise of his duty or who
asserted that the \textit{écchevin} or his colleagues had misjudged a case or had acted unjustly or
who refused to accept his judgment, suffered seizure of all his goods, redeemable only
upon payment of a Draconian fine which reverted to the count.\footnote{21} Complaints arose and

\footnote{18} The charter of Brogne (1154), which followed in many respects the older customs of Namur, speaks of
\textit{vericonjurati} or \textit{veridici}, men of probity and high repute. They may be the precursors of the \textit{jures}. See
\footnote{19} \textit{Cart. Nam. II}, p. 40.
\footnote{20} Léopold Genicot. “Une ville en 1422”, p. 94.
\footnote{21} Count John I acknowledged on 3 February 1316 that he had received the sum of £100 tournois from the
commune of Bouvignes, owing to him in payment of a \textit{desdit d’écchevin}. See Jules Borgnet, \textit{Cartulaire de
la commune de Bouvignes}. Namur, (prior to 1862), pp. 38-39. The crime could be adjudged as \textit{grand} or
\textit{petit}. From the size of the fine, this one was evidently \textit{grand}, occasioning bodily injury. Before long,
however, the law governing \textit{desdit d’écchevin} was mitigated; one could not be arraigned on this charge
unless a complaint by a unanimous vote of all the \textit{écchevins} had been brought to the High Court. See
continued, for in his decree of 30 May 1357, William I acknowledged the need for change. Inter alia, he reduced the fine for verbal criticism “sens silence ou contempt” to seventy sous louvinois. About this time also, the administration of the town was broadened by the appointment of the quatre des métiers. Nominated by the mayor and échevins, they oversaw public works and collected the revenues of the town. They presented their accounts to the count’s bailiff and receiver and to the whole corporation of the town, thus reducing somewhat the opportunity for collusion.

Still, complaints continued. A decree of William I dated 14 November 1383 stated that the laws and customs of the commune had been transgressed and abused in the past, and that a stricter control over the revenues of the town was advisable. He therefore ordered the town to nominate at least two (or more) suitable men of probity, the élus, whose appointment would run for a year from St. Andrew’s Day (30 November) and who would oversee the collection of moneys and render public account once or twice a year. On 12 December 1385, William further ordered that if the forced loan previously levied on two hundred bourgeois did not prove sufficient to raise an aide of 1500 gold florins for his son’s marriage, the shortfall should come from ordinary revenues, and he raised the number of élus to six to oversee the collection. They also superintended public works,

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Joseph Grandgagnage Coutsnes II. art. 43. p. 52. This ruling is not dated, but it was customary law before 1440, since it is included in the Répertoire of that date.

22 “Laws have weighed heavily on our subjects”, he remarked, “to the extent that some people refused to live or lodge there [in Namur]. to have to do with our justice or to do business there.” Cart, Nam. II. p. 37.

23 Four masters from the artisans’ guilds, well suited to their appointment by virtue of their practical knowledge.

24 Cart. Nam. II. p. 134. “...certains poins dele loy. usage et coutume...desquels on avoir...fouruseit ou abuseit du tamps passeit...” and (p. 138) “que ce seroit grant profit et utiliteit de mieux penser as cens. rentes et revenues...que on n’a fait du tamps passeit...”

25 Cart, Nam. II. p. 149. See infra. p. 59. note 61. William’s florin was worth £1.5.0 tournois.
especially the gates and walls, and they were responsible for the safe-keeping of weapons and ammunition. As they were men of rank and property, their emolument was a token: eighty moutons per year to buy a robe. This was an office that they could not refuse under pain of a judicial pilgrimage.

By 1392, trouble was brewing again with Liège. To raise revenue for armaments and repairs, William II authorized a tax to run for nine years on hops, beverage grains, wine, mead and ale, and to oversee both the income and the expenditure, he reduced the number of élus to three, two nominated by the magistracy and one by the count. All might be re-appointed from year to year. They were given wide powers to farm out taxes and to let out contracts of work, but with one caveat: all three must be in agreement. They also received revenues and authorized expenditures of the Grand-Hôpital, the Poor Table and the Grands-Malades (the leper hospital), rendering an account of their office once or twice a year to the magistracy and the comital council. Their office staff consisted principally of a clerk and a sergeant, whose appointment and salaries they determined.

In 1403, the office of élus was made more democratic. It consisted of two members only, appointed by the entire commune: one chosen from bourgeois not connected with an artisans' guild, that is, rentiers or patrician members of the urban nobility, and the other, a bourgeois of a guild. Their responsibilities remained the same, but their annual salary was increased to fifteen French francs, equivalent to 120 moutons. The commune had thus arrived at a more equitable balance of power between patricians and plebeians, one reason,
it would appear, why Namur was spared the violent political quarrels of the great industrial cities of the north. As Genicot put it, more people were making their voices heard and were acquiring a role in politics.²⁹ Such democratic innovations did not, however, eliminate incompetence or graft. William II tried to do so by his decree in 1411 that father and son, two brothers or brothers-in-law or first cousins, or uncle and nephew might not serve together on the town council, so as to avoid “favours and irregularities in justice”.³⁰

The last attempt to reform the administration occurred after 1420 as a result of a conjoncture of circumstances. First, the ongoing conflict between Dinant and Bouvignes, its Namurois rival across the Meuse, escalated again and threatened to become a Liège-Namur war. Second, the walls of Namur, the concern of William I as far back as 1357,³¹ were still unfinished. Third, John III was in serious strategic and financial difficulty.³² By a decree of 23 June 1420, he established a new governing body in the commune, the Council of XXXVIII. It comprised four members named by the count, the mayor, the six échevins, the two élus, six bourgeois chosen by their peers and nineteen guild members, one from each guild, also chosen by their peers.³³ Its mandate was to improve fortifications in the town and environs within three years by additional taxes and by corvée, that is, an unpaid contribution of the use of carts, horses and personal labour. A sense of urgency pervades

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²⁹ Léopold Genicot. “Une ville en 1422”. p. 91. “La masse de ses habitants s’y est...acquis progressivement un rôle politique.”
³¹ By decree of 31 May 1357, William I authorized the commune to tax certain commodities over the next ten years in order to repair the walls and fortifications. See Cart. Nam. II. pp. 45-48.
³² The causes of this crisis were several and cumulative, to be discussed below under the heading of Finance.
³³ The quatre des métiers, addressed in the preamble of this decree, were replaced by the guildsmen of the new council. See Cart. Nam. II. pp. 359-364.
the decree. A month later, the Council of XXXVIII was expanded into the Assemblée du Pays comprising prelates, nobles, bailiffs, mayors and officers of towns and many other subjects of the whole county. Having already been in consultation with Philip the Good in January 1420, on 23 July 1420, before this Assembly, John proposed to submit to arbitration the Bouvignes-Dinant conflict. The chief arbiter was his enemy, the bishop of Liège. On 31 December 1420, the Namurois were found guilty and John was assessed with a fine of 21,000 écus à la couronne, which neither prince nor county possessed. Anticipating this, however, John had already ceded the county to Philip the Good on 14 December 1420. It was an enlarged Assemblée du Pays, called the Assemblée d'Etats, representative of the whole population, which was convened 8 June 1421 to hear John’s act of disinheritance and to promise allegiance to Philip the Good upon John’s death. Thus, by 1429 when the Burgundian rule began in Namur, the administration of both commune and county had gradually and generally peaceably developed from medieval feudalism to an emerging democratic state.

Money (See Appendix 2)

Some of the sovereign rights of the count, for example, those of justice, military service and feudal dues, he might upon occasion abrogate or deputize, but the right to mint money he sedulously retained under direct control. The earliest detailed reference to minting by Guy of Dampierre occurs in February 1283 when he granted to Hubert Alion, a citizen of Ast and likely a Lombard, and his companions, the sole right to mint silver coins.

34 The fine was paid out of the down payment of the sale of the county, and John received his quittance.
in the county of Namur. The contract would run for two years.\textsuperscript{35} The mint-master, obviously a man of means, was required to provide a setting-up fee of £500 tournois in order to pay merchants bringing silver for sale and also to pay the food and lodging expenses both of the workmen and of Guy's inspector. His brassage was not stipulated except that it would be at the going rate "ensi c'on tient en autres mousnoies". Guy's seignorage, however, was set at three silver deniers from the coins minted from each silver marc of Cologne. The census of 1294 shows that the seignorage amounted to £600 tournois a year.\textsuperscript{36}

Renier Chalon, the first Namurois historical numismatist, credited Guy with introducing into Namur the tournois system of Louis IX, with a coin of two-thirds of the French gros, worth eight deniers, and two other coins of lesser value.\textsuperscript{37} The second of these coins was commissioned in 1283, a silver esterlin, identical to that of Brabant and identical also to the new esterling of England, that is, with a fineness of 0.979\textsuperscript{38} and worth four deniers or one-third of a French gros. It would therefore have found ready acceptance by merchants everywhere in the Low Countries and beyond. Guy took sophisticated precautions to ensure the accurate weight and fineness of his coins. A stable and widely accepted coinage and a mint which sellers of silver could trust would go far in contributing to the success of the great annual fair of Herbatte and to economic stability and growth.

\textsuperscript{35} Cart. Nam. I. pp. 58-60. Henri Pirenne in Histoire de Belgique I. p.299. comments that Guy chose Lombards as his receivers-general and as his minters.
\textsuperscript{36} D.-D. Brouwers. Cens et Rentes I. p.213. There is no mention of seignorage in the Cens et Rentes for 1289.
Recognizing the importance of the free circulation of his coinage, Guy declared that should the duke of Brabant or other lords cause his coins to be refused, he would cause theirs to be rejected throughout his lands of Flanders and Namur.  

In November 1283, the mint-master’s commission was broadened to mint “petite monnoie”, also of silver. Guy stipulated that the mint-master must ensure that 450 pieces of this money (37.5 sous x 12) must weigh the same as 180 Brabant esterlins, or that two and a half of these petty coins made one esterlin. The fineness was the same.

By a charter dated 1 August 1297, Guy established a corporation of eighty workmen and twenty moneyers, who enjoyed a standard of living, like the crossbowmen, of special privilege. A son could succeed to his father’s office provided that the heir was a man of ability and probity. All must all be bourgeois of Namur, but Guy reserved the right to replace a member, as he chose, who proved unfit. They paid their annual bourgeois fee of two pence namurois to the count and enjoyed his personal protection anywhere in the comital domains. Unlike other bourgeois, however, they were exempt from military service except in defence against an invasion, and they were also quit of all dues, taxes, watch duty, impositions, subsidies, aids or other levies. Like other bourgeois, they had free panage for their pigs, free access to dead wood in the forest of Marlagne and

41 These two corporations, always numbering one hundred members each, took a special oath of loyalty to the magistracy and the count, and were therefore known as serments rather than guilds.
42 The statutes of the corporation of moneyers (Cart. Nam. I, pp. 151-157) provided that if a member died without male heirs but with a female heir, she should succeed to her father’s place in the mint although she might not do the actual work. However, if she married someone acceptable to the mint, he could take her place, if she vouched for him, as long as she lived. After his death, if he had an heir by her, succession passed to the heir; the father of the heir, after his wife’s death, retained his mint position until the heir was old enough to take his place.
free pasturage in the neighbourhood of Salzinnes. Except for capital crimes, they were disciplined by fines at the discretion of the mint-master and the provost.\textsuperscript{43}

New statutes of the corporation dated 17 September 1298 at the beginning of the reign of John I and drawn up by the members themselves, specifically excluded bastards, outlaws and serfs and provided for permanent expulsion, or suspensions up to a year and a day, plus fines, for crimes of aggression, defamation, false accusation or theft. Each heir of a member paid an entry fee of forty sous namurois. And there was a dress code; no-one could enter the mint to work unless he was wearing clothing worth more than five sous namurois. This did not apply, however, to the help in wood-cutting given to furnace-workers by their wives, children, sisters or other kinfolk whose wages, if any, were mutually determined. A member who was ill received a supplement of two sous namurois a day from a common fund; a member who "by the will of Our Lord" became a leper received twelve deniers namurois a day for as long as his replacement worked. When a member married, he gave a courtesy payment of twenty sous namurois to the corporation; all members were bound to attend the wedding and funeral ceremonies of their colleagues, their wives and their heirs, and to provide a burial for any indigent member. Such acts of charity were paid from a box into which was put petty fines plus one denier namurois a week per member. It was this very considerable sum which covered expenses of the annual banquet and participation in the great processions of Namur on Fête-Dieu or Blessed Sacrament (Thursday after Trinity) and the Visitation of the Virgin (2 July) in whose care Namur lay. To speak "villainy" of the Mother of God brought a fine of twelve deniers

\textsuperscript{43} Cart. Nam. I. pp. 147-151.
namurois, as did each occasion of wagering earnings at dice. Doubtless, they gambled but any member failing to pay his debts or to meet a claim for damages might have half his wage garnisheed.

Guy’s mint on the ground floor of the Cabaret sufficed for Namur until 1422. Meanwhile, through the fourteenth century, mints were established at Bouvignes, Viesville, Neuveville (across the Sambre from Namur) and also at Méraude in the Poilvache. Of all these mints, as well as those minting for John I in Flanders at Alost, Ninove and Termonde, only one brief and incomplete record survives for the whole of the fourteenth century. It is from Alost, rendered to John I for the period 29 September 1313 to 15 January 1314. But once John III had made his arrangement in 1420 to sell Namur to Philip the Good, and minting was carried on under Philip’s aegis, record-keeping improved. Thus, we find in the Archives générales du Royaume in Brussels almost continuous mint accounts from 24 October 1421 to 10 October 1433 when the mint was closed. It was not re-opened until 1497. The gold seignorage from the Namur mint from 1421 to 1430 totalled £3,697 livres gros, one-third to John and two-thirds to Philip - a handsome sum attributed in part to Philip’s debasement of gold.

How much debasement was practised by earlier counts is impossible to determine, but in view of its rich rewards to the prince, it is very likely that the counts of Namur did

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44 In 1422 Philip the Good transferred the mint to a large house called Le Faucon in the rue de la Croix, which he bought for 500 gold crowns. See Renier Chalon. Recherches, p.7.
45 The Poilvache was bought by Marie d’Artois in 1344. See supra, p. 33.
not resist it. One would hazard the conjecture that William I and II and John III all profited from it, especially in view of the growing scarcity of silver and gold from the 1370s on. John Day calls it “the great bullion famine”, which he dates from 1395 to 1415 and which, he shows, affected the whole of western Europe. There is no reason to think that Namur was an exception. In the 1380s, as John Munro points out, “the silver content of the Flemish mite (double) had been reduced by over 70 per cent to just 12 grains argent-le-roy.” Numismatically speaking, it was virtually a copper coinage. Similarly, in Namur large amounts of billon noir minted by William I and II have been found in the Sambre.

The fiscal need to debase was, of course, much more intense in Flanders than in Namur. The Hundred Years' War subjected Flanders to recurring fiscal demands through the fourteenth century, and when these began to coincide with shortages of bullion, the only recourse to pay the costs of the war was to debase. Thus, Munro shows that in Flanders between 1349 and 1420, there were twenty-four debasements of gold and twenty of silver. However, Namur escaped the need to debase the coinage for war-related fiscal needs. The long reign of William I (1337-1391) was peaceful and William was very rich. His son, however, was less responsible. During his reign, there are two references to

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48 Ibid., Chapter One, pp. 11-35, providing methods and reasons for monetary debasements: central to the case of Namur is Munro's comment (p. 22) that “While the mint was by no means generally the prince's largest single producer of income, it was important as one of the very few flexible and immediate sources of revenue at his personal command.”
debased money. In 1395, the canons of Saint-Aubain complained to him that their stipends had been much diminished "pour le foiblece de la monoye qui si est empirée", whereupon the count granted them an annual supplement of six muids of spelt or thirty old gros namurois.\textsuperscript{52} Five years later, in 1400, the count and the town came to an agreement after some lengthy discussion; William agreed to cease minting for six years in return for 600 French écus à la couronne (£600 tournois).\textsuperscript{53} At 56 heaumes to the crown, this agreement gave William a gift of 5,600 heaumes per year. A master mason at six heaumes per day, employed for perhaps 200 days a year, earned 1,200 heaumes per year. This "feebleness of money" hurt the canons and the townsfolk; as for William, he lost his seignorage but gained a premium.

**Finance**

The financial policy of the commune had two purposes. The first was to fortify the town against the continual threat from Liège, a concern that motivated count and people alike throughout the fourteenth century after the devastation wrought by the Liégeois in the war of 1319-1321. The second was to satisfy the count's need for money. Like most rulers, the Namurois counts found that revenues from their domains still left them short of working capital for war and territorial acquisitions, a short-fall which they covered in various ways: increased taxes, the sale of annuities, extraordinary subsidies, forced loans and borrowings from Lombards.

\textsuperscript{52} Léopold Genicot. *Economie rurale III*, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{53} AEN, Comptes de la ville. 1400, fol. 10 verso. See Appendix 2 for conversion of currencies.
Domanial records are non-existent before 1356-1357 and scanty thereafter through the reigns of the two Williams and John III. Nevertheless, the long reign of William I provides many examples of the financial activities of the count and the magistracy. We know that the dowry from his first wife, Jeanne, in 1348 amounted to £50,000 tournois and the sale in 1369 of the lands of his second wife, Catherine of Savoy, realized £200,000 tournois. At Christmas 1356, William acknowledged the receipt of 6,000 gold florins which the town owed his mother, Marie d’Artois. He stated that “l’avons mis et conviért en nostre profit et utiliteit” and bound himself to repay it to his mother by Christmas of 1357, pledging all his goods to indemnify the town (as the principal debtor) should he fail to meet the obligation.

William was no autocratic despot in his comital policies. At his accession, he had taken a solemn oath to uphold the charter of the commune. Taxes were levied by the magistracy, but only with the count’s permission; if they were, in fact, proposed by the count, they were approved and executed by the magistrates, his nominees; if by the magistrates, the count gave permission because he always got a portion. Thus, the niceties of the town’s autonomy were preserved. The commune received a small portion of its fixed revenues from rents, but most came from the usual levies of the time: a tax on carts

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54 The following domanial accounts, running from 24 June, are extant:
1356-1357 AEN. Fonds des domaines. no. 1
1371-1372. AGR. CC. no. 3221
1376-1377 AEN. Divers. no. 13 (4 folios of fragments)
1395-1396 AGR. CC. no. 3222
1407-1408 AGR. CC. no. 3223
1409-1410 AEN. Fonds des domaines. no. 2
1416-1417 AGR. CC. no. 3224
1421-1422 AGR. CC. no. 3225
1423-1424 AGR. CC. no. 3226

The next accounts begin from 1 March 1429, the date of the death of John III.
55 Cart. Nam. II. pp. 34-36.
and beasts of burden entering the town gates; an entry fee at the gatehouse of the Meuse bridge; fishing rights in the moats (which were fed from the Sambre and Meuse rivers); taxes on money-lenders and money-changers; a tax levied on certain goods from Dinant, principally brassware and textiles; a portion of fines from civil and criminal courts. Taxes were intended to be applied to the cost of upkeep of roads and town walls (the fermeté) and were consequently called fertés. They were not enough. However, the count and the town found ways to increase their revenues.

By a decree of 30 May 1357, and with the approval of the magistracy, William I made some changes to the fiscal laws of Namur. He ameliorated some laws governing foreigners; they could now live in Namur for twenty days at a time without being liable to formorture should they die there. But more important, he assigned to the magistracy all proceeds from the warisials, that is, the lands lying immediately outside the town walls, at that time used in common for pasturage, gardens, fishing, wood-gathering and so on. The magistrates were free to charge what rents they could get, provided that the proceeds were used for town fortifications and that an annual public accounting was given. In return, the magistrates granted the count a whole series of new taxes on wines, ales and mead sold retail and wholesale.  

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56 The double heritage of French and German law operative in Namur is seen in the feudal right of both mortemain and formorture. Under the former, when a man or woman of basse-loi (non-bourgeois) status died, the lord had the right of meilleur catel: for a poor man, the best movable chattel was often an animal, even his only animal. Formorture, which applied to movable property only, granted the lord one-half of the goods of a married man who died without legitimate children. If he was a widower leaving no children, the lord took all of his goods. A charter of freedom to a commune always stipulated freedom from mortemain and formorture to the bons hommes (bourgeois). In 1431, after the terrible losses suffered in Namur in the Liégeois war of 1430 and with a view to re-populating the county, Philip the Good abolished these feudal dues. See Léopold Genicot, *Economie rurale* I, pp. 169-170 and Joseph Grandgagnage *Coutumes* II, p. 136.

A second act, also dated 30 May 1357, granted taxes on beverages and certain unstipulated foodstuffs to run for seven years from 1 May 1357 to 1 May 1364, two-thirds for the count and one-third for the commune.58 From 1 May 1365 to 1 May 1369, the commune would receive all these taxes to be spent on fortifications. Finally, the taxes granted to the count (and his heirs thereafter) would not be taken by him until 1 May 1364. The earliest extant town accounts for 30 November 1362 to 1 March 1364, suggest that the commune was sailing close to the wind. Total receipts were 1,271 écus, 5 gros, while total expenditures were 1,222 écus, 24 heaumes; 960 écus were spent on repairs to roads, town gates and the gate-house of the Meuse bridge; 262 écus went for expenses of the mayor and échevins for inspections, entertainments, wine and gifts including a gift of wine worth some 51 écus to the dowager countess.59 There appears to have been little provision for emergencies; in fact, as Borgnet pointed out, in the accounts from 1385 to 1429, there were only three years which showed a surplus.60

Because town accounts are missing for the years 1365-1384, we do not know to what extent these tax concessions were honoured and fulfilled. Reference to a diploma, now lost, mentions a request by Count William to the magistracy for a subsidy to help pay the great debts of his two sons (his namesake and John, his brother) which they sustained when fighting in foreign parts. In a response dated 30 November 1383, the mayor,

58 ibid., pp. 45-48. The count reneged. Town accounts for 1363 show no ferté of one-third for the commune.
59 AEN. Comptes de la ville 1362-1364. The medieval system of accounting for receipts was to include sums due as well as sums received. The double-entry system of bookkeeping devised by Italian merchants did not reach Namur until much later. Although the Namurois had no way to record accounts receivable, they doubtless had means to collect them.
60 Surplus years were 1386, 1388 and 1417. All other years were deficits. See Jules Borgnet and Stanislas Bormans, Histoire de la commune, p. 144.
échevins and jurés offered 6,000 florins to the sons and 1,100 florins to the count, all to be paid over the next seven years.\(^6\) They also promised to address the problem of the town walls provided that they might levy fêtés on beverages as well as new taxes both in the town and in the banlieue on the grinding of grains, beans and peas. Further, they asked to initiate a tax on imported bread [sic] and on beer mash for export, all to run until 30 November 1392.\(^6\)

Another financial resource for the town and the count was the sale of rentes viagères or annuities. Thus, on 4 July 1357, William and the commune discharged “pluseurs grosses et pesantes debtes” owing to John, lord of Falais, by granting him an annual pension for life of 200 gold florins or écus of France at twenty-one carats of gold to the écu.\(^6\) On 21 June 1358, William agreed to reimburse the town for six annuities which he had granted, having received the capital, and for which the town stood guarantor. But in return, the town obtained permission to levy to its profit heretofore domanial dues of utage (on various merchandises), sclaidage (a due for the right to keep wine for re-sale) and louches (a tax in kind on grain sold in the grain hall).

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\(^6\) Although the kind of florins is not stipulated. William I minted gold florins in imitation of Florentine florins. which latter in 1350 were worth £1.50 tournois, according to Peter Spufford. *Money and its Use*, p. 292. For a discussion of Namurois florins, see Marcel Hoc. “Un florin d’or de Jean III de Namur, seigneur de Béthune” in *Études d’histoire et d’archéologie dédiées à Ferdinand Courtoy*. Namur. 1952. pp. 477-482. William I’s florins are mentioned on pp. 479-480.

\(^6\) The response of the magistrates of 30 November 1383 is lost, but we have a document renewing the agreement, presumabley on the same terms, dated 30 November 1392. See *Cart. Nam. II*. pp. 188-206. particularly pp. 192-195. The wording on pp. 195-196 runs: “item, pour le stier de nud grain, orge. féves et pois que ons y mouira, paiera li moulans un wihot ... ; et pour les painz venans de dehors qui vendus seront en la dite ville et franchise, paiera li vendières le double de ce qui dit est. revenant au muy. sans malengien, au serement dudit vendeur; et pour cascun muy de brais qui sera vendus en ladite ville et franchise pour mener dehors. payera le vendières demi viez gros ou monoye au vaillant par le dit des cangeurs de Namur.” One wonders why Namur would import bread (painz). Perhaps what is meant is fine wheat flour to make bread that was superior to what was available locally.

\(^6\) *Cart. Nam. II*. pp. 49-53.
When the count had an extraordinary and unforeseen need for money, he could call upon the town for a subsidy. That of December 1385 of 1,500 moutons granted by the commune to the young William on the occasion of his marriage was raised by a forced loan over two years on two hundred bourgeois and tradesmen at three moutons each for two years, the balance of 300 moutons being taken from the fertés.64

As Georges Bigwood has shown, all the princes of Belgium in the Middle Ages borrowed extensively from every possible source: family, other princes, lords, ecclesiastical establishments, towns and bourgeois, but especially from Lombard merchant-bankers.65 Such debts of Guy of Dampierre amounted in 1290 to over £115,000 (kind of pound not stated, but probably parisis), largely incurred to finance his war with Philip IV of France.66 Lombards acted as his receivers-general in Flanders, while in Namur it was they, very likely, who staffed the three maisons de cange which the 1294 census records as bringing Guy £20 tournois net a year.67 The scope of their activities was broad: “to trade in merchandise, to sell and to buy, to change money and to lend it, and to use their money, goods and stock-in-trade, for their profit in all ways and on all occasions, as they shall determine.”68 While authorized to buy and sell, their principal business was in

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64 Cart. Nam. II. p. 143. note 1.
67 Cart. Nam. I. p. 126.
68 Georges Bigwood. Le régime Part 2. p. 356. “...faire leur marchandise, vendre, acheter, cambgier et prester, et faire de leurs deniers, leurs biens, chozes et marchandises en toutes fachons leur proufit toutes et quanteffois que bon leur semblera.” The source of this quotation is not given.
money. They acted as bankers, receiving and disbursing moneys as instructed, lending and holding on deposit. We do not know when they were established in Namur; it was from the Lombard Perrin Royer and his associates in Liège that William together with his brother Robert and the commune of Namur on 15 December 1356 acknowledged a loan of 5,000 gold florins, repayable in one year and covered by extensive guarantees. Again, in 1358 when William borrowed a total of 4,482 gold florins on two occasions, it was from Lombards in Huy. If they were not operating in Namur earlier in the century, the reason was perhaps that not until the reign of William I was there such a lucrative business for them. They took an oath to uphold the laws of the commune, to conduct their affairs honestly, to treat each client small or great, bourgeois, foreigner or anyone else with equal integrity, and finally to render public accounts. They posted a substantial bond.

Recalling the large sums that came to William from his two wives, one might ask why he became indebted to money-lenders. Lack of documentation makes it impossible to know why these sums were borrowed by a count richer than any of his peers, unless it was to enlarge his territory. By 1360, he had acquired the castellanies of Mirwart, Longpré.

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69 It is true that Lombards did deal in grain, wine and wool, but many such contracts were fictitious, intended to cover loans at interest. See Joseph Balon, “Contrats fictifs au moyen âge”, in Namurcum 23 (1948), pp. 33-46.

70 See Cart. Nam. II, pp. 27-34. The agreement stipulated that if the debt were not paid on time, the Lombards might borrow a like sum from whomever they wished, the expense of which would be borne by William, Robert and the commune. Further, the count pledged his heirs and successors to honour the debt with all his (and their) movable and immovable goods. As well, if the debtors defaulted, six lords with two horses each and six squires with one horse each would go to Liège and remain there on two meals a day at fixed hours and at their own expense in housing approved by Perrin Royer. Provision was even made in case the horses ate too much. The twelve guarantors might send substitutes. Finally, it was stated that there was no interest or usury in the agreement.

71 Georges Bigwood, Le régime Part 2, pp. 18-19. on 11 July and 1 August 1358.

Villancé and Orchimont in Luxembourg, as well as eleven villages in Brabant and a number of other significant holdings - fiefs, vineyards and woods. Included in his acquisitions were seventeen small towns along the right bank of the Meuse which the bishop of Liége refused to yield. William took the case to Rome; appeals, counter-appeals and stays followed, but in 1375, Namur’s ownership was upheld and William’s determination justified.73

One of his most costly expenditures occurred as a result of the capture of his two brothers, Robert and Louis, and his son, William, at the battle of Bastweiler (22 August 1371), which nearly ruined the principal loser, Wenceslas, the Duke of Brabant. Taken prisoner by the Duke of Juliers, Wenceslas had to raise his own ransom as well as find 15,438 Namurois moutons (£2,970 tournois)74 which he owed Louis for his expenses and indemnity.75 The ransom of Robert was 2,200 moutons d’or (£2,926 tournois)76, paid by a loan from the count. The ransom of Louis is not known, but that of the young William, as befitted the wealth of his parents, was 37,400 Namurois moutons (£7,192 tournois) from which, of course, he could deduct the ransoms of prisoners whom he himself had taken. This occasioned some considerable scraping and scrambling in the House of Dampierre. Part of the necessity was met by the Lombards of Namur in a deal which richly illustrates the financial legerdemain practised by lenders and borrowers in order to hide forbidden

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73 But in 1417, armed Liégeois seized them again. It was not until 1446 that the duke of Burgundy finally secured possession. This celebrated case is an epitome of five hundred years of Liége-Namur relations.
74 Cart. Nam. II, p. 188, note, referring to the comptes de la ville, 1393, fol. 16, equates 10 francs with 52 Namurois moutons.
75 The finanes of Wenceslas appear to have been precarious at best. Between the end of 1359 and the end of June 1361, William lent him a total of 31,300 petits florins, followed later by 13,000 moutons. On 5 April 1373, Wenceslas borrowed 2,000 vieux florins à l’écu from William who in turn thirteen days later borrowed an identical sum from his receiver-general, Guillaume Masson. See Georges Bigwood, Le régime Part I, pp. 14 and 39.
76 See Appendix 2, note 19.
interest on loans. The contract, dated 13 February 1373, was between Jakemin and Ruffin Pellette, Lombards of Namur and a consortium of Robert and Louis, the count's brothers, William, his son, four Namurois lords and Guillaume Masson, provost of Saint-Aubain and close associate of the count. These eight, as vendors, promised to deliver to the Lombards on 1 November next 2,000 muids of wheat; they received immediately 2,000 moutons d'or (£2,660 tournois). Needless to say, no one in this agreement was a dealer in wheat futures. Not only was delivery due after a harvest of unknown abundance, but it was to be made, all expenses paid, in any one of five counties of the buyers' choice. In lieu of the wheat, the vendors had the option of settling with 2,000 gold florins (presumably also worth £2,660 tournois, to save the appearance of no interest), with a late penalty of four muids of wheat per day. Each time the buyers had recourse to law for settlement, the vendors owed a fifth muid. The case could go to any court chosen by the buyers, all costs payable by the vendors who, each one, pledged every asset he owned as security, as did, in a codicil, the count of Namur. Despite the usual wide-eyed protestations that there was no fraud or usury involved, the contract was undoubtedly just that, a fraudulent fabrication designed to borrow money and repay it with usurious interest.

As one of William's epitaphs reads, "...le comte de Namur...fut noble et gentilz et gardant tant bien son pays...". One would like to know how much was in his treasury when he died on 1 October 1391 after a reign of fifty-four years. What his sons, William II

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1 This transaction, found in AEN, Chartrier du comté de Namur, no. 1029, has been analyzed by Joseph Balon in "Contrats fictifs". pp. 36 ff. Balon comments on p. 41. note 29 that William's ransom would be about 50 million francs in 1948.
2 Ruffin figured in the battle of Mecfe. See pp. 35-36.
and John III, left is easier to assess even though domanial accounts are missing. Both of them continued their father's policy of fertés to be spent on fortifications. The agreement of 1392 was renewed for another nine years to 30 November 1401. After an inexplicable lapse of two years, it was renewed continuously, even after the county passed to the dukes of Burgundy. It was never sufficient to cover the great expense of re-building and maintaining the town walls, gates, moats and bridges, all of which were the financial responsibility of the townsfolk. Town accounts show two contributions from William II: 240 oak planks in 1407 and the wood of 100 oaks in 1410.\textsuperscript{80} The latter gift was doubtless a slow response to the terrible flood of February 1409 (see p. 31) which destroyed much of the fortifications and left the town defenceless. An extraordinary levy was immediately ordered on the bourgeoisie, assessed according to means, which raised 8,472 moutons over some two years; the clergy assessed themselves and paid 268 moutons. In 1418, a similar levy produced 2,260 moutons, but not, as the comptes de la ville commented, without "grant paine et riotte".\textsuperscript{81}

Even before the flood, the town was borrowing from the Lombards. In the comptes de la ville for 1407 and 1408,\textsuperscript{82} we read that "for the difficulties and necessities which have occurred in the town of Namur this year both for the new moats in the renewed fortifications and for other needs, and since we simply did not know where to obtain the money for this work and since we had to find it urgently, it has been ordered by the council of our most revered lord to borrow from the Lombards of Namur...300 French

\textsuperscript{80} AEN. Comptes de la ville 1407, fol. 11 and Comptes de la ville 1410, fol. 34.
\textsuperscript{81} Jules Borgnet, Promenades, p.310 and AEN. Comptes de la ville 1409, fol. 3; 1410, fol. 4; 1411, fol. 4; 1418, fol. 5. Cart. Nam II, p. 248 equates 8 moutons to the franc or £ tournois in 1403. At that rate of exchange, these three sums in tournois were £1,059.0.0, £33.10.0 and £282.10.0 respectively.
\textsuperscript{82} fol. 37 and fol. 4 respectively.
écus à la couronne, at 56 heaumes to the écu...1,120 moutons." When one compares the huge sums borrowed by William I with the small, hand-to-mouth loans obtained by the count and the town in the last years of the reign of William II, their desperate straits are manifest. For example, some time before 1417, the town borrowed a sum of money which was given to the count; it was repaid to the Lombards in dribs and drabs: 100 crowns (presumably when the loan fell due), another 100 crowns on 22 November 1418, 50 crowns on 9 March 1420. Again, the town borrowed 300 French crowns on 9 November 1417 at 25 per cent; it did not meet its payment on 9 March 1420. The Lombards granted an extension on the loan without charge to 24 June 1421. At the end of that November, 200 crowns were still owing.

A month after the death of William II on 10 January 1418, his widow donated to Saint-Pierre-au-Château forty-one precious ecclesiastical ornaments of silver and one of gold, all of exquisite workmanship and most adorned with precious stones. The total weight of the silver was some 155 marks. Although William had stipulated that she was to enjoy them during her lifetime, she feared that after her death they might be broken up or lost. They would certainly have temporarily relieved the financial distress of John III.

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83 "... pour les affaires et nécessitez qui sont eskeuwez en ladite ville de Namur ceste présente année, tant de nouvais fossés à la noeve fermetet comme en autrre manière, et pourtant que on ne savoit bonement où prendre l'argent pour ce faire et que en haste il le convenoit trover. il at estet ordenet par le conseil de nostre dit très-redoubté singueur et de sa dite ville de prendre aus Lombars de Namur argent: se y at estet pris et empruntet 300 couronnez de France. 56 hiames pour le couronne ...1,120 moutons." Quoted by Jules Borgnet. Promenades. p. 311. note 4.
84 Georges Bigwood. Le régime I, pp. 36-37.
86 AGN. Chartier de Namur. no. 1322, dated 6 February 1418. Every item is described and its weight of precious metal recorded. The document has been published by Jules Borgnet in Cart. Nam. II, pp. 322-331.
Both John and Namur were poor. For example, in December 1385, the Namurois had raised by a forced loan a subsidy of 1,500 moutons for the marriage of William I’s son, but for the Joyous Entry of John III in 1418, the most that could be offered was 1,000 moutons in two half-yearly payments.\textsuperscript{87} For many years, the town had been operating at a deficit and borrowing to make up the short-fall. It does not appear to have occurred to any of the élus in charge of finances that capital repairs could not be paid for from current revenues, and after the devastation of the 1409 flood, the cost of repairs was overwhelming. The magistracy had recourse to corvées des fosses, that is, unpaid day-work by all the townsfolk on moats and palisades, which could, however, be commuted into a cash payment scaled to income. Another recourse, at least from the time of William I, was to sell rentes viagères at a premium of 10 or 12 per cent.\textsuperscript{88} But as these were usually paid out over two lives, that is, to two closely related persons, such as a husband and then to his widow, or a father and then to his surviving son, there was a risk that they were actuarially unsound. The town might buy them back, although one would imagine that it rarely had the capital to do so. Meanwhile, the Lombards’ rate of interest was from 40 to 65 per cent.\textsuperscript{89}

John’s more direct recourse was to sell off assets. Thus, on 11 May 1419, he sold one of his afforages de vin - his right to eight lots (sixteen litres) out of every barrel - together with a chambage (the right to brew beer) and twenty cords of fire-wood to the wife of a former échevin for 300 gold florins. Two days later, he sold another chambage to

\textsuperscript{87} Cart. Nam. II., p. 322, note 3.
\textsuperscript{88} Jules Borgnet. Promenades. p. 312.
\textsuperscript{89} Joseph Balon. “Contrats fictifs”. p. 35.
a butcher for 240 francs. On 28 August 1419, he sold the toll rights on the Meuse bridge to a local lord for 500 Rhenish florins, carefully stipulating a taille of 64 florins to the Troy mark, and reserving the right to re-purchase the toll rights at the same price. On 4 October 1419, he renewed the town’s right to levy fertés for repairs of fortifications against the “gran[d]s maux et périls” that threatened them all. By 1420, Namur and its count were so emmeshed in debt that they could not extricate themselves. The county would surely have been seized by Liège had not Philip the Good bought it. John III had three effective years of reign - 1418-1421. After that date, he appears to have led a carefree life while Philip administered the county. Following John’s death on 1 March 1429, his goods were sold at auction to pay his debts.

Law

A sound body of law evolved from common consent and impartially administered provides the social stability which is an essential foundation of a good standard of living. In Namur, as elsewhere in early medieval Europe, law codes grew slowly from the Germanic law of private vengeance, which Charlemagne failed to control, if not repress, and which in the ninth and tenth centuries became an excuse for violation, pillage and brutal retaliation. With no lay authority strong enough to check these private wars, it fell to the Church to protect the vulnerable - monks and clergy, travellers, peasants, women and merchants - in the Peace of God movement which arose about 1042. 

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90 Cart. Nam. II. pp. 342-344. This was, one might say, a fire-sale. for in 1384, one afforage alone sold for 300 francs (Cart. Nam. II. p. 142).
91 Cart. Nam. II. pp. 344-346. The money from the sale of this winage was “mis et convertie en és nécessiteis et bezoingnez touchant sondit pais”. 
92 Cart. Nam. II. pp. 349-353.
93 His will is preserved in AGR. CC.. Acquits de Lille, no. 1932. The sale of his goods is in AGR. CC., no. 28580.
events in the 1030s had been seen as a sign of God's wrath: storms, floods, crop failures, dearths and ergotism.94 A further step towards control was taken by the Truce of God which prohibited warfare at certain times: from Thursday to Sunday inclusive, during Lent and Advent and on major saints' days. The Tribunal of Peace, convoked by the bishop in Liège in 1082, was attended by all the Lotharingian lords, including Albert III of Namur. Developing commerce and industry demanded peace and it was enforced by the Tribunal with severity; any free man who attacked, ravaged or burned his neighbour's property or who wounded him to death was deprived of his fief or property and expelled from the bishopric; if he was a serf, he lost his right hand. These injunctions were soon written into the charters of the communes, one of the earliest of which was that of Namur which existed before 1121.95

But the ancient Germanic code lingered on in Namur for centuries. In the first instance, it persisted in the lex talionis, "vitam pro vita, membra pro membro", as stated in the charter of Brogne,96 although a money compensation was usually made instead. In the case of a simple homicide committed in the banlieue, the death penalty might be imposed by the mayor as president of the High Court; outside the commune and its banlieue, it was only applicable if the relatives of the victim demanded it. There was just such a case in 1378 where the kin of a young woman insisted that her killer be beheaded instead of being banished. The mayor had to yield to the ancient principle of talion, even

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94 This is also known as St. Anthony's Fire, an excruciating and chronic disease caused by eating rye flour which has become infested with mould.
95 See page 29, note 57.
though the judges tried to bring about an accommodation. The other lingering instance of old Germanic law was the judicial duel. Despite its prohibition in 1258 by Louis IX, the practice continued, and in 1306 Philip IV of France found it wise to issue an ordinance to bring it under some sort of control both of the sovereign and of the Church. In Namur, it was one of the sovereign's rights to preside and judge at these gages de bataille which were the right of anyone of bourgeois or higher rank. Lesser folk had recourse to cold water, boiling water or hot iron. At a time when a conviction could be obtained only by confession or by the testimony of two eye-witnesses, the ordeal and its accompanying oath of innocence was the sole means of proof. The practice rested on the belief that God would justify the innocent, although too often the innocent suffered or died in the proving.

In the course of the thirteenth century, as a result of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), ordeals began to disappear as legal proof, replaced for better or worse with interrogation or torture. But in Namur, the judicial duel remained in custom if not in law as a means of settling questions of honour, particularly in the countryside. One of the last occasions occurred in 1412 when Colin and Gobin, from the village of Avin, insisted on their right to settle a name-calling quarrel on the champ clos. Preparations went forward: levelling a field some little distance from the town, cutting the wood for the enclosing fence, making a model of the staves to be used by the two champions, inspections and consultations by the magistrates involving wine, pears, grapes and cheese - all and more charged to the hapless Colin and Gobin who had each borrowed forty crowns (£40

97 AEN, Transports de la Haute Cour de Namur, Sentences criminelles, no. 1324 (1363-1383), quoted by Charles Lamsool, La peine de mort à Namur aux XIVe et XVe siècles, Namur, 1934, pp. 4-5, note 9.
98 His other prerogatives in the commune gave him the right of high justice, of military service, of taille, of crenée (castle duty) and of minting. To permit or refuse passage by road or river was also his sovereign right.
tournois) from the Lombards to cover expenses. But eight days before the appointed duel, when even the prescribed leather jerkins and helmets had been made, they reached some agreement. Then the Lombard loan came due; they could not pay it and each borrowed again to pay off the Lombards - at nearly 20 per cent per month. The meticulous account of this farce, kept by the town clerk, breaks off without a conclusion. The final word on duelling belongs to Mary of Burgundy, who outlawed it in 1477.99

The archives of Namur contain two registers of judgments in criminal cases, from 1363 to 1383 and from 1383 to 1389, recorded from day to day by the clerk of the High Court of the magistracy. In the fifteenth century, these and other decisions were gathered by other clerks of the court into two case-books called répertoires: one in 1440 containing 124 cases and the other in 1483 with 384 cases. The latter is called the Répertoire of Louis Lodevoet, that being the name of the clerk. Both of these were edited by Joseph Grandgagnage and published in 1869 and 1870 under the title Coutumes de Namur et Coutumes de Phillipeville.

Homicide, the first of seven capital crimes, fell into several categories. The least serious, homicide simple, was the result of private vengeance with its attendant compensation and peace-making, and was tolerated anywhere except in the commune and its banlieue. What distinguished it from murder was its openness, whereas murder involving secrecy, treachery or entering was almost always punished by death with prior torments and subsequent indignities to the body. For example, on 10 August 1415, a man

called Simon the Barber came with his confederates into the centre of Namur to attack his enemy whom he attempted to kill by shooting an arrow into his house. At his trial, Simon protested that the house was a tavern and thus a public place; the plea was disallowed by the court because it was forbidden to carry or discharge weapons in the town or banlieue. He was condemned to death, tied to a horse and dragged to the gallows where he was beheaded and his body exposed on a rack. Infanticide, like secret murder or murder in the course of theft, carried a death sentence; a woman convicted of killing her child was likely to be burnt alive on Champeau.

Breaking a truce was also a capital crime. In Namur where family wars persisted, it was considered a kind of treason if reparation had been made or received and then the peace was not kept. If the guilty person was arrested, he was executed. If he had fled, he was forjuge, that is, declared guilty in his absence. He returned at his peril.

Rape could be very expensive for the perpetrator but it rarely cost him his life. If the woman cried out so that people could hear her, a rape was presumed; her status was not an issue. When she made her complaint to the court where the crime occurred, the perpetrator was arrested and held prisoner. When the case was proved, he might make his peace, first with the woman and then with the count, both actions requiring compensation. In the worst case, the count was empowered to sentence him to death. Further, if the woman became pregnant, the criminal was imprisoned in chains in the castle keep or in the town itself. There he lived on bread and water or what his kin brought him, until the birth

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100 Joseph Grandgagnage. Coutumes II. no. 91. p. 105-108 and also Charles Lamsoul. La peine de mort. p. 5. note 10. In the interests of public order, there were repeated prohibitions against non-authorized people carrying weapons. See, for example, Cart. Nam. II. pp. 364-365. of 14 September 1420. The law was difficult to enforce when most people carried knives to cut their bread and meat.

101 Ibid., art. 234. pp. 310-311.
of the child. Only then might he make his peace which very often involved an expiatory pilgrimage.¹⁰²

Theft was a heinous crime in medieval minds, especially if it involved breaking and entering or wounding. Carrying off a man’s movable property was seen as only one step removed from carrying off the man himself. Thus, the law was very severe against thieves, often sentencing them to death. In fact, the greatest number of executions recorded in the Registre de sentences criminelles is for theft.¹⁰³ Even stealing fruit was serious and drew a heavy fine, the thief being imprisoned until he paid it.¹⁰⁴ But justice was sometimes tempered with mercy. One man who sold a pig that he had found was fined ten moutons¹⁰⁵ and on 11 October 1411, Goffinon, son of Colaur Terroie, was merely banished for an indefinite period because the thefts to which he confessed were not of great value.¹⁰⁶

Counterfeiting and treason were crimes against the count’s sovereignty and the penalty lay in the count’s discretion. It could range from death to banishment to dismemberment (usually of the right hand) or to a heavy fine. In 1369, Johannin de Malboge was found guilty of false coining. Hidden in a horse collar under the straw in the stable of his house was a quantity of black money stamped with the arms of lords who had no right to mint. He satisfied Count William with a fine of 1,000 Brabant moutons.¹⁰⁷ The death penalty for treason was almost unknown, since the count would prefer, as Guy I did,

¹⁰² Ibid., art. 30. p. 38.
¹⁰³ Charles Lamsoul. La peine de mort. p. 8.
¹⁰⁴ Cart. Nam. II. 24 August 1424. p. 396.
¹⁰⁵ Charles Lamsoul. La peine de mort. p. 8. note 32.
¹⁰⁶ Cart. Nam. II. p. 292.
a fine or a pilgrimage which could be composed by a fine, or banishment. A dead rebel had no such worth.

Finally, wounding, the commonest of crimes, could carry a death penalty if the assault took place in the victim's own house, or in a boat on the water, or if the victim was a town official fulfilling his office. If the wound drew blood, the assailant was expected to report it to the magistrates and have a qualified doctor visit the victim and prognosticate on his recovery. Failure to do so might lead to a charge of homicide. If the wound was judged not to be mortal, the deed would be considered simple assault, carrying a fine and compensation to the wounded man. If the victim was seen in public on the next but one day, walking without staff or crutch, or if he died forty or more days later, the assailant was held not guilty of his death. And common everywhere, a husband might beat his wife as long as he did not kill her.

Medieval Namurois society saw no sense in keeping a criminal in prison; better that he should pay a fine or be banished or be sent on a pilgrimage, which had the double merit of removing him from the town and permitting him to expiate in some holy place both the sin and the crime. There were usually two meutes or departing groups each year, in March and September. The condemned person came before the magistrates to receive a sash, which he wore over his long, cowled gown, a bell and a purse for food or alms. From the attendant priest, he received a blessing. Occasionally, his route was prescribed with times to be spent in certain places, and he had to bring back a certificate of accomplishment. Thus, in a letter dated 30 August 1316, the archbishop of Cyprus

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109 Ibid., art. 18. p. 427.
attested that Nicholas of Namur, who had killed a canon of Saint-Aubain, had fulfilled a continuous residence of two years.\textsuperscript{110} Often, a sentence of pilgrimage could be commuted into a cash payment. But what was never forgiven was the default of a malefactor who broke his ban or reneged on a pilgrimage. He was forejudged and executed as soon as he was apprehended. In 1405, for example, Pierot the Porter, sentenced to a pilgrimage to St. James Compostela, decided to seek safety across the Meuse in the Liégeois town of Jambes. But at the request of the Namurois magistrates, he was delivered into their hands at the gate of the bridge and summarily decapitated.\textsuperscript{111}

This was a quick and merciful death. Other methods were considered more fitting for other crimes. Thieves were hanged, although females were generally thrown into the Meuse to drown. Murderers were first broken on a wheel and then beheaded. If these punishments seem barbarous, consider some in neighbouring Brabant and Hainaut: burying alive, scalding to death in boiling water and decapitation with a wood-saw.\textsuperscript{112} The obverse of such punishments was the very high value put upon public safety and upon the sanctity of life, limb and private property.

The same principle was embodied in the civil law of Namur. A father was responsible for damage caused by his children living under his roof.\textsuperscript{113} If a boy committed a homicide while he was under the tutelage of his father, all the movable goods of the

\textsuperscript{110} Cart. Nam. I. pp. 177-178.
\textsuperscript{111} Joseph Grandgagnage. Coutumes II. art. 131, pp. 228-231.
\textsuperscript{113} Joseph Grandgagnage. Coutumes I. art. 25. p. 429.
father were forfeit. In the interests of public safety and control, a curfew was observed. Anyone found on the streets after the town clock had struck nine was liable to the heavy fine of twelve patards. Excepted were married men and others abroad of necessity, but they had to carry lights and go unarmed. Further, anyone found in a tavern or bordello after nine o’clock was also fined.

The legal age of maturity for a girl was fourteen, for a boy, fifteen, at which time they could dispose of their possessions as they wished. Up to that age, no transfer of goods could be made to a guardian, thus protecting against duress. Wives were also protected. No married woman could be arrested for debt anywhere in the county, unless she was a merchant or had herself signed the document in virtue of which the debt was claimed. Agreements of marriage involving real or movable property had to be registered in the appropriate court; otherwise, no legal action could be taken in respect of the property. Widows were assured of three kinds of inheritance: first, all of her husband’s movable goods and the usufruct of his real property; second, the accrual in money, grain or other profit on real property as stipulated in the marriage agreement; third, whatever real property her husband had transferred to her. She then became bound for his debts. Should she wish to avoid that, there was a ceremony prescribed. No later than one day after her husband’s death, she went before a magistrate and removed

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114 Ibid., art. 128, p. 456.
115 Ibid., art. 13, p. 426-427. A patard was worth three heaumes. See also Cart. Nam. II, pp. 364-365.
118 Ibid., art. 131, p. 457.
119 Ibid., art. 92-93, p. 448.
120 Ibid., art. 111-113, pp. 453-454.
her head-covering and her cincture, putting her household keys and her purse into the official’s hands. She swore that no movable goods had been removed or sequestered and she was then barred from the house until the debts were settled. If, having failed to make this renunciation, she married again, her subsequent husband had to pay whatever debts were registered against the deceased husband.

Then as now, it was important to make a will and register it. Again, the widow was protected. A husband could not overturn a marriage contract or abrogate a will made jointly unless his wife consented. Sons and daughters shared equally in their parents’ movable property, but land could not be left to bastards, or to daughters if there were sons. A will made by a Namurois bourgeois in extremis was in danger of being overturned unless his wife had consented to it and it was approved by the High Court of Namur.121 One non-bourgeois attested to his state of compos mentis by describing himself as “healthy in body and members, without appearing to suffer from any illness, walking freely on the lord’s road without crutch or stave, able to do what he wished, fully capable of speech and understanding”.122 If a bastard died intestate, even if he were a bourgeois, if he had no wife or children, all his goods of every kind reverted to the count; if he had a wife, the count took only half and if he had children under his roof, the count took nothing.123

The highest lay court of the land was the Souverain Bailliage, presided over by the count or his bailiff and assisted by a quorum of twelve peers. It met several times a week in the Salle de l’impératrice in the castle to hear appeals from lower courts, particularly in

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121 Ibid., art. 8, p. 465. But by 1440, such a will was valid if it was approved by his wife.
122 "...haytiz de son corps et à ses membrez sens alqueil maladie apparant avoir. alans et stisans sour le plain chemin le singueur sens croche et sens baston, de li faisant poest. bien parlant et endendans..." Quoted by Léopold Genicot. Economie rurale I, pp. 174-175. note 5.
cases involving real property, and to publish comital acts of grace and favour as well as comital decisions in contentious cases; that is, it had a *juridiction gracieuse et contentieuse* concerning both real and personal property. It registered contracts of marriage and processed probates of wills if the lands concerned lay outside the jurisdiction of lower courts where the parties resided or, of course, if the lands were held from the count. It also received oaths of allegiance, which were taken in the castle keep on Peter's stone. This was a low table-top set on two short and massive columns, on which the chapter of St. Peter's, situated in the castle precinct, placed their gospels and relics to sanctify oath-taking. This ancient stone functioned as a place of particular solemnity and authority, harking back to early Frankish practice.\(^{124}\)

A second high court was the Cour du Feix, concerned with the fiscal rights of the count.\(^{125}\) Its object was to guard his sovereign interest in roads, rivers and fishing rights, his various bans and feudal rights and the boundaries of his county. It consisted of the mayor, who presided, and the *échevins*, with a clerk; it sat in Namur every Sunday.

Thirdly, and most important in the daily life of the town, there was the High Court of Namur over which the mayor also presided, assisted by the *échevins*. Its civil and criminal jurisdiction was very wide, embracing every action not specifically assigned to the other two courts. Originally, it had met in the open air; later, it sat in the Cabaret in Place Saint-Remy, in front of which stood a structure called the *perron*, first mentioned in 1285.\(^{126}\) This symbol of communal authority consisted of a square base of stone upon which were built seven equally diminishing smaller squares. At each corner of the sixth

\(^{124}\) This court began as a result of a decree of Guy I. 9 December 1293. See Cart. Nam. I, pp. 105-106.

\(^{125}\) In Walloon, the "x" represents "sc" as in the Latin *fiscus*.

\(^{126}\) Baron Frédéric de Reiffenberg, *Monuments* I, p. 96.
square was a crouching lion supporting a wrought-iron column from which rayed inwards and upwards supports for a stone column centred on the seventh level and crowned with a pine cone. This column, it was said, represented the mayor: the seven steps, the échevins; the four lions, the four major roads from the four main gates; the four corner columns, the four jurés. Here the town crier announced new laws and here forejudged criminals were proclaimed. From here, those who had been banished or sentenced to pilgrimages set out; from here, was measured the distance to the boundary of the banlieue. And here also took place an unusual punishment for women guilty of slanderous, abusive speech or of flagrant immorality. It was known as porter la pierre, a kind of ambulatory pillorying. The transgressor knelt at the perron in front of the hôtel de ville, while around her neck were placed two halves of a round stone, each half having a semi-circular hole drilled on the straight edge. The halves were sealed with lead. Then she walked through the area where she lived to one of the four gates of the town and back, passing through the main streets and market places. To add injury to insult, an aiguillon or sharp goad was given to the woman or women whom she had offended or defamed, with which to urge the termagant on her way. Upon her return to the perron, a sentence of banishment might be read if she was a woman of notoriously evil tongue or loose living. This, like all the punishments of the commune, aimed at being condign and public.

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128 The perron was demolished in May 1515, perhaps because it interfered with traffic or because the Namurois under Charles Quint no longer enjoyed their former self-determination or simply because it was old. Jules Borgnet records from the comptes de la ville the expenses involved: twelve days for carpenters to erect hoardings and scaffolding; fourteen days for masons to break up the stone; six days for a carter to remove it; two days to pave over the area. When it was finished, the magistrates enjoyed a celebratory banquet. See Jules Borgnet, "L’hôtel-de-ville et le perron de Namur", pp. 236-237. A perron of modern construction and more modest design stands in a central square in Liège.
In the fourteenth century, another court was created to function both in the commune and in the rural areas, to relieve congestion in the echevinal courts. It was known as the aide de ville and it sat as often as needed under a mayor with an échevin or a juré or even a single échevin. It was limited to non-contentious cases, particularly concerning land but not where a transfer of ownership was involved, although it could bind parties to a future sale, legacy, donation, etc. Another kind of court served rural areas, hamlets and villages at a distance from Namur. They were the basses-cours, a remnant of early feudal times, presided over - owned, one might say - by the local lord or large land-owner. These courts sat three times a year and enjoyed limited powers; they could sentence offenders to certain corporal punishments and they could exact fines not exceeding five sous. Still, they were a source of considerable revenue.

One of the reasons for pressure on the echevinal courts was the growth of commerce from the late twelfth century and with it, the need for capital with the ensuing necessary legal contracts of sale and lease back, conditional sales with repurchase clauses, and other assignments on real property and on movables. However, customary law dating back to early feudal times forbade the seizing of land by a creditor for debt, a protection against rapacious lords. But land was a would-be borrower’s most valuable possession. How might he raise a loan on it if the creditor could not claim it in default of the debt? An ingenious legal agreement was devised, called a contrepotent-lansage whereby the owner of movable goods or of the title to an immovable (land) voluntarily assigned it to a second party. In the case of a movable, the assignment was made directly to the creditor; in the case of an immovable, it was made to an officer of the High Court who then transferred a
temporary title to the creditor. This action was the **contrepan**, first mentioned in 1285 and very popular by the mid-fourteenth century, not only with individuals including William I, but also with abbeys, hospitals and chapters whose incomes came mainly from their lands. The **ランスァージ** part of the transaction was the simultaneous transfer by the creditor to the debtor of the full enjoyment of the **contrepanned** property, retaining for himself only the title to it which he held until the debtor fulfilled his obligations. Hidden by various means in the arrangement was the interest, for example, a "donation" to a third party. It was not an expensive legal action and it could apply to any good or revenue; anyone who had the right to alienate property could **contrepan** it. Restrictions were few; a fief could not be **contrepanned** without the authorization of the lord, nor a wife's dowry by her husband without her consent. Its further advantage was that the debtor was freed from personal obligation; it was the property which was **indebted**.

Another device to raise capital was the **arrentement**, whereby a loan was made against movables and repaid by, usually, an annual payment called a **rente**, which included interest on the loan. This transaction was often the last resort of desperate peasants in the countryside, constrained to eke out a living on inadequate holdings of three or four **bonniers** of land laden with feudal charges. The **rente** was usually payable in spelt to protect the lender against devalued coin and it might be a third, even a half, of the peasant's total production. Properly speaking, before the appearance of the **aides de ville**, the action of **arrentement** should have gone through the High Court of Feix, a slow process, but a peasant desperate for cash and a **basse-cour** pleased to assume wider

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130 Ten **bonniers** (twenty to thirty acres) was considered the minimum for a family. See Léopold Genicot, "L''étendue des exploitations agricoles dans le comté de Namur à la fin du XIIIe siècle". *Etudes rurales* 5-6 (April-September 1962), pp. 5-31.
powers and exact additional fees accommodated each other. When the debtor could not pay, the local court ordered seizure of movables - equipment, furnishings and beasts. This was very profitable for the court and the creditor.

Eventually, arrentements became so common and so abusive that on 28 December 1337, Countess Marie d’Artois, as regent during the minority of her son William, forbade basses-cours to act against a debtor. Instead, the case had to be referred to the High Court of Feix. Settlement in this court took a long time, up to a year, during which time the debtor might pay what he owed and the legal procedure would stop. Even if judgment had been given against him, his next-of-kin could settle the debt during the whole of the following year. As a result, basses-cours lost their profitability and disappeared in the course of about a generation.¹³¹

Conclusions

Although administrative responsibility was broadened from a narrow oligarchy in 1263, headed by the count, to a nominally ever-widening base from 1403 on, the government of the commune remained essentially the concern of upper bourgeois. The minting of money, however, with its consequences for purchasing power, was held solely by the count. On the other hand, the financial policy of Namur was decided by the magistracy and the count working hand in glove, but when the count needed extra money for his own purse, he obtained it by forced loans, subsidies and other impositions from

which there was little or no recourse. Fortunately, the counts of Namur did not need costly and continuing financing for war.

It was in the field of law that the Namurois standard of living was most safeguarded, and if lex talionis lingered longer in Namur than in other western European jurisdictions, it indicated a very strong commitment to the protection of life and limb, just as the serious consequences of theft or breaking and entering were intended to keep personal property sacrosanct. Finally, changing needs of commerce were met by new kinds of legal instruments, while some older institutions like the basses-cours were abolished for the protection of the poor and vulnerable.
CHAPTER III
Commune and Church

Introduction

In the exercise of its prerogatives, the bourgeois administration of Namur might not always be seen as contributing so much to the general standard of living as to the civic pride of the burghers. Their concern with the four essentials of a commune illustrates the point. But their regard for public health, for the protection of children and for the care of the ill and infirm did contribute to the welfare of the townsfolk. Nor was the Church free of self-interest, yet it too played an important role, as the mother of hospitals, in the support of the pauperes of society. As the foundress also of schools, it preserved and extended book learning and fostered education. More important, its enshrinement of Christian principles tempered lawlessness and cruelty, and comforted, in the deepest sense of the word, its people, while its festivals of the liturgical year and the spectacles mounted by the commune animated the lives of the Namurois.

Commune

There were four prime essentials for a commune in the southern Low Countries of the late medieval ages: its fortifications - walls, moats, gates and, often, a castle; its hôtel de ville with belfry and bell; its perron; and its seal bearing its coat of arms.¹ These

¹ After the battle of Brustem (28 October 1467), Charles the Bold entered Liège on 17 November 1467, significantly, through a breach in its walls. Amid the carnage and destruction, another symbolic act was executed: the perron was dismantled and shipped to Bruges, where it was erected as a trophy in the Place de la Bourse. For an account of the battle, see Henri Pirenne, Histoire de Belgique I, pp. 283-284, and
material attributes were symbols of its autonomy, that is, the right to defend and govern itself, presupposing the possession of a charter to limit the power of the lord. Further, recalling the symbol of a city noted by Robert Lopez (pp. 10-11), we might read the equilateral cross inside the circle as representative of the Church, rather than of a cross-road, and add to the four attributes a fifth, for the commune was usually the site of a cathedral or collegiate church.

Reconstruction of the fortifications was the pressing concern of the commune of Namur in the fourteenth century, and it precluded, revenues being so restricted, the building of a handsome town hall like those of the rich cities of Flanders and Brabant. But the modest two-storey Cabaret had a belfry attached to it, reached through two little doors in the upper storey. A watch was kept at the top of the belfry where also hung the town bell. It was rung to summon the bourgeois to arm themselves for the defence of their commune, or to assemble in the Franciscan church to hear the annual accounts, to welcome the count making his Joyous Entry or, more sombly, at the time of an execution or departing pilgrimage. It might also be rung to signal a crime, as the charter of Brogne stated. “If anyone in the town has committed a crime of such magnitude that he merits being physically apprehended, when the hue and cry of Hahai or the sound of the trumpet or the ban bell has been signalled against him, the whole town is to follow after him to the final limit of the banlieue.” Because the bancloke was the perquisite of the


2 Félix Rousseau. Actes des comtes. p. 28. “Si quis in villa tantum forisfecerit ut capi...dignus sit. facto post eum clamore Hahai. vel sono buccine, vel bannalis campane, usque ad terminos leuge bannalis total villa eum insequetur”.


commune, it was the magistracy, not the prince, who decided when it would be rung. The church of Saint-Pierre-au-Château on the heights of Champeau also had a belfry from which watchers could see the whole of the town below. It too had a *bancloke* which sounded the same alarms, especially of fire. Six days a week, the *bancloke* rang at sunrise, the start of the working day, and at sunset to mark its end, as well as at *nones*, which had gradually been moved back from the ninth hour (3.00 p.m.) to noon. That marked the half-way point in the work day and signalled the rest break. The bells of the eleventh-thirteenth centuries could thus mark both church and secular time, but by the fourteenth century with its growing industry, there was a need to regulate hours of work more precisely. Church bells would no longer serve as work bells. Accordingly, a new *bancloke* was commissioned by the magistracy in 1371 to serve secular purposes only. A certain Jean Falise of Namur was paid £25 tournois to cast it; the metal came from the old bell as well as copper and tin from a foundry in Bouvignes. The total weight was about 5,000 pounds and the whole cost of some 174 moutons (£145 tournois approximately) was paid by the count.

Before the end of the century, the major cities of Flanders, Brabant and Hainaut had mechanical clocks, and the fine, deep-throated bell of the commune of Namur was not enough. The magistracy determined to put a clock in the town belfry, as handsome as those of Brussels and Mons. The contract was given to John of Huy to provide a clock for

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3 When Philip VI (1328-1356) crushed the Flemish rebels at the battle of Cassel (23 August 1328), the charters of Bruges and Ypres were confiscated, their walls demolished, their moats filled in and their bells smashed. See Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique II*, p. 90.
the sum of £155 tournois which, with a small item of carpentry to the peak of the belfry, was contributed by Count William II. The remaining cost of about 700 moutons (about £135 tournois) was met by the town, it represented roughly one-fifth of the total receipts for the year. A clock required a clock-keeper; one was hired for 37 moutons, 12 heaumes per year, including a new coat to designate his office. It was restricting, if not onerous, work and he would probably have been constrained to augment it with other employment.

The last attribute of a commune was its seal, which gave authenticity to its enactments and proclaimed its power to legislate, although at first it merely portrayed the arms of its princes. The first mention of a distinctive communal seal appears to be in 1213, when the chapter of Saint-Aubain allowed the commune to erect a small building in the Place Saint-Remy to serve as a very modest hôtel de ville. The document asserts: “[And for greater surety, we have confirmed this present document by appending our seal and that of the town.]”

Again in 1216, the seal was appended to a charter granted by the commune. It is sealed in brown wax, showing a shield with three roundels, two below and one above, and the legend SIGILLUM VILLICI ET SC[abinorum de Namu]CO. These were the arms of the de Courtenay family. About 1250, another seal appeared, showing a walled town with several towers, the one in the centre bearing a lion with a banner. The counter-seal shows a shield with lion rampant traversed by a band bearing the legend “Secretum

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7 See Appendix 2. At 14.25 heaumes to the mouton, the clock-keeper earned, say, 540 heaumes (about £7 tournois) per year. the same as a labourer at 3 heaumes per day for, say, 180 days a year.
8 Cart. Nam. I. p.8. “Ad maiorem vero certitudinem, presentem paganum sigilli nostre et ipsius ville appensione roboravimus.” The seal is missing from the document.
This was the lion of Baudouin. In 1411, the arms of the count carried a lion crowned, without the transverse band. This lion remains today on the Namurois arms: “d’or, au lion de sable, armé, couronné et lampassé de gueules” (with open jaws and protruding red tongue). The Belgian flag retains the same three colours: from the hoist to the fly, black, yellow, red.

The responsibilities of the magistracy extended beyond defence, finance, law and public order to every aspect of the life of the town. Public health and sanitation was a constant concern. Every property owner or tenant was required to keep the street abutting his property swept and washed down; but the disposal of waste exercised the ingenuity of the townsfolk and the vigilance of the authorities. While water was not commonly drunk, a clean supply was essential for domestic and manufacturing purposes, especially for brewing. That industry gave its name to the street, the rue des Brasseurs, which ran along the left bank of the Sambre at water’s edge. Similarly, the moats were kept fresh and clean; fishing in them was by permit. The water tables of Namur were high, making the sinking of wells, public and private, fairly easy, but conversely, shallow wells could be easily polluted by surface refuse. A cri de perron of 9 April 1412, doubtless one of a succession over the years, forbade anyone throwing anything into the Sambre, whether it be offal from the Butchers’ Hall near the bridge or other refuse - earth, manure or human ordure. It was also forbidden to deposit waste in any street, particularly those which ran near the river. The fine was a little over 30 heaumes (10 days’ wages for a labourer) plus the forfeit of the vessel containing the matter. The fine was split three ways among count,

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10 Isaiah 24:16. Freely rendered, "I keep my own counsel".
Whether there were public latrines in Namur as there were in the early fourteenth century in Brussels, we do not know, but since almost every household had a patch of garden, to say nothing of extensive cultivation by market-gardeners, it may be surmised that the refuse of middens and the ordure of animals and humans furnished useful fertilizer. In 1928, Lynn Thorndike made a point that is still valid today. In the last century, scholars used to decry the public and private hygiene of medieval people on the grounds that since their own was so bad in the nineteenth century, that of the fourteenth century must have been much worse. Namurois noses did not tolerate stenches. From the early fourteenth century, tanneries and fulling mills, for example, were located on the Hoyoul streams flowing into the Meuse about 1,200 metres downstream from Namur. However, the buildings where the cloths were dried and tentered were not noisome and they were located in the north-eastern part of the town. One of these, belonging to the abbey of Floreffe, was rented by the commune in 1409 and transformed at great expense into a public bath. Two smaller baths had existed from about 1350. They became places of relaxation and conviviality as well as bathing, one for women and the others for men. But since their management was farmed out, rules governing segregation of the sexes were relaxed, and they became places of ill repute. Maintenance grew slack.

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12 Cart. Nam. II. p. 295.
14 They and vine-workers were incorporated as a guild in the town on 9 September 1404. See Cart. Nam. II. p. 253-258.
and by about 1460, they were closed. Some areas were used for archery practice; others were turned into indoor tennis courts.\(^\text{16}\)

In the interests of public sanitation, the magistrates also ensured that the Butchers’ Hall was kept clean, that no meat or sea fish was sold except in the hall and that no animals were killed, skinned or drawn on the public pavement. Pork and beef might not be sold from the same stall; the same separation was required for freshwater and sea fish. There were also restrictions on the sale of cooked meats. Each tradesman might sell only from the stall (or half-stall) which he rented each August and he must, of course, be a member of the guild.\(^\text{17}\)

Doctors came so frequently to practise in Namur that the magistrates established a fee of 25 heaumes (£1 tournois)\(^\text{18}\) to administer an oath of trustworthiness and competence. One, at least, of these physicians was employed to visit and prognosticate on every case of wounding, but their chief source of income came from house-visits to the well-to-do. They were recognized by their long robes, unlike the short gowns of the surgeons, and at the waist, each carried his \textit{vade-mecum} of recipes and remedies. One of these from Namur has survived.\(^\text{19}\) It contains herbal recipes for all the common complaints of eye and skin infections, headaches and toothaches, burns, wounds, gout, and

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16 Theodor Puschmann in \textit{A History of Medical Education}, p. 276, shows that in the fourteenth century, the number of public baths was far greater and the custom of bathing more widespread than in his own day and that in Germany at least, his principal concern, bathmen and barbers performed some medical functions. On Namurois baths, see Ferdinand Courtoy, “Une vieille rue de Namur”. \textit{Namurcum} (1949), pp. 49-63.

17 \textit{Cart. Nam. II}, pp. 160-169. 18 May 1388. On 11 June 1363, two butchers were found guilty of selling bad meat. They were expelled from the guild for two years, at which time they might be re-instated at the pleasure of the mayor. See Joseph Grandgagnage. \textit{Coutumes II}, art. 128, p. 227.

18 The devaluations of William II had cheapened the heaumé from 18.66 to the franc in 1384 to 25 to the franc about 1400.

19 It has been edited by Jean Haust in \textit{Médecinaire liégeois du XIIIe siècle et médecinaire namurois du XVe siècle}, Brussels, 1941. The Namurois portion (pp. 189-213) was transcribed from MS. Dorstadt 2769, fol. 217 recto to 226 verso, comprising some 200 recipes in French, with the last folio, a pious exhortation, in Latin.
congestion of the lungs, as well as emetics for poisonings and contraceptives and abortifacients for women.\textsuperscript{20} Much of this information already lay in the public domain so that its prescription by the physician simply confirmed the patient’s confidence in him. There were some diseases, however, that were so difficult to cure that only the miracles of the saints were deemed efficacious; and thus, the afflictions were named for the saints: St. Anthony’s Fire (erysipelas), St. Lupus’ disease (epilepsy), St. Lawrence’s complaints (eczema, shingles, scabies), and various diseases of the throat, which were the purview of St. Blaise.

Surgeons, whose ministrations were more painful and desperate, were also licensed by the magistracy. The law required that in any case of serious wounding, life- or limb-threatening, an authorized prognostication be obtained and a complaint laid within ten days. Otherwise, if the patient died, his demise might be attributed to septicaemia or to the surgeon’s ministrations, rather than to the assailant, who would thus avoid a charge of homicide. A case in point came before the Namurois magistrates on 26 March 1380 when one Pierre le Costurier sought redress for wounding. He had suffered so grievous a knife wound to his foot by Jehan le Mauvaix that the member was only just hanging to the ankle. A surgeon cauterized the wound and sewed it back on, but about six days later, the foot rotted and fell off. When he had somewhat recovered, Pierre came to court, demanding that the foot of Jehan be cut off. But the time limit had expired. Jehan kept his foot and paid a fine to the count.\textsuperscript{21}

Such a story brings home the excruciating and traumatic pain that some patients bore until quite recently when anaesthetics and analgesics have made illnesses more

\textsuperscript{20} Some of these herbs are listed by John M. Riddle in “Oral Contraceptives and Early-term Abortifacients during Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages”, \textit{Past and Present} 132 (1991), pp. 3-32.

tolerable. In late-medieval times, there were no true anaesthetics, but there were some palliatives. Myrrh was one stupefacient; another, consisting of a mixture of equal parts of the gall of a swine, hemlock juice, nept (cat-mint), lettuce, poppy, henbane and vinegar, taken in two quarts of wine, would send a patient to sleep with senses dulled.  

*Sages-femmes* and beguines also ameliorated the sufferings of some patients. The former were licensed by the magistrates to practise privately as midwives. As well, they were employed by the authorities to investigate certain cases involving the welfare of women. One such inquiry concerned a tiler who was brought before the magistrates’ court to answer an accusation that he had beaten his pregnant wife, who had then miscarried. Four midwives were sent to examine the woman; they reported that they had found “nothing in the form of a creature”. The tiler thus escaped a charge of homicide, but the case went on record and perhaps acted as a warning to him.  

In another case, three workmen were carrying a long balk of wood through a Namurois street when one end of it struck and wounded a woman who was sitting at the window of her house. Because she was pregnant, the accident was serious; the workmen were questioned and *sages-femmes* and a doctor were sent to examine her. The former were required to live with her until she felt the child move. Then the workmen were discharged.  

In another instance, about 1393, the wife of an Hainaut usurer had beaten her Namurois servant, who was said to be pregnant. The mistress was arrested and released on surety, while two *sages-femmes*  

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22 This recipe is given by Linda E. Voigts and Robert P. Hudson in the article entitled “A drynke that men callen dwale to make a man to slepe whyle men kerven him: A Surgical Anesthetic from Late Medieval England”. It is contained in Sheila Campbell, Bert Hall, David Klausner, eds., *Health, Disease and Healing in Medieval Culture*. New York. 1992. pp. 34-56.  
24 Ibid., art. 21. pp. 31-32.
examined the young servant. When they did not find clear evidence of pregnancy or any serious damage, the girl's mistress was given a discharge.25

The magistracy had children as well as women under its particular care. Injuries to infants and small children were the subject of frequent inquests, especially when they occurred as a result of suspected carelessness of paid nurses. Open cooking and heating fires were a constant danger,26 while out-of-doors, there was the threat of vehicles and animals. On 13 August 1418, there was an inquiry into the disappearance of a two-year old boy who had fallen into the moat while in the paid care of a furrier and his wife. Not finding the child, they fled to sanctuary in the cathedral. Their house was put under guard and both they and the child's parents were about to be investigated, when the child was found wandering in the street. Whereupon, charges against all four adults were dropped.27

Those suffering from accidents or illnesses recovered or died at home, attended by physicians, if they could afford the fees. In either case, the ministrations of the beguines were of great comfort. The earliest reference to these women in Namur is in 1235, when a widow named Eve made a gift of three houses near Saint-Aubain and four bonniers of land near Bouges to provide some revenue. These were for the use and support of women devoted to a religious life (without, however, taking perpetual vows of poverty and chastity), who would minister to the poor and the ill. This foundation, known as the

25 Ibid., art. 16. pp. 219-220. The undated article does not say whether the mistress was a citizen of Namur, but her servant-girl was protected by Namurois law.
26 Ibid., art. 31. p. 157, reports four fatal cases happening in different locations in the banlieue of Namur, where parents had entrusted their children to paid wet-nurses; in each case, the woman had fled to escape a charge of homicide.
27 Ibid., art. 66. pp. 180-181.
Grand-Béguinage, was followed by others in 1313, 1350, 1365, ca. 1398, ca. 1410 and 1430.

Beguines wore a distinctive habit of rough wool, grey or beige, and lived under the authority of a prioress, with rules that varied somewhat from one beguinage to another; often, the benefactor would stipulate prayers to be said for the souls of himself and his family, as well as requiring the strict observation of the feasts, fasts and sacraments of the Church.28 The women augmented their incomes, private and communal, with sewing, spinning, weaving and sometimes begging, by means of which for nearly five hundred years they relieved poverty with gifts of money, food and clothing, and they mitigated the suffering of the old, the infirm and the ill, as well as offering help to new mothers and their children. The last beguinage consisting of four women was disbanded soon after 1692.29

The work of the beguines was, of course, more extensively undertaken by the Church in hospitals and hospices, of which there were at least three: the Grand-Hôpital, the leper hospital called Grands-Malades, and a pilgrims’ hospice originally called Hôpital d’Outremer, later known as Saint-Jacques. The principal of these was the Grand-Hôpital, situated at the foot of Champeau on the Meuse side and dating from at least 1229.30 It was

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28 But they were not nuns under an approved order. Clement V in 1311 at the Council of Vienne proscribed them and threatened to excommunicate them and any who counselled or aided them. Nevertheless, a saving clause added that “we in no way intend by the foregoing to forbid any faithful women, whether they promise chastity or not, from living uprightly in their hospices, wishing to live a life of penance and serving the Lord of Hosts in a spirit of humility. This they may do, as the Lord inspires them.” See Norman P. Tanner, S.J., ed., Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, I, London, 1990, cap. 16. p. 374.
29 Charles Wilmet. “Histoire des Béguinages de Namur”. ASAN 6 (1859-1860), pp. 43-90. He comments (page 89) that the town accounts of 1692 contain the last references of beguinages in Namur.
30 Cart. Nam. I, note 4. pp. 51-52. Jules Borgnet here mentions various donations and concessions made to the hospital and its poor. Besides the three hospitals, there was a salle de malades for poor women in the Grand-Béguinage. It is possible that there was also a hospice for the blind by the end of the fourteenth century, to which the will of Pierre de Courtray in 1398 may have referred. See infra. p. 100.
also known as the Hôpital de Notre-Dame, the Hôpital des pauvres (signifying its purpose) and the Hôpital Saint-Gilles, which is still the name of the present hospital on the same site. It was founded to care for the old, the infirm and the poor, as well as poor pregnant women and foundlings and orphans. In its earliest days, the administrator was one of the canons of Notre-Dame, who had charge of the revenues of the hospital, arising from donations of lands and other bequests.

In medieval times, most western European hospitals were based upon the statutes of Raymond of Puy, who, in 1120 as master of the hospital of St. John in Jerusalem, required that both inmates and staff follow the order of St. Augustine, with segregation of sexes and adherence as far as possible to the Offices of the Church and its days of obligation. The staff comprised sisters and brothers who had vowed poverty and chastity, as well as obedience to one of their number whom they elected as prioress or master respectively. Each inmate was admitted according to a ceremony of confession and communion and then carried to his bed, and there, “like a lord”, he enjoyed the care, food, drink, clothing and furnishings which were provided as the house could afford. But the scrupulous and altruistic management of the eleventh and twelfth centuries deteriorated in some cases to usurpation and carelessness, so that by 1311, the Council of Vienne called

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31 See Léon Le Grand, Statuts, pp. 7-11. By 1181, the hospital of St. John in Jerusalem retained four doctors.
32 Ibid., cap. 16, p. 11: "Comment les seignors malades doivent estre recehuz et serviz." By the early thirteenth century, hospitals had become much more prescriptive. The Hôtel-Dieu in Angers, for example, required that twice a week, poor and infirm people were to be sought out in the town and brought to the hospital for convalescence (cap. 5, p. 23). But at the same time, it refused admission to lepers, ardentes and contracti (two types of St. Anthony’s Fire), orphans and foundlings, and thieves newly mutilated or branded (cap. 13, p. 25). All of these except the last-named were received elsewhere.
for a restoration of alienated property and a secular management accountable to the local bishop and magistrates.\textsuperscript{33}

In Namur, the bourgeoisie had always been strong supporters of their Grand-Hôpital, and by the late thirteenth century, some of them became the brothers and sisters who cared for the inmates. They belonged to no religious order and took no vows; sometimes they were celibate, sometimes married. They elected one of their members as master or governor; often he was a well-to-do guildsman - stone-mason or carpenter, for example - who could oversee repairs and maintenance. He reported annually to the magistracy and the general public, after which the usual banquet was held. By 1367, however, the governor was an \textit{élu} appointed by the magistracy.\textsuperscript{34}

By this time also, the hospital had assigned a number of rooms on the second floor to bourgeois men and women who wished to retire there. If they had donated their goods to the hospital, they lived free for life. Otherwise, they paid a lump sum upon admission and were given a monthly food allowance. In either case, they supplied their own furniture and equipment, and all of it together with whatever money, clothing or other personal effects were left at their death became the property of the hospital, usually to be sold, occasionally to be given to children being raised by the hospital. The chief revenue of the hospital came from rents on its lands donated over the centuries, and totaling about seven hundred hectares, mostly in the fertile Hesbaye.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{33} Norman J. Tanner, \textit{Decrees of Ecumenical Councils I}, p. 375.
\textsuperscript{34} The first extant hospital accounts for the year beginning 30 November 1367 were presented by Henri de Wierde, \textit{élu}.
\textsuperscript{35} Léopold Genicot in \textit{La crise agricole}, pp. 126-197, has provided tabulated average prices of foodstuffs and other materials purchased by the Grand-Hôpital principally, and by the town of Namur. From accounts extant from 1367-1368 for the former and 1384-1385 for the latter. From these records, he concluded that the rents, usually expressed in \textit{muids} of spelt, generally retained their purchasing power (p. 17).
An indication of the kind of rations provided for the old, infirm and indigent patients, housed on the lower floor of the hospital, can be deduced from the hospital accounts of 1378-1379, which list the cost of eight confinements of poor pregnant women. Each received wine, strong ale, condiments, bread, apples, pears and meat. And there were extra treats, called pitances, often paid for by legacies, issued on many of the twenty-six special holy days or on the anniversary of a donor’s death.

Of all the marginals of society, surely the lepers were the most pitiable, for their disease could reduce them to many types of suffering: facial disfigurement, ulcers, deformation of clawed fingers and toes, even loss of hands and feet and eyesight. The first signs might be concealed - fever, difficulty of breathing and a harsh, nasal tone to the voice - but the thickening and tuberosity of eyebrows and the breaking down of nasal cartilage gave the patient’s face a distinctive leonine look, which could not be hidden or ignored. Following Biblical injunction, the diagnosis was made by the parish priest together with a doctor. If the patient were a bourgeois, he could appeal the decision by going to the leper hospital at Mont-Cornillon, near Liège, accompanied by the master of the Namur leper hospital and one of the brothers - all at the patient’s expense; mistakes were occasionally made. Failing such a reprieve, the designated leper presented himself to his parish priest, who verified that he was a baptized Namurois; only they were eligible for admission to the leper hospital. Then, with two or three of his friends to vouch for him, he

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37 See Appendix 3.
38 See, for example, Lev. 13:2 and Luke 17:14.
went before the échevins to prove that he had been born in one of the four parishes. That done, the governor of Grands-Malades was notified to expect the leper's arrival.

The entry ceremony was much more elaborate than that for any other kind of hospital and it varied slightly from one diocese to another. Its intent, however, was always the same: to make public declaration of the disease, recognized as a death to life, and to remind the leper of the restrictions upon his behaviour and his movements. First, the leper waited in his house for the arrival of the priest who would conduct him to Grands-Malades in the hamlet of Beez about 1,200 metres down-river from Namur. Standing ready also was a horse and cart laden with the furniture and equipment stipulated by the hospital: a bed with sheets, blankets, coverlets and pillows, table and chairs, cushions, bowls, cooking pots, cutlery and utensils, candlesticks, a dipper, a spade, two wine measures (two-litre and one-litre), pewter goblets and whatever other furnishings the leper wished, all of which reverted to the hospital at his or her death.39

The funeral procession was preceded by a crucifer; then came the priest in surplice and stole, the leper clothed in a shroud and borne on a stretcher, and all the people following. At the hospital, the leper knelt in front of his hut or cottage to hear the priest’s sermon counselling patience to endure this scourge of God in hope of heavenly joy. Clad now in his long leper's cloak and his distinctive cap covering his ears, with a clapper in his hand, he listened to the ten prohibitions.40 Then, as he kissed the priest’s foot, some earth was thrown on his head, he entered his hut, and the door was closed.41

40 These were essentially the same everywhere: to avoid contact, direct or indirect, with healthy people. Thus, never to enter a market, mill or bakehouse; never to wash in any spring or stream and to take water only with his dipper; never to go out without his leper’s dress and never unshod; to indicate with his staff whatever he wished to buy; never to enter a tavern or private house; to have no intercourse with any
Grands-Malades occupied a pleasant area of some 8.5 hectares bounded in front by the road along the Meuse and behind by a rocky cliff, and containing grain fields, orchards, vegetable gardens, vines and wells. The lepers were housed in little cottages if they were of some distinction or if their wives had chosen to accompany them, or else in rooms of a large central building. In another similar building, there were rooms for the hâties, the healthy people like those in the Grand-Hôpital, who paid to lodge there.

The leprosarium dated from at least 1210, when Innocent III took it under his protection. Originally, it was staffed, like the Grand-Hôpital, with tertiaries following the Augustinian rule, and the leper inmates were required to follow the same rule if they were able: daily Mass and the Offices, observation of the Church Year, and strict segregation of the sexes. But by the late fourteenth century, the hospital was governed and staffed by paid laity under the supervision of the échevinage.

By all accounts, the lepers lived comfortably. The statutes of the hospital prescribed rations of cereal (for bread and porridge), wine, chicken, pork and lard, as well as tallow candles and annually six cords of wood for heating and cooking. The statutes also contained prohibitions besides the usual ten défenses: not to leave the grounds without permission; not to gather fruits which they did not intend to eat themselves; not to enter the cow-sheds; to keep to their appointed place in church; never to cough in the

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woman except his wife; in travelling abroad, to step off the road when someone approached, and never to go through a narrow lane; to touch no gate or post without wearing his gloves; never to touch an infant or young person or to give them, or anyone else, any of his possessions; never to eat or drink in any company except that of lepers. These défenses are found (in Latin) in Baron Frédéric de Reiffenberg, “Rite de la séquestration d’un lépreux dans l’ancien diocèse de Trèves”, in Bulletins de l’Académie royale des sciences, des lettres, et des beaux-arts de Belgique, vol. XI, part 1, pp. 401-403, Brussels, 1844.
42 Cart. Nam. 1. pp. 6-7.
presence of healthy people - all on pain of deprivation of a portion of their rations. On feast days, they received an extra measure of wine.\textsuperscript{43} They also enjoyed extra rations, as well as money and clothing, provided by bequests that were managed separately from the other incomes of the hospital. Thus, the will dated 4 February 1334 of Jehans li mal moine, a priest, left to the pitance of the hospital part of the 55 sous tournois of annual rent on a house in Buley, and 5 sous a year on another house in Jambes, the latter on condition that the chaplain at Grands-Malades would say a Mass every month for him and his late faithful wife, Isabelle, referred to as his épouse, not his femme.\textsuperscript{44}

There was no question of quarantining the lepers; they were moderately free to come and go, subject to the défenses. Indeed, they might be expelled for felonious or sexual activities, or they might choose a vagabond life alone or in company, seeking a night’s lodging in the local leprosarium wherever they happened to be, and earning their food by begging on the road or at a church door.

This disease, which had experienced an upsurge during the twelfth century, perhaps from returning Crusaders,\textsuperscript{45} finally began to abate in the late fourteenth century. By 1409, the leper hospital had only nine haitiés and three lepers;\textsuperscript{46} new uses were found for it in caring for widows, orphans and wounded workmen.\textsuperscript{47} It is possible, too, that poor, blind people were housed there or had a hospice of their own. A will of 1398 of

\textsuperscript{43} The earliest extant statutes of Grands-Malades date from 1522. They have been published by Jules Borgnet in Cartulaire de...Bouvignes, note 6, pp. 36-37.


\textsuperscript{46} Jules Borgnet. “Les Grands-Malades”, p. 452. The figures are taken from the hospital accounts, which are extant only from 1409.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 404.
Pierre de Courtray, dean of Saint-Pierre-au-Château, bequeathed clothing to the lepers and to the poor, blind people of Namur.\textsuperscript{48}

**Church**

The affiliations of the Church in Namur were far-flung: the archbishopric of Cologne, the diocese of Liège and the archdeaconry of Hainaut. Its three parishes of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Saint-Jean-l’Évangéliste and Saint-Loup were in the deanery of Gembloux, while the fourth parish, Saint-Michel, lay in the deanery of Fleurus, the dividing line being the left bank of the Sambre. There were three collegiate churches with chapters of secular canons: Notre-Dame, Saint-Aubain and Saint-Pierre-au-Château. Finally, there were chapels of oratories of Saint-Rémy in the market-place, Saint-Nicolas founded on the left bank of the Sambre in 1153, Saint-Hilaire in the old portus, dating from the sixth century, and Saint-Martin also founded about the same time on the left bank of the Meuse near La Plante. Two religious orders, the Croisiers and the Franciscans, were established in Namur early in the thirteenth century. Thus, the Namurois were well served with pastoral care and places of worship.\textsuperscript{49}

Of these establishments, the chief was Saint-Aubain, founded by Count Albert II in 1047. Its High Court was independent of the High Court of Namur and the only appeal against its decision was to the count himself. Its perron, a stone column mounted on three steps, stood before its central doors, signifying the legislative authority of the chapter. Its

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 350.

\textsuperscript{49} A map of these deaneries is found in the article by Alain Dierkens, “Premières structures religieuses: paroisses et chapitres jusqu’au XIIe siècle”. p. 57. in Namur, le site, les hommes. Generally, a chapel had no authority to baptize or to bury.
privileges were affirmed by Henry the Blind in 1154 and by Guy I in 1273, and again in 1423 by John III,\textsuperscript{50} guaranteeing the right to administer its lands and to judge its members and dependants, clerical and lay, of any crime save treason; to seize the goods of its debtors for non-payment; to enter the dwelling and arrest the person of anyone rebellious to its authority - canon, chaplain, servant or tenant - living on its properties. The decree of John III refers to other freedoms and privileges "which would be too numerous to list" (quy trop longues seroient icy à incérer),\textsuperscript{51} but they included freedom from watch duty and from wine taxes and milling charges, and its servants were exempt from formorture and all other servile dues and exactions.\textsuperscript{52}

While the magistracy of Namur was for long a high bourgeois oligarchy, the provost, dean and canons of Saint-Aubain frequently came from noble families of the county, following the practice of the cathedral chapter of Liège.\textsuperscript{53} Vacancies were filled by election in the chapter and the count was doubtless satisfied with the result. This was certainly the case with Provost Guillaume Masson, who was also the count's receiver-general.\textsuperscript{54} These churchmen ranked with the highest laity of the county; their wealth enabled them to dress lavishly, to keep fine horses, hawks and dogs and to absent themselves from Chapter for protracted periods to enjoy the secular entertainments of feasting and hunting. The decay in religious discipline is seen in the statutes promulgated

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Cart. Nam.} II. p. 377.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Cart. Nam.} II. pp. 104-108. A legal decision dated 11 October 1375 re-affirmed this freedom.
\textsuperscript{53} How long this had been the custom is not known, but it was confirmed by Martin V in a decree dated 3 April 1426. See Alfred Cauchie and Alphonse van Hove, \textit{Documents sur la principauté de Liège}, vol. I. Brussels. 1908, pp. 82-86.
\textsuperscript{54} See chapter II. p. 63.
by the chapter of Saint-Lambert in Liège, 18 and 19 September, 1336. Heads were to be tonsured in keeping with clerical rank, beards shaved and a modest decency in clothing observed; dress should be neither too short nor too tight. Fancy shoes and costly ornaments were forbidden. Garb had to be recognizable as clerical, and gesture and conduct had to proclaim a priestly status. It was deemed necessary to insist on daily attendance at Matins, Mass and Vespers. Finally, their convivial gatherings were repressed, and they were forbidden to invite in mimers, jugglers and actors for entertainment.55 The cause of laxity, however, did not rest solely with the clergy. The count was known to appoint unsuitable favourites to office. On 29 September 1310, following a protest by the chapter of nuns of Andenne against his having given a prebend to Agnes, sister of Huon de Lannoi, and an illiterate, John I promised not to give any prebend to unlettered persons or to those who had not attained twelve years of age.56

Generally speaking, the pastors of the parish churches were more praiseworthy shepherds, if only because their incomes were smaller and they were in direct touch with their parishioners. Concubinage remained an affront to the discipline of the Church but it was tolerated by the people, particularly in rural parishes. The will of Jehans li mal moine referred by name to his loyal wife (page 99).

Dissatisfaction arose less with the sexual transgressions of priests than over fees charged for their services. In 1406, a dispute between the parishioners of Saint-Michel, attached to Notre-Dame, and their priest was settled by an official from Liège, together

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with two bourgeois deputized by the commune. For a betrothal and calling of banns, the fee was 6 silver Namurois esterlins, 12 if the couple were merchants, and 18 if they were rich rentiers. For a simple, quiet solemnization of Holy Matrimony, the priest received only the offerings of the congregation. For an elaborate wedding with music, the same staggered fee of 6, 12 or 18 esterlins applied; for the burial of a child, offerings only; for adults, according to status; for attestation of baptism, 2, 4 or 7 esterlins. Finally, all priests in the commune were bound to observe this scale of fees. The priest of Saint-Michel appealed to the archdeaconry of Hainaut, but lost the case and was assessed with costs.

Parishes were also served by clerks in minor orders. These marguilliers (sacristans) acted as acolytes, sang the Offices, rang bells, assisted with communion and carried the viaticum. They may also have served in the administration of relief to the poor and the blind. They were themselves often poor, relying on fees and other gifts, which were set out in the regulations of the parish. Sometimes, for example, their fees for weddings and funerals were a fraction of those for the priest. Fees also varied with the extravagance of the nuptials, with the place of burial - church, cloister or cemetery - and with the person's status. In any event, the sacristan received also his dreschée - a litre of wine and a plate of meat. He was paid to serve at the receptions held by the canons as a chapter or individually, and doubtless there was left-over food as well. At New Year's, he got special confections (coeke et cougnoul) and other gratuities from the parishioners, at

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58 Léopold Genicot. Economie rurale III, pp. 360-361.
59 The cougnou was a loaf-shaped or conical Christmas cake. The Sunday after Epiphany (6 January) was the Festin du cougnou in many Namurois localities, when young women signified their interest in certain young men through the ceremony of cutting and distributing the cake. See Félix Rousseau. "Le cougnou" in Le Guetteur Wallon I (1924). pp. 247-249.
Candlemas, a four-ounce candle, on Holy Thursday, a dozen little cakes, at Easter, eggs and pastries, and every year on Saint-Jean-Baptiste (24 June), one gigot from every household in the parish.60

In addition to this hierarchy of the Church, there was one other group of special status in Namur, dating from Carolingian times, known as the sainteurs. These were men, women or children who were willingly attached to a cathedral, abbey or collegiate church, becoming to a certain degree the property of the Church. But they were not serfs, although like serfdom the status was transmitted by a mother to her children. Because they were not serfs, they escaped taille and often also formorture and mortemain. Yet they were not entirely free. As the serf belonged to the familia of his lord, so the sainteur was a dependant of a saint or of the institution of which that saint was the patron. Both serf and sainteur paid chevage (a head tax), but in the latter’s case, it was very light and served to prove his status. Sometimes, a lord would free his serf out of charity or for some special service rendered or for a lump sum payment. What would then become of the serf, heretofore the possession of his tréfoncier lord, the three-fold owner of his body, of the land he lived on and of the air he breathed? The solution might be to assainteurer him if he lacked a trade or a small accumulation of capital. Thus, on 8 October 1382, Mariette, natural daughter of a priest and a serf of Gérard d’Enghien was “quittée, afrankise, libérée et absolue” of serfdom and the next day, she was donated, by her choice, to Saint-Aubain.61 Sometimes, the donation was self-originated: in thanks for the cure of an illness

60 These and other gratuities are published in Cart. Nam. II, pp. 270-271. A gigot was worth 6 Flemish mites or one-quarter of a Flemish gros.
or following the disintegration of a family’s assets, the démêlés of a family or by a woman of low birth who had no hope of marriage.62

Besides ameliorating suffering, the Church was the repository of learning and the founder of schools. Before the thirteenth century, all three of the collegiate churches had well-established schools under the direction of a chanoine écolâtre. Although their first purpose was the elementary instruction of priests in Latin chanting and the services of the Church, they also provided a basis for possible future training at the universities of Paris, Cologne, Louvain and Orléans. As well, they were patronized by bourgeois who wished their sons to be educated and by well-to-do artisans who recognized that those in trade must be able to read, write and reckon. It seems probable, therefore, that the curriculum was not confined to ecclesiastical studies, and indeed, a 1218 inventory of the library of Saint-Aubain included manuscripts of Bede, Priscian (the fifth-century Latin grammarian), Virgil and Homer.63

By the mid-thirteenth century, the écolâtre no longer taught, but rather oversaw the school and appointed its masters. At first, fees were negotiated with each parent; later, they became standardized at one denier per month, that is, one sou namurois per annum, since schooling had no holidays except leaves granted by the master. While he was forbidden to charge for a leave, gratuities were permissible, just as they were to a parish priest. Poor children at Saint-Aubain’s school, whose records are fullest, attended free and got extra bread rations in Lent.

62 Léopold Genicot in Économie rurale III devotes a section, pp. 238-246, to saineteurs. His concern is mainly rural, but he did find (p. 259) that Saint-Pierre-au-Château in about 1350 had 56 saineteurs from 31 families.
63 Most of this library was lost in the 1409 flood.
Students typically spent twelve years at the school, divided into elementary and higher. In the petite école, they learned to serve as acolytes and to sing in choir; religious instruction was given by a schoolmistress. When and if the master deemed them fit, they passed into the grande école. It is possible, although we do not know, that they followed the trivium (grammar, rhetoric and logic) and the quadrivium (music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy). Attendance at the grande école was compulsory for the capitular vicars, of whom there were twenty, endowed in 1047 by Count Albert II to ensure that all the services of the Church duly took place, since some of the appointed canons were not priests. Attendance was also compulsory for young canons, some of whom were barely fourteen years old.

Punishments for offences by the scholars from moral slackness, whoring and dicing to fighting and wounding were graduated: escondit required the offender to kneel in chapter and beg forgiveness, often followed by a whipping. Worse, a vicar might be sentenced to a judicial pilgrimage. Most seriously, he might suffer the poena scolarum, which required him to attend a school in another city, thus necessitating him to find and pay a substitute, with the consequent loss of his prebend.

Almost nothing is known about the school of Saint-Pierre-au-Château; that of Notre-Dame was abandoned and razed to provide a cemetery during the severe plague of 1399-1400. But Saint-Aubain, probably the first school to be established, had a long and chequered history. In 1562, Philip II gave the site to the town as a school. About 1610, the magistracy gave it to the Jesuits. Revolutionary French invaders in 1792 closed the school and dispersed its teachers. In 1827, the Jesuits returned to take up their work
again, calling the school L’Athénée. Today, it flourishes on the same site near Saint-Aubain, as a lycée called Athénée royal.\textsuperscript{64}

The Church both gave and took. Besides the payment of tithes and fees and the observation of sacraments and days of obligation, diocesan statutes required that its parishes visit the cathedral of the diocese once a year. Since this would lay hardship on parishes distant from Liège, the duty could be fulfilled by a visit to one of ten other venerated places of pilgrimage such as Lobbes, Stavelot, Tongres and Fosses, the last-named being only 15 kilometres south-west of Namur. This obligation was known as croix-bânales and it generally took place during the octave of Pentecost. Led by their curé, the heads of families from each parish set aside their livelihoods to fulfil the ban. Doubtless, it provided some pleasure in the camaraderie; certainly, it was lucrative for shop-keepers and hostels in the pilgrimage town.

Unlike these obligatory croix-banales, the annual church processions involved all the Namurois as well as people from nearby villages. There were two important festivals in which Church and commune co-operated: the Feast of the Sacrament (Thursday after Trinity) and the Visitation of the Virgin (2 July), recognized as the patronal day of the commune. The celebration of Fête-Dieu began with Mass at the collegiate church of Notre-Dame. Some renowned preacher was invited to come, at the expense of the commune, to deliver a suitable sermon, after which the procession was mustered: first, the armed serments of sixty archers led by their constable and the hundred crossbowmen with their four masters, and then the guilds in their appointed order, each led by its valet

carrying the banner that portrayed the patron saint of the guild. Lastly came the moneyers. After them followed representations of Biblical scenes and personages, serious and grotesque - a cart bearing five people depicting the beheading of John the Baptist, Christ on a donkey, another cart depicting the Crucifixion, dancing devils surrounding a wagon bearing an enormous, gaping maw of hell, St. George on horseback, and a towering Goliath, which was an échasseur inside a huge "body" of wicker-work, dressed in a robe with enormous buttons. The dignitaries of the town came next and then the clergy of the three collegiate churches and the religious orders preceded by their mitred abbots. Finally, in the place of highest honour, the Blessed Sacrament carried by the provost of Notre-Dame, accompanied by musicians and escorted by the curés of the parish churches. Afterwards, there were banquets and feastings, both public and private.

The dedicace or patronal festival of the Virgin followed the same order of procedure and procession, but it included representations appropriate to her. The Gésine

65 There were 20 guilds in Namur in 1407. In mid-fifteenth century, there were 28 or 30, some affiliating and others splitting off, e.g. the potters separating into those working in copper and those in earthenware. See Jules Borgnet, "Des corps de métiers" in Messager des sciences historiques et archives des arts de Belgique, Ghent. 1847. p. 101, note 1. The number of guilds is an indication of the liveliness of Namur's commercial and industrial life.

66 The first document referring to échasseurs is a cri de perron on 8 December 1411 that no one under the age of thirteen might mount stilts to walk about or to joust, on pain of a fine and confiscation of the stilts (Cart. Nam. II. p. 293). It was, and is, a dangerous entertainment. The stilts are usually 3.15 metres long, with foot rests one metre up from the ground. Companies of échasseurs, dressed in the bright colours of their group, engaged in combat, standing on one stilt and jousting with the other or otherwise attempting to knock over their opponents. Bodies were bruised and legs and arms sometimes broken. Visitors to Namur are often told that the échasseurs date from the insurrection of 1313 when the insurgents were besieged in the town by John I. "No pardon", he told them, "though you come out on foot, on horseback, by chariot or by boat." One morning, the gates of Saint-Aubain were opened and a crowd of giants emerged. Their spokesman said to the count. "You would not grant us pardon. sire, if we came on foot, on horseback, by chariot or by boat. Now we come before you on stilts." The count received the rebels with compassion - or so the story has it. The more likely origin of the stilts was to get around the town when the waters of the Meuse, the Sambre and the Hoyouel were in flood.

notre-dame (the lying-in of Our Lady)\textsuperscript{68} began the depictions, followed by three or four shepherds admiring the infant Jesus, and three magi on horseback. St. Christopher was there to recall the carrying of the Christ Child and since the saint was always thought of as very tall and strong, his role was played by an échasseur. Jesus rode on a donkey as on the first Palm Sunday and was shown on another wagon in the procession as crucified with the two thieves, and three dice-players below. Again, as in the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, there followed the guilds, the magistrates and all the regular and secular clergy.

Thus, it was the Church that shaped the Namurois year with work-days and holy-days - about 165 of the latter, including the patronal festivals of the guilds. Further, the customs of the liturgical year became the customs of each family, adapted to its own status, with each member taking his part. Thus, the family was strengthened in cohesion and continuity, blending its customs with those of the Church Year, as if to say, “At Easter, we always…”

The Namurois observation of Holy Week followed certain customs day by day, some of which are continued still. On Palm Sunday, parishioners received blessed sprigs of box (the evergreen) and after Mass, families visited the graves of their relatives to plant the box. Sometimes, it was planted in fields or gardens to ward off lightning and hail.

On Holy Thursday, non-consecrated wine was administered to communicants following their reception of the wafer. At Saint-Loup, after the ritual of the stripping of the altar and the homily, a table was set up in the choir at which were seated the curé, the

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., pp. 7-8, note 6. Jules Borgnet was inclined to think that “gésine” here referred to her death, as in the gisant figures on a tomb; but the word can also mean accouchement and in view of the attending shepherds and magi. I give it that meaning.
clerks, the preacher and certain chosen parishioners, all numbering thirteen. They and the congregation were served nilles (special fruited breads) and wine, paid for by certain legacies. Following general custom, the bells were silent from Holy Thursday to Easter morning. In Namur, it was said that they were silent because all the bells took flight for Rome at the moment when the priest at the altar sang the Gloria. For Friday and Saturday, the children of the church choirs ran through the streets shaking rattles to announce the church services and also “po tchessi cwarème” (to chase away Lent).

Good Friday had its customs, too. On this day, after visiting their parish churches for the Veneration of the Cross, housewives baked the special small, flat confections called tourteaux (tortias in Walloon), which were like little pancakes, often flavoured with cheese, spices or dried fruits, but on Good Friday, just sweetened with a little honey.

Holy Saturday was occupied with cooking and cleaning, and the laundry which was never done on Good Friday.69 Late at night, the New Fire was struck in the churches and the five grains of incense were inserted in the Paschal candle.

In the early hours of Easter Day, the bells of Namur flew back from Rome, dropping coloured eggs for the children to find, and at dawn, they pealed the joyous news of the Resurrection. At High Mass, the head of each household presented a gift of eggs to the curé, the number varying according to the number of children in his family.70

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69 There is a story in Félix Rousseau. Légendes et coutumes du pays de Namur. p. 11. that Christ on His way to Calvary asked for a drink from a woman who was doing her laundry by the side of the road. The water that she gave Him was soapy. “Cursed be women who wash on this day.” He is alleged to have said. Later, exhausted and hungry, He passed a house redolent with the smell of fresh bread. and when He asked the housewife for something to eat, she hastened to bring Him a little loaf. “Blessed be women who bake on this day.” He said.

70 Ibid. for these and many other Namurois customs.
Other great holy-days of the Church Year, such as All Saints, St. Nicholas and Christmas, together with each family’s own fêtes of birthdays and anniversaries, linked family members to one another and to their parish. Often, there was friendly rivalry between parishes, for example, between Saint-Loup and Saint-Jean-Baptiste. These two churches faced each other across their cemeteries, and the children of the catechism schools often engaged in games, les loups vs. les agneaux. The latter, being more numerous, usually won, giving rise to the saying that in Namur the sheep devour the wolves.\footnote{11}{Ibid., p. 21.}

The Church inspired some beautiful artifacts that have mercifully escaped the destruction and plunder of invading armies. In the Treasury of the Sisters of Notre-Dame are exquisite pieces made in the early thirteenth century by Hugo of Oignies: a chalice and paten given to his brother, a monk at Walcourt; a magnificent evangelistary set with precious stones; and a cross and portable altar made for Jacques de Vitry. Other treasures of Namurois goldsmiths include reliquaries and episcopal rings, and a chalice said to have belonged to Mary of Oignies.\footnote{12}{St. Mary of Oignies, whose life was written by Jacques de Vitry, was born ca. 1177 at Nivelles in Brabant. Despite an early marriage, she devoted herself to a life of poverty and voluntary privation and to the care of lepers at Willembroeck (halfway between Antwerp and Brussels). Always a visionary, she spent the last years of her life in a small religious community at Oignies, where she died on 23 June 1213 in a state of ecstasy.} In the Musée des Arts anciens du Namurois, housed in the old Gaiffier hôtel on rue de Fer, are found some samples of Namurois stone-carvers’ work. Salvaged from Grands-Malades, there is a notable sedes sapientiae by Colars Jacoris (fl. 1395), and a handsome retable depicting the Passion of Christ, attributed to Jean
Murelle. The few pieces that remain are sufficient to demonstrate that a refined artistic
taste enriched medieval Namur.

Namurois pastimes which were not founded on church festivals were inclined to be somewhat crude and boisterous. Many were enjoyed in teams, as if the Namurois chose to be in groups: parish, guild or family. Ball games were popular, particularly lacrosse and jeu de paume, and so were jousts on stilts. A variation of the latter was played on the Sambre below Champeau. There were two teams, each composed of six punts decorated with coloured streamers. Each boat had a team of six men: four skilled rowers, a fifth man with a drum to keep time, and a sixth who was the combatant, dressed in his team’s colours and wearing a protective cuirass of wicker-work. He stood on a little platform in the prow, armed with a light wooden lance that had a large, flat disc fastened to its tip. The object of each jouster was to tumble his opponent into the water or drive the boat off course or sink it, so that his boat might arrive intact at the opposing team’s starting line.

This game was often followed by a contest for an eel, a Namurois delicacy. The creature was secured by a cord to a rope strung across the river and attached on either bank to a pulley, each operable by an opposing team member who sought to lower or raise the rope to help his side or hinder the other. After many tumbles into the water and the crashing of boats and oars, someone managed to pull the slippery prize into his boat.

Another very popular entertainment was the annual archery contest organized by the serments of the sixty archers and the one hundred crossbowmen. The celebration began with High Mass on St. George’s day (2 April) at the Franciscan church to which the

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73 Today. many Namurois belong to church or secular choirs.
serments marched with banners, drums and trumpets. These two companies were highly favoured, exempt from many of the duties of other bourgeois; admission was possible only with the approval of the count, when a vacancy occurred by death. In emulation of the two grands serments, several petits serments developed and they also marched on St. George’s day. Their members trained regularly at their own expense in the hope that one of them might secure admission to one of the Grand companies. The Franciscan church was the only one large enough to accommodate the crowds.

After a banquet, all the serments went to the practice grounds near St. Nicholas’ gate, where the crossbowmen drew lots to decide the order of shooting at the papegay. This was a wooden parrot set high on a pole. Whoever knocked down the papegay with a single shot was proclaimed king of the serment for the year. He wore a neck chain from which a little papegay hung and he received certain discounts on fees. Anyone who was king three years in succession was elevated to the rank of emperor with even greater concessions.

The shooting trials began on 1 May and continued for eight days. They attracted a large number of contestants to the town, members of similar serments, as well as spectators, who spent their money in Namurois hostels, shops and taverns. The contest necessitated considerable expense by the Namurois serments.\(^7\) The location was the long, wide street of the Marché aux légumes (now the rue de l’Ange), which was decorated with banners and streamers. A pair of archery butts was set up, one in the Marché for the

\(^7\) Jules Borgnet. *Histoire des compagnies militaires de Namur*. Brussels. 1851, pp. 3-89, being an extract from *Mémoires couronnés et mémoires des savants étrangers of the Académie royale de Belgique*. vol. XXIV. Borgnet believed that the earliest fête of the crossbowmen was that of 1390 (p. 7) and cites AEN. Comptes de ville. 1390, fol. 11: “item, rendu lequel fut donneit en cortoissie aus arbalétris de Namur pour eaus aidier en accomplissant leur fait à le prière d’eaus. et pour faire honneurallle dit ville. 20 moutons” (nearly £17 tournois).
archers and the other at St. Nicholas' gate for the crossbowmen, each at the end of a long alley\textsuperscript{75} with balustrades on either side, all painted or draped in red and black. It would appear that the crossbowmen had their contest first and then they and the spectators repaired to the Marché for the archers' contest. There, they could refresh themselves at a buffet table laden with wine, fruit and baked goods and admire the trophies and prizes to be awarded to the victors. A company of drummers and trumpeters stood by to provide a fanfare as each contestant was announced by the town crier, and throngs of spectators cheered their favourites.\textsuperscript{76}

**Conclusion**

Life in medieval Namur was not easy, especially for the lower orders. Hours of labour were long, especially in summer, for the work day was always from dawn to sunset, while inadequate heating and housekeeping facilities added to the burden of housewives. Sufferings attendant upon old age and disease were borne by all classes, and by the poor most of all. Nevertheless, the magistracy, which had the cure of bodies, sought to ensure clean food and water and the preservation of law and order, and the Church, holding the cure of souls, assisted the lay authorities in the care of the marginals of society.

\textsuperscript{75} One would like to know how long the alley was.

\textsuperscript{76} *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11. Over the years, as these contests became more elaborate, the town met most of the expense and fuller records were kept. Borgnet's description here is of a fête held from 9 June to 7 July 1510. *Serments* from all over the Low Countries were invited; ten of the best Namurois crossbowmen were chosen by the magistracy to represent the commune. AEN Comptes de la ville. 1510, fol. 89 verso records that the various prizes of cups and other receptacles, objets d'art and jewellery weighed a total of 53 marks, 5 ounces, 6 esterlings of silver, and cost £665.8.6 tournois. Receipts in the town accounts for the same period show extraordinary taxes levied on grain, wine and cattle.
CHAPTER IV

Class Distinctions

Introduction

At the pinnacle of Namurois lay society stood the count. Under him were the great fief-holding nobles, numbering seventy-five according to Croonendacl, and generally living on their estates, with the exception of the honorary office-holders of the count’s household, who had fine houses on Champeau. Next were the hommes de loi, the knights, whose estates were often too small to support them as they would wish. In the commune itself, the most important citizens were the bourgeois, also graduated in wealth and prestige. In pride of place, were the mayor and échevins, living on their rentes or engaged in such industries as mining and quarrying, or in trade, particularly in cloth and wine. Lesser bourgeois were guild-masters, and under them were the journeymen and apprentices, hoping to rise, as some few did, to the level of the bourgeoisie. Lower still were illiterate day-labourers, leaving no record unless they came before the courts, having been driven by need or passion to commit a crime or to take part in some protest. Finally, there was the sub-stratum of the pauperes; these were artisans and labourers too old or ill to work, vagabonds and prostitutes, of whose lives nothing is known save for some mention in the records of Poor Tables or hospitals.

The Count

At the level of the Sambre, a fortified gate with towers, and walls five to six feet

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thick, guarded the ascending and curving road that led to another fortified and towered gate. Beyond, lay the castle itself, an oblong building with walls of massive thickness and flanked by eight high, round towers. Within the enceinte of the castle were gardens and orchards, other buildings of supply and defence, the houses of the great lords attached to the count’s court, and the church of Saint-Pierre-au-Château with its appendages, including the dwellings of its thirteen canons. This enormous complex loomed over the commune and covered an area greater than that of the town. Little now remains of it after the ravages of Dutch, Austrian and French conquerors. We know, however, of the Salle de l’impératrice, the official audience hall, on what is called the piano nobile level, reached by a grand staircase from the ground floor. The apartments of the count included his private and public bedrooms, the latter, in the custom of all great sovereigns, being used for his public levees. Nearby was the salle peinte where his domanial accounts were rendered, and his chapel, with rooms adjoining for the priests. The countess and the children also had their separate suites of apartments, with accommodation for their personal servants.

On the ground floor, there was a great courtyard where carriages arrived and where ceremonies of welcome could take place. At a distance were kitchens, wine cellars, tailoring shops and laundries, tallow-rendering and candle-making facilities, stables, cattle-sheds, kennels, falcon-houses and all the other support trades to supply and maintain a great medieval household.

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Named for Countess Marie, wife of Baudouin II of Constantinople.
Not a great deal is known about the furnishings of the living quarters of the castle. An inventory ordered by the count and countess on 6 March 1408 lists only a large quantity of kitchenware, carefully itemized, including cooking vessels and spoons of copper, iron, pewter and wood, two boilers for heating bath water, waffle irons, spits, a mustard mill, etc.¹

Only slight records of comital revenues remain² and even fewer of expenditures; the latter would have provided a rich store of knowledge of daily life - food, drink, dress, music and pastimes. Not only did Catherine of Savoy bring a huge dowry when she married William I, as the widow of a Visconti lord of Milan and later of the Constable of France, she brought a new elegance and sophistication to Namur.⁵ When she died in 1381, she left a part of her magnificent bedchamber hangings to be made into ecclesiastical vestments.

"[It is] directed that [from] my chamber hangings of velvet, worked with embroidery, undulating with green and red, be made four sets of vestments for priests, deacons and subdeacons, to wit, chasubles, dalmatics and trimmings for albs and amices, of which I leave one set to the Church of Saint-Aubain... The other sets to Saint-Pierre-au-Château, Notre-Dame and

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¹ AGR. Chambre des comptes. 1003. fol. 110v-115. cited by Jules Borgnet in Promenades, pp. 60-63. He also lists tapestries as well as coverlets of silk, including those embroidered with the arms of Savoy and France for Catherine, wife of William I. But of tables, chairs, armoires, chests, beds, there is no mention.
² For a list of them, see supra, p. 56. note 54.
⁵ The background of Catherine has been sketched by Joseph Balon in La maison de Namur, pp. 55-58. She was the only child of Louis II of Savoy, who served a term as a Roman senator, a particular honour conferred by the pope, entitling the recipient to display the letters SPQR on his coat-of-arms. Catherine’s first marriage was to Azzon, a lord of the celebrated Visconti family in Milan, patron of the arts and founder of the classical library in Pavia. She lived in a magnificent palace, according to the Italian historian, Giorgio Giulini (1714-1780, quoted by Balon and whose work on Catherine I have not found), which was noted for its menagerie of rare animals and its avaries of exotic birds, as well as its majestic rooms richly decorated with paintings and frescos. When Azzon died in 1339, Philip VI of France arranged Catherine’s marriage to Raoul II of Brienne, who later became the king’s constable, and who was beheaded by John II in 1350 on a charge of treason. In 1352, this rich and sophisticated widow married William I of Namur in the abbey of Cîteaux, not far from William’s castle at Seurre on the Sâone. Of the rich decoration with which she must have adorned the castle on Champeau nothing remains.
The Franciscans.\textsuperscript{6}

The Peerage

In a system modelled on the French court, the count's household was served by hereditary officers known as the servants of the "bouche du comte". They were, principally, the chambellan, the pannetier, the bouteiller, the grand veneur, the sénéchal and the escuelier, masters respectively of the household, the pantry, the wine cellar, the hunt, the protocol of banquets and the precious vessels and cutlery. Nine other peers sat on the count's court.\textsuperscript{7} Unless their country estates were close by, they lived in great houses in the town, supported by rents from their holdings, which often consisted of many small pieces scattered over a wide area. There were still some feudal lords, like the sire of Morialmé, who had castles with crenellated towers and drawbridges, great halls and, perhaps, by episcopal consent, private chapels. These were self-contained and self-supporting holdings of extensive lands, villages, mills and breweries. While war was historically their first pursuit\textsuperscript{8}, opportunities for riches as mercenaries declined in the Dampierre period. John I (1298-1330) had a pension of £2,000 parisis a year for military services rendered to Philip the Fair of France and doubtless the knights and squires in his military entourage were suitably recompensed also. But John II with a company of knights

\textsuperscript{6} N.-J. Aigret. \textit{Histoire de l'église et du chapitre de Saint-Aubain à Namur}, Namur, 1881, p. 48: "Ordonné que ma cambre de velviet ovrée de brodures, ondée de vert et de roge. soient fait quatre paires de vestimens pour prestres, diakres et subdiacres, est assavoir, casublez, dalmatikes et paremens d'albes et d'amisse, desquels je laisse une paire al Engliese Saint-Albain...Les autres paires à Saint Pierre au Castial. Notre-Dame et Frères-mineures."

\textsuperscript{7} The lords of Poilvache, Falise, Sorinnes, Assesse, Awagne, Sclayn, Onhaye, Ligny and Falmagne.

\textsuperscript{8} But there were no great lords in Namur comparable in power with the Avesnes in Hainaut, who were almost independent of the duke; see Henri Pirenne, \textit{Histoire de Belgique I}, p. 117. And no Namurois peers waged private wars as did those of Awans and Waroux in Liège, subjecting the populace to nearly forty years (1296-1335) of pillage and atrocities, as described in \textit{Histoire de Belgique II}, pp. 37, 139 and passim.
made two expeditions into Prussia with what financial reward one cannot estimate. His brother, Guy II (1335-1336), with some two hundred knights engaged himself to fight for Edward III of England against the Scots; all were well rewarded in one of the last financially successful chevauchées. William I and his army supported the bishop of Liège at the battle of Votem in 1346 and were defeated - one of the very few times when an investment by William failed to show rich returns. The remaining counts, William II and John III, were too poor to engage in military adventures.

By at least 1300, many nobles were in financial trouble. Partibility of their estates left many of them with reduced and scattered holdings, which became less and less economical to work. Agricultural corvée had almost disappeared by the beginning of the thirteenth century and paid labour cut into the lords’ profits. By the middle of the fourteenth century, some landowners were forced to reduce rents by a third or even a half to avoid abandonments. Pious donations fell off sharply. Cens that for more than a hundred years had been paid in deniers became insignificant in value. A variety of remedies was tried, occasionally successful: imposition of a surcens payable in kind, usually spelt; renting out parcels of lands formerly reserved for hunting; land clearings or sales from wooded lands; and, as a last resort, sales of agricultural holdings that were snapped up by rich peasants. Thus, by the mid-fourteenth century, many of the huge

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9 Jean Bovesse, “Jean I, comte de Namur”, pp. 35-36, states that Jean II made two expeditions against pagan Slavs in Prussia and died on his return, in Bavaria, where he was buried in the monastery of Spaltheim.  
12 Ibid., p. 258. Cens is defined as “...la redevance perçue par le seigneur foncier comme tel ou...la prestation due au seigneur en raison de la possession perpétuelle d’un fonds et comme marque indélisible de la dominité. La rente n’a au contraire aucun caractère seigneurial. Elle est l’intérêt d’un capital mobilier ou immobilier ou le prix d’un service, comme un obit.”  
13 Léopold Genicot discusses some of these difficulties in La crise agricole, pp. 15-22.
domains of feudal lords had become little land-holdings so characteristic of Namur: a
manor house with its adjacent home farm, two or three others not far away, some wood-
lots, and meadows for pasturing the horses that were the symbol of their rank and on
which they could parade on festival days. If they did not retrench and adapt, if they
continued to relinquish lands to pay for high living at the count’s court, to take out
mortgages on which they defaulted, they risked ending like the sire of Clarembaut who
held the ancient fief of Atrive. Within two years of his accession, he began to accumulate
debts that he could meet only by selling off lands. Those that formed part of his fief were
redeemed by the count, broken up and conferred upon the “new men”. When Clarembaut
mortgaged the rewards of his two hereditary offices of seneschal and marshal, they too
were taken up by the count and allowed to lapse as hereditary offices, so that William
could appoint to them whom and for what term he pleased. In 1363, even the sire’s war-
horse was auctioned off. In 1364, the last of his lands were seized and in 1367, his son-in-
law had him assassinated. The old aristocracy no longer led society in the commune.
Many of the lords were engaged in managing, even working, their estates. Some lines
were blurred by inter-marriages. By the early fifteenth century, knights, even squires, were
addressed as “noble et honoré”.

These gentry, called hommes de loi and later hommes de lignage, were
descendants of knights who had renounced their rank or who were ineligible for it because

15 This exceptional case is mentioned by Léopold Genicot in *Économie rurale* II. pp. 152-159. It is also
recorded by Jacques de Hemricourt. *Oeuvres de Jacques de Hemricourt*. vol. I. ed. C. de Borman and A.
of a mother who had married a basse-loi. The title was held for seven generations through either a male or a female line, but it was extinguished by a bastard in the direct line. The hommes de loi enjoyed many of the perquisites of the nobility. They were free from all feudal dues and obligations; their persons and goods could not be seized for debt until they were found liable in a trial by their peers, and they were fined at a lower rate than the hommes de basse loi. But unlike the great lords of former times, even as late as the mid-thirteenth century, they had no right of private war, although they were entitled to defend their honour by judicial duel. They had their coats of arms, and their seals with which they could authenticate transactions of their own property without recourse to a notary.

Most of them lived on their land, which varied in extent from a courtil no bigger than a poor peasant’s yard and garden, to one hundred hectares or more, and generally, they were directly engaged in its management. They also presided over their own courts and kept half of the fines. Some were rich enough to maintain a house in Namur where they might engage in commerce or serve the count in some rewarding capacity. Others came looking for rich bourgeoises to marry.

The rank might pass to a son, but unlike the peerage, never to a grandson. Still, after the extinction of their rights as hommes de loi, they might apply to the count for a knighthood. However, that rank, although conferring privileges, also involved costs and risks. There was the expensive present to the count’s chamberlain and a suitable

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16 Artisans and labourers were hommes de basse-loi, defined in a negative way as neither nobles nor hommes de loi nor priests nor bourgeois nor serfs. They were subject to mortemain and formorture.

17 A peasant who married a femme de loi assumed her status. Or he might summon his rich and influential friends who would swear that there was an homme de loi in his lineage within seven generations.
entertainment for friends. The knight was required to maintain five armed men with horses and to go to war when the count called. The young knight was expected to take part in tournaments, and these occurred in the summer when he was needed on his land.

It was less burdensome and more advantageous to seek from the count, either by way of sale or for services rendered, an alod or a little fief. The alod was freehold and once granted was rarely abrogated. Moreover, the count might transform it into a fief. On the other hand, while a fief was held at the count’s pleasure - what he gave he might rescind - it was better to be an homme de fief than an homme d’alleu, because the fiefdom moved its holder into the same hereditary class as the highest nobles of the county. We are not speaking here of the huge tracts acquired by lords in the early Middle Ages. The thirteenth- or fourteenth-century fief might be half a bonnier (an acre or so) or even a journal. Léopold Genicot records that in 1427 at the castle in Namur, there were assembled in court 5 peers, 4 knights and 111 hommes de fief.\(^{18}\)

The Bourgeoisie

In the commune, about ninety percent of the population fell into two categories, the bourgeoisie and the gens de métier. Included in the former group, but with separate privileges and responsibilities, were the moneyers, the crossbowmen and the archers. The remaining ten per cent of the population was composed of the clergy, the inmates of hospitals and other pauperes.

The earliest Namurois bourgeois were probably those of the ninth century, living as traders in the portus and shielded by the natural protection of the Sambre, the Meuse

and the ramparts of Champeau. By the early decades of the twelfth century, the term “bourgeois” or *bonnes gens* was clearly defined as a class. It devolved most usually from father to child, son or daughter, bastard or legitimate. At age twelve, the child assumed the status by public declaration. It was a status to be sought, rather than one automatically conferred, except in the case of a marriage when one of the parties, of *basse-loi* class, married a bourgeois husband or wife. Then, the very fact of the wedding was proof of the desire of the *basse-loi* to become a member of the bourgeoisie. A foreigner who had lived in Namur or its banlieue for a year and a day could apply to the magistracy to become a bourgeois. It is probable that enquiries were made as to his good name. In Liège, the sergeant cried the name of the applicant, inviting those opposed to come forward with their reasons. According to Jules Borgnet, the Namurois *échevins* asked the applicant if his wife was in good health; if she was ailing, the application was refused, presumably because she would not add healthy children to the commune. The applicant was required to buy or build a suitable house in the commune within a year, to promise to pay his yearly tax of two sous louvignois, to provide himself with the necessary arms to defend count and commune, without pay, and to fulfil watch duties. Clearly, he had to be a man of substance.

The status was not irrevocable. Technically, like every other situation in the commune, it was at the count’s pleasure. It could be lost, temporarily or permanently by banishment, which followed from revolt or from a capital crime. It was also lost if a bourgeois man or woman became a monk or nun, or chose to live outside the commune.

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19 But if the bastard died intestate, his goods were subject to *formorture*, despite his bourgeois status.
for more than forty days. And finally, the status was lost if the citizen failed to pay his bourgeois fee.22

His privileges were considerable. He was free, first of all, from the odious feudal impositions of mortemain and formorture and from arbitrary assessments of tailles and corvées.23 He was also free of the count's ban of mill, oven and brewery.24 He was entitled to judgment by his peers. His house was inviolable unless he was guilty of a capital crime or was sheltering such a criminal. He enjoyed freedom of movement anywhere in the county, and anyone who attacked him was liable to death. Another right, which may have devolved from Germanic law, entitled him to buy off the punishment for a crime and to make a composition in settlement with the injured party. Finally, in the area of industry and trade, the bourgeois enjoyed freedom of association, and the right, in consort, to draw up and enforce guild regulations.

By the fifteenth century, the richest bourgeois families might be living on their rentes and be serving the count or commune in various juridical or political capacities, but

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22 His status was probably recoverable upon payment of what he owed plus a fine. There seems to have been difficulty in the late thirteenth century in collecting the droit de bourgeois, which went directly to the count. In the charter granted to Bourvignes in 1213 and based on that of Namur, it was twelve silver deniers for each household. In Namur in 1431, it was two sous loupignois, which represented fourteen heaumes. See Borgnet and Bormans, Histoire de la commune, p. 161. Guy I reminded the bourgeois that the right to gather dead wood from the forest of Marlagne, for their private use, applied only to those who had paid their fees. See Cart. Nam. I, 9 December 1293, p. 111. Originally, the droit was collected from each household, in person by the sergeant, half at Christmas and half on 24 June. But it appears that increasingly, sergeants were finding doors locked against them. On 1 June 1411, William II ruled that bourgeois were henceforth responsible for getting their droit to the Cabaret on the due date. Failure to do so after due warnings could result in the sergeant's breaking and entering the defaulter's house and seizing him and goods to cover the droit and the fines. Such a shocking abrogation of the ancient bourgeois right to the inviolability of his house suggests both an increasing lack of social responsibility by citizens and a growing need for money by the count. See Cart. Nam. II, pp. 284–290.

23 But in times of difficulty or danger, every household was required to furnish personal labour, or money in lieu, to maintain or repair walls, moats and bridges. The men were organized in brigades of varying numbers. See Léopold Genicot, Economie rurale I, p. 361.

most of them made their money initially in one or more of four areas: mining and metalworking, stone quarrying, drapery manufacturing or the wine trade. In all these endeavours, the count took a keen interest.

The 1265 census records that the count received £30 louvainois a year from the lead mines at Seilles and Andenne, but the count had to supply the wood for smelting it. A hundred years later, the mines were still operable, for a consortium was formed in 1356 by three Namurois bourgeois together with a sword-maker from Huy, an iron-worker from Marche-les-Dames and three miners from the Condruz. Another mine at Boninne, about two kilometres north-east of Marche-les-Dames, was the subject of a disputed ownership between a Namurois bourgeois, William of Souredial, and one Lambert, an iron-worker of Marche-les-Dames. The question turned on whether the land lay in the banlieue of Namur or of Wasseiges; the decision of 2 June 1364 was in favour of William. The record mentions a mine and some “traux” or out-croppings; it would appear that the metal was quite accessible. The owner of the land in which the mine was situated retained his possession of the land, and any metal, particularly silver, found with the lead, belonged to him. There was a good market for such diverse leaden products as roofing and gutters, small cannon-balls, weights for use in trade and housewares - cauldrons, pots and cutlery. The metal was soft and easily worked, and leaden utensils were cheap, although they could not bear a very high heat. There seems to have been no particular fear of contamination from leaden pots, although the smoke from smelting was

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25 Brouwers, Cens et rentes I, p. 101. "...mais li cuens i doit livrer bos".
27 Cart. Nam II, p. 75 and Joseph Grandgagnage. Coutumes II. art. 41, pp. 163-164. It is not known whether this Lambert was the same iron-worker who figured in the consortium of 1356.
known to be dangerous, at least in England, where in 1371 in London, complaints were made about plumbers who melted lead "to the great danger and peril of death to all who shall smell the smoke from such melting for whoever has smelt the smoke therefrom has never escaped without mischief." Of less danger was the use of lead for coffins shaped to the corpse. Lead-mining was an operation that required capital and time; the metal was not valuable enough to give a high return, but it was a useful product that did not need expensive equipment to render it marketable.

The more lucrative pursuit of stone-quarrying was investigated by Ferdinand Courtoy, insofar as was possible, given that there are no direct records before the sixteenth century. He cites Roman tombs of the second century, made of the same dark blue granite that one sees in Namurois streets today. The oldest record of quarrying is found in a charter of 1229, wherein an abbot of Val-Dieu in Luxembourg ceded a quarry north of Namur to the abbot of Val-Saint-Lambert (Liège); much of the cathedral of Liège is made of Namurois stone. So also is the handsome stone-coffered ceiling of the church of Saint-Loup in Namur. And so were the great cut-stone hôtels of the richest bourgeois, like the Gaiffier house in rue de Fer, now the Musée des arts anciens du Namurois. The quarries were not only accessible to the river, but they were also extensive, like the one near Grands-Malades, still operative in the eighteenth century after four hundred years.

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29 Ibid., p. 59. Such was the coffin of Ann Mowbray, who died in 1481, aged eight, the child widow of Richard, Duke of York.
30 Ferdinand Courtoy, "Le travail et le commerce de la pierre à Namur avant 1500", Namurcum 21 (1946), pp. 17-29.
31 Today, these disused quarries provide cheap and easy disposal for Namurois garbage.
The trade of stone-mason was highly respected and well rewarded, albeit dangerous. Near the guild hall and chapel of Notre-Dame, the patroness of the trade, there were little houses for injured workers; there was also a hospice for infirm and injured quarrymen near the great quarry at Grands-Malades. The success of one mason, Jean Duche, is recorded in his will of 21 July 1318. He left a complete set of armour, to be distributed amongst sons and friends, money to his “dear wife” and to his mistress and her two sons, a house, after his wife’s death, to the Grand-Hôpital, his shop to the beguinage at Jambes, and miscellaneous clothing and household effects to his three “varlets”. The continuing work on the fortifications from 1357 on guaranteed work for stone-masons.

No charter for them exists prior to 6 June 1433 when stone-cutters and ceiling-makers were included in the same guild, but in 1421, town accounts record a sum of twenty-two Namurois moutons granted to masons and carpenters for their annual fête. The inclusion of allied trades with the masons may simply reflect the increase in the number of guilds, or it may suggest a falling-off of stone-workers.

The cloth industry engaged many well-to-do bourgeois, although Namurois historians disagree as to how and when it was organized. The 1289 census, à propos of locating certain houses let by the count, mentions both new and old drapers’ halls. These drapers were merchants who bought wool and oversaw its manufacture into cloth by weavers and fullers. Compared with some drapers of the great cities of Flanders, who may have commanded hundreds of workers, the Namurois drapers were small operators.

32 ibid. “Le travail...de la pierre”, p. 20.
33 Jules Borgnet, “Des corps de métiers...”, p. 100. As this sum appears in the town accounts, the moutons are presumed to be Namurois money of account.
concerned with local trade rather than with export. According to Jules Borgnet, the Hanse after 1364 included drapers, weavers, fullers and dyers, all under the patronage of St. Francis.\textsuperscript{34} Drapers and dyers were grouped together, as were fullers and shearers, in the order of procession on Blessed Sacrament day. One can understand the linking between drapers and dyers, for both were self-employed, with enough capital in the first instance to purchase supplies of wool and in the second case, to establish dyeing houses and maintain a stock of dyes. Both required business acumen, the drapers in wool prices and futures, the dyers in technical skill.\textsuperscript{35} Shearing was also a very demanding trade, particularly on fine cloths, but because these were not produced in Namur, the shearers had a lower standing in the hierarchy of the industry.

One reason why foot-fullers were on the bottom of the scale was that their work of fulling was arduous and unpleasant.\textsuperscript{36} When the woollen fabric came from the loom, it

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\textsuperscript{34} Ibid. p. 87, but in Jules Borgnet and Stanislas Bormans, \textit{Histoire de la commune}, p. 169, mention is made of the revolt led by “les quatre maîtres des tisserands” for whom “on possède une charte”, dated 27 July 1377. These “weavers”. however, were \textit{tisserands de toile}, weavers of linen, not wool, as their charter makes clear. See Cart. Nam. II, pp. 115-119. Makers of thread and cords and spinners of silk and cotton formed part of the large mercers’ guild.

\textsuperscript{35} André Joris in \textit{La ville de Huy}, p. 382, comments that in that town among artisans in the cloth industry, shearers and dyers were the most privileged, while weavers and fullers were the least. In Flanders, Henri Pirenne writes in \textit{Histoire de Belgique} II, p. 67, that “les tisserands sont-ils appelés à contrôler le travail des foulons, des tondeurs et des teinturiers qui achèvent leur ouvrage, et en arriveront-ils bientôt à prétendre même fixer leur salaire.”

\textsuperscript{36} See John H. Munro, “Industrial Entrepreneurship in the Late-Medieval Low Countries: Urban Draperies. Fullers. and the Art of Survival” in \textit{Entrepreneurship and the Transformation of the Economy (10th-20th Centuries): Essays in Honour of Herman Van der Wee}, ed. Paul Klep and Eddy Van Cauwenberghhe, Leuven, 1994, pp. 377-388. In this article, Munro shows that the process of foot-fulling, explained on pp. 380-381, took some three days with two journeymen overseen by a master, as opposed to mechanical fulling, taking about nine hours with one operator: the cost of the former procedure was approximately 20 per cent of the total manufacturing cost compared with about 3 per cent for the latter. But guild and governments believed that the delicate wools used for very high-priced luxury cloths were impaired by mechanical fulling. Consequently, some Flemish drapers insisted on foot-fulling, and the manufacture of fine cloths survived, in Kortrijk for example, until the sixteenth century, despite the competition of cheaper textiles.

For a full explanation of the various stages in medieval cloth-making from the raw wool to the finished goods, see Munro’s illustrated essay “Textiles” in the \textit{Dictionary of the Middle Ages}, vol. 11, ed. Joseph
looked like coarse sacking; fulling shrank and bonded the fibres so that the surface became solid and uniform. In the earliest procedure, the cloth was fulled by trampling with the feet on it in a tub of water or, in Flanders, in a hollowed-out tree trunk. Fuller’s earth, a clay of hydrous silicate of alumina, was added to the tub to remove grease from the wool and to speed the felting process. We have no record of the process in Namur or of the fullers’ guild in medieval times, but there is early reference to the count’s fulling mill on the Sambre. There, attached to a water-wheel were hammers that pounded the cloth as the wheel revolved. In the 1294 census, the mill brought the count £35 tournois a year, all expenses paid.

From time to time, he was called upon to settle disputes concerning both the use of his mill and the cost of foot-fulling, as in July 1403, when the drapers offered a price for fulling which the fullers refused. In negotiation, they hit upon eighteen heaumes and three wihots per long cloth, of which the apprentices got twelve heaumes, four wihots and one copille, and the master the remainder, from which he had to pay the mill charge.

On 10 August 1418, two drapers and two fullers agreed with the échevins that the rate for the next twelve years would be twenty-four heaumes, of which the apprentices received their previous rate plus one-quarter of the increase. Again, the master paid for the use of...
the mill. There were usually two apprentices required, for the wet cloth was very heavy and cumbersome. The length of time necessary for the process in Namur was probably two days, so that by the agreement of 1403, the apprentice earned a little more than three heaumes a day, plus, of course, some kind of board and lodging with the master.

The drapery industry was protected, especially in the later years of the Dampierre period. In 1390, the count agreed to a tax of one franc on each foreign cloth imported for sale in Namur, and this brought him fifty-four francs. No fine cloths were made in Namur, but demand for them was high enough among the well-to-do to make the imports profitable. Even the Namurois cloth industry of coarse and light textiles languished because cheap cloths from neighbouring towns undercut those of Namur. On 3 March 1420, John III published a decree of strict protectionism. Acting at the instigation of the mayor and jurés and the Hanse, he moved to shelter the industry, which was "...one of the largest and finest of the commune, [and] which was seriously in decline as a result of abusive [practices], but especially because of light, foreign cloths which were being brought into the commune, that is to say, cloths from Chimay and Beaumont [in Hainaut], from Herke [in Limbourg], from Halle [in Brabant], from Laudrez [not identified] and from other towns..." Henceforth, no cloths from these places might be imported, either finished or to be finished in Namur, nor bought nor sold, on pain of fine and confiscation.

40 AEN. Comptes de la ville. 1390, fol. 3.
41 Cart. Nam II. pp. 353-358. See p. 354. "...la dicte drapperie, qui estoit unc des plus grans et beaulz membres de nostre dicte ville. alloit grandement à déclin pour plusieurs causes et poins dont on fourosoit en ycelle, et généralement et especially pour les légers estrangniers draps de dehors que on amenoit en nostre dicte ville et franchise, assavor drapz de Chymay, de Bealmont, de Herke, de Halle de [Laudrez] et d'autres villez..."
of the cloth. Furthermore, and this was a trenchant departure from customary law, officials of the Hanse were empowered to enter the premises and inspect the cloths of drapers, and whoever refused was fined one Holland florin, which was split among count, commune and Hanse. The custom of allowing work of weaving and finishing cloth in private houses was forbidden unless it was for that household only. A new regulation forbade any employee or apprentice of the Hanse to purchase wool or cloth for re-sale. It appears that the mercers, a very heterogeneous guild, were secretly buying wool, yarn and woven goods for resale and undercutting the drapers; this practice also carried a fine of one Holland florin. All of these regulations were aimed at the protection, that is, the profit, of the drapers. The guild was a closed corporation; entry was restricted to sons of drapers, and at the annual election of officers, the existing seven jurés of the guild presented to the magistracy a slate of twelve names of suitable candidates, from which the mayor and échevins chose seven to direct the guild for the ensuing year. One can only speculate whether this policy of ‘closed shop’ was motivated by fear or by greed. Perhaps there was a nostalgic memory of better days, when the old cloth hall, mentioned in the census of 1289, was replaced by the new one in rue des Fossés-Fleuris. The comptes du domaine for 1356 show a total of £25.19s.8d. (currency not stated) received by the count as fees for drapers’ stalls at the rate of sixteen shillings for a large stall sixteen feet wide, and eight shillings for a half-stall. If the split of the almost £26 between full and half stalls were, say,
twenty-two full and twenty-one half, there would have been forty-three drapers in the commune. This seems a goodly number for a population of 5,000-6,000, as estimated by Léopold Genicot.⁴⁵

A more rewarding occupation and one in which most rich bourgeois were engaged was the wine trade. Namur produced some quite passable wines on the sunny slopes of the Sambre and in the Herbatte, where the count also had a vineyard.⁴⁶ But the preferred wines were the French, imported from Burgundy, Champagne and Bordeaux, as well as German Rhenish and Moselles and some from Spain. Namur’s location at the junction of the Sambre and the Meuse rivers made transportation by water quick and cheap. By the late fourteenth century, traffic by road also had improved. The trade became even more lucrative if the merchant mixed the imported wines from “amont” with local Namurois “petis vins”, a practice that was more alluring after William I established a retail sales tax on foreign wines.⁴⁷ John III, in June 1424, made this abuse his first concern in a decree which touched on several kinds of merchandise. The wine merchants were required to declare what wines they were importing and whether they were to be sold at retail or at wholesale. Presumably, the wines were inspected on the spot, because if they arrived in advance of the merchants, the latters’ wives were responsible for the declaration, and if the absent merchant was a woman, her servant made it. Furthermore, foreign and domestic

⁴⁵ Léopold Genicot. “Une ville en 1422”. p. 79.
⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 93, note 89. In 1278, a tonneau of Bordeaux sold for 1,800 deniers namurois and of local wine, for 1,500.
⁴⁷ Cart. Nam. II. 31 May. 1357. pp. 42-43. “...des vins qui sieront vendus à broke [ou en gros] ... venant d’amont ... et d’aval ...”
wines had to be stored in different “houses”, although a merchant was allowed to keep one keuze (approximately 365 litres) of local wine with six of foreign for mixing for his own table. Wines were to be randomly tested at least twice a year. The fine for transporting wine in any quantity at all from the domestic cave to the imported cave was two French francs, and any mixed wine found offered for sale was deemed to be domestic. The penalty, if one were caught, does not seem to fit the rewards of the crime.

The merchant might sell his wine from his place of business or, just as likely, from the ground floor of his house; either way, the count was entitled to, respectively, an estallage or a fenestrae. The count also benefited from his own ban de vin, when, during three weeks of the year, he held a monopoly on wine-selling. In 1402, a case came before the mayor’s court of the wife of a vintner of Namur who sold a cask of wine during the count’s ban de vin. The mayor ordered all the vintner’s wines seized, and imposed a fine of five hundred florins (kind not stated). The vintner appealed, saying that the sale had nothing to do with him; indeed, he had been absent at the time. His appeal was largely successful. The impounded wines were returned and the Draconian fine was cancelled. But because the sale was made by his wife, who was herself a wine-merchant, he was held to a lesser degree responsible and was fined six old gros, two esterlins for each of the sixteen lots that the cask contained.

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49 Joseph Grandgagnage. Coutumes II. art. 110. pp. 214-215. The cask contained only thirty-two litres, not a very large sale. The point of the case is the rigour with which the count’s ban was upheld. Grandgagnage did not specify the kind of gros.
The Guilds

It is not known when artisans first decided to organize themselves into guilds and to determine by common consent the broad provisos of their trades. Perhaps there was a need to band together against exploitation by some powerful lord, or to achieve mutual support in times of sickness or economic distress - as the word frairie suggests - or to guard against cut-throat intrusion by strangers, as well as to control production and hours of work, ensuring a uniform standard of skill or product. In any event, every trade in Namur was so organized. All guild masters had to be bourgeois and they determined the details of their charters, which were granted by the magistracy.

The earliest extant Namurois charter is that of the butchers, dated 9 July 1303. Entry was limited to bourgeois, as usual, each entrant paying a fee of forty sous tournois, part of which was used to provide weapons stored in their hall in case of emergency. Later charters were much more particular in regulating hours and place of business, kinds of meats sold and maintenance of the hall.50

The next earliest charter extant is that of the boatmen, dated 18 April 1328. After the usual ascription to God, to the guild’s patron, St. Nicholas, and to the count, the charter records the tolls payable to the guild by its members on boats going down the Meuse to Liège and beyond, and upstream to Dinant, Fumay and Massières (in Hainaut), as well as on boats plying the Sambre.51

50 For the first charter, see Cart. Nam. I. pp. 162-165. The charter of 18 May 1388 was much more restrictive.
51 Three words are used for “boat”: nef marchande (such as was owned by the count), ponton, and the smaller bisée. Referring, presumably, to the nef and to the ponton, Maurice Arnauld in his La
Like most guild charters, the boatmen’s prescribed mutual help in time of illness or distress and more specifically, on the water. All journeymen had to help when needed, on the river bank, to draw boats along, with their own manpower or with horses. Whoever refused without good reason was fined eighteen deniers; the master who needed the help paid the same amount to the guild. Similarly, if one boatman needed to borrow equipment from another boat, it was assumed that the loan would be approved, whether or not the owner was actually asked for it. But if the equipment was not returned in good order and promptly when the owner needed it, the maximum fine of eighteen deniers was imposed.

Each master boatman had presumably satisfied the guild of his competence - the charter does not specify how - and had paid the entry fee of six sous namurois. He would require considerable capital to buy a boat, hire a boatman or work it himself, and support apprentices. As well, he needed enough operating funds to pay tolls and buy goods to sell up and down river. The fact that St. Nicholas, protector of merchants, was chosen as the guild patron suggests that these boatmen were primarily businessmen rather than mere transporters.

The guild was managed by four masters who were elected by their peers on St. Nicholas’ day (6 December), naming one master, le roi, to direct affairs with the help of an elected clerk. That all masters of this or any other guild in Namur had to be bourgeois

navigabilité ancienne de la Sambre. p. 54. describes them as being about 20 metres long and 3.2 metres wide, with a draught of about 1.2 metres. Maximum load was probably fifty tons, or as little as ten tons in low water. The bisée was smaller and faster, carrying a lighter load and subject to one-half the toll of the bigger boats. Usually, all the boats were flat-bottomed and propelled by sails or by poles. Sometimes, on the Meuse, three boats were fastened closely together, prow of second to stern of first, and prow of third to stern of second. They were operated by three boatmen, one in the prow of the first boat, another at the rudder of the same boat, and a third at the rudder of the second boat. They are thus described by Jules Borgnet. Cart. Nam. I, p. 202. note 3.
must surely have been known by Colin Baduart, who in 1405 permitted himself to be elected as a master. He must have been a man of substance to be taken as a bourgeois by his associates. However, bourgeois he was not. He was discovered, charged, convicted and assessed with a fine of twelve florins together with all his movables, or such other fine as the court determined.\(^2\)

The charter fails to state the minimum age for apprenticeship or its duration. Apter and stronger boys might progress more rapidly to become journeymen; on the other hand, it was often to a master’s advantage to prolong apprenticeship. Each written contract between master and apprentice was reached by mutual, individual consent. However, if a master engaged an apprentice who failed to serve him satisfactorily, no other master might take on the apprentice until the latter had fulfilled his contract or had made an acceptable amend. Conversely, if an apprentice had a grievance against his master, no other apprentice might be hired to replace him until the grievance was settled. Unfortunately, no copy of a contract has come down to us. We do not know the standard of living that the apprentice might enjoy in the master’s house, the conditions of his lodging, the food that he was given; sometimes, the contract stipulated a small amount of money and/or clothing. There were good masters and bad, apt apprentices and lazy; when like met like, each probably got what he deserved.

An indication of the rewards that the owner of a nef marchande might earn is found in the complaint about 1322 by Denisons Tarte, who appealed to the count for some

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\(^2\) Joseph Grandgagnage, Coutumes II, art. 130, 10 July 1405, p. 228. In this, as in so many other cases, one would like to know more.
kind of recompense for loss of income caused by a recent war with Liège. He set the cost of £81 (probably namurois) for a two-year licence to ply his boat between Namur and Huy against the fact that he was able to operate it only for eight months (of the twenty-four). As the licence fee was only the beginning of his expense, the boatman’s profit must have been substantial. Perhaps the count was sympathetic, for he also owned a nef marchande, but his was a franke nef; he paid no tolls.53

Still, it was a hard life and a dangerous one. In the winter, there were floods which covered the many little islets of the Meuse, where a boat could go aground or capsize. In spring, waters ran fast and carried debris. In summer, low water exposed flats and made some reaches of the Sambre unnavigable. A boatman was hardened to all weathers, living about half his working time on the boat, since the distance that could be covered in one day, thirty kilometres, would take him from one major town to the next, but the return journey would require at least another day.54

Occasionally, the count chose to interfere in guild matters. That was the case with the iron-workers of Marche-les-Dames, whom William I wished to foster and to whom he granted, on 28 October 1345, a remarkable charter of freedoms. By it, those involved in smelting or other ironwork were exempt from feudal assessments, corvées and other feudal dues including armed service, unless the latter was for the defence of the county.

53 D.-D. Brouwers. L’administration et les finances, series 4. vol. II. p. 129. The unfortunate Denisons also mentioned the fee of £62 tournois paid for fishing rights, which were similarly disrupted by the war. 54 I have described the boatmen’s guild in some detail because many of its provisions apply to other guilds as well. A copy of the charter, in very bad repair, is found in AEN. Archives des Etats, Régistre des corps de Métiers formé en 1761. It has been transcribed, with its many lacunae, by Jules Borgnet in Cart. Nam. I. pp. 201-208.
Each year, they elected a mayor and four officials called jurés, who exercised judicial power in the cours des feronso for all cases except capital offences. They were also exempt from the usual tax, by weight, on their wares, which might be of any kind of iron except steel, and even the merchants who bought their goods enjoyed that exemption. If the ferons, who also engaged in mining, found a more precious mineral on the count’s land, they were bound to inform him, but in recompense, they had the exclusive right to work the area lying more than seven metres from the find. Finally, they could freely take any wood from comital land for their forges or for construction of buildings, water-wheels, wagons and other equipment.55

A similar charter, both protectionist and democratic, was won by the miners of Morialmé, an iron-rich area some fifty kilometres south-west of Namur, under the religious jurisdiction of Liège. There, the curé of Morialmé thought that the tithes paid by the miners were not sufficiently encompassing. When he increased the tithable scope, the miners stopped work. A tribunal, consisting of the Chapter of St. Lambert, the count of Namur, the duke of Lorraine, the abbot of Florennes and other worthies, heard complaints and formulated the charter of 1 March 1384, unique at that time anywhere in the Low Countries.56

In the commune itself, workers in iron were probably to be found, according to Georges Despy, in the ancient portus, as early as the twelfth century.57 By the mid-

56 Jean Bovesse and Françoise Ladrier. A travers l’histoire du Namurois. pp. 164-166. The authors describe the charter as a complicated code of relations among the lords, the owners or lessees of the land, the local magistracy and the mayor and jurés of the guild. It set out the reciprocal rights and obligations, profits, incomes and fines, with a purview both broad and democratic. The miners got the profits; to the lord went only the eleventh basket of ore. And no tithe could be raised by a curé.
57 Georges Despy. “L’agglomération urbaine”. p. 75.
fourteenth, at least, they had become so numerous and specialized that they formed their own guild, the févres, comprising farriers, locksmiths, makers of weapons and knives (but not of steel), harness-makers and saddlers, makers and merchants of iron housewares - all under the patronage of St. Eloi. Because they worked within the town, they were closely regulated by charter under their elected mayor and four jurés, assisted by a clerk. Masters paid an entry fee of twelve silver old gros tournois, and apprentices one-half, for an apprenticeship that usually lasted two years. The normal work day was from dawn to sunset, but hours of work were further restricted: not after three p.m. on Saturdays or on the eves of major feasts or on holy days. The exception was an emergency blacksmithing in which case, the smith had to give half of the payment to the chapel of St. Eloi for candles. There were fines for non-delivery of goods on the promised date and for sub-standard work. Any cutting instrument had to bear the mark of its maker. Like all the guilds in the commune, the févres were required to support their fellows in illness or need, and to participate in their patronal festival and in the great processional festivals of the commune.

Two guilds in particular supplied the daily food and drink of every Namurois - the bakers and the brewers. The quality and weight of bread was closely monitored by a team of three inspectors appointed annually. The count ordered that they be master-bakers, but not any longer engaged in selling bread. The loaves were generally round, about twenty centimetres in diameter, dense and heavy, and usually eaten in hunks. The poorest people ate rye bread, whose grain was susceptible to ergot and therefore closely scrutinized. A

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58 The four masters of the févres took part in the 1352 rising against William I.
59 The earliest extant is dated "le mardi devant La Chandeleur 1373". Candlemas is 2 February.
60 For this information on the févres, I am indebted to Jules Borgeat, "Métiers", pp. 77-81.
better quality was made from spelt; wheat bread was for the rich. The weight of a loaf varied according to the price of grain, which was itself determined after the harvest and proclaimed from the perron on St. Remy’s day (1 October).61

Bread was usually sold à fenestre, that is, from the aperture of the front room of the baker’s house, at street level. The shutters were divided horizontally; the top half was propped up to form a sheltering awning, and the bottom shutter was let down to become a counter. The most modest baker would live in a little house, one room down and a sleeping loft above, reached by a ladder. His oven was in the open area behind his house and his stock-in-trade was very limited. The most prosperous bakers sold a variety of breads and pastries from bakeries staffed by a number of apprentices and journeymen. All, however, had to have their flour ground at the count’s mill, and all paid the count his fenestrage according to the size of the selling area.62

Like the bakers, the brewers were inspected by masters of their trade, who were no longer actively engaged in it, and who noted particularly that the type and quantity of grain or hops used was proper to the kind of brew. That varied both in type and quality. Keute was a strong, dark beer like a porter, brewed in March and kept in barrels up to two years. Cervoise was the next in strength and flavour; the same word was also applied to strong cider. Middel was a small beer, affordable by the lower classes. Houppe was made

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61 Cart. Nam. II. p.392. dated only June 1424. No fourteenth-century statutes are extant, and there is no information on weight or price of bread until late in the fifteenth. The patron saint of bakers is St. Aubert (10 September), who is portrayed with the long baker’s paddle (for removing loaves from the oven) in his left hand, and four round loaves at his feet. The count received an annual bokaige on each oven. According to D.-D. Brouwers, Cens et rentes II, p.274, there were fifty-seven bakers in the commune in 1289.
62 In 1294, the count’s estalages and fenestrages amounted to £25 tournois. See Cart. Nam I. p. 124.
from hops, which appear to have been introduced in the late thirteenth century. At the lowest level, indeed, the dregs, was torde, little more than the rinsings of the vats and drunk by the poorest of the Namurois.

Little is known about the brewers early in the Dampierre period. Even their patron St. Arnoul, a seventh-century bishop of Metz, is obscure; his feast day is 19 August. The oldest extant charter is dated 29 June 1376, granted by the count but replacing at least one of earlier date. The entry fee to the guild was eleven quartes (22 pintes) of wine for the mayor and jures of the guild, plus a muid (18.2 bushels) of oats, that is, its value, to the coffers of the guild. An apprentice who damaged the brew or who was otherwise unsatisfactory was liable to a fine and was not employable elsewhere until it was paid. Similarly, a master who was judged to have acted unreasonably to his apprentice was fined one gros tournois per day until the dispute was settled. Members of the guild were required to support one another in the usual ways: assistance in time of need, presence at weddings and funerals, and respect one for another.

The 1289 census records twenty breweries held at cens by the count, of which seventeen were in production in that year, and Léopold Genicot posits that there must

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63 See Heinrich Joh Barth, Christiane Klinke and Claus Schmidt, The Hop Atlas: the history and geography of the cultivated plant. Nuremberg, 1944, p. 26. “It is ... safe to assume that the cultivation of hops in Central Europe began some time between the 5th and 7th centuries ... fostered by monasteries and stewards of the royal courts. ... The first sizeable [sic] single hop-growing area in Southern Germany developed around the town of Spalt. There is evidence of hop gardens here as early as the late 8th century. ... In the [later] Middle Ages hop growing in Germany was centred in the North, as a major brewing industry had grown up in and around the towns of the Hanseatic League. ... The trade in hops was one of the most profitable of the Hanseatic merchants' activities.”  
64 These beers are listed by Félix Rousseau, Légendes et coutumes. pp. 179-180.  
65 Cart. Nam. II. pp. 112-115.
have been thirteen others owned outright by brewers. If this seems like an abnormal number of brewers for a small town, one must remember that the demand for beer was high - it, rather than water, was drunk in quantity by everyone - and also that the countryside was supplied with beers from Namur. Breweries were very rarely located elsewhere than in towns and Namur was the only town of consequence in the county.

Brewing was a lucrative operation for the count, beginning at the manufacturing level. When the barley grain, after steeping, had germinated and had then been dried, it was ready for grinding. At this stage, it was called barley malt or in Namurois records, brais. The count held the ban for grinding at his mill. In the year 1355-1356, his molage or mill due, on 1,583 muids of brais, brought him £118.4s.6d. tournois. The quantity of brais is interesting also. At 18.2 bushels per muid, it represents a total of 28,810 bushels of barley malt, or, at approximately 15 kilograms per bushel, about 440,000 kilograms. For an alcoholic content of five per cent, 18 kilograms are required to produce a hectolitre (100 litres) of beer. Thus, 1,583 muids of brais would produce some 24,500 hectolitres, that is, 2,450,000 litres. Not all of this, of course, was consumed in that year or by the townsfolk alone.

The count also received his chambage, that is, a due on the right to make or sell beer based on the production of each brewer. The earliest reference to this exaction occurs in the 1289 census, which records that at Neuveville, a suburb of Namur, the count

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66 See Léopold Genicot, “Une ville en 1422”, pp. 92-93. He founds this assumption on the thirty brokers paying chambages to the count, recorded in D.-D. Brouwers, Cens et rentes II, p. 274.
67 Cart. Nam I, p. 182, note 4. AEN, Fonds des domaines, no. 1, fol. 11 v.
68 For this information, I am indebted to Mr. Bruce Murray, a corporate brewer of Molson’s Breweries in Toronto.
received about £10 tournois. By 1357, taxes on beers and wines were re-assessed to provide money for rebuilding the fortifications. In 1388, William I issued new regulations; to the chambage of twelve lots on every four hundred (a charge of three percent of the selling price), plus one muid of brais per brewer per year, was added a tax of three sous tournois on the cervoises, which, as the decree suggests, had become very popular. The heaviest taxes fell on the best beers, which were drunk by the richest Namurois.

As there were class distinctions based on birth and wealth, so there was a hierarchy in the guilds. Highest in status were the members of the moneyers’, the crossbowmen’s or the archers’ serments, and all were appointed by the count or by the magistracy with his approval. Trade guilds were ranked by affluence. The drapers’ Hanse was high in wealth above the friperie, which sold used clothing; boatmen were more distinguished than charliers (carters); the masterpiece produced for entry as a master in the goldsmiths’ guild required a very large capital outlay, compared with the masterpiece of four pieces of clothing tailored by an aspirant to mastership in the guild of parmentiers.

In sum, the charters of the guilds concerned, first, their administration, and in this respect, they were all very similar: self-administered by their elected bourgeois masters, with regulations for entry fees and apprenticeships, for fines (half of which went to the count) and for the mutual support of their members. All were bound by oath before the High Court of Namur to support the commune and to fight for it if necessary. The other concern of the guilds was to regulate the manufacture and sale of merchandise. Nothing

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69 D.-D. Brouwers, Cens et rentes II, p. 281. The amount varied somewhat.
could be made except by guild members and their hours of work were prescribed. Every article had to be identifiable as to its maker. Each guild had its inspectors, who had the right to enter houses or workshops and seize substandard merchandise. In a word, the guilds were protective of members and production. They were suppressed by the French, when they occupied Namur from 1792 to 1815.

Shelter and Clothing

Affluence also determined the type of dwelling and the cost of clothing chosen by the Namurois or enjoined upon them. None of the thatched two-room cottages of artisans remains or, as one would expect, the earth-floored huts of the very poor. Most of the bourgeois houses were made of wood with roofs of tiles. The rich could afford high, narrow, contiguous, three-storey dwellings of brick, sometimes with stone coursings, such as one now sees above the shop fronts in rue de l’Ange or rue du Collège. Many had attics with small dormer windows and all followed the distinctive Namurois architecture of sloping roof lines parallel with the street, and gables at the ends of the buildings. Thus, the Namurois style presents a plain, sober face to the street, unlike the Flemish style of decorated gables facing the street. The richest Namurois flaunted their wealth with free-standing hôtels built around courtyards, and with extensive orchards and gardens.

Unfortunately, in their fervour for civic improvements in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Namurois did not spare the medieval houses of the rich, except for the Gaiffier hôtel, now a museum.

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71 The destruction of these and other historical buildings - notably, most of the hôtels, the Romanesque building of Notre-Dame, the little chapel of Grands-Malades and the perron - was lamented by Adolphe Borgnet in Légendes namuroises par Jérôme Pimpurniaux. Namur. 1837.
To the casual observer, it was dress that was the immediate and visible sign of wealth. While clothing was commonly made of wool, it varied widely in quality. To generalize, artisans wore coarse stuff of drab colours to accommodate both their purses and their active working day, while well-to-do bourgeois indulged themselves with cloths of finest wool in varying textures and patterns. Silks, velvets and scarlets fashioned the best clothes of the richest, for these fabrics commanded princely prices. There was a hierarchy also in undergarments. Shifts and culottes of silk were worn by the richest, cotton served the bourgeois and coarse hempen stuff served the poorer folk. Flax, widely grown north of Namur in the Hesbaye, provided the material of cheap personal linens.

Furs were also ranked by class. Peasants wore skins of cats, rabbits and goats; fox, badger, hare, fine lambskin and squirrel were chosen by the lower bourgeois. For the very rich, there was miniver, ermine, martin, sable and even the exotic *luberne* (leopard).

Favourite colours also reflected wealth and fashion. Scarlet, highly prized because of the cost of the kermes which produced the brilliant, enduring colour, was the symbol of pride and the reflection of princely opulence; blues were next in popularity; greens, symbolizing new life, were often chosen for the bedrooms of aristocrats. These colours were reflected in the most prized jewels; rubies, sapphires and emeralds were preferred to colourless diamonds. White, the colour of purity, was chosen for the habits of some

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75 Thus, the bed-chamber of Catherine of Savoy was hung with red and green velvet.
religious, brown for others. Brides wore the best clothes they had, regardless of colour. Yellow lost its modest popularity in the early fourteenth century and was often later the colour of ridicule - for a court fool, or, in Italy, for an insolvent debtor or to express hostility. Black had for long been the colour of mourning in the West, but Philip the Good in later life dressed entirely in black velvet - so portrayed by Rogier Van der Weyden - and set a new style.

Food

Ostentation and luxury of shelter and clothing are not necessary for an acceptable standard of living. In a temperate climate, neither is as essential as is an adequate diet. Between the rich and poor in medieval Namur, a very significant difference lay in their food. To generalize, the poorer the household, the greater its dependence on grains for bread and gruel; in order of preference, poorer people chose spelt, rye and oats. Wheat was for the rich. Next in importance were peas and beans for pottage, a valuable source of protein. The predominant nutrient was therefore starch.

A modern nutritionist is astonished both by its quantity and its proportion in relation to other food values. B.H. Slicher Van Bath cites a fourteenth-century Nuremberg hospital which provided its patients with a daily diet of 3,400 calories; bread formed two-thirds, by weight, of the food consumed each day:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>280 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>15 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>1000 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse</td>
<td>100 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>130 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Ibid., p. 203. And in Nazi Germany, the yellow Star of David expressed hatred and contempt of Jews. Johan Huizinga in The Waning of the Middle Ages, London, 1924, p. 251, recounts that Henry of Wurtemberg and his retinue, all dressed in yellow, paraded before Duke Philip of Burgundy to show hostility.
Again, daily rations for Venetian galley-rowers provided 3,915 calories in biscuit, wine, cheese, salt pork and pulse, of which the biscuit was 68.4 per cent of the caloric value.

However, it is not the caloric value that one questions here. A medieval labourer threshing with a flail, or a farmer driving a horse and plough through heavy March soil, a boatman poling a barge - all such workers could use up to 4,500 calories a day, an intake that they seldom got. But the excess of starches led to corpulence with accompanying circulatory ailments. More serious were the results of vitamin deficiencies, A, D, E, K and, in particular, C. Today, we know that vitamin A is found in carrots, green vegetables, milk, eggs and liver; lack of it results in a loss of formation of mucus to lubricate the eyes. The eyelids become swollen and the eyeballs dry; dust and bacteria adhere to the eyes and blindness results. Vitamin D is absorbed, in insufficient amounts, as a result of the action of the sun on the skin; a lack of it causes rickets in children. Vitamin E occurs in leafy green vegetables, especially asparagus, nuts (especially peanuts) and wheat germ; lack of it causes anaemia. Vitamin K, like E, is contained in plant leaves; it helps to promote blood-clotting. Vitamin C abounds in citrus fruits and in such vegetables as potatoes and tomatoes; a deficiency of it predisposes towards bone fractures, inhibits wound healing and causes scurvy. Ironically, the peasant who ate green plants, onions and garlic, and

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81 Infections and diseases of the eyes were a common ailment. See Jean Haust, Médecinaire, p. 193, where the anonymous Namurois physician gives six recipes for poultries or ointments to relieve such complaints.
who was held in contempt for his smell, was healthier and sturdier than the artisan in the town.

It was not only a preponderance of bread that differentiated the poor from the bourgeois; their choice of meat, or lack of it, also distinguished them, as the bourgeois were distinguished from aristocrats. The latter prized red meat, especially the product of the hunt - the only time that they would draw a bow. Deer, boar and occasionally, bear graced the tables of nobles. Of domestic animals, the bourgeoisie ate mutton and in large households, beef including the offal. Tripe was a particular delicacy. Those who could afford to buy or rent a small house kept chickens and a pig or two.\(^{82}\) The whole of a pig was utilized, including the skin, which could be tanned, and the bones, after soup-making, were easily pulverized for fertilizer. Pig manure was also a rich nutrient for the soil. A pig was easily and quickly raised, especially by bourgeois who were entitled to free pasturage for their pigs in the count’s forest of Marlagne, a few kilometres south-west of the town of Namur. The pigs of others were kept in their pens or allowed to forage in the streets. Goats, the poor men’s cows, were confined to fallow or scrub lands because of their destructive grazing habit of uprooting the whole plant, rather than nibbling the top as sheep do. It is likely that some households kept rabbits to piece out their meals, and occasionally, the count permitted rabbit-hunting for a fee, as did William II in his charter of 22 October 1402.\(^{83}\)

\(^{82}\) Claude Gaier pointed out that between twenty and twenty-three per cent of medieval beef cattle was bone, whereas the bone content of a pig was only ten per cent. See his “L’approvisionnement et le régime alimentaire des troupes dans le duché de Limbourg et les terres d’Outre-Meuse vers 1400” in *Le Moyen Age* 74 (1968), pp. 551-575. On pp. 558-559, note 13, he quotes the astonishing provision, per day, of 5.585 kilograms of bread, 1.5 of meat and 2.8 litres of wine. It should be noted, however, that these “troupes” were cavaliers, not foot-soldiers.

\(^{83}\) Recorded in *Cart. Nam. II.* pp. 231-234.
In sum, red meat was favoured by the upper classes; poorer people ate pork occasionally, or what was scornfully called “white meat”: chicken, eggs, some milk and a little cheese. However, frequent fast-days enjoined the same dairy foods on everyone, in addition to fish. That too was graded. The rich had their carp ponds and they could also afford fresh-water barbel, eels and shrimp. Sea fish were sold in the Butchers’ Hall, where the law required that any fish not sold on the day on which it was received had their tails cut off to show that they were not fresh-caught. Fresh sea-fish, like salmon and plaice, were expensive, but smoked cod and herring were within the reach of most people.

Sugar was rare up to the fifteenth century, but honey was always available and natural fructose was obtained from fruit. Those with sufficient space had fruit trees, pear and apple most commonly. Fruit stealing was a temptation, but the crime was considered to be so serious that it carried the heavy fine of a double pilgrimage, or the cost of its commutation, to Notre Dame of Rocamadour, to be paid to the count and to the victim of the theft. As to the serious consequences of eating unripe fruit, the anonymous writer of the Darmstadt manuscript 2769 warned:

"Whoever really intends to preserve his health must habitually observe this rule, that is, never to use fruits, cooked or raw, until they have reached full maturity, on the tree if possible. An exception are those varieties which must not be used from the time when they grow dark at full maturity since they are food for spiders, and they infect the blood or cause the groin to fester and produce a multiplicity of malignant pustules."

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84 See Herman Van der Wee. The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the European Economy, 14th to 16th Centuries. Louvain, 1963. vol. 2, p. 77. vol. 3, graph 15, and vol. 1, appendix 26/4, pp. 318-324, showing a gradual decline in the price of sugar and an increase in its consumption from 1430, due to sugar plantations established in Mediterranean islands.

85 B.H. Slicher Van Bath in Agrarian History. p. 183. comments that in the thirteenth century, a beehive produced about 9 litres of honey a year.

86 Cart. Nam. II. 20 August 1424. p. 396.

87 Jean Haust, Médecinaire. p.206. "Quicumque vero ad conservationem sanitatis intendit debet hanc regulam generaliter servare. scilicet quod nunquam utatur fructibus. tam coctis quam crudis, donec in
If cultivated fruit was out of reach for the poor, they might satisfy their need by foraging for wild fruits and nuts, a task left to children and people too old or infirm to work.

Sea salt was imported from the Bay of Biscay and from Zeelande, but pepper and spices came at great expense from the East, particularly via Venice and later, in the sixteenth century, from Portugal. They not only preserved foods, but they also added flavour, for the diet, even of the lower bourgeoisie, was flat and monotonous.

If bread was the chief component of a poor man’s diet, what percentage of his income was spent on it? To answer this, there are prerequisite questions. Was he employed? At what rate and for how many days a year did he work? Was he the only breadwinner in the family? Were there other mouths that he had to feed? How much bread was required and what did it cost?

Let us assume that he was an unskilled labourer, employed for two hundred days a year.88 Records of Namur building costs transcribed by Léopold Genicot show that in 1406-1407, a labourer earned three heaumes a day, winter or summer; from 1424 through 1429, it was five heaumes a day. There is no indication of a food supplement.89 According to W.P. Blockmans and W. Prevenier, most authors assume that there was one

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88 Allowing for Sundays, civic holidays and major holy days of the Church, there were about 270 working days in a year, but this maximum was never reached, according to W.P. Blockmans and W. Prevenier. “Poverty in Flanders and Brabant from the Fourteenth to the Mid-sixteenth Century: Sources and Problems” in Acta Historiae Neerlandicae, X (1978), p. 24. Tables constructed by Herman Van der Wee in Antwerp Market, vol. 1, pp. 540-543, show that between 1437 and 1516. the number of days worked in Antwerp fluctuated between 200 and 220.

89 Léopold Genicot. La crise agricole, p. 163.
breadwinner for a family of four, although it is possible that a mother might get some days’ work raking in the fields at harvest time.

We assume that the daily number of calories required for this hypothetical family is 10,000: 3,500 for the labourer, 2,500 for his wife and 2,000 for each of the two children. A kilogram of bread gives 2,500 calories, but man does not live on bread alone. If we set the family’s basic bread consumption at 3.2 kilograms a day - a convenient figure because it represents 8,000 calories - then the family has to obtain 2,000 calories a day from other sources: legumes, light ale, some meat.

For the year’s supply of bread (3.2 kilograms x 365), that is, 1,168 kilograms, 25.28 halsters or approximately 1,340 litres or nearly 5.5 muids of grain are needed. The records of grain purchased by the Grand-Hôpital show a muid of spelt costing 9.4 heaumes in 1367-1368, dropping to 7.95 in 1374-1375 (a bumper crop), and steadily rising through the 1390s to 24 heaumes in 1402-1403. By 1424-1425, when labour rates were finally raised, spelt cost Grands-Malades 34.5 heaumes a muid.

In 1402-1403, then, the labourer earned 600 heaumes a year (200 days at 3 heaumes) and the cost of grain for his yearly bread was 132 heaumes (5.5 muids at 24 heaumes). But to this cost must be added those for milling and baking. If, faute de mieux, we take the figures of Blockmans and Prevenier, we should quadruple the grain cost of 132 heaumes, bringing it up to approximately 528 heaumes per year - 88 per cent of the

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91 Ibid., p. 26. A halster is 53 litres; 25.28 halsters is 1,339.84 litres. There are 245.7 litres in the Namurois muid. Thus, the family would need 1,340 / 245.7 or nearly 5.5 muids of grain, a year.
92 Léopold Genicot, La crise agricole, tables on pp. 132-133. These figures from hospital purchases are for spelt, which produced a better bread than the cheaper rye. The cost of the labourer’s bread is therefore overstated by the difference in cost (unknown) between the two grains.
family’s income. Of course, one might argue that if the father was not working, he did not need 3,500 calories a day. However, the fact remains that the family would be on the edge of starvation, saved only by gifts from the Poor Table or the Grand-Hôpital or the beguines. Such was one of the results of Count William II’s debasements.

How did the bread cost compare in 1424-1425? That year, the labourer might earn 1,000 heaumes (200 days at 5 heaumes), and the cost of the grain for his family’s bread would be about 190 heaumes (5.5 muids at 34.5 heaumes). Quadrupling for milling and baking, the total cost would be 760 heaumes, or nearly 59 percent of his total income. And the cost of the rest of his food, his rent, some clothing, the luxury of shoes? He was still desperately poor.

Every possible step was taken to ensure that there was no profiteering in foodstuffs, especially in grain when the harvest was poor. The size of a loaf of bread, and its price, were set on 1 October. Bakers were forbidden to buy more grain at the grain hall than was necessary for their immediate needs. As far as was possible, the aim was to put the country seller into direct contact with the town purchaser; to this end, numerous inspectors were employed. It was forbidden to buy food from peasants before it reached the town and was displayed in the market at fixed prices. Each purchaser bought publicly for the needs of his own family, “at a reasonable price, in the opinion of the four inspectors appointed annually by the magistracy”. However, when foodstuffs such as

[93] W.P Blockmans and W. Prevenier in “Poverty”. p. 26, show that the cost in Ghent in 1320 of baking a halster of rye worth 60 deniers parisis was 253 deniers. The authors do not state whether the halster had been milled. And we do not know what these costs might have been in Namur in the two periods of our example.
[94] Cart. Nam. II. June 1424. pp. 391-392. “...à pris raisonnable, à la conscience de quatre rewar sermentés qui pour ce seront ordonnés par nos dis maaier et eschevins, et annuelement renouvellés...”
fish, spices and especially wines were imported in bulk, a different control was applied, and, indeed, it applied to any goods brought into the town in bulk. Originally, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the foreigner bringing his goods to a town was obliged to lodge with an appointed townsman, his hôte, who accompanied him on his business transactions and received a lucrative fee. In Namur, and generally throughout Europe, such a broker had to be a bourgeois.95

**The Herbatte Fair**

There was, however, one occasion when a foreign merchant could do business directly in Namur and, indeed, was encouraged to do so. That was the annual Herbatte fair. It was held on the meadow-lands, comprising some twenty-five hectares, that stretched along the left bank of the Meuse, from north-east of Namur to where the rocky cliffs bordered the Meuse at Bouges. This area forms the present-day suburbs of St. Marc, Champion and Vedrin. It is not known when the fair was first held, but in the twelfth century, when the new quarter of Neuveville was developed across the Sambre, a parish church was established in 1153, and dedicated to St. Nicholas, patron of merchants. In 1192, an annual gift of twenty-four sous namurois was made to Saint-Aubain from the cens of Herbatte lands.96 By the time of Guy I, the fair was widely known.

Merchants coming to it from other jurisdictions were guaranteed safe passage and all, Namurois or alien, were free from arrest of person or chattels (save for capital crimes) while the fair ran. For a week from 2 October, merchants took possession of their stalls and set up their accommodations behind or near them. Then from 9 October for seventeen

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95 This safeguard against foreign competition is succinctly set out by Henri Pirenne in his *Histoire économique de l’occident médiéval*. Bruges. 1951. pp. 316-318.
days, the fair was open to the public. Compulsory guard duty was carried out by the Namurois.

Every kind of good was sold: copperware from Dinant and Bouvignes, pottery, cutlery, shoes, clothing and especially textiles. All drapers from the same foreign place were installed in their own temporary halls. Namurois drapers were naturally the most numerous. Purveyors of food and drink passed continually to and fro or sold from stalls that were originally located just outside the town walls, conveniently close to their source of supply. But when the walls were extended in 1391, they lost their location. They petitioned the count for redress, and having received a gift of one hundred gold florins, the count graciously assigned them other stalls. 97

The Herbatte fair was, of course, lucrative for the count. The cens of 1294 records that he received £16 tournois per year as ground rent for the Herbatte lands. 98 Each foreign merchant paid twenty sous namurois to the count and five pounds of pepper to the échevins 99, if the count so assigned it. Then, there were the stall rents, graduated as to full stalls, sixteen feet wide, and half-stalls, and as to the nature of the merchandise. Cloth stalls in 1265 cost twenty sous namurois, others as little as one denier. Bourgeois linen-weavers were exempt, and the mayor had one and-a-half stalls free. Thus, it was possible for the count to favour certain trades or individuals. 100

It would be interesting to know how long the Herbatte fair attracted foreign merchants. A study by Christiane Piérard of the town accounts of Mons showed that

99 Ibid., p. 23.
100 Ibid., p. 23 and II, p. 281.
before 1317, Montais merchants went to fairs at Paris and Bruges and, in their own county, at Tournai. From 1317 to 1348, the accounts show payment in every year to a messenger sent by the count of Namur, inviting the Montais merchants to the Herbatte fair. After 1348, they went to northern fairs.  

As Léopold Genicot commented, Namur never figured in international trade. It remained a regional centre only, aspiring neither in quantity nor in quality to a broader market. Its economy, like its politics, was localized.  

Conclusion

In its stratification, Namurois society followed the same broad pattern as any other society in western Europe at the time. The count was supreme, but he wisely acted within the customary law of the commune. Excepting John III, he was the richest man in the county, owner of vast tracts of forests and meadow-lands, of river rights and of mines. Most important, he had the right to mint, and when he chose to devaluate, he could, in fact, steal from his own subjects. He surrounded himself with chosen peers who filled hereditary posts in his household, or sat in his High Court. But his chief concern was with rich bourgeois rentiers whose support he needed in administering the town. Without exception, during the Dampierre period, the holders of the offices of mayor and échevin were chosen by the count from this class. All bourgeois, however, were a source of

103 Nicholas Oresme, The De Moneta of Nicholas Oresme and English Mint Documents, ed. Charles Johnson. London, 1956, p. 24. “...the prince unjustly usurps this unjust privilege...Besides, the amount of the prince’s profit is necessarily that of the community’s loss.”
revenue for him, from their annual fees and from their commercial and industrial activities. When the count needed extra funds as, for example, on the occasion of a son’s ransom or marriage, he called upon his subjects for an aide. Thus, two hundred townsfolk were each assessed six moutons or sixty old gros, payable in two instalments. All paid the same amount, but they were recorded in separate lists: “hommes qui ne sont point de mestier” and “hommes de mestier et de frairie”. The former were in a class by themselves. Whether it was conferred by birth or by acquisition, their status made them qualitatively different, as Henri Pirenne remarked, analogous to the effect of the dubbing of a knight or the tonsuring of a priest.

But as between privileged or not, rich or poor, the most telling distinction in status lay in the proportion of income spent on food. Christopher Dyer estimated that fourteenth-century English nobles spent about one-third of their income provisioning their large households. Poor Namurois labourers might spend 80 per cent and still go hungry, for although from 1370 to 1429, Léopold Genicot does not record a grain shortage - and some years produced bumper crops - devaluations and consequent inflation caused prices to escalate.

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105 Henri Pirenne. Histoire économique. p. 208. “Le bourgeois médiéval... est un homme qualitativement différent de tous ceux qui vivent en dehors de l’enceinte municipale... L’acquisition de la bourgeoisie entraine des effets analogues à ceux de l’adoubement du chevalier ou la tonsure du clerc. en ce sens qu’elle confère un statut juridique spécial.”
107 Léopold Genicot. La crise agricole. pp. 10-12 and pp. 132-133. Spelt rose from 9 heaumes a muid in 1367-1368 to 43.8 heaumes a muid in 1428-1429.
CHAPTER V

Conclusion

There are as many criteria of a desirable standard of living as there are philosophies, ranging from such extremes as Plato's ideal state to the hedonism of second-century Rome, and from the asceticism of the desert monks of the early Christian era to the consumerism of the present-day western world. Whatever the differences, however, everyone would prefer to live without war, famine and pestilence, yet even these three abominations might be graduated, according to a Bolognese canon who wrote in 1602 in words of cynical meiosis that of these three, famine was the least to be feared. While war and pestilence strike all men, famine, he proposed, is discriminative. It spares the priests so that people can die confessed and absolved. It spares the notaries so that people can die testate. And it spares the princes who watch over the welfare of their people.¹

Except for a major conflict with Liège (1319-1322), the territory of Namur was spared the depredations of war during the Dampierre period. Its counts, however, took part in various battles elsewhere, seeking honour, booty, and ransoms. John I with the military support of his feudatories fought at Courtrai in 1302 with the Flemings against the French and at Cassel in 1328 with the French against the Flemings. William I supported the bishop of Liège against insurgent Liégeois in 1346 at Vottem, where the Liégeois foot-soldiers won the day, a costly day for Count William. His son, William II, was at the battle of Othée in 1408, again supporting the egregiously unworthy bishop, John VI of

Bavaria against his outraged Liégeois subjects, who suffered terrible losses and
excruciating vengeance at the hands of the victorious bishop. For two centuries and more,
the people of Liège and Flanders were wracked by war, while the Namurois enjoyed an
almost unbroken peace.

Nor did the second terror, famine, did stalk the streets of Namur in 1316-1317 as
it did those of the great cities of the north because Namur, with its small population almost
surrounded by fertile agricultural lands, did not suffer such problems of supply as did
Paris, Ghent, Bruges or Ypres. That is not to say that no Namurois experienced the pangs
of hunger and the fear of starvation. Yet a record of calamities that struck Namur from
1350 to 1500 shows remarkably few dearths or famines until the 1430s, as a result of the
Liégeois invasion. A table showing the price of wheat from 1368 to 1500 in Namur,
Antwerp, Bruges and Louvain, expressed in silver, reveals that prices in Namur were
generally lower. Exceptions occur: from 1396 to 1407, as a result of devaluations, and
most markedly, from 1429 to 1435. When a labourer in Namur spent 80 per cent and
more of his income on bread for his family, because inflation raised the price of grain while
the magistrates held his wage steady, his standard of living was pitiable. Yet there were no

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2 This bishop-elect, brother of Duke William IV of Bavaria, was a seventeen-year old sub-deacon when he
was appointed. Never ordained priest, he refused to be consecrated as bishop, devoting himself to politics
and war while enjoying all the powers and perquisites of the bishopric. After Othée he was known as Jean
3 There are no Namurois town documents for this time. In Ypres, 2,974 people, about 10 per cent of the
population, died from May to October in 1316, according to Hans Van Werveke. “La famine de l’an 1316
en Flandre et dans les régions voisines”. RN 41 (1959), pp. 5-41. For a more general account, see Henry
good summary of the causes of the catastrophe is given in Chapters 1 and 2 by William Chester Jordan in
4 Léopold Genicot. La crise agricole. pp. 10-14. The 1430s are not in the Dampierre period.
5 Ibid., pp. 189-192.
uprisings. Perhaps there were no leaders, the petty bourgeoisie making do with trade incomes matching inflation.

The third terror in the late Middle Ages was the plague. Namur was spared in 1348-1349 but was later struck three times: 1361-1362, 1382, and, with fearful severity, in 1399-1400. The plague did not reappear until 1438-1439.

To qualify a standard of living in terms of scourges of God, as the Bolognese canon called them, is a negative approach. Rather than enumerating the evils that one would avoid, it is preferable to consider what one expects as an adequate satisfaction of basic human needs. In the physical sphere and in order of importance, these are food, shelter and clothing. It was the first of these needs that was shouted in the words, “We have nothing to eat!” by a mob of thousands in St. Mark’s Square in Florence in August 1378. Fear of starvation caused a riot in Paris in 1382. In 1381 when Ghent was under siege, as Froissart relates, 12,000 starving Gantois under François Ackerman went to buy provisions; they travelled to Brussels, to Louvain and finally to Liège, in which latter city they obtained six hundred cart-loads of grain and flour, enough to sustain the 30,000 people of Ghent for fifteen days. Doubtless, there is much truth in the events related by Froissart, even if we question his well-rounded numbers. Did famished thousands, or even hundreds, of Namurois gather in the Place Saint-Remy to protest the price of bread? There

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Oeuvres de Froissart, ed. Albert Kervyn de Lettenhove. vol. X, Brussels, 1870, pp. 4-7. “Quant les nouvelles vinrent en la ville de Gand que leurs gens retournoient et amenoient plus de VI cens chars chargéis de pourvéances, dont il avoient grant nécessité, si en furent moulant resjoy. quoique toutes ces pourvéances qui venoient dou pais de Liége. n’estoient pas fortes assés pour soustenir la ville de Gand XV jours...” On p. 19. Froissart reports Philip Van Arthevé as saying that “il y a tels XXX mille testes en ceste ville qui ne mengièrent de pain. passct XV jours...”
are no such records and there is no argument from silence, but it seems unlikely, given the population of Namur and its geographical location. In 1366, when frightened Namurois rioted, thinking that their grain supply was being carried off, it was with the loss of only a single life. The recurrence of starvation in the large cities of Italy, France and Flanders was generally due to a combination of factors: failure to prepare for the provisioning of the large populations, grain yields which were too low to supply those populations\(^8\) and ravages of war. In all of these respects, Namur was more fortunate than the larger cities.

There were also contrasts in the quality of housing between the cities of the north and Namur, and the most marked discrepancies showed in the dwellings of the very rich and the very poor. Namur had nothing comparable to the palaces and hôtels of Paris or the handsome residences of the great burghers of Ghent. Nor did it have the crowded squalor of four- or five-storeyed tenements in Paris where a family might exist in a garret room. Better the earthen-floored hut in Namur; at least its tenant had greater ability to make his needs known, readier accessibility to help if need be, and opportunity to walk out to the banlieue in search of casual work.

What criteria can one adopt as to an adequate standard in clothing? It is more than merely to clothe one’s nakedness. It is more than stark necessity, as Lear cries out when he is to be stripped of his entourage, a symbol of his rank.

\[
\text{O, reason not the need! Our basest beggars} \\
\text{Are in the poorest thing superfluous.} \\
\text{Allow not nature more than nature needs,}
\]

Man’s life is cheap as beast’s.⁹

The lowest acceptable standard is to be clothed in accordance with one’s status so as to be able to appear without shame in the streets among one’s peers.¹⁰

What strongly influenced the material aspects of the standard of living in Namur, as everywhere in western Europe, was the prince’s use or abuse of his unique power to mint money and to receive his seignorage fee on every coin produced. This right became an important, even indispensable, source of revenue. Philip VI resorted to debasement to finance the opening years of the Hundred Years’ War. For example, up to the end of 1336, 60 gros tournois were struck from a mark of argent-le-roi, each coin consisting of 96 per cent silver and 4 per cent alloy. By late 1355, 480 gros were minted from a mark of argent-le-roi, the gros containing 20 per cent silver and 80 per cent alloy.¹¹ So too, Count Louis de Male of Flanders financed his wars against his rebellious subjects. By the end of his rule (1346-1384), the silver coins which he minted, still of the same name, were reduced in silver content by 75 per cent. Hans Van Werveke estimated that these debasements gave the count a total revenue of about £500,000 parisis, averaging £13,000 parisis a year. After 1354, his seignorage made up one-sixth of his total income.¹² To

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⁹ William Shakespeare. King Lear. II.iv.267-270.

¹⁰ This standard is mentioned by Geoffrey Hawthorn in his introduction to The Standard of Living by Amartya Sen (see footnote 20). It is found in Adam Smith in his An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, vol. 2. Everyman’s Edition, London, 1924, pp. 351-352. “By necessaries I understand not only those commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life, but whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people, even the lowest order, to be without. Custom... has rendered leather shoes a necessary of life in England. The poorest creditable person of either sex would be ashamed to appear in public without them.”


¹² Hans Van Werveke. “Currency Manipulations in the Middle Ages: the Case of Louis de Male [sic], Count of Flanders”. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society. 4th ser., 31 (1949), pp. 115-127. The author observes, however, that these debasements reduced the price of Flemish cloth to purchasers abroad and thus benefited that industry.
almost all his subjects £13,000 parisis was an unimaginable sum. But although they could not imagine it, they paid for it by higher prices to compensate for the lower value of the money. Inflation hurt the rentiers particularly, because it reduced the purchasing power of their fixed incomes.

The spokesman against this untrammelled princely right to manipulate the coinage was Nicholas Oresme, whose De Moneta appeared in its first edition late in 1355.13 “It is clear”, he wrote, “that a change of money should never be made unless perhaps under eminent necessity, or for the obvious advantage of the whole community14 ... it involves forgery and deceit and cannot be the right of any prince ... the amount of the prince’s profit is necessarily that of the community’s loss.”15

Debasement and consequent inflation do not appear to have undermined the standard of living in Namur until late in the fourteenth century, but the historian is hampered by lack of documentation in mint accounts, town records and domanial receipts. Guy I took care to ensure that his coins were widely acceptable; furthermore, he found no need to debase the coinage. John I, as count of Namur and Flanders, had a mint in Alost; presumably, he retained those in Namur and Neuveville established by his father. Whether or not William I knew of Oresme’s work, he seems to have approved of its thesis, for when in 1357, the pressure of population or the need for newer, stronger fortifications led the count to propose extended walls, moats and tower gates, he chose to pay for them by

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14 To foil counterfeiters, for example.
taxation. There is no evidence that he debased the coinage. But his son, William II, evidently had need to supplement his revenues by debasements, for we have a record of the complaint of the canons of Saint-Aubain that the count’s monetary policy was reducing their incomes. Léopold Genicot found that the accounts of the Grand-Hôpital, giving purchases of supplies of various kinds, often furnished equivalences between Namurois coins and the gros tournois. This enabled him to record the weight of the Namurois which in grams of fine silver. He found a steady decline in the silver content from 0.4489 grams in 1380 to 0.2693 in 1395, to 0.2244 from 1402 to 1411, and from 0.2020 in 1412 to 0.1347 by 1429. The decline began with the count’s debasements, but an intensifying factor may have been the periodic but widespread shortage of silver in western Europe. How it affected the standard of living in Namur is succinctly indicated by Léopold Genicot. In 1377, the Namurois sou was worth 2.9 heaumes and bought 66 kilograms of wheat. By 1415, the sou was worth 4.8 heaumes and bought only 40 kilograms of wheat.

The usual way of judging a standard of living is to measure the extent of material possessions. But there are other important criteria. What possibility was there in Namur of effecting social or political change through protest? None for the marginals and very little for artisans who did not have any voice in government until late in the fifteenth century.

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16 See Chapter II, note 52.
18 Léopold Genicot, Economie rurale III. p. 87.
Political power resided in birth. An *homme de mestier*, no matter how rich or clever he might be, was never chosen by the count to sit on his council, or on the de facto governing body of the commune, the magistracy. The mayor was always selected from the noble or chivalrous class; *échevins* and *jurés* were high bourgeois, engaged in such “acceptable” commerce as wine, cloth and wood.²⁰

Despite the restrictions of this stratified society, there was an opportunity to move up the ladder. A peasant who had acquired substantial land-holdings might claim a chevalier ancestor five or six generations back, and with the affirmation of some influential friends, he would then become an *homme de loi*. Or, to achieve that goal by a quicker route, he might marry a *femme de loi*. The Valion family offers further examples. Henri Valion was an artisan: a mason and a carpenter. His son, Michel, accumulated several pieces of land totalling about seven hectares. A brother, Henri, was master of comital works, and his son, another Henri, owned seventy or eighty hectares and could have lived off his rents like a bourgeois. He was elected as *élu* and governor of the *Grand-Hôpital*, even though neither he nor any member of his family penetrated the magistracy.²¹ Thus, Namurois society allowed some chance for advancement. It was this “plasticity”, to use Léopold Genicot’s phrase, that offered hope of a more rewarding life, for the higher the standing and function of a man, the more rights he enjoyed.²²

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²¹ Ibid., pp. 81-82.
Passing over material needs and the restrictions of a hierarchical society, Amartya Sen emphasized the importance of one's freedom to choose from several alternatives, as a determinant of a satisfactory standard of living.  

$^{23}$ To put it another way, "...it is the set of available capabilities of a person to function which is...what the standard of living ought to be about."$^{24}$

Under this definition, few in a medieval society enjoyed a fully acceptable standard of living, and none of the marginals had any such "capabilities" at all. The very word _pauper_ meant originally a person in a state of feeble dependence due to age, illness or infirmity, as a result of social, economic or political factors. Thus, the opposite of _pauper_ in the eighth or ninth centuries was _potens_. Not until about 1200 did _pauper_ come to mean poor as opposed to _dives_ (rich).$^{25}$

The institution upon which these _pauperes_ principally depended was the Church. From its earliest days, their care lay primarily with the bishop and secondarily, as parishes developed, with the parish priest. For this purpose, one-fourth of tithes went to the bishop for the relief of suffering and need beyond the parish and another fourth for the poor within the parish, for whom the priest was responsible.$^{26}$ In addition, by at least the thirteenth century in Namur, lay people contributed directly to poor relief by the establishment of Poor Tables. These organizations were endowed by gifts of money, lands and houses, the annual income from which supported the needy; originally, distributions were made from a table at the church door.

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$^{24}$ _Ibid_. p. 41.


$^{26}$ Further, one fourth for the maintenance of the church building and one fourth for the priest.
An early reference to the communal Poor Table of Namur occurs on 1 December 1289, when Jakemon Branche, receiver for the count, committed to the magistracy and to the governor of the Poor Table of Namur the sum of £140 lovignis, to provide an annual gift to the Poor Table of the value of twenty muids of spelt, and a further sum for prayers for his soul in the chapter of Saint-Remy, newly established by him.\textsuperscript{27} The first extant accounts for this Poor Table are for 1483; they list the names of the needy and donations made in terms of setiers of spelt. It may be, as Herman Van der Wee describes for the town of Lier, that the Poor Table in Namur also purchased stockings, shoes, cloth, foodstuffs and other household necessities for distribution.\textsuperscript{28} Another Poor Table was maintained by the parish of Saint-Michel.

If we judge the standard of living of a society according to its care for its pauperes, Namur scores well. The Grand-Hôpital, supported by laymen, ministered to the poor and infirm in lodging and in distributions of necessities. The earliest recorded gift is in 1273, an annual rente of five muids of wheat, from Guy I. By 1360, the hospital had annual rentes of nearly six hundred muids from some five hundred hectares of land, almost all of which it had received in gifts from its counts, magistrates and people. From 1372 to 1429, its holdings increased by eighty-two acquisitions, thirty-three of which were by way of gifts. If the dukes of Burgundy were disgraceful examples of niggardly support of the needy - in

\textsuperscript{27} Cart. Nam I, pp. 87-88. Some may aver that these donations were merely the quid pro quo of a desire, possibly ill-founded, for the donor's eternal welfare. W.P. Blockmans and W. Prevenier in "Poverty in Flanders and Brabant", pp. 53-54, suggest that Poor Tables had "to devote a substantial part of their budget to Masses, and ... they economized on distributions to the poor in preference to failing in their obligations towards the donor." The authors see "that, in terms of date, quality and place (at the rear of the church, often following a Mass for a departed soul), the entire pattern of poor relief was aimed at accentuating the ritual of the Church." One needs to guard against twentieth-century secularism misconstruing the mentalité of the fourteenth.

\textsuperscript{28} Herman Van der Wee, "Les archives hospitalières et l'étude de la pauvreté aux Pays-bas du XVe au XVIIIe siècle". RN 48 (1966), pp. 5-16.
1403, their alms represented 0.14 per cent of ducal revenue\textsuperscript{29} - the people of Namur were generous.

* * * * *

Terrible times were in store for the Namurois, as their county was fought over by waves of Austrian, Dutch and French armies for a hundred and fifty years\textsuperscript{30}, while the population was further decimated by famine and pestilence. But during the reign of the counts of Dampierre, such events happened on a smaller scale and to a lesser degree. The gods seemed to smile on these moderate, good-natured people, lovers of processions and banquets, of singing and games, who on their stilts or in the course of their daily lives could fall and pick themselves up again with a jest and who above all loved their commune and their history, optimistically waiting for that day

\begin{quote}
Quand paix serat a touttes gentz  
Que nulz n'aurat faute d'argent  
Et ung chacun maistre de sa femme  
Lors bleidz vindront sans qu'on les semme.  
\end{quote}

- Epigram of a Namurois clerk, 1592\textsuperscript{31}


\textsuperscript{30} The war in 1550 between Charles Quint (Charles I of Spain) and Henry II of France centred around Namur. Then, in 1662, the French laid siege to Namur against the Dutch and Spanish. In 1704, the Dutch bombarded Namur against the French who had gained control of it. In the course of this bombardment, the castle was razed, except for a part of its keep, together with Saint-Pierre-au Château. Ousted by the Dutch, the French swept back in 1792, destroying churches and ecclesiastical ornaments with anti-clerical ferocity. They occupied the county until 1815.

\textsuperscript{31} Quoted by Jean Bovesse in “Un centre de recherches historiques”. p. 124.
Appendix 1

The Counts of Namur

Counts of the Première Race
Berenger v. 907 - v. 937
Robert I v. 946 - v. 974
Albert I v. 981 - v. 1011
Robert II v. 1013 - 1018
Albert II v. 1031 - 1063/4
Albert III v. 1063/4 - 1102
Godefroid 1102 - 1139
Henry the Blind 1139 - 1196

The House of Hainaut
Philip the Noble 1196 - 1212

The House of Courtenay
Yolende and Pierre de Courtenay 1212 - 1216
Philip II de Courtenay 1216 - 1226
Henry de Courtenay 1226 - 1229
Marguerite de Courtenay and
Henry, Count of Vianden 1229 - 1237
Baudouin de Courtenay 1237 - 1263

The House of Dampierre
Guy I 1263 - 1298
John I 1298 - 1330
John II 1330 - 1335
Guy II 1335 - 1336
Philip III 1336 - 1337
William I 1337 - 1391
William II 1391 - 1418
John III 1418 - 1429
Appendix 2

Money in Namur, 1263-1429

Unfortunately, we know very little about Namurois money before the acquisition of the county in 1263 by Guy of Dampierre, Count of Flanders. What we do know about the monetary system in the period of this study comes primarily from references in ordinances and decrees, and from extant town accounts. Of these, for the whole of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there are only seven: the period 30 November 1362 to 1 March 1364, and then after a lacuna of nearly two decades, for the years (beginning 30 November) 1385, 1386, 1388, 1390, 1393 and 1394. Some of these lacunae can be supplemented from the accounts of the Grand-Hôpital which are extant for the years 1368-1370, 1374, 1379, 1381, 1382, 1384 and 1386. In the fifteenth century, there are town accounts for 1400, 1407-1414, 1417, 1418, 1429-1429. There are no mint accounts until 1421.1

In imitation of the vieux gros first struck by Louis IX of France in 1266 and worth one sou tournois, Guy I of Namur (1263-1298)2 minted a Namurois gros worth two-thirds of the French gros, or 8d. tournois. In 1293, he minted a silver esterlin, like that of Brabant, which was worth 4d. tournois, or one-third of the French gros, and in the same year, petite monnoie, also of silver; two and a half of these little coins made one esterlin.3

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1 After John III (1418-1429) concluded his agreement of sale with Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, 16 January 1421, records were better preserved.
2 In 1298, Guy named his son John as count of Namur. Guy lived in captivity in Compiègne and died there in 1305.
3 These mintings are discussed in Chapter II, pp. 49-53. The esterlin or “sterling”, also known as the “inghamelschen”, was worth one-third of a gros tournois, because it had the approximate value of the then current English sterling penny.
His son John I (1298-1330) also minted gros, as did John’s fourth son, William I (1337-1391). Surnamed the rich, William seems to have owed some of his vast wealth to his minting activities. Like his father, he also struck silver esterlins as well as a coin nicknamed the joly, worth 12 sous namurois; 36 jolys equalled a French franc, that is £1 tournois, and 54 jolys equalled a Brabant double d’or. To accomodate daily uses, he also minted petite monnaie noire, base coins, largely copper, equal to 4 deniers namurois, that is one thirty-sixth of a joly. Like other princes in the medieval Low Countries, William I also minted gold coins, in his case a florin worth £1.5s.0d. tournois.

William II (1391-1418) debased the coinage to such an extent that, in 1400, his outraged subjects dissuaded him from any minting for six years. In 1417, when he had resumed his minting, he struck silver coins called timbez, a large one worth 3 heaumes and a half-timbez worth 9 wihots. These were imitations of the same fineness and taille as the double gros and gros minted in Brabant and Flanders. John III also minted them, though in what quantity we do not know.

When Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy concluded his agreement in 1421 with John III, he minted gros, and double gros, called tarelare, which were worth slightly more than the Flemish plaques or double gros. In 1423-1424, the Namurois tarelare contained 4 deniers 4 grams of silver (33.275 per cent pure silver) and weighed 2.879 grams. The

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4 There intervened three older sons as counts of Namur. John II (1330-1335), Guy II (1335-1336) and Philip III (1336-1337), all of whom were adventurers who passed their time outside of Namur. See Chapter I, p. 32.


6 Ibid., pp. 106-107. That is, 17 tarelare equalled 18 plaques. For some reason, unclear to us now, the mint-master, Jacquemart Dupont of Namur, was forced to suspend operations. On 22 February 1429, John III forgave him the one-third seignorage that Dupont had not paid and Philip the Good remitted the debt of 1,000 crowns that Dupont owed him.
tarelare or double gros (2d.) contained 5 deniers argent-le-roy (39.93 per cent pure silver) and weighed 4.895 grams. The current Flemish double gros contained 6 deniers of silver (47.917 per cent pure) and weighed 3.599 grams. Thus, the Flemish double gros contained 1.725 grams of pure silver, while the Namurois tarelare contained 1.955 grams of pure silver. In 1433, the duke unified the coinage for the whole of his Netherlander realms by striking the patard or vierlander, half silver, half copper alloy, and weighing 3.44 grams.

1. Namurois Coins

We find the following coins recorded in the accounts of 1362-1364.

| 14 gumes | ......... | 1 tiercelet |
| 3 tiercelets | ......... | 1 hardi |
| 35 hardis | ......... | 1 écu moyen |
| 45 hardis | ......... | 1 French franc |

In the comptes de la ville of 1384-1385, the hardi has disappeared and the coin structure is expanded.

| 4 chapirons | ......... | 1 borghemite |
| 3 borghemites | ......... | 1 wihot |

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7 AGR. Chambre des comptes. no. 18.203.
8 See John H. Munro. *Wool, Cloth and Gold*. Table K, p. 211.
9 See Peter Spufford. *Money and its Use in Medieval Europe*, Cambridge, 1988, p. 324. It is unfortunate for my purpose that in Spufford's superb study, he makes only four brief and tangential references to Namur on pp. 40, 194, 232 and 372. In his *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, London, 1986, there are three short sentences only (p. 232): “In the fifteenth century accounting was done in florins of 45 heaumes. After 1433 Namur used the common coinage of the Burgundian Netherlands based on the coinage of Flanders. For accounting purposes the heaume of Namur was reckoned as equal to the groot [of 24 miten] of Flanders.”
10 Few of Namur's historians have concerned themselves with the medieval money of their county. Passing reference to it was made by Paul de Croonendael in his *Cronique contenant l'estat ancien et moderne du pays et comté de Namur*, ed. le comte de Limminghe, vol. 2, Brussels, 1879, p. 471, but it was not until 1989 that Georges Baurin gave a satisfactory explanation of the monetary system in his magisterial article “Les comptes de la ville de Namur et le système monétaire de Namur au XIVe siècle”. *ASAN* 66 (1989), pp. 15-71. In my opinion, it was the complexities and shifting equivalencies of the units which defeated the historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the great Jules Borgnet, rather than the fact of the missing accounts.
11 The gume or guillaume was a base coin, largely of copper, minted by William I
2. Namurois Moneys of Account

There were two moneys of account systems in Namur in the Dampierre period: first, the Namurois livre with the standard 20 sous to the livre, and 12d. to the sou (and thus 240d. to the livre). In the census of 1289, we discover the following relationships:

\[ £1 \text{ namurois} = £1 \text{ louvainois} \\
13s.4d. \text{ liégeois} \\
£1.10s.0d. \text{ tournois}^{14} \]

The second money of account was the Namurois mouton, always valued in terms of actual silver coins. Thus, for example:

\[ 1 \text{ mouton} = 47 \text{ hardis} (1362-1364) = 28 \text{ gros of Flanders} \\
44 \text{ wihots} (1367-1368) \\
16.66 \text{ heaumes} (1384)^{15} \\
14.25 \text{ heaumes} (1393)^{16} \]

3. Some Foreign Gold Coins in Use in Namur during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth Centuries\(^{17}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coin Type</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brabant double d'or</td>
<td>54 jolys(^{18})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flemish mouton d'or (28d. gros Flemish)</td>
<td>54 jolys(^{19})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^{12}\) See Renier Chalons, “Recherches sur les monnaies”, p. 16.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 92: the timbez was equal to the Flemish or Brabant blaffart.

\(^{14}\) Approximate. In the 1294 census, £1 namurois was worth £1.10s.2d. tournois. See D.-D. Brouwers.

\(^{15}\) Cens et rentes I, p. 234.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 62

\(^{17}\) The equivalences listed below between Namurois coins and those of France. Brabant and Holland in the fourteenth century are given by Baurin on p. 68.

\(^{18}\) Joseph Grandgagnage, Coutumes I, p. 362. evaluated the joly first minted by William I in 1374 as 36 to the French franc or £1 tournois, and 54 to the double d'or of Brabant or the mouton d'or of France.

\(^{19}\) See Hans Van Werveke, “Currency Manipulations in the Middle Ages: the Case of Louis de Mâle, Count of Flanders” in Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 31 (1949). pp. 259-261, where the author states that this coin was first struck in 1356 at 24 carats, and decreased to 21.25 carats by the time of its last minting in 1361.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coin Type</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French mouton d’or</td>
<td>54 jolys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florentine gold florin</td>
<td>40 jolys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French écu à la couronne</td>
<td>56 heaumes (1417)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French écu moyen or philippe</td>
<td>35 hardis (comptes 1362-64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French franc</td>
<td>36 jolys (1374)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French petit gold florin</td>
<td>45 heaumes (1424)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland maille</td>
<td>18.5 heaumes (1390)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhenish florin</td>
<td>40 jolys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As further evidence of the complexity of money in Namur, were such proof needed, I quote a <em>crie du perron</em>, dated 21 June 1419. It was forbidden to give, or to receive, in payment any of the coins named, except for the following official values:

- *Le vieux noble d’Angleterre*<sup>27</sup> 114 heaumes
- *La couronne de France* 57 “
- *Le noble de Gand*<sup>28</sup> 104 “ = 5s.0d gros Flemish
- *L’écu de Dordecht* 47 “
- *Le florin du Rhin* 44 “
- *Le florin d’Arem (d’Arnhem?)* 40 “

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<sup>20</sup> As the French franc was worth 36 jolys and £1 tournois, the French mouton d’or, worth 54 jolys or one-half more, was worth £1.10.0d.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Spufford, in *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, pp. 176-8. 215, provides the following values for the Florentine florin in 1350: 25s.0d tournois and 20d. gros Flemish; in 1400, 16s.8d. tournois and 33d. gros Flemish.

<sup>22</sup> Jules Borgnet, *Cart. Nam. II*, p. 130 note. The reference is to comptes de la ville, 1417, fol. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Georges Baurin, “Les comptes de la ville”, pp. 50-63. The effect of comital debasements in Namur is clearly shown here.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, p. 232. comments: “In the fifteenth century accounting was done in florins of 45 heaumes.” He does not specify the kind of florins; I assume them to be French.

<sup>25</sup> Georges Baurin, “Les comptes de la ville”, p. 68.

<sup>26</sup> Originally, the same weight (3.54 grams) as the Florentine gold florin, but declining in weight and fineness.


<sup>28</sup> 23.5 carats fine, weighing 6.799 grams and worth 5s.0d. gros Flemish. See John H. Munro, *Wool, Cloth and Gold*, Table J. p. 209.
Le mouton de France
Le blaffart de Flandre
Le blaffart de Brabant

Le kamahu
La vieille haie
La nouvelle haie
La vieux délivreté (?)
Les autres délivretés
La délivreté de Namur

38 heaumes
3.5 " = 2d.gros Flemish
3 " = 2d.gros Brabant

14 wihots
13.5 "
2 heaumes
10 wihots
8 "
7 "

Appendix 3

Major Holy Days of the Church Year

St. Andrew, 30 November
Conception of the Virgin, 8 December
St. Lucy, 13 December
Christmas, 25 December
Circumcision of Christ, 1 January
Epiphany, 6 January
Candlemas, 14 February
grand carême, Ash Wednesday, the fortieth day (Sundays excluded) before Easter
my-carême, Thursday of the third week of Lent
Annunciation of the Virgin, 25 March
Palm Sunday, Sunday before Easter
Easter, movable, the first Sunday after the full moon following the spring equinox
Quasimodo, first Sunday after Easter
Ascension, Thursday, forty days after Easter
Pentecost, Sunday, fiftieth day after Easter
Trinity, Sunday after Pentecost
Blessed Sacrament, Fête-Dieu, Thursday after Trinity
St. John the Baptist, 24 June
Visitation of the Virgin, 2 July
St. Peter, 29 June
Assumption of the Virgin, 15 August
Nativity of the Virgin, 8 September
All Souls, 31 October
All Saints, 1 November
St. Martin, 11 November
St. Catherine of Alexandria, 25 November
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ABBREVIATIONS

AEN - Archives de l'état de Namur
ADN - Archives départementales du Nord
AGR - Archives générales du Royaume
Annales: ESC - Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations
ASAN - Annales de la Société archéologique de Namur
Cart. Nam. - Jules Borgnet, Cartulaire de la commune de Namur
RBPH - Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire
RN - Revue du Nord

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