

Regulating Work, Wages, and Time in the Craft Institutions of Medieval Normandy (Twelfth to Fourteenth Century)

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ABSTRACTS

Die historische Literatur geht davon aus, dass die Entlohnung im Mittelalter entweder streng geregelt war oder auf segmentierten Arbeitsmärkten ausgehandelt wurde. Die systematische Analyse eines Korpus normativer Quellen aus der Normandie liefert neue Daten, die Licht in diese divergierenden Ansichten bringen. Die frühen Handwerkszünfte hatten zwar Einfluss auf die Entlohnung, doch waren solche Privilegien selten, und Versuche, die Entlohnung bei der Einstellung von Arbeitskräften auszuhandeln, wurden unterdrückt. Schriftlich festgehaltene Lohnsätze entwickelten sich ab dem Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts, lange vor dem Schwarzen Tod, blieben aber selten. Bei Arbeitskonflikten spielten andere Faktoren im Zusammenhang mit der Entlohnung eine wichtigere Rolle als Geld, insbesondere die Arbeitszeit. Die bestehenden Tarife wurden regelmäßig überarbeitet, manchmal explizit aufgrund von Geldveränderungen. Schriftlich fixierte Tarife betrafen vor allem Vermittler oder bestimmte Berufe wie Hafenarbeiter. Der Brot- oder Weinpreis konnte auch lokal von der Obrigkeit festgelegt werden, was die Entlohnung der Bäcker und Weinhändler beeinflusste.

According to historical literature, medieval remunerations were either strictly regulated or negotiated in segmented labour markets. The systematic analysis of a corpus of normative sources from Normandy provides new data to shed light on those divergent views. Early guilds of artisans did have leverage on remunerations, but such privileges were scarce and attempts to negotiate remunerations on hiring places were repressed. Written tariffs developed from the end of the thirteenth century, long before the Black Death, but remained rare. Other variables related to remunerations were more important than money in work conflicts, especially working hours. The extant tariffs were regularly revised, sometimes explicitly due to monetary mutations. Written tariffs concerned mostly the brokers or specific trades like the stevedores.

The price of bread or wine could also be locally fixed by the authorities, which influenced the remunerations of the bakers and the wine merchants.

1. Introduction

Famous labour historians like Bronislaw Geremek have assumed that medieval craft institutions regulated the wage levels with the support of the public authority by comparing Paris with other European cases.¹ However, his 1968 book only quoted a few examples of scattered craft rules. Others, like Steven Epstein in 1991, have claimed that craft guilds never controlled the wages,² but argument from silence is always fragile. Recent scholarship has put an emphasis on individual, seasonal and geographical variations of the remunerations.³ But the role of legislation remains ambiguous.⁴ Recent historiographical reviews allude to wage tariffs established by craft rules or regional laws in Provence,⁵ by city statutes in Italy,⁶ by urban seigniorial or royal laws or by-laws in Portugal,⁷ in Spain,⁸ in the Holy Roman Empire⁹ or in England.¹⁰ According to these articles, the study of this legislation about remunerations either remains unsatisfactory for the German areas,

1 B. Geremek, *Le salariat dans l'artisanat parisien aux XIIIe–XVe siècles: étude sur le marché de la main d'œuvre au Moyen Âge*, Paris 1968, pp. 131–140.

2 S. A. Epstein, *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe*, Chapel Hill/Londres 1991, p. 116.

3 For a recent synthesis about western Europe, see P. Beck, P. Bernardi, and L. Feller (eds.), *Rémunérer le travail au Moyen Âge: pour une histoire sociale du salariat*, Paris 2014. The Low Countries are unfortunately left aside, as Monique Bourin points out in the conclusion (M. Bourin, Conclusion. De la dépendance à la marchandisation du travail: le salariat existe-t-il au Moyen Âge?, in: P. Beck/P. Bernardi/L. Feller [eds.], *Rémunérer le travail au Moyen Âge: pour une histoire sociale du salariat*, Paris 2014, pp. 487–501, at p. 387, note 3). For that area, see J.-P. Sosson et al. (eds.), *Les niveaux de vie au Moyen Âge. Mesures, perceptions et représentations. Actes du colloque international de Spa, 21–25 octobre 1998*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1999.

4 The index of the huge book edited by Patrice Beck, Philippe Bernardi and Laurent Feller does not include “corporation”, “législation”, “métier”, “ordonnance”, “régulation”, “tarif”, “taxation”, or any other word related to craft guilds or legislation. This suggests that this aspect was not regarded as central by the large group of historians involved. Nevertheless, wage laws came up in relation to the sources or to historiography (mostly an ancient one), as shown by the following references.

5 Beck/ Bernardi/Feller, Introduction, in: Id., *Rémunérer*, pp. 7–17, at p. 15. For Provence and for references to the older historiography about wage tariffs in medieval France, also see R. Braid, *Et non ultra: Politiques royales du travail en Europe occidentale au XIVe siècle*, in: Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes 161 (2003) 2, pp. 437–491, and F. Michaud, From apprentices to waged-earners: child labour before and after the Black Death, in: J. Rosenthal (ed.), *Essays on Medieval Childhood*, Donington, UK 2007, p. 76, note 17.

6 G. Pinto, Salaire et salariat dans l'Italie du bas Moyen Âge, in: P. Beck/P. Bernardi/L. Feller (eds.), *Rémunérer le travail au Moyen Âge: pour une histoire sociale du salariat*, Paris 2014, pp. 26–40, at p. 35; G. Pinto, Les rémunérations des salariés du bâtiment (Italie, XIIIe–XVe siècle): les critères d'évaluation, in: P. Beck/P. Bernardi/L. Feller (eds.), *Rémunérer le travail au Moyen Âge: pour une histoire sociale du salariat*, Paris 2014, pp. 308–313, at p. 317.

7 A. Melo de Sousa, Salaire et salariat au Portugal au Moyen Âge, in: Beck/Bernardi/Feller, *Rémunérer*, pp. 41–61, at pp. 64–65; A. Melo de Sousa, Les mots et le contexte de la rémunération du travail dans les sources normatives portugaises, *ibid.*, pp. 174–184.

8 P. Benito i Monclús, Salaire et salariat dans l'historiographie ibérique médiévale: Castille, Aragon et Navarre, in: Beck/Bernardi/Feller, *Rémunérer*, pp. 41–61, at pp. 46–47.

9 N. Bulst, Salaire et salariat au bas Moyen Âge dans l'historiographie allemande, in: Beck/Bernardi/Feller, *Rémunérer*, pp. 97–106, at p. 99.

10 P. Schofield, Salaire et salariés dans l'Angleterre médiévale, in: Beck/Bernardi/Feller, *Rémunérer*, pp. 107–124, at pp. 112 and 115–118.

or is only starting to develop for Portugal, or depends on the province considered for Spain and France, while it is already thorough for England, thanks to an abundant documentation including court records about the implementation of the rules.

In that historiographical context, a case study of Normandy is interesting in several respects. First, as wage regulation strongly varies geographically, the duchy of Normandy is not to be overlooked, because it was an important economic area which generated approximately a quarter of the tax revenues of the French monarchy at the end of Middle Ages.¹¹ Its capital city, Rouen, was the second most populated city in France (outside Flanders) with 40 to 60 000 inhabitants even if population sank temporarily to 15 000 during the Hundred Years War. Secondly, the remuneration of work in Normandy has been studied on a large scale by Guy Bois in a famous book about the Crisis of feudalism.¹² He attributed the nominal rigidity of the most frequent wages (*salaire modal*) to the “direct and indirect” influence of the guild system in urban areas, while rural wages seemed more flexible, despite some cases of customary remuneration amounts, especially when workers were paid in kind. This analysis was important enough to be among the few references to the role of regulation regarding remunerations in a historiographical review about medieval France.¹³

However, Guy Bois did not expand on the role of the guilds: he merely referred to Bronislaw Geremek’s analysis of the tariffs, the customs and other social restrictions of competition in Paris. Philippe Lardin later came back on the subject through the question of the standards of living. Taking up Jean-Pierre Sosson’s scepticism on the reliability of a statistical approach, he criticized Guy Bois’s methodology for its approximations, insisted on the gaps of the documentation and provided new data, without mentioning any regulation.¹⁴ Other studies of Norman wages also emphasised cases where no craft institution was involved and where the amounts of the remunerations were highly variable, whether in the small town of Argentan or at the royal shipyard of Rouen.¹⁵

The influence of an urban guild system was all the more indirect as the historiographical debate between Guy Bois and Philippe Lardin focused on the construction industry,

11 É. Lalou, Les finances et le rôle de l’État dans l’économie de la Normandie royale, in: M. Arnoux/A.-M. Flambard Héricher (eds.), La Normandie dans l’économie européenne (XIIe-XVIIe siècle). Actes du colloque de Cerisy-la-Salle, 4–8 octobre 2006, Caen 2010, pp. 9–17. The proportion of a quarter is well documented for the second half of the fifteenth century and the weight of Normandy in the royal budget may have been even greater in the fourteenth century.

12 G. Bois, Crise du féodalisme, Paris 1976, pp. 91–110, at p. 108 for the mention of guilds and customs.

13 P. Beck/P. Bernardi/L. Feller, La rémunération du travail : l’historiographie française, in: Beck/Bernardi/Feller, Rémunérer, pp. 78–96, at p. 85. The only other reference to legislation is about the sources used by Édouard Perroy in a 1955 article (wrongly dated from 1956; see *ibid.*, p. 83).

14 P. Lardin, Le niveau de vie des ouvriers du bâtiment en Normandie orientale dans la seconde moitié du XVe siècle, in: Sosson et al. (eds.), Les niveaux de vie au Moyen Âge, pp. 141–173.

15 M.-A. Moulin, Argentan au Moyen Âge : aspects urbains, sociaux et économiques, PhD in medieval history, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), 2007, pp. 685–705; I. Theiller, Les salaires des ouvriers de marine au Clos des Galées de Rouen, chantier naval du roi au XIVe siècle, in: Revue d’histoire maritime 22–23 (2017), pp. 77–93, at pp. 84–89. In the case of the royal shipyard, despite the lack of evidence for any guild, the wages remained more stable than in the building industry of Rouen, which suggests that the administration had a special wage policy.

which was only partly submitted to craft institutions in Normandy: while the roofers or the plasterers had specific rules, there is no evidence of any stable organisation for the masons and the carpenters.¹⁶ Moreover, even in Paris where the masons and carpenters had guilds, Bronislaw Geremek pointed out that the building sector was an exception to the rigidity of the labour market which he noticed in the rest of craft industry, as some construction stages could abruptly increase demand.¹⁷ Because the builders' remunerations is well documented, historians have been tempted to consider them representative of the craftspeople, from Georges d'Avenel to Hermann Van der Wee, and including Guy Bois for Normandy.¹⁸ This point of view was contradicted for the modern period by Denis Morsa¹⁹ and questioned by medievalists: the building industry has been repeatedly highlighted as an exception regarding the weight of wage-earning and the weakness of the guilds, even if wage-earners were also numerous in other economic sectors, especially in the textile branch, and could have similarly varied and personalized remunerations.²⁰ While a generalised regulation of the level of wages by written tariffs can be excluded according to the many analyses of actual remunerations quoted above, questions remain about the role of a more local or sectional regulation like craft rules or urban by-laws, especially outside the building industry. Many trades were institutionalised in ways that could lead to the collective negotiation of a tariff, or to an indirect reduction of competition on the labour market.²¹ The analysis of an extensive corpus of normative sources about the craft institutions of Normandy makes it possible to examine the development of regulation concerning wages through various examples from the twelfth century on, and to assess the representativity of the preserved rules between 1270 and 1389. To what extent were the earnings of craftspeople regulated and what were the motives of such interventions?

16 P. Lardin, *Les chantiers du bâtiment en Normandie orientale, XIVe-XVIe siècles: les matériaux et les hommes*, 2 vols, Villeneuve d'Ascq 2001, pp. 418 and 491.

17 Geremek, *Le salariat dans l'artisanat parisien*, p. 121. Already in 1935, Marc Bloch insisted on the exceptional characteristics of the building sites and of workers like the masons, who often escaped municipal regulations. (M. Bloch, *Le maçon médiéval: problèmes de salariat*, in: *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* 7 [1935] 32, pp. 216–217).

18 Beck/Bernardi/Feller, *La rémunération du travail*, p. 79.

19 D. Morsa, *Salaire et salariat dans les économies préindustrielles (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle)*. Quelques considérations critiques, in: *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 65 (1987) 4, pp. 751–784, at p. 754.

20 Beck/Bernardi/Feller, *Introduction. Rémunérer le travail au Moyen Âge*, p. 9; J. Gautié, *Salaire et salariat au Moyen Âge: le regard d'un économiste*, in: Beck/Bernardi/Feller, *Rémunérer*, pp. 125–133, at pp. 131–133; Bourin, *Conclusion. De la dépendance à la marchandisation du travail*, pp. 496–499.

21 The existence of a labour market in the Middle Ages is still discussed. According to Laurent Feller, the strength of personal relations prevented the commodification of work. (L. Feller, *Introduction. Les formes du paiement: évaluation des rémunérations*, in: Beck/Bernardi/Feller, *Rémunérer*, pp. 296–300, at p. 307). But in the same volume, the conclusion by Monique Bourin takes a more favourable position, despite nuances about the fragmentation of this market and its limits in small towns and in a rural context. (Bourin, *Conclusion. De la dépendance à la marchandisation du travail*, pp. 498–501).

2. Was Regulating the Remunerations an Old Custom?

Before 1270, the rare written craft rules seldom set any rules about the remuneration of workers. The main exception is a tariff for the servants of the millers in Rouen,²² stating that they should be paid a cup full of flour by the bakers if they helped them carry their corn to the mill. But this custom was written down as a minor clause in a 1199 agreement between the archbishop of Rouen, the seneschal of Normandy, the mayor of Rouen and the abbot of Saint-Ouen de Rouen. It had more to do with the feudal rights related to the mills than with an organisation of workers, even if the payment of the cup of flour was not a mere ritual and was conditional on the actual help provided by the miller's servant. It is difficult to assess what part of those servants' income came from those payments in kind, even if its mere mention in a text involving major figures of Rouen suggests that it was not so trivial as it might seem.

The influence of craft institutions could also be indirect, through a reduction of competition which could increase wages. The exclusive right to work in the craft could be granted to craft organisations, even if such privileges are only documented in three cases in Normandy before 1270. The first two are the guilds of the shoemakers (from 1131) and of the tanners (from 1172) of Rouen.²³ The third is the confraternity of the wool-weavers of Saint-Lô (1234), which was entitled to requesting the workers to pay a fee to a local hospital in order to practise the trade.²⁴ However, these exclusive rights did not explicitly come up in the extant sources about the 24 other craft institutions known to have existed before 1270 and there is no evidence about their impact on remunerations.²⁵

Those scattered written sources are supplemented by judicial evidence about the bargaining practices of workers and the customs dealing with them. In 1285, a court sentence of the Exchequer, the royal supreme court of Normandy testifies that the gathering of the weavers of Rouen on a hiring place had been forbidden by the commune about fifty years earlier, that is around 1235.²⁶ The motive of the ban was that they had made "plots and conspiracies (*taquehans*), bad rises and increases of the price of their works (*œuvres*) at their will", which was deemed harmful for the commune and for the community of the

22 L. Delisle, *Cartulaire normand de Philippe Auguste, Louis VIII, Saint Louis et Philippe le Hardi*, in: *Mémoires de la société des Antiquaires de Normandie* XVIe vol./2e série, vol. 6 (1852), p. I–XL ; 1–390, at pp. 10–11.

23 C. Johnson/H. A. Cronne (eds.), *Regesta regum Anglo-normannorum*, 1066–1154. 2. *Regesta Henrici primi*, 1100–1135, Oxford 1956, p. 249; H. A. Cronne/R. H. C. Davis (eds.), *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, 1066–1154. 3. *Regesta Regis Stephani ac Mathildis Imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici, Ducum Normannorum*, 1135–1154, Oxford 1968, pp. 267–268; L. Delisle/É. Berger (eds.), *Recueil des actes de Henri II, roi d'Angleterre et duc de Normandie*, Paris 1920, pp. 57–58.

24 B. Jacqueline, *Les statuts de la confrérie Sainte Catherine des tisserands de Saint Lô (1234)*, in: *Revue de la Manche* 14 (1972) 54, pp. 127–133, at p. 133.

25 For a presentation of these institutions, see F. Rivi re, *Travail et m tiers en Normandie   la fin du Moyen  ge*. *Institutions professionnelles et r gulation  conomique*, PhD in medieval history,  cole des Hautes  tudes en Sciences Sociales, 2017, pp. 89–132.

26 Paris, Archives Nationales, JJ 59, f. 233. The sentence is known through a royal confirmation of 1320. The jurisprudence of the Exchequer before 1370 is known through compilations in which the remuneration of work is not touched upon.

drapers.²⁷ The list of condemned practices associated a collective and subversive action of the weavers with an illegitimate pay rise, probably through coalitions organising boycotts or strikes against the drapers who employ them. Fifty years later, the drapers supported the ban and won the case by putting forward that the weavers had managed to get hired for fifty years without assembling themselves. The principle that the weavers could not use their common bargaining power to increase their remunerations had therefore been in force throughout most of the thirteenth century, and it remained in effect after the sentence of 1285. This suggests that the price of their tasks was personally negotiated in private since the weavers had no more public hiring place. No rules about the wage level were mentioned.

The role of the craft institutions themselves in this matter is ambiguous. In the lawsuit of 1285, the drapers and the weavers did not appear as separate official guilds but as two private communities acting through temporary legal representatives called “attorneys” (*attournés*). In fact, the weavers presented themselves as a “part” of the larger craft organisation of drapery, which agrees with the situation described by later source.²⁸ As craft guilds almost never had their own courts in Normandy,²⁹ the drapers who wanted to limit the remuneration of hired weavers had to rely upon the court of the mayor of Rouen, the royal court the Exchequer and the royal bailiff who enforced the sentence. Although the evidence is thin until the end of the thirteenth century, it rather supports the idea of a limited influence of institutions on remunerations, even in a customary and unwritten way.

3. To What Extent Did Written Craft Rules Control Remunerations in the Fourteenth Century?

The historical perspective on craft institutions changes from the 1270s, because the sources increase rapidly: only eight written craft rules are extant for the times before 1270, while 136 have been preserved for the period between 1270 and 1389, most of them after 1350.³⁰ These rules apply to a total of 75 craft organisations. This change in the documentation coincides with the first mentions of specific officials who were

27 Paris, Archives Nationales, JJ 59, f. 233.

28 They probably already shared the same guild officials and craft rules as the drapers. The first complete craft ordinance referring to the weavers that has been preserved for drapery in Rouen dates from 1372 for the suburban drapers (*draperie foraine*) and 1378 for the “big” drapers (*grande draperie*). Previous written rules are attested but have been lost. See F. Rivière, *Protester ou obéir dans les organisations de métiers en Normandie (XIIIe–XVe siècle) ?*, in: *Contester au Moyen Âge: de la résistance à la révolte*. XLIXe congrès de la SHMESP (Rennes, 2018), Paris 2019, pp. 299–313, at pp. 301–304.

29 Rivière, *Travail et métiers en Normandie*, pp. 335–355. Only the master of the ironmakers of Normandy and the provost of the tanners of Rouen had a documented jurisdiction.

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 131–133 and 263–266. Written rules are extant for the shoemakers, the tanners, the bakers and the dyers of Rouen, the wool-weavers of Eu and Saint-Lô, the smiths of Caen and the minstrels of Fécamp. 16 other trade institutions are attested but have left no trace of written regulations. For the time spanning between 1270 and 1389, 63 detailed craft rules are preserved, and 73 less developed normative texts can be added.

in charge of enforcing craft rules, often called *gardes* (wardens). These wardens, chosen among the craftspeople, generally had little autonomy from the public authority, but could occasionally deal with remunerations. In the written rules of the plasterers of Rouen established in 1290, an article stated that “the daily rate of the apprentices must not be set by the masters but by the wardens of the craft”.³¹ In that case, the craft organisation directly interfered in the negotiations between the masters and their apprentices. This example apparently fits into the chronology drawn up by Bronislaw Geremek for Paris: until the end of the thirteenth century, wages could be fixed customarily by the guilds even if statute laws establishing tariffs were still uncommon.³² However, this historian only quoted one case to support the idea that wages were fixed by customs, that of the joiners of Paris: their rules alluded to a customary price for the work of the day labourers of that trade in the city of Paris.³³ This text from 1290, which is contemporary to the ordinance of the plasterers of Rouen, referred to customs that could be older, but in the state of the art, the evidence for an unwritten taxation of wages by guilds remains thin, in Normandy as in the rest of Europe. Among the 75 Norman trades for which rules have been found between 1270 and 1389, only 15 regulated prices or wages directly, and none referred to an ancient custom.³⁴ Judiciary sources such as the Exchequer of Normandy or local courts did not register conflicts about such rules.³⁵

In Normandy, it was much more common for the guilds to regulate indirectly the remuneration of masters by limiting the supply of workforce through apprenticeship than to fix wages. This way of restricting competition to raise wages and profits was denounced as early as 1776 by Adam Smith, who described it as a labour market monopsony, even if more recent scholarship showed that gaps in the privileges and poor enforcement made it rather an oligopsony.³⁶ Indeed, in Rouen, a local apprenticeship was required to become a master and each master could only train one apprentice. The requirement

31 “*Et est assavoir que les journées des apprentiz ne doivent pas estre tauxées par les maistres, ainçois doivent estre tauxées par les gardes du mestier*” (E. de Pastoret [ed.], *Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisième race*. XVIII. Avril 1474–mars 1481, Paris 1828, p. 415).

32 Geremek, *Le salariat dans l’artisanat parisien*, pp. 131–135.

33 R. de Lespinasse, *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris (XIV^e–XVIII^e siècle)*. 2. Orfèvrerie, sculpture, mercerie, ouvriers en métaux, bâtiment et ameublement, Paris 1892, p. 637.

34 All the trades regulating wages and prices will be analysed in this article: in Rouen, the millers, the plasterers, the drapers and the brokers; in Eu, the bakers, the innkeepers, the stevedores for wine (déchargeurs), the porters of coal, the hay trussers and the thistle bundlers; in Bayeux, the innkeepers; in Louviers and Montivilliers, the cloth-brokers; in Harfleur, the wine-brokers; in Évreux, the fish-brokers.

35 The only evidence related to the Exchequer of Normandy about the taxation of wages is an undated assize of bread, determining indirectly the remuneration of the bakers (F. Soudet, *Ordonnances de l’Echiquier de Normandie aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles*, Rouen/Paris 1929, p. 198).

36 A. Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Oxford 1976, pp. 79 and 136–139; analysed by S. R. Epstein, *Craft guilds, apprenticeship and technological change in pre-industrial Europe*, in: *Journal of Economic History* 53 (1998) 3, pp. 684–713, at pp. 688–691. The historical interpretation was qualified by P. Wallis, *Apprenticeship and Training in Premodern England*, in: *The Journal of Economic History* 68 (2008) 3, pp. 832–861. For medieval Normandy, see F. Rivière, *Guildes, monopoles et oligopoles dans la Normandie de la fin du Moyen Âge : la réglementation des métiers est-elle hostile à la concurrence ?*, in: *Entreprises et histoire* (2008) 52, pp. 36–45.

of a minimum time of local training before mastership³⁷ and the limit of the number of apprentices³⁸ were instituted in a majority of the 25 craft organisations documented in Rouen before 1389. Such rules influenced the remuneration of masters and may have kept the wages of apprentices lower.³⁹ However, contrary to other areas,⁴⁰ there is little evidence that apprentices were regularly paid in medieval Normandy.⁴¹ Moreover, such measures were not generalised: in Rouen, the control of apprenticeship remained absent in a strong minority of 9 craft institutions out of 25, and it was rarely attested in the rest of the craft rules known for Normandy before 1389 (5 cases out of 49).⁴²

The data available for a later period suggests a small impact of such craft regulation on the wages. Among the trades working for the cathedral of Rouen from 1426 to 1509, in the state of knowledge, apprenticeship was limited for the roofers, plasterers and lead-workers and not for the masons and the carpenters. Other factors like danger or expertise may have played a role, but the wages of the crafts which restricted competition through rules tended to be slightly higher on average (see figure 1).

37 This provision was documented among the rules of 15 craft organisations of Rouen between 1290 and 1390: the plasterers (1290), the spinners (1309), the tallow chandlers (1311), the roofers (1315), the butchers (probably 1322; before 1358), the strap makers (fabricants de courroies, 1339), the clothworkers of plain cloth (1350 and 1378), the clothworkers of striped cloth (1350), the saddlers (1355), the spur makers (1358), the dyers (1359), the shearers of finished cloth (1359), the wax workers (1374), the wool-card makers (1377), and the wiredrawers (1382). For the clothworkers of striped cloth and the wax workers, the provision about apprenticeship cannot be related to written craft rules but only to case law. For the references of these sources, see the list of the extant written craft rules before 1382 in F. Rivière, *L'institutionnalisation de l'apprentissage à Rouen (XIVe-XVe siècles)*, in: *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome* 131 (2019) 2, pp. 207–219, at pp. 217–218. For the time between 1382 and 1390, the only preserved rules to be added to the list are those of the tailors in 1388 (D.-F. Secousse [ed.], *Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisième race*. VIII. Début 1395–fin 1403, Paris 1750, pp. 44–46).

38 Same craft organisations as in the previous footnote, except the clothworkers of striped cloth and the wax workers. But, contrary to the previous one, this measure was written down in the rules of the shoemakers (1375), which makes a total of 14 concerned craft institutions.

39 F. Rivière, *Salariat et apprentissage à travers la réglementation professionnelle normande. Réflexions à partir des cas de Lisieux et de Gisors (1430–1540)*, in: Beck/Bernardi/Feller, *Rémunérer*, pp. 265–277, at p. 272, note 42.

40 According to written contracts, a large minority of apprentices were paid in the Orléans area. Among other articles, see F. Michaud-Fréjaville, *Bons et loyaux services : les contrats d'apprentissage en Orléanais (1380–1480)*, in: *Les entrées dans la vie. Initiations et apprentissages*. XIIe congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'Enseignement supérieur public, Nancy 1981, Nancy 1982, pp. 183–208, at pp. 205–206. The same practice has been documented for Provence, see P. Bernardi, *Métiers du bâtiment et techniques de construction à Aix-en-Provence à la fin de l'époque gothique (1400–1550)*, Aix-en-Provence 1995, p. 82; F. Michaud, *From apprentices to waged-earners: child labour before and after the Black Death*, in: J. Rosenthal (ed.), *Essays on Medieval Childhood*, Donington (UK) 2007, pp. 75–92, at pp. 79–84. It was also very common in Italy: F. Franceschi, *I salariati*, in: G. Cherubini (ed.), *Ceti, modelli, comportamenti nella società medievale, secoli XIII–metà XIV*. Diciassettesimo convegno internazionale di studi, Pistoia, 14–17 maggio 1999, Pistoia 2001, pp. 175–202, at pp. 185–191; M. P. Zanoboni, *Salariati nel Medioevo, secoli XIII–XV*. Guadagnando bene e lealmente il proprio compenso fino al calar del sole, Ferrara 2009, pp. 34–39.

41 P. Lardin, *Apprentissage et alouement dans les registres de tabellionage rouennais*, in: J.-L. Roch (ed.), *Tabellionages au Moyen âge en Normandie : un notariat à découvrir*, *Changer d'époque* n° 28, Mont-Saint-Aignan 2014, pp. 121–137, at p. 131; Rivière, *Salariat et apprentissage à travers la réglementation professionnelle normande*, p. 268.

42 For the references of these craft rules, see Rivière, *Travail et métiers en Normandie*, t. 2, p. 197, “annexe V”. Restrictions on apprenticeship and the access to the activity were only attested for the cloth workers of Montivilliers (1322), Eu (1356), and Dieppe (1358) as well as for the coppersmith of Villedieu-les-Poêles (1328) and for the organisation of the wiredrawers of Normandy (1382).

As for the 15 Norman craft organisations which directly regulated remunerations, two types of interventions can be distinguished: the first was the collective bargaining of working time in relation to wages, and the second was the fixation of price and wage tariffs.

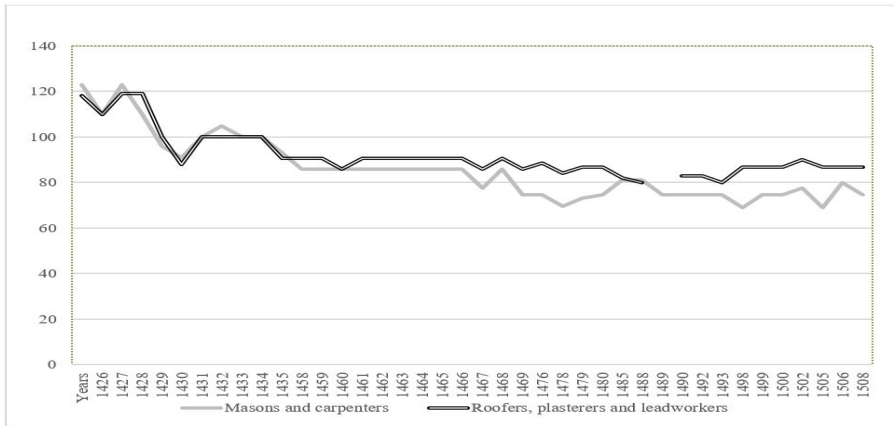


Figure 1: Usual daily wages of the cathedrals' workers (in deniers tournois). Reference: P. Lardin, Le niveau de vie des ouvriers du bâtiment en Normandie orientale dans la seconde moitié du XV^e siècle, in: J.-P. Sosson et al. (eds.), Les niveaux de vie au Moyen Âge. Mesures, perceptions et représentations. Actes du colloque international de Spa, 21–25 octobre 1998, Louvain-la-Neuve 1999, p. 169.

4. Remunerations and Working Time

The close link between remunerations and working time has been emphasized by the historiography for a long time, but it showed in a quite discreet and original way in medieval Normandy.⁴³

Apart from the rules of the plasterers of Rouen allowing the wardens of the craft to set the daily wages of apprentices in 1290, the drapers' ordinance of 1378 in Rouen is the only one in Normandy that directly controlled the remuneration of servants, and not of workers in general, before the end of the fourteenth century.⁴⁴ It did so in an extremely limited way: the rule fixed the rate for the overtime work of the salaried fullers and woolcombers (*laineurs*). Between the end of the prayers of nones at the Cathedral and the customary end of the day at compline,⁴⁵ the servants could choose to work for them-

43 For a recent synthesis, see C. Maitte/D. Terrier, Les rythmes du labeur: enquête sur le temps de travail en Europe occidentale, XIV^e–XIX^e siècle, Paris 2020, pp. 43–67.

44 D.-F. Secousse (ed.), Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisième race. VI. Début 1374–fin 1382, Paris 1741, p. 367.

45 The specialist of Norman medieval drapery Jean-Louis Roch estimates that the end of the prayers of nones at the cathedral ("le retrait de none Notre-Dame") was around 4:00 or 4:30 p.m. He interprets the phrase "the other customary hour" (l'autre heure accoustumée) as complines, according to later sources from the beginning of

selves, in which case a fixed sum would be deduced from the daily wage, or to stay later, in which case the deduction was not applied. The sum was four deniers for the fullers and two deniers for the woolcombers. The same mechanism applied for the lunchbreak of the woolcombers, which they could skip in order to stay at work if they did not want to lose two deniers. The amount of the daily earnings of those textile workers in medieval Normandy, which was probably negotiated, remains unknown.⁴⁶ But the value of those two to four deniers can be compared to the 48 deniers per day that average qualified workers in the building industry earned in Rouen in 1378, or even to the 24 deniers per day of unskilled labourers.⁴⁷ The deduction ranged from four to 16,6 per cent of the daily wage, depending on the estimate and on the trade, which seems a very moderate variation considering that approximately three to four hours had to be worked from the end of nones to the end of the day. The intervention of the craft organisation remained marginal and did not apply explicitly to the weavers who were subject to the same ordinance. The rule was then slightly modified in the drapers' ordinance of 1394, which is less detailed on this matter.⁴⁸ The remuneration of overtime was not presented as a deduction from the daily wage but as a bonus for "hours" worked additionally to a "complete day". The rate was not stated for servant fullers anymore, but amounted to four deniers for woolcombers, and to two deniers for weavers, while the usual daily wage in the building industry was slightly lower at that time (20 deniers for unskilled workers and 45 for skilled workers).⁴⁹ This additional remuneration seems to be fixed independently from the evolution of the labour market and to remain at a low level compared to a potential daily wage. The rule then disappeared in the ordinances of the fifteenth century according to Jean-Louis Roch, who interprets this regulation of overtime as a temporary response to the shortening of the workday following the Black Death, when labour shortages gave the servants more leverage.⁵⁰ When the economic climate changed towards more activity and more population, two conflicts from 1401 and 1409 ended by a lengthening of the working hours for day labourers, from sunrise until complines or even 8:00 p.m., which means long after nightfall in winter. Those limits to the workday were less favourable than previously, but still protected wage-earners in comparison to masters and apprentices, who were allowed to keep working even after complines, as long as daylight was available.

the fifteenth century, some of which also allude ambiguously to 8:00 p.m. That would leave approximately 3,5 to 4 hours of work, according to the season (J.-L. Roch, *Un autre monde du travail : la draperie en Normandie au Moyen Âge*, Mont-Saint-Aignan 2013, p. 158).

46 In the ordinance, the wage was described as "the money for which they have been hired (*loué*)", which suggests individual bargaining.

47 Bois, *Crise du féodalisme*, pp. 387–392.

48 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, 3E 1/anc/S3, folio 66 recto. This craft rule of 1394 was issued after the end of the Commune of Rouen and remains out of the systematic corpus constructed for Normandy before 1389.

49 Bois, *Crise du féodalisme*, pp. 387–392. The four deniers of the woolcombers might be the addition of the two deniers for the lunch break and of the two deniers for the time after the prayers of nones.

50 Roch, *Un autre monde du travail : la draperie en Normandie au Moyen Âge*, pp. 158–159.

Those repeated mentions of the length of the workday and its relation to remuneration suggests that the wool-drappers granted a greater attention to day labourers than other craftspeople. The relative importance of wage labour in the wool-cloth industry seems to be constant since the conflict about the hiring place in the thirteenth century described earlier. However, the amount of the wages was only a side matter in the conflicts. The vagueness of one isolated article among 27 others in 1378 and 34 in 1394 suggests that the earnings of the servants were not a major issue for the craft organisation.⁵¹

A similar analysis can be made about the plasterers and roofers. Until 1348, their rules did not go further than the isolated article about the daily wage of apprentices in 1290, but then, their revisions indirectly raised the question of wages in relation to working time. When the plasterers' ordinances of 1290, 1319, and 1346 were revised on 26 February 1348, the only purpose was to insert an article forbidding to work on Saturdays after the hour of nones, except for one additional hour at most.⁵² This text specified that working until nones, i.e. approximately 3:00 or 4:00 p.m.,⁵³ should be paid as a half-day with one hour of overtime maximum.

The accent on the wages probably came from special circumstances. Indeed, on 26 February 1348, the Black Death had not yet struck Rouen,⁵⁴ but the Hundred Years War already had consequences on the city and its building industry. In 1346, the construction of new walls and ditches had been ordered by the king. The increased demand for labour may have favoured claims of the workers such as a shortening of the working hours, especially for the journeymen who depended on their employers for the length of their workday. This could also be a claim of the masters, since they could be hired by the day as teams with their servants on large building sites like ramparts.⁵⁵ Moreover, even masters may have been willing to ensure that if they chose to rest on Saturdays, their competitors would not take advantage of it.

This interpretation is supported by the fact that this new measure was requested from the mayor by "the masters and the servants of the craft of plastering working in the aforesaid city",⁵⁶ which suggests that it was the result of collective bargaining inside the trade as well as with the public authorities. While the request by the craftspeople was

51 This ordinance on the drapery of Rouen was also the only one to state explicitly that a valet had to have finished its apprenticeship in order to be allowed to earn money as a journeyman (article 19) (Secousse (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*. VI, p. 366).

52 Pastoret (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*. XVIII, p. 417. The phrasing of the rule about the additional is ambiguous but can be interpreted so thanks to the revision of the rules in 1478 (ibid., p. 423).

53 "Nones" usually referred to 12:00 a.m. or to 3:00 p.m. (article "none", ATILF – CNRS & Université de Lorraine, *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, version 2020, <http://www.atilf.fr/dmf>, accessed 17 June 2021). But in Rouen, Philippe Lardin calculated that it could refer to a break taken around 4:00 p.m. (P. Lardin, *Les rythmes du travail à Rouen à la fin du Moyen Âge: l'exemple du bâtiment*, in: C. Mazauric [ed.], *Temps social, temps vécu. Actes du 129e congrès national des sociétés historiques et scientifiques*, Besançon, 2004, Paris 2007, pp. 147–161, at p. 150).

54 The plague affected Rouen from Saint John's day, 24 June, until Christmas 1348 (M. Mollat, *Histoire de Rouen*, Toulouse 1979, p. 100).

55 Lardin, *Le niveau de vie des ouvriers du bâtiment en Normandie*.

56 Pastoret (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*. XVIII, p. 417.

common for such rules in fourteenth-century Rouen,⁵⁷ the mention of servants among the applicants for this ordinance was very unusual: it is the only one known for Rouen in the fourteenth century, even in the other rules of the same trade.⁵⁸ At the end of the ordinance granted by the mayor, the masters swore to abide by its content and to enforce it, but the servants were not involved anymore, possibly because they were not in a position to determine the length of the workday or the salary autonomously, and mostly benefitted from the measure.

The official motives of the common request appeared quite far from the economic perspective of this analysis: it was the danger of working high above the ground, probably when plastering roofs or high walls like the ramparts under construction at that time, and the honour of the Virgin Mary. The risk of work accidents could be related to a measure ensuring that workers would be able to rest more on weekends. The religious motive, which was not so common in those urban ordinances, may be a hint to the fact that leisure, like feast days, should be dedicated to devotion, as well as to the protection of the life and health of the workers. This discourse was coherent with the fact that the request itself, which is summarised in the ordinance, did not allude to the question of the wages: the masters as well as the servants may have genuinely tried to improve their working conditions.

However, it was the mayor and the city council who added to the requested rule that the plasterers should not “take more wages than for a half-day”. This particular point probably reflected a specific issue in 1348, because it was left out in the article about the working hours when the ordinance was revised in 1478. The urban authorities who financed the construction of the city walls were also employers. Therefore, they may have feared that the plasterers would take advantage of the high demand of labour to ask for a full payment of the day, even if they quit at nones. The notion that wage-earners could be paid a whole day even when they only worked until nones was not absurd, since it was explicitly written down in the later rules of the masons of the Rouen cathedral, around 1425: the day before a series of feast days, they could leave at the beginning of Nones and “get a full day”. If there was only one feast day in a week, Saturdays were also “worth a full day”, even if they left earlier.⁵⁹ The accounts of 1385–1386 suggest that this way of counting workdays was already in use in the fourteenth century. According to the 1425 ordinance, this privilege was refused to the plasterers, carpenters or leadworkers of the cathedral, and even to the masons if they worked on ordinary houses belonging to the Cathedral Fabric Advisory Committee. But the account books show that it had

57 Such a request was mentioned in the rules of 13 of the 17 craft organisation for which written ordinances have been preserved. Rivière, *Travail et métiers en Normandie*, p. 521.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 530–531. The coppersmiths of Villedieu-les-Poêles in 1328 are the only other known case of a common request of regulation by masters and servants in fourteenth-century Normandy.

59 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, G 2094, p. 43, ed. by E. Lefèvre, *Les maçons de la cathédrale* [documents], in: J.-P. Chaline (ed.), *La cathédrale de Rouen: seize siècles d'histoire*, Rouen 1996, pp. 79–81. For an explanation of the ambiguities of the rule and its implementation according to the account books, see Lardin, *Les rythmes du travail à Rouen à la fin du Moyen Âge: l'exemple du bâtiment*, pp. 152–155.

been extended to all those who worked at the cathedral in the second half of the fifteenth century. This measure seemed to answer periods of labour shortages, during which the Fabric Advisory Committee made gifts to the workers as explicit incentives to work well or to come back after holidays.⁶⁰

To sum up, the plasterers' rule in 1348 as well as the ordinance of the Cathedral masons in 1425 probably reflected collective bargaining between institutional employers and workers (masters and servants). The negotiations took into account both the length of the workday and the wages, with different outcomes according to the context. While the workers of the Cathedral gained considerable privileges in the fifteenth century, the city of Rouen was apparently less generous in the previous century. The Commune granted time but not money to the plasterers in the ordinance of 1348. In 1390, the urban authorities used their regulatory power to control the workday of the masons working at the belfry by reducing their breaks to two hours maximum a day, without changing the wages.⁶¹ By doing so, they intervened in the working conditions of the masons employed by Richard Le Conte, himself a mason, who had contracted with the city for this task. He swore to abide by these new rules and to enforce them, which reminds of the oath taken by the master plasterers at the end of the ordinance of 1348. The breaks were shorter than those granted by the ordinance of the Cathedral masons in 1425, but we have not enough sources to see if the level of the wages made up for these working conditions, or if they were simply worse. The penalty for taking longer breaks was either prison, which was unusual in such rules, or a deduction on the daily pay, which suggests that the workers were likely to be unhappy with that new ordinance, and that the goal was to reduce the labour costs.

Even if the question of remuneration appeared secondary in the Norman written craft rules, the few references that have been found show the strong link between the regulation of working time and that of earnings, especially for servants but also for independent wage-earners. This does not come as a surprise: Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum already pointed out that working hours were usually at stake when there was a time-based payment, or when independent workers wanted a common rule in order to restrain competition on that point, for example regarding night-time or feast days.⁶² Jean-Louis Roch showed that both cases caused conflicts in the wool cloth industry of medieval Normandy.⁶³

Outside this economic sector, the prohibition of work at night or on feast days was not so widespread in the Norman craft rules prior to the fifteenth century, maybe because

60 Lardin, *Le niveau de vie des ouvriers du bâtiment en Normandie*, pp. 152–157.

61 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, 3E1/anc/A1, fol. 146 verso, quoted by Lardin, *Les rythmes du travail à Rouen à la fin du Moyen Âge*, p. 157. Philippe Lardin claimed that the urban by-law of 1390 was a setback compared to the practices of the masons of the Cathedral, but he did not produce sources to support the implicit hypothesis that the length of the workday and of the breaks in fourteenth century Rouen was already based on the practices documented for the masons of the Cathedral in the fifteenth century.

62 G. Dohrn-van Rossum, *L'histoire de l'heure. L'horlogerie et l'organisation moderne du temps*, Paris 1997, p. 303.

63 Roch, *Un autre monde du travail : la draperie en Normandie au Moyen Âge*, pp. 151–163, at 153.

it was so obvious that it was unnecessary to write it down. The first written mentions of mandatory working hours excluding night-time suggest that it was not a “natural” practice, but the result of negotiations, possibly in relation to remuneration considering the activities involved.⁶⁴ The earliest evidence can be found in 1291, in the middling town of Eu, where the wool-weavers were already submitted to rules that forbade them to work before the first bell in the morning and after compline in the evening.⁶⁵ No such provisions had been included in the rules of the drapers the previous year,⁶⁶ which suggests that the time of the weavers was regulated because they worked for others. The workday was also defined by bells for the fullers in 1307, for the locksmiths in 1308 and again for the weavers and drapers in 1356.⁶⁷ For the locksmiths, the risk of fire could be an implicit motive.⁶⁸ But the rules about the fullers, the weavers and the drapers linked the working hours to a hiring place. The ordinance of 1356 implemented a work schedule for the drapers as well as for the weavers, because each trade had gained the right to hire servants from the other branch, in order to concentrate all the production process of cloth in one workshop. In the town of Montivilliers, known on a European scale for its wool-drapery, daylight and bells also defined the workday for the fullers and weavers at least from 1322 on, which caused a protest from the weavers, also probably because they often worked as wage-earners.⁶⁹

In Rouen, the activities forbidding night-work were more varied. The ordinance of 1299 on the boilermakers was the earliest known to ban working at night and on feast days, maybe for the same safety reasons as for the locksmiths of Eu, or because of the inconvenience for the neighbours.⁷⁰ In 1300, the first rules of the saddle-makers also prohibited night-work and justified it by a concern for quality.⁷¹ As for the third known written rules which forbade night-work, it was a revision of the ordinance on the spinners and spinneresses of coloured thread of 13 July 1329, devoted entirely to working time.⁷² Technical factors such as the control of the colour of the threads could have explained this regulation. But the fact that the rules were only added twenty years after the first ordinance of 1309 suggests that there were other reasons, such as the subordinate position of the spinners and spinneresses in the production process, comparable to that of

64 The idea that the workday was a social construct linked to remunerations in the Middle Ages was developed in Maitte/Terrier, *Les rythmes du labeur*, pp. 32 and 50–67.

65 Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, folio 33 v°. Most of the following references to this manuscript can also be found in its old and sometimes faulty edition. See A. Legris (ed.), *Le Livre rouge d'Eu* (1151–1454), Rouen 1911.

66 Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, fol. 32 r°.

67 Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, respectively at folio 63 r°, 55 v° and 122 v°.

68 The article limiting the workday through two bells in the morning and in the evening was followed by another one forbidding to “put iron into fire at night”.

69 L.-G. de Villevallet/L.-G. de Bréguigny (eds.), *Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisième race. XII. Supplément, 1187–fin du règne de Charles VI* [1422], Paris 1777, pp. 456–458; on the conflicts about this regulation of working hours, see Roch, *Un autre monde du travail*, pp. 154–155.

70 C.-A. de Robillard de Beurepaire, *Notice sur les fondeurs de Rouen*, in: *Mélanges historiques et archéologiques concernant le département de la Seine-Inférieure et plus spécialement la ville de Rouen*, Rouen 1897, pp. 379–401, at p. 383.

71 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, 5E 646.

72 D.-F. Secousse (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisième race. VII. Début 1383–fin 1394*, Paris 1745, p. 633.

the weavers. Moreover, the servants as well as the masters had to swear to abide by these new norms, which was as unusual for this craft as for the plasterers of Rouen in 1348 and could be interpreted in the same way.⁷³ However, in all these cases, the motivations for writing down the regulation of working time for some crafts and not for others remain hypothetical, and the evidence is fragile: the control of wage labour was only one factor among others.

As for the prohibition of work after nones on the eve of feast days, its interpretation can differ according to the context. This provision was already written down in a revision of the rules of the saddle-makers of Rouen in 1329, but without any reference to remunerations, contrary to the ordinance of the plasterers in 1348.⁷⁴ Servants and apprentices were regulated by another article added to the saddle-makers' rules in 1329, but nothing indicates that the reduction of the working time was aimed at them. Moreover, most master saddle-makers were probably not paid by the hour, unlike the plasterers. Therefore, the rule was probably not the result of negotiations about the full payment of half days, and rather an endeavour to restrain competition and to share demand, even if it reduced activity and the potential benefits of each master. The reasons for this decision remain unclear in the absence of special circumstances.

But the consequences of the Black Death of 1347 on remunerations may explain why time off before holidays became quite common in the written craft rules of Rouen in the second half of the fourteenth century. In 1358, the revisions of the rules of the boiler-makers, of the spinners and the first ordinance of the spur-makers each prohibited work after nones of the eve of Virgin Mary's feasts, but also every Saturday, and the day before all the holidays for the spur-makers.⁷⁵ The shoemakers in 1375, the woolcomb-makers in 1377 and the wiredrawers in 1382 were submitted to similar provisions, including the eve of all the feast days.⁷⁶ This extension of the rest time was not generalised to all the written craft rules of Rouen, since it was not mentioned in the articles regulating working time for the belt-makers in 1357 or for drapery in 1378, for example.⁷⁷ However, this tendency could be related to the labour shortage following the Great Mortality: the income raise for the craftspeople may have allowed them to work less, whether they were masters or servants, and to enjoy what may be seen as the embryo of a modern week-end on Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

Overall, the control of time by craft institutions may have exerted an indirect influence on the remunerations in a wide range of activities. But the normative sources were more explicit about the payment of the working hours for the wage-earners from the textile

73 See above.

74 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, 5E 646.

75 de Robillard de Beaulieu, *Mélanges historiques et archéologiques*, p. 383; Secousse (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*. VII, p. 636; C. Quin-Lacroix, *Histoire des anciennes corporations d'arts et métiers et des confréries religieuses de la capitale de la Normandie*, Rouen 1850, p. 641.

76 Rouen, Archives départementales de Seine-Maritime, 3E 1/anc/chartrier de Rouen, tiroir 15, liasse n°9. Secousse (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*. VI, p. 274. Secousse (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*. VII, p. 741.

77 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, G 2116, f. 34 r°-35 r°. Secousse (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*. VI, pp. 364–371.

industry (drapers) and the building trade (plasterers and roofers), which is consistent with the early development of a labour market in those economic sectors.⁷⁸

Setting wage or price tariffs was the other type of direct regulation of remunerations related to the Norman craft institutions.

5. The Regulation of Remunerations Through Tariffs

Although the sources about the craft rules between 1270 and 1390 are logically richer for the metropolis of Rouen than for the middling town of Eu,⁷⁹ only two examples of tariffs have been found for Rouen, five for the rest of Normandy and ten for Eu.⁸⁰ This discrepancy can be explained by the exceptional preservation of the urban register of the Eu, the *Livre Rouge*, which is the only extensive remaining source about the activity of an urban government in Normandy before 1389.⁸¹ This confirms the views of Bronislaw Geremek, who noticed that it was often the public authorities and not the craft guilds which set tariffs after the end of the thirteenth century.⁸² Whereas the sources for Rouen are based on an incomplete series of rules often granted after requests of craftspeople and scattered in the archives, the *Livre Rouge* of Eu registered most of the decisions of the commune from 1272 to 1362, whether craftspeople were consulted or not.⁸³ This did not mean that the fixation of wages and prices was the primary concern of the urban authorities of Eu: among twenty-nine rules specifically concerning craft groups between 1280 and 1362, only eight set wages for specific tasks and two were assizes of bread, which set its price and weight, and therefore the potential gains of the bakers. However, the number of sources makes it possible to analyse the chronology and the motives of such a regulation.

The assizes of bread were apparently not a regular habit but a reaction to the consequences of the Black Death,⁸⁴ because they were only registered in 1351 and 1352.⁸⁵ The weight of the bread was adjusted according to the quality and to the corn used, while the price of each loaf remained fixed at two or four deniers. The variations were not directly proportional to the price of corn and varied from one kind of bread to the other. This means that the bakers who were consulted could put forward the technical differences and the remuneration of their work.

78 Bourin, Conclusion. De la dépendance à la marchandisation du travail, p. 499.

79 Among the 136 normative texts gathered for the timespan between 1270 and 1389, 51 are about Rouen and 32 about Eu. See Rivière, Travail et métiers en Normandie, pp. 263–268.

80 See the references below in this section.

81 Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1.

82 Geremek, Le salariat dans l'artisanat parisien, pp. 131–132.

83 Rivière, Travail et métiers en Normandie, pp. 190–195.

84 The Black Death had touched the town of Eu in 1349, since the death of the city clerk and eight members of the city councils was recorded, which caused a gap in the register in 1350. Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, f. 109 v°.

85 Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, f. 114 and 117.

Another response to the crisis consisted in writing down the “commandments” of the commune in 1351.⁸⁶ The list of eighteen rules did not set any wages but reminded that the customary working hours of all the crafts should not be exceeded (article seventeen). At a time when wages were supposed to rise, this could be an answer to independent artisans who could have been tempted to work longer hours to meet demand while many of their competitors had disappeared. It could also be a way of ensuring that the employers did not try to compensate higher nominal remunerations by imposing unpaid overtime. Those “commandments” also indirectly tackled the problem of price by writing down the selling hours of the small women retailers, the corn merchants and the leather sellers (articles nine, ten, and fifteen). Indeed, selling outside the regulated time and space of the market was suspected of favouring commercial frauds and raising the prices above the “just price”.⁸⁷ The only mention of a tariff was for the price of wine sold by the innkeepers (article two). Beyond the taxation of the prices of bare necessities like bread and wine, setting precise wages was apparently not a specific response to the crisis of the “Black Death” in the commune of Eu.

Indeed, six out of the eight wage tariffs registered in Eu date back to before the Black Death and the last two were adopted in the 1360s. The number of tariffs follows the global increase of preserved craft rules from the 1280s with a first case in 1288. In fact, this chronology also fits in with the development of the French statutes on wages quoted by Bronislaw Geremek, which also dated back to the 1290s.⁸⁸ Their multiplication was explained by the new instability of the currency under Philipp the Fair and his successors, even before the economic crises of the fourteenth century. This analysis could also apply to earlier examples of urban or royal taxation of prices and wages that can be found in other European countries: the written laws of *almotaçaria* fixing wages as early as 1253 in North-Western Portugal were related to monetary mutations and a subsistence crisis. Such explanations could be more complicated to provide for local Italian city statutes containing such provisions in the thirteenth century, but they would not be unlikely.⁸⁹ After the Black Death of 1347–1348, several European monarchies, from Catalonia to England or France, issued famous tariffs on wages and prices, which reached a larger scale and applied to many activities.⁹⁰ They have sometimes been adapted locally, for example in Provence, but we have kept no evidence of their reception in Normandy, neither in Eu nor elsewhere.⁹¹

86 Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, f. 114 v.

87 R. H. Britnell, Forestall, forestalling and the Statute of Foresters, in: *English Historical Review* 102 (1987) 402, pp. 89–102.

88 Geremek, *Le salariat dans l'artisanat parisien*, p. 131, note 5. The references come from the older historian Prosper Boissonnade.

89 Melo de Sousa, *Salair e salariat au Portugal au Moyen Âge*, p. 174; Pinto, *Salair e salariat dans l'Italie du bas Moyen Âge*, p. 35. See also M. Viana, *A lei de almotaçaria e a política económica de Afonso III*, in: R. Dias Gregório (ed.), *Abordagens à história rural continental e insular portuguesa, séculos XIII–XVIII*, Lisbon 2013, pp. 45–71.

90 See Braid, *Et non ultra: Politiques royales du travail en Europe occidentale au XIVe siècle*.

91 As Robert Braid remarked in his article, the ordinance on wages issued by the seneschal of Provence in 1348 and

In Eu, the wage tariffs only concerned 4 out of the 15 trades regulated by written ordinances between 1272 and 1362: the stevedores for wine (*déchargeurs*),⁹² the porters of coal,⁹³ the hay trussers,⁹⁴ or the thistle bundlers.⁹⁵

The fixation of the wages of the very specific activity of the thistle bundlers in 1293 was justified by the fact that they were given the monopoly of that service against an oath and the prohibition of working elsewhere if they were needed by the inhabitants. Their wage was expressed in deniers *parisis*, which were more stable and worth more than the deniers *tournois*, the most common in Normandy. This could suggest that they were attentive to the monetary mutations of the time. The rules of the porters of coal in 1302 can be interpreted in the same way, since they switched between deniers *parisis* and *tournois*. The relation of the tariff to changes in the use of currencies is quite clear for the tariff of the hay trussers in 1361, which gave the exchange rate of the newly introduced “franc” in *tournois*, even if it did not explain the connection with the fixation of a remuneration in sous.

The tariffs of the stevedores for wine were set in 1288 and revised four times in 1301, 1312, 1341, and 1362. The revision of their wages in 1341 was motivated by their complaint about the weakness of the currency, even the stevedores were not as explicitly consulted about their rules as the fishermen, the drapers, the weavers or the bakers. They might have been especially exposed to the problems of money changing because they were paid by foreign merchants. In 1362, the rates were given in “*gros de Flandre*”, which were actual coins, instead of using *tournois* as an account currency.

Compared to the rules of the porters of coal, the tariffs of the stevedores entered into more details about the places, the means of transportation, the containers and the use of lifting appliances. But they only dealt with the costs of their various tasks, without granting them an exclusive privilege as for the thistle bundlers. The written rules also left aside the fact that stevedores regularly registered before the commune guarantors who answered for any damage during the transportation of goods.⁹⁶

The evolution of their wages was not linear. Judging from the most common tasks, the nominal rate increased or remained stable from 1288 to 1301, then dropped in 1312 before jumping in 1341. This must have implied a negotiation between the commune, the stevedores and maybe representatives of the merchants who were their customers: the rules were not only presented as “ordinances”, but also as “agreements” (*accord*).⁹⁷

its local implementation in Brignoles, but also the French royal ordinance on wages of 30 January 1351, were only preserved through later copies, and other similar rules might still be lost until further researches.

92 The wage of the public measurer of wood was also set in their tariff of 1341. Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, f. 28 v° (14 May 1288), 56 r° (1301), 69 r° (1312), 98 v° (1341) and 131 r° (10 January 1362).

93 Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, f. 57 r° (1302).

94 Someone who makes bundles of hay. Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, f. 130 v° (3 July 1361).

95 Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, f. 39 r° (9 September 1293).

96 Eu, Archives Municipales, BB 1, f. 36 and 37 (1292), f. 48 v and 49 (1297), f. 58 (1302), f. 63 (1307), f. 98 v (1341), f. 110 (1349), f. 113 v° (1351) and f. 117 v (1353).

97 The texts only referred to the urban government validating the rules and not to other parties in the legislative process, but the wording of the craft rules in Eu was often laconic.

The tariffs preserved for Eu show that craft institutions could play a role in setting wages or prices, in relation to monetary mutations or other crisis contexts, as Bronislaw Geremek had pointed out. This could involve certain occupational groups but did not seem typical of craft guilds, considering the specialised nature of the trades in question.

The number of tariffs preserved for the stevedores and porters of Eu might have suggested that these trades called for a closer regulation of wages. But in Rouen, the stevedores received rules without actually setting the level of their remuneration. When their first known customs were written down between 1269 and 1300, competition was strictly controlled but only through an oath sworn by teams that could not change for one year afterwards.⁹⁸ On 30 October 1398, the stevedores of Rouen were submitted to a more developed ordinance, in response to complaints of merchants about damages during the unloading of wine.⁹⁹ It regulated the risky practices and apprenticeship, but the vicomte de l'eau also threatened to set the wages or have them set by experts if the stevedores raised their remuneration through collective action.¹⁰⁰ The article about the wages aimed at repressing "assemblies or conspiracies" called "*taquehen*", which was also the word used to condemn the bargaining practices of the weavers of Rouen in 1285. Coalitions of workers or strikes were quite likely to happen since, in that trade, sworn teams had to work together for a year. However, either this rule did not result in interventions of the public authorities as in Eu, or these interventions left no trace. While these sources confirm that the level of the wages could be an issue, the regulation of remunerations remained mainly indirect in the written rules of the stevedores of Rouen. The situation was globally similar for the drapers of Rouen, even if I have counted the article fixing the rate of overtime in 1378 as one of the two known "tariffs".¹⁰¹

The brokers were the only trade for which tariffs were a central element of the regulation, in Rouen as in the rest of Normandy. In 1335, the duke of Normandy fixed the rate of brokerage on a series of products exchanged in Rouen, because the commune received one third of the profits and needed money to face the ducal taxes.¹⁰² We know of no

98 However, if needed, a team could hire members of another team for a wage (C.-A. de Robillard de Beaurepaire [ed.], *De la Vicomté de l'Eau de Rouen, et de ses coutumes au XIIIe et au XIVe siècle*, Evreux 1856, pp. 356–357). A small group of stevedores of Caen received fiscal privileges against watch duties and services to the royal court when it was in town, including unloading its supply of wine for free. But it did not involve the whole craft and it is not surprising that a wage tariff was not written down (H. de Formeville, *Notice sur les francs-brements-canoniers de la ville de Caen*, in: *Mémoire de la société des antiquaires de Normandie* 11 [1837–1839], pp. 283–328).

99 Secousse (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*. VIII, pp. 303–306.

100 "Item. Et se lesdis maistres et ouvriers font assemblées ou taquehen entre eulx, pour faire taux ou pris plus grant ou exercif qu'il n'appartient de leurdit labour ou ouvrage de vins, et il est trouvé contre eulx, justice y pourra mettre tauxacion ou le faire faire raisonnablement par gens en ce congnoissans et en prendre amende selon raison et a la volenté de justice." Translation: "If the said masters and labourers make assemblies or conspiracies between themselves in order to set the rate or the prix of their said labour or work about wine at a higher or excessive level, and it is found (decided) against them [in justice], justice will be entitled to fix the wages or to have them fixed reasonably by knowing people, and to levy fines according to reason and the will of justice" (ibid., p. 305).

101 Secousse (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*. VI, p. 367. See above.

102 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, 3E 1/anc/U2, fol. 32 v°.

other written rules about the brokers of Rouen for the fourteenth century, even though the customs governing their appointment were numerous according to a long conflict opposing them to the commune, which is documented from 31 March 1348 to 1357.¹⁰³ The dispute was caused by brokers who took higher wages than the tariff, which was probably related to the economic changes caused by the Hundred Years War and by the Black Death. The oath sworn by a new cloth broker in 1375 quoted the fees that should be received, which had not changed since 1335.¹⁰⁴ This shows the institutional importance of those rates, but also their lack of adaptation to the market fluctuations and to the monetary mutations.

The fact that a part of the broker's fee was collected by the public authority could explain why the rates were written down in Rouen, but it was not always as clear in the sources concerning other places. However, the brokers were often the only activity submitted to official tariffs, whether they were involved in drapery in Louviers (1326)¹⁰⁵ or Montvilliers (1374 and 1389),¹⁰⁶ wine in Harfleur (1321),¹⁰⁷ or fish in Évreux (1385).¹⁰⁸ The profits of the brokers were suspected of being illicit because they were commercial intermediaries whose activity was immaterial and difficult to control.¹⁰⁹

The last known craft submitted to tariffs were the innkeepers, who could have to bargain with the authorities because the lords or the towns sometimes had the right to fix the price of wine and other food supplies.¹¹⁰ The sources about Normandy seldom present the innkeepers as an organised craft group, but in Bayeux, they joined with wine merchants and inhabitants in order to lodge a series of collective complaints to the royal courts from 1302 to 1319.¹¹¹ They appealed to the king Philip the Fair because the price of the wines from Gascony was supposed to be the same in Bayeux as in Caen, although it was in fact imported through the harbour of Caen, which entailed transportation costs

103 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, 3E 1/anc/U2, fol. 34 r^e to 37 r^e.

104 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, 3E 1/anc/U2, f. 32 r-v.

105 T. Bonnin (ed.), *Cartulaire de Louviers, documents historiques originaux du Xe au XVIIIe siècle*, XIVe siècle, Évreux 1871, pp. 28–29.

106 I. Theiller, *Un document pour l'histoire de la draperie médiévale de Montvilliers (1374–1383)*, in: A. Becchia (ed.), *La draperie en Normandie du XIIIe au XIXe siècle*, Mont-Saint-Aignan 2004, pp. 67–83, at pp. 70–83; Secousse (ed.), *Ordonnances des rois de France*, VII, pp. 323–6.

107 Paris, Archives Nationales, JJ 61, f. 110 r-v.

108 A. Giffard (ed.), *Ordonnances de Jacques d'Ableiges pour les métiers d'Évreux (1385–1387)*, Caen 1913, p. 18. The broker was called a "vendeur" (seller) in this case but his role was similar.

109 M. Mollat, *Les hôtes et les courtiers dans les ports normands à la fin du Moyen Âge*, in: *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* XXIV (1947), pp. 49–67, at pp. 55–56. For a more general approach, see V. Demont, A. Wegener Sleeswijk, and M. Scherman (eds.), *Le pouvoir des courtiers. Univers marchand et acteurs du courtage en Europe (XIVe–XVIIIe siècle)*, Paris 2018.

110 E.g. the commandments of Eu in 1351 commented above. See also I. Theiller, *Le prix du marché (publicité, contrôle, répression)*, in: *La circulation des richesses au Moyen Âge, rencontre internationale des 29 et 30 octobre 2004, à Gif-sur-Yvette, organisée par Laurent Feller* (2004), <http://archive-2007-2013.lamop.fr/richesses/IsabelleTheiller.pdf> (accessed 23 June 2021). See also the rights of the baron of Le Neubourg in 1401, 1403, and 1494 (A. Plaisse, *La baronnie du Neubourg. Essai d'Histoire agraire, économique et sociale*, Paris 1961, pp. 108 and 307–308; I. Theiller, *Les marchés hebdomadaires en Normandie Orientale, XIVe–début XVIe siècle*, PhD thesis in medieval history, Université Paris 7 Denis Diderot, 2004, p. 575).

111 Paris, Archives Nationales, JJ 59, f. 269–270.

from Caen to Bayeux. The royal officer of Caen, the *bailli* (bailiff) who was responsible for the whole district, granted them an increase of two deniers per gallon of the official price of wine in Bayeux. But in 1304, this decision had to be confirmed by another *bailli* of Caen, because the innkeepers complained that they were fined by the local jurisdiction when they applied the price rise. The change of tariff was then copied in 1308 by the *bailli* of Caen, which suggests that the rules needed to be reinforced. The tariff was also confirmed by the next king, Louis X (the Quarrelsome), at an unknown date, and again in 1319 by a third king, Philipp V the Tall. Still in 1320, a lieutenant of the *bailli* of Caen had to order the royal viscount of Bayeux to abide by the previous decisions and to return to the innkeepers the goods that he had confiscated: the local officer had apparently ignored the royal orders and kept enforcing the custom that prevailed before 1302. This conflict is only known thanks to the intervention of the monarchy, whose registers shed light on local rules which have left no other trace in the local archives.¹¹² This case suggests that such tariffs may have been more widespread than what the remaining sources show. The enforcement of uniform and lower prices by the royal local officers could benefit the consumers but reduced the remuneration of the innkeepers and wine merchants. The length of the dispute and the involvement of the kings of France demonstrates the reach of such an issue for the local craftspeople. The innkeepers of Bayeux managed to change the tariff and to successfully defend their remuneration by arguing that the transportation costs reduced their profit too much. The argument that the price was insufficient to cover the transportation costs was probably exaggerated, but the innkeepers apparently managed to impose their price to the local viscount. This could illustrate the fact that the fair price was supposed to be determined according to the market in consultation with local merchants and not by a single officer.¹¹³ In this respect, the innkeepers of Bayeux had more success than the brokers of Rouen who were dismissed by the mayor in 1354, after they had explained that they were paid above the tariff thanks to the “courtesy” of their customers.¹¹⁴ They were pardoned by the king in 1357 and reinstated in their offices, but they had to pay a fine and remained unable to raise their rates at least until 1375.¹¹⁵ The result of those conflicts depended heavily on social and economic relations between the litigants and the authorities, which remain largely unknown. But those two disputes show that tariffs could be really enforced by the authorities, and that concrete arguments could make the fixed rates more flexible.

6. Conclusion

An overview of the medieval sources about Normandy suggest that remunerations were rarely controlled directly by the authorities or by craft institutions, even if the role of

112 See F. Neveux, Bayeux et Lisieux, villes épiscopales de Normandie à la fin du Moyen Age, Caen 1996.

113 I. Theiller, Prix du marché, marché du grain et crédit au début du XIII^e siècle: autour d'un dossier rouennais, in: Le Moyen Âge, revue d'histoire et de philologie CXV (2009) 2, pp. 253–276, at pp. 265–267.

114 Rouen, Archives Départementales de Seine-Maritime, 3E 1/anc/U2, fol. 36 v^o et 37 r^o.

115 Ibid., fol. 32 r^o and 34 r^o–v^o.

unwritten customs and the loss of many archives may hide a part of the regulation to the historians.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that craft institutions were able to influence the wages indirectly at least from the twelfth century, through the reduction of competition. The multiplication of more detailed sources after 1270 reveals many measures contributing to regulate remunerations through the level of competition. The control of apprenticeship was one of the more widespread, even if these rules were rarely written down outside Rouen in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The fixation of daily wages for servants could be found in the building or the wool-cloth industries, because salaried work was more developed than in other economic sectors. But it remained secondary while craft rules granted more and more attention to working time, which was often associated to remunerations and raised conflicts. Writing down the working hours or the holidays could be motivated by devotion, by safety or by technical reasons, but also influenced the income of the journeymen and of the masters. In Rouen, the builders of the cathedral negotiated to be paid a full day even when they did not work in the afternoon on the eve of feast days. In the second half of the fourteenth century, several trades started stopping work at nones not only before holidays but every Saturday even if they were only paid half a day in that case: the loss of income due to this medieval kind of “week-end” was probably made possible by the rise of wages consecutive to the great mortality of 1347–1348.

However, the consequence of the Black Death on the collective bargaining of remunerations in Normandy was apparently not a development of the taxation of prices and wages such as the famous ordinances issued by the king of France and other authorities. The documented tariffs remain as rare in the second half of the fourteenth-century as in the first. They mostly applied to essential goods like bread and wine, or to closely controlled trades like the brokers and sometimes the stevedores. Taxation seemed to be motivated more by monetary mutations than by fluctuations in the labour market. But it could be used as a threat if a coalition of workers aimed at raising the wages, which was repressed as a public disorder, from the weavers of Rouen in the thirteenth century to the stevedores at the end of the fourteenth century. The extant sources about medieval Normandy therefore suggest an indirect regulation of remuneration through market mechanisms rather than through collective bargaining and set wages, which may also be the case for other areas.¹¹⁶

116 The extensive research of Thomas Roy about Dijon reached similar results: in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, only three craft rules intervened directly in the remunerations. The wages were fixed for the plasterers and the roofers, the linen-drapers, and the winemakers. Even if the similarity to Rouen is not complete, the building and cloth industry were particularly controlled in both cities. It was logical that wine production should also be concerned because all these trades were characterised by the development of salaried work. Moreover, the case of the barbers shows that coalitions of workers fixing wages without the consent of the authorities were repressed in Dijon as in Rouen. As for the taxation of prices, the emphasis was also put on the assizes of bread (T. Roy, *Rémunérations et travail à Dijon à la fin du Moyen Âge*, PhD in medieval history, Université de Bourgogne Franche-Comté, 2019, pp. 808–818).