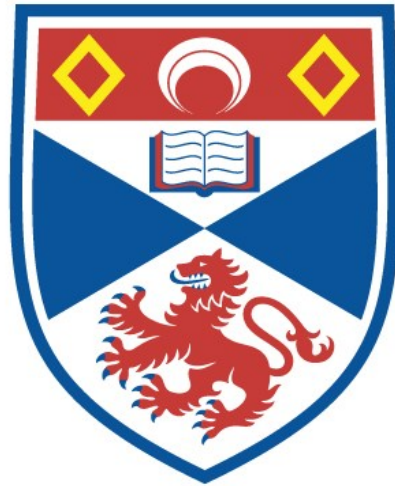


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## Abstract

### Social Concern and the Reformation in Geneva

The post-Reformation years recorded a tremendous increase in social concern within the city of Geneva. In poor relief, prison reform, consumer protection, public health, and general social welfare, Geneva's magistrates blended ideas from a number of sources to create new and necessary proclamations and institutions.

Geneva entered the decade of 1526-1536 struggling for political independence. Its Eidguenot party, which favored a Swiss-style municipal republic, rebelled against Geneva's traditional overlord, the Duke of Savoy, and his local supporters. During the military and political upheaval, Geneva's Bishop/Prince allied himself with the Duke against the Councils; Fribourg, and later Berne, entered the war on Geneva's behalf. The defeat of the Duke and the Bishop and the concurrent triumph of the Reformation created a leadership vacuum in the city. The former political, social, judicial, and economic duties of the Roman Catholic Church devolved upon the city Councils.

The councillors joined their traditional secular approach to these obligations, outlined in the 1387 "Franchises," with many of the new ideas resounding across sixteenth century Europe. The Renaissance, and subsequently the Reformation, promoted a number of common themes for welfare reform. Reformation theology reflected the mentality of the medieval burgher



(especially within the Imperial Cities) in calling for an end to mendicancy, voluntary poverty, monastic idleness, and the concept of salvation solely through acts of impersonal charity. The Reformers provided the theological foundations upon which the new welfare system was built. Both lay control and centralized administration were encouraged in order to assure a comprehensive, city-wide range of social services that consolidated the fragmented, inefficient medieval charity system. Geneva, in common with Zürich, Strasbourg, Berne, and even Roman Catholic Lyons, eagerly and earnestly undertook these reforms.

Unfortunately, Geneva's new social institutions suffered during the first years both from a lack of organization and from internal political dissension. After Calvin's return to Geneva from Strasbourg and the implementation of his 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances, a modus operandi for running the hospital system, the schools, etc., was finally created. The staff members of the various institutions stabilized, and a period of relative calm befell the city and its new social welfare system.

Economically, however, Geneva remained very backward and quite poor. Independence had disrupted traditional trade patterns, and industrial development was virtually negligible until the arrival of wealthy, skilled French and Italian religious refugees during the period of 1550 to 1560. The rapid arrival of so many people overcrowded the city and caused infla-

tion and scarcity. Opportunity was rife for cheating and fraud, so the Councils and the Consistory took the initiative in protecting the public from unscrupulous business practices and in guaranteeing the unity and tranquillity of the city. The Councils developed innovative programs for assuring adequate food supplies and, under the advice of Calvin, sought the creation of employment opportunities. Ultimately, the immigrants raised the economic level of Geneva by introducing numerous industries (including textiles, gold-smithing, watchmaking, and large-scale printing) which have defined the city's economic strength and position into the present.

The Genevan clergy issued from French humanist backgrounds, where they were imbued with ideals designed to better the human situation. Calvin and the Company of Pastors played an active role in implementing many of the city's reform measures, with Calvin personally promoting a number of social improvements. He developed the diaconate, along Martin Bucer's lines, specifically to direct social welfare projects. Indeed, Calvin's staunchest supporters ran the hospital system and the refugee bourses.

Through lay control, centralized administration, and Reformation altruism, the new system managed to serve the community better than the old one had. Geneva's residents and rural dependencies were aided by the constant improvements in adequate civic food supply, public health, quality

control in manufacturing, and honesty in business dealings.  
The social conscience of Geneva and its practical consequences  
developed considerably in the thirty brief years between the  
declaration of Reformation and Calvin's death.

William C. Innes

1981

SOCIAL CONCERN AND THE REFORMATION  
IN GENEVA

William C. Innes



Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of  
Divinity in the University of St Andrews

1980

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, that it is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a Higher Degree. The research was carried out at the University of St. Andrews under the supervision of Professor James K. Cameron, St. Mary's College.

(William C. Innes, Jr.)

CERTIFICATE

I certify that William C. Innes, Jr. has fulfilled the conditions of the resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1, and that he is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

(Professor James K. Cameron,  
St. Mary's College,  
University of St. Andrews.)

## Introduction

## Introduction

The story of Geneva in the sixteenth century is one of profound interest and importance, for it records the emergence of a small, undistinguished town in rural Savoy into, ultimately, an international center of religious, cultural, and financial pre-eminence. In the course of this transformation, Genevan religious, political, economic, and social welfare institutions underwent substantial changes. It is the evolution of these civic institutions (hereafter referred to as "social"), plus a reconstruction of the pattern of daily life during this formative period, which are the bases for this study.

The life of Geneva in the sixteenth century is, in large part, a reflection of the ideas and a product of the effects of the Calvinist Reformation; yet this is not totally so. In truth, by the time Calvin arrived in Geneva (late in the

summer of 1536), the city had secured its political independence and embraced the Reformation. The majority of the city's new social institutions, including the consolidated hospital system, the public school, and the re-organized judiciary, had been established in the preceding twelve months by popular vote. Thus, Calvin did not find Geneva a "tabula rasa." An impressive amount of civic accomplishments and a heritage of civic concern already existed, even if individually they sprang from diverse and varied origins.

Geneva had longstanding methods and proclamations for protecting its residents and aiding the less fortunate. These were described in the "Franchises" (the municipal charter) of 1387 which provided the primary historical and procedural basis for civic welfare projects both before and after the Reformation.

Within the philosophical heritage of Geneva and its practical expression (the Franchises) can be discerned the "weltanschauung" of the medieval burgher, a characteristic present in all the Imperial Cities. In common with magistrates from Strasbourg to Augsburg, from Basle to Zürich, Geneva's bourgeois demanded that social care be provided to all as a part of the city's collective religious obligation. To a great extent, a man's world was circumscribed by his city's walls, and his life and livelihood were dependent upon the preservation of the well-



being of the entire social organism (the city) of which each individual was an integral part. In the mind of the medieval burgher, divine judgment was collectivized over the whole community, so one's individual perogatives were to be subjected to the common good. Individual activity, judged by religious, personal, and even economic ethics, was subjected to communal regulations in order to advance and to assure the community's welfare. Understanding this philosophy will help to explain much of Geneva's Councils' altruistic social legislation.

On the other hand, the impact of John Calvin as Geneva's social conscience should not be understated either. Calvin brought to Geneva an outstanding background academically: the classics, the contemporary works of Erasmus and other humanists, and a strong grounding in the Bible, Patristic writings, and classical languages. Calvin also worked as a parish pastor with Martin Bucer in the newly-reformed Church of Strasbourg. There he gained practical insight for reforming and re-organizing a city's ecclesiastical structure.

Naturally enough, the political events of the era must be considered as an influential factor in the development of Geneva's social institutions, although to some extent they acted more as a catalyst. Many long-standing tendencies in the city were accelerated in the 1530's because of the war for independence against Savoy, the traditional overlord. The Roman

Catholic Church in Geneva unwisely threw its weight wholeheartedly behind Savoy, making the Genevan Reformation almost inevitable. After the rebellion succeeded, leadership and administrative roles in social care ordinarily reserved for Savoy or for the organized Church were eliminated and so devolved upon the elected civil authorities.

The development of social care arose inside a complex matrix brought about through the interplay of many forces. In order to apportion proper value to each of these influences, in order to understand how the changes arose and how they were implemented, it is essential to attempt to reproduce verbally the environment in which they all occurred. Thus, one purpose of this introduction is the necessary re-creation of the "sitz in leben" of sixteenth century Geneva.

Attempting to characterize this "sitz in leben" carries an important corollary. Although Calvin brought an impressive academic background to Geneva, most of his theological treatises and letters were written while he was a pastor in the city. Understanding Geneva itself will go far toward indicating why Calvin addressed himself to certain specific issues. More importantly, it will even help explain why he espoused certain theological positions. In some instances, such as his view of the diaconate and his qualified acceptance of limited interest-taking, Calvin may have been giving theological approbation to what he

saw successfully at work in Geneva.

Traditional treatments of history have tended to isolate great thinkers from their environment and era. Political history and intellectual history (the development of thought in an epoch) are usually considered separately. The first is concerned with governments, wars, legislation, and, in the post-Marx period, economics. The second speaks of movements in philosophy and theology, ordinarily paying little attention to the major social and political concerns of the day.

Few intellectuals have achieved distinction ferreted away in a library; few men live isolated from their social environment. For many, greatness has been reached because they clearly discerned major contemporary problems and dealt with them in a novel manner when old formulae had failed to provide meaningful answers. Such was the case at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Renaissance learning had sorely outdistanced the medieval Scholastic dogma of the Roman Church and rendered incongruous the princely lifestyle of its members.

When seeking to understand Geneva, it must be remembered that it was a municipal republic, not a nation, with a population of only 12,000. Since Calvin's lifetime, Geneva's influence and renown have grown out of all proportion to its size, which obscures this point. Because Geneva was only a city, possessing no countryside, it did not have room to expand beyond its cramped boundaries. Lacking a geographical

outlet for problems, Genevans had to confront the important issues of their lives head on and seek specific, immediate solutions with directness and with a candor which provides an excellent vantage from which to perceive their mentality and environment.

Until the time of the Reformation, the most important figure in Geneva was its bishop, although the attainments of each and his attitude toward the city varied greatly. Some were quite sincere in working for the good of Geneva; Bishop Arducius, for example, managed to obtain Geneva's status as an Imperial City in 1153. In doing so, he not only secured the authority of the bishopric, but more importantly assured the city a relatively large amount of freedom from any foreign power. Geneva was never tied as tightly to Savoy as it would have been otherwise, and its judicial code was meant to follow the laws of the Empire rather than the whim of the Duke.

Bishop Adhémar Fabri encouraged the writing of Geneva's municipal charter which in turn was approved by Pope Felix V in 1387. The Franchises codified the legal traditions of the city, emphasizing especially the personal freedoms of each citizen and the personal protection of each resident. Of such importance were the Franchises that every in-coming bishop was required to take an oath to support them. Fortunately for the city, the Franchises were used not as an end in themselves or as a

limited, legal monolith, but as a base from which to augment republican power and to create more modern and enlightened legislation as necessary. The 150 years following the proclamation of the Franchises do in fact record gradual increases in the authority of the city's elected representatives.

Historically, Geneva emerged from the Middle Ages as only a minor Imperial City, governed by an interesting tripartite union. At its head of course was the Bishop of Geneva, who ruled the city as a prince. In Latin, he was called "dominus," lord under suzerain authority of the Holy Roman Emperor.

Directly under the bishop was his assistant, known as the "vice-dominus" or, in French, "vidomme." Ideally, the vidomme executed temporal justice in the name of the bishop and constituted the second branch of government. However, it was only through the bishop that cases could be appealed and, if further action was called for, be taken to the metropolitan (the provincial ecclesiastical head) at Vienne, near Lyons.

In Geneva's system of government, the vidomme was the highest ranking secular official. Following prolonged intrigue and conflict, the Duke of Savoy won papal approval in 1290 for a scheme which assured Savoy of the right to nominate Geneva's vidomme. As a result, the Duke, in place of the Emperor, gained suzerainty over the city and deprived the Genevans of con-

trol of their own judicial system.

The Genevan citizenry itself constituted the third repository of power in the city. The general assembly (which used the French name of "Conseil Général") enjoyed the responsibility of electing four Syndics, the Seigneurie. To these four men belonged the task of policing the city and administering the mundane aspects of local government. The precise distribution of power is summarized in the following way:

The four syndics also possessed police powers of the city by night, with watchmen to enforce their orders; investigated and prosecuted violations of the franchises, and received oaths of the bishop and his officers to support the charter. The bishop as prince had the rights of appeal, pardon, and coining money. His feudal deputy, the vidomme, exercised the temporal functions of guarding and executing persons and presiding over a civil court. 1

From the middle of the fifteenth century, Geneva's citizens began to seek ever greater amounts of power from their vidomme and bishop. Two smaller councils were formed in which these new areas of self-assumed authority were exercised. The "Petit Conseil" (composed of about two dozen magistrates) handled additional administrative responsibilities, while the "Conseil de Soixante" began to deal personally with the city's diplomatic relations and to act on all treaties, in common with

most Swiss city-republics. Because membership in each council came to be based on experience, with the same people often sitting on one committee or another, and because the number of councillors was so workably small, as compared with the Conseil Général, secular jurisdiction increased and improved significantly.

Final approbation for nominations to the Seigneurie, Petit Conseil, and the Conseil de Soixante was originally given by the Conseil Général, which was summoned only twice a year unless urgent matters arose. In 1449, however, the election of the Conseil de Soixante was transferred from the Conseil Général to the Petit Conseil. By 1460, the two smaller councils were nominating the slate for the Seigneurie, four of whom were then chosen by the Conseil Général. In turn, the retiring Syndics were automatically put on the Petit Conseil each year with the newly-elected Syndics nominating the remaining members of the Petit Conseil. In 1529, imitating the gubernatorial set-up of Swiss allies Fribourg and Berne, a "Conseil de Deux Cents" was added and gradually took over the duties of the Conseil de Soixante. Following 1530, the outgoing Petit Conseil began to nominate the incoming Conseil de Deux Cents and vice versa. Although this procedure was carried out with the approval of the Conseil Général, such reciprocal nomination by two such small, elite circles reflected an erosion



of power from the Conseil Général and hence Geneva's voting citizenry, which numbered about 2,000. While the assemblies were always open to public view and while public records were kept, it is obvious that the Councils did become more aristocratic and perhaps even ingrown as the years progressed. Even in the form of elected secular officials, tradition managed to rule in Geneva.

Coincident with the rise of the authority of the Councils was the decline of the bishopric. By the late fifteenth century, the selection of the Bishop of Geneva had become the prerogative of the Duke of Savoy. Qualified local candidates were passed over in favor of weak sycophants of the Duke so that gradually the Bishop lost touch with Geneva's republican aspirations and sought only to please and maintain the sovereignty of the Duke. Naturally Savoy perpetuated the power of the Bishop only in order to assure or hopefully to augment his own authority in the city. By mutually supporting one another and trying to prevent the Councils from eroding their respective powers, the Duke, bishop, and vidomme benefitted from each other's continued strength.

As the power of the Duke increased within the city, the Councils attempted to amass more authority by which to contain, if not challenge, him. They gradually became successful by starting competing courts in which petty cases were heard



and by usurping some of the social care functions formerly reserved to the bishop. Although this trend began as early as 1470 and accelerated rapidly in the early years of the following century, it did not really become a point of controversy until the second decade of the sixteenth century.

In 1519, a substantial number of Genevans banded together and staged a rebellion against the Duke. Although the revolt was easily quashed, it gave the movement two martyrs: Philibert Berthelier and Ami Levréry. Republican sentiment simmered while the Duke and the Bishop made high-handed attempts to abridge civil liberties further. By 1526, open rebellion had again broken out, although this time with the aid of powerful Swiss allies, Fribourg and Berne. Revolt was destined to succeed this time.

When Calvin arrived in Geneva in 1536, the city's primary concern continued to be the political conflict with the Duke of Savoy. Popular polemics centered mainly on judicial liberties and party politics. This is not to say that religious interest was absent from the city, for in this era the soul's salvation was every individual's most pressing concern. Nevertheless, the Reformation only gained popular support in Geneva once it had become identified with the rebellion and after the Roman Catholic Bishop of Geneva had totally alienated himself from the Councils and the citizenry.

As a small republic, Geneva's inhabitants were forced to shoulder a great degree of individual responsibility for and participation in civic policy-making. Thus, they manifested an incredible amount of political interest and activity, frequently taking to the polls and the streets to demonstrate their beliefs. The city's residents in general were rough, proud, and provincial in outlook, caring more for politics than the arts. Their patois was a curious strain of French, bearing little resemblance to the language spoken in Calvin's university circles. Geneva clearly was an intellectual and cultural backwater.

It is ironical that a man with Calvin's personal qualities and background should devote his life to Geneva. Calvin was a quiet, introverted academic, fond of the mannerly French life to which he had belonged first in Paris and later in Strasbourg. Along with his erudition, he evinced the humanists' desire for scholarly detail and perfection, for fine writing, and for the arts. In Geneva, he found none of these. Perhaps such differences would go far toward explaining some of the tensions that existed between him and the town fathers, particularly during the earliest years.

The classical Renaissance of France and Italy, with its emphasis on education, art, and culture, never shed even a glimmer on Geneva. The city's genuinely low standards of

learning and culture can best be demonstrated through glimpses of its own educational facilities, its literary production, and its contributions to the fine arts.

Historically, those Genevans in pursuit of higher learning were always forced to seek further education outside of the city walls. Anxious to correct this shameful situation, the Bishop of Geneva in the thirteenth century hired a doctor to at least tutor young ecclesiastical candidates. Sadly, the school quickly fizzled, and no alternative was instituted. However, in 1378, approximately a century after the bishop's failure and nearly a full century before Basle took the honor of becoming the first Swiss university town, Emperor Charles IV offered to establish a university in Geneva. In response to such a generous and prestigious suggestion, the citizens complained that students tended to behave in an uproarious manner and would cause too much noise and commotion in the city. The plan was summarily rejected by the populace.

Only in 1429, and even then with obvious reluctance, did Geneva finally establish a permanent place of learning. The Conseil Général had voted to institute a public school in the prior year, but with typical bureaucratic mystery, it would not provide the necessary operational funds. François Versonnex, a wealthy bourgeois, stepped forward to contribute the requisite amount; his endowment in 1429 marked the creation of

the Ecole de Versonnex. A section from Versonnex' founding statement illustrates the city's intellectual vacuum:

That in his opinion scholastic discipline is advantageous, seeing that it drives out ignorance, disposes men to wisdom, forms their manners, endows them with virtue, and by these means facilitates and favors the good administration of public affairs. Considering, therefore, that this illustrious City of Geneva has, up to the present, suffered greatly from the want of such discipline.... 2

Unfortunately, even this school did not last. The headmaster ran away during an outbreak of plague; and a short time later (in 1531), the Petit Conseil ordered it closed on the grounds "that the children were knocking it to pieces."<sup>3</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church in Geneva was noticeably delinquent in its obligations to educate the youth of the city. The medieval belief that life was a pilgrimage to eternity ordinarily, at least elsewhere, led to basic instruction in Latin and ecclesiastical matters by Church-connected teachers. Even this fundamental, spiritual motivation was absent, or perhaps simply ineffective, in Geneva until the city's independence and Calvin's arrival.

The literature produced in Geneva during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was primarily composed of plays staged for royalty, farces, and doggerel "sur le thème commu

de Bontemps." <sup>4</sup> In the early days, "diversions" were regularly produced for nobility (mainly the Duke of Savoy) visiting or journeying through the city. One such piece performed in 1523 in honor of Beatrice of Portugal, Duchess of Charles III, is described as follows:

At the bridge over the Arve, four mounted syndics met the Duchess, and escorted her toward the city, holding a white silk canopy over her head. At Plainpalais, a further deputation of leading citizens awaited the cortege. Their leader, Jean Phillippe, attired in a magnificent silk suit, with silver facing-for which he had paid fifty crowns-delivered an address of welcome....

"Oh! mighty dame of high renown,  
We bid you welcome to the town;  
Marshalled in orderly array,  
We trust you will be pleased today...." 5

This rather ridiculous sort of entertainment continued at about a half dozen places around the city, at each of which a deputation of citizens arrayed in their finest greeted and attempted to amuse the royal retinue. This lengthy proceeding was followed by a six-act play in which Constantine was seeking the identity of the true cross. So disgusted with all of this drivel was Beatrice that she broadly advertised her boredom. The Genevans were deeply annoyed.

Another "art form" of the day was the "sottie," a "sa-

tire in the form of an allegory." <sup>6</sup> These were amateurish, yet timely and pointed attacks on the Duke, the Church, and whatever else had currently fallen into disfavor with the citizenry. This interesting excerpt is a good example not only of a sottie but also of the more critical and outspoken attitudes toward the Church.

Physician:

So that is what upsets your mind?  
 Are you not upset to find  
 Church benefices bought and sold  
 By hungry thieves in quest of gold?  
 Or babies on their mother's knee  
 Appointed to a Bishop's Fee?  
 While haughty Churchmen, as they please,  
 The goods of any neighbor seize,  
 And go to war on small pretext-  
 Whereby all Christian men are vext.

The World:

From Luther's land these complaints arise;  
 We're told they are a pack of lies.

Physician:

Whatever the abuse you ban,  
 They call you, now, a Lutheran. <sup>7</sup>

Architecturally, Geneva had no buildings worthy of note. The city's Cathedral was always its most important structure, yet it is still described as a most unoutstanding edifice. Although stained glass had been used in Britain as early as the twelfth century, it was not introduced in Geneva until 1473. At that point, it was incorporated into the Town Hall; the Cathedral had to wait until 1480 for its first bit.

The high quality and the prolific output of painting in the Italian Renaissance by-passed Geneva except for a few odd works such as the "Adoration of Christ by the Kings" (artist unknown), dating from 1415. As importantly, wealthy Genevan citizens and ecclesiastics never became patrons of the arts as did well-to-do individuals in other cities. The combination of these two factors left the city with an impoverished heritage of artistic accomplishment.

Writers of the day, such as François Bonivard, characterize the life of the city's residents as cabaret-like, exhibiting a great fondness for drinking, singing, and merrymaking. The degenerate moral conduct of some clergy, especially the monks, was in part a reflection of the life and behavior in general within Geneva.

It has been recorded that there were few open spaces within the confines of Geneva's walls, so its streets were narrow and over-built. Also, they were teeming with people as it was the custom to meet, mingle, and carouse out of doors rather than inside suffocatingly small, dark, and crowded houses. In addition to the noise and the numbers, the city must have reeked, for Genevans showed a preference for throwing slops out of windows, piling refuse in front of doors, and letting pigs and dogs run wild through the streets in spite of prohibitions against such recorded in the Franchises. On the whole, Geneva



appears to have been dirtier and far less comfortably inhabitable than most of its contemporaries.

Even spiritually, Geneva seems one of the most unlikely candidates to be the citadel of the Reformed faith, or indeed of any other. Reformers in Northern Europe owed much of their early training, initial development, and later support to the intense personal piety indigenous to some monasteries and religious groups such as the "Brotherhood of the Common Life." That essence and affirmation of reverence and devotion, which gave inspiration to men like Erasmus, Luther, and Melancthon, were completely absent in Geneva's monasteries and among its clerics. While the Reformation in France sprang from Renaissance questioning of traditionally held ideas and first developed in university circles, such an awakening in Geneva was a political response (as has already been mentioned), supported by the city's magistrates and activist citizens.

All of this heartily contributes to the image of Geneva as a coarse frontier town, unsophisticated in lifestyle, undeniably backward in education and the arts, bereft of spiritual sensitivity and example, and clearly by-passed by the major trends of Renaissance Europe. Yet in addition to this isolation and rough, raucous, rude existence were a keen mettle and a spirit of independence, the two outstanding Genevan characteristics of the pre-Reformation period.



Considering the amount of attention Geneva has received since its Reformation, it is indeed surprising that a number of eyewitness journals from the era remained unpublished until the last century. Town hero and sage François Bonivard (immortalized in Lord Byron's poem "Prisoner of Chillon") wrote his own personal Chroniques de Genève with a coarseness of style, however, that caused Calvin to recommend against its publication. Thus, Bonivard's Chroniques remained in manuscript for three centuries. Antoine Fromment, an early preacher who helped bring the Reformation to Geneva, penned a volume entitled Les Actes et Gestes merveilleux de la cité de Genève; his work similarly remained unpublished until the middle of the 1800's.

Genevan magistrate Michel Roset recorded an official history of the city using the Council Registers instead of relying on recollection like the other journals. However, even Roset's Les Chroniques de Genève were refused publication (in this instance by the Councils), because they recalled some events unfavorable to Berne just at the time Geneva was trying to re-negotiate a *combourgeoisie* with that city. As with the journals of Bonivard and Fromment, Roset's literary contribution to the historical picture of Geneva was not discovered and published until the nineteenth century.

Two other annals prepared during this momentous period

were published, however, shortly after their completion and provided ammunition both for the Roman Catholic Church and for Protestant reformers opposed to specific points of Calvin's personal theology. The first, by Sister Jeanne de Jussie (the mother superior of a cloistered order of nuns in Geneva), contained attacks against the city's reformers and offered support of Roman Church policy. In her eyes, upstart merchants rebelled against the law, their hereditary prince, and the one true Church. Her book, entitled Le levain de Calvinisme, où commencement de l'hérésie de Genève, faict par Reverende Soeur Jeanne de Jussie, was published in the early seventeenth century. Jean Trolliet, a minister in Geneva until he and Calvin quarrelled over the issue of predestination, published in 1577 a work containing the basis for many anti-Calvinist polemics over the following centuries.

There has been a tendency, albeit an unconscious one, to view Geneva's sixteenth century history in miniature through the lives of three of its most outstanding citizens, each of whom dominated a generation. The first is François Bonivard, dedicated patriot concerned with his town's political future and hero of the 1519 and 1526 rebellions. He was earthy and unsophisticated, an amateur poet primarily interested in fun-loving pursuits. All in all, Bonivard typifies the pre-Reformation Genevan: a dashing, irreverent patriot.

Calvin looms as the second great personality. He and his foreign-born pastors organized the reformed Church, emphasized personal piety, presided over social reform, and guided Geneva through its hard economic times. To a large extent, his era was characterized by a good deal more rigorous legislation and enforcement of the town's civil and ecclesiastical ordinances.

Michel Roset epitomizes the third character typical in Geneva during the latter years of the sixteenth century. Roset was a magistrate who dominated the Petit Conseil for many years and was held in the highest estimation by his contemporaries. He appears to have been pious, hard-working, patriotic, and wealthy, although a bit on the dull side: an industrious and conscientious yet uninteresting product of the Reformation.

As with any generalization, these portraits hover between hyperbole and truth. Bonivard's Geneva was never quite so wanton nor Roset's quite so drab as popular conjecture might suggest. It is an often-overlooked fact that the Genevan people voted for every significant change that came to their city, with most of the major issues being decided unanimously. The Reformation, the sumptuary laws, and all the town legal codes were debated and passed by the Conseil Général; even the tenure of the pastors was at the discretion of the councillors.

From this fascinating and heterogeneous background,

Geneva's sixteenth century Reformation was proclaimed and its social institutions arose. They owed their form and evolution to Genevan tradition, Calvinist theology, and the demands of the time. Tracing the impressive development and the tremendous increase in social concern in the city of Geneva from 1535 through 1565 is the purpose of this study.

## Introduction Footnotes

1. Foster, Herbert D. "Geneva Before Calvin (1387-1536). The Antecedents of a Puritan State." AHR, vol. 8, no. 2, (January, 1903), p. 220.
2. Gribble, Francis. Lake Geneva and its Literary Landmarks. Westminster, 1901, p. 126. Gribble does not quote the original source.
3. Ibid., p. 127.
4. Jullien, Alexandre (ed.). Histoire de Geneve. Geneva, 1951, p. 318.
5. Gribble, Lake Geneva, p. 13.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
7. Ibid., p. 16. Although Gribble supplies interesting material, he fails to accurately quote his sources.

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## Chapter One

### The Pre-Reformation Social Care System

Even a casual reader of Geneva's Church constitution, the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordonnances, cannot help but be impressed by the amount of thought Calvin devoted to the new municipal hospital. Truly, he allotted far more space to outlining its purpose and operation than he did for the city's college, or even in order to explain the administration of the two Sacraments. One must conclude that the hospital held an important place in Calvin's scheme for the way in which Reformed Geneva should be run.

The native Genevans were in full accord with these sentiments. The hospital received their attention even in the 1540 Petit Conseil resolutions asking Calvin to return from Strasbourg to assume his former post. The Guillermin party, Calvin's supporters who invited him back to Geneva, promulgated the following edict:

It is necessary to try, wrote the secretary finishing his document, once again to turn ourselves only to God, and to put things back into the order they were in four or five years ago, when everyone held this city in high esteem and when people came from all countries to see the manner in which

it [Geneva] conformed to the Gospel, the magistrates as much as the ministers, the hospital, and the college. Without that we shall be striving in vain, and shall always go from bad to worse and begin again. 1

Clearly, in Reformation-era Geneva both the civil and religious leaders meant the hospital to fulfill an important role within the city. This function was both social and theological. But the origins of social concern in Geneva reached back many centuries. The attitudes and practices of earlier citizens shaped the way in which Reformed Geneva looked at its hospitals and social services.

The birth of social welfare in Geneva predated both Reformation and Renaissance. Of its nine pre-Reformation hospitals, two first appear in mid-thirteenth century annals, and their true origins are still not conclusively known.

Perhaps when speaking of these institutions, calling them "hospitals" is a misnomer; for that word conjures up images of patients being attended by skilled medical staff. That is a bit off the mark.

It was only a place of refuge for itinerant travellers, for the poor who were homeless; and, in a sense, the etymology of the word gives a truer picture than the present reality of it. The hospital gave hospitality. 2

It was a primitive medical system where lepers and victims of plague were secluded but not cured. The hospitals provided the major source of charity for the needy of Geneva.

It was the primary institution through which contributions of food, clothing, and lodging were furnished to the poor. Furthermore, the hospitals fulfilled a religious function. Pious donors trying to effect their souls' salvation through aid to the poor did so via the city's hospital system. It was the city's prime charity agency, as well as its major medical facility.

The organization of all these hospitals was very similar. The primary requirement, of course, was a founder, a wealthy man willing to donate enough money to begin the venture. After his death, another agency, called the "patron," was needed to continue the project. In some cases, a wealthy bourgeois founded a hospital, and a confraternity maintained the establishment by overseeing its operation and managing the endowment. In yet other cases, direct family heirs filled the requirement.

The actual administrative head of each hospital was the "recteur," or, if a layman, the "procureur." This official was named by whatever group was patron of the hospital. He ran the day-to-day business of the hospital and the chapel which was attached to it. The recteur or procureur acted officially in the hospital's name. In all nine hospitals save the two found latest, this official was a priest who also made certain that mass was regularly said in the chapel. Here, donations to charity and money for masses were collected and used to maintain the infirmary.

Each hospital also had at least one "hospitallier," a salaried official customarily chosen by the Syndics. The hospitallier was the superintendant, usually in residence, for the hospital. The Syndics exercised a general oversight of the institution, occasionally visiting to see that everything was in order, that no abuses were occurring, and that basic public health standards were maintained. Hospitalliers had to deliver an oath of allegiance to the Seigneurie. Since the hospitalliers were accountable for money and food and acted in the public interest, the oath seemed a practical means to insure that basic uniform standards would be maintained.

Endowments usually consisted of "loyers," a clever device used to circumvent the sin of usury.<sup>3</sup> An amount of some commodity, even money itself, was "rented" to a customer. For the repayment of the hospital's letting him use this commodity, the customer, or tenant, returned to the sanatorium one-twentieth of the total commodity rented per annum. This sum was termed his "rent." At any time, the tenant could either buy the commodity, in which case it became an "achat," or return to the hospital the original amount which he had rented. In this way, the hospital was assured a 5% income on its endowments.

Of course, all this worked well when the price of foodstuffs remained nearly constant. During periods of abundance, which were caused either by good harvests, a mild out-

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break of plague in Geneva, or both, the "coppes" of grain and "setiers" of wine dropped in price. Since the hospital was being repaid in the commodity itself and not for the cash-value loaned, considerable sums could be lost. In times of scarcity, on the other hand, the hospital could do very well. But it ran the additional risk that its tenants could not find the grain or wine to repay their obligations until the following season, when abundance might have returned.

Some wealthy individuals, particularly priors and other ecclesiastical landowners, collected an annual duty, or "cense annuelle" from those working the land. In order to provide requiem masses for themselves, have years in purgatory reduced, etc., the rich dedicated some of their censes to the hospitals. This provided the hospitals with an additional income.

Over time, economic developments conspired against these charitable institutions. The amount of precious metal in any given currency declined gradually over the years, a classic case of creeping inflation. Since land tenants were paying the original cense donated to the hospital, the purchasing power of the cash repaid was worth progressively less in real buying power. Also, the cost of foodstuffs as a proportion of the renter's yearly income decreased. This thereby decreased the market value of the commodity rented, and the produce which the 5% interest could buy. These two economic developments acted as a vise, which tightened over

the years. A number of Geneva's infirmaries found themselves in bad financial straits by the dawn of the sixteenth century.

Geneva's oldest hospital was the "Hôpital de Notre Dame du Pont du Rhône," founded next to and possibly by the Dominican monastery at Palais. It is mentioned in archives as early as 1269. The hospital was placed under the patronage of the provost and Cathedral Chapter and remained so until the sixteenth century. However, it did not receive funding directly from the ecclesiastical structure. Instead, it survived from the personal contributions of individual Genevans, both lay and clerical.

Notre Dame served native Genevans and foreign wayfarers, both wealthy and poor. It was, incidentally, the only hospital in the city which may have been founded directly by the organized Church.

Nearly as old was the "Hôpital du Bourg-de-Four," founded, at the latest, by 1289. It developed from a house sold to the recteur of Notre Dame, plus another house donated by Raoul St.-Joire, a wealthy burgher. At one time it was used exclusively by women, and at another point by abandoned children. Later, in 1443, it was rebuilt by Guillaume Bolomier, a chancellor of Savoy. During the rest of its history, the St.-Joire and Bolomier families patronized it and probably chose the recteur for it and the small chapel attached to the hospital. The hospitallier<sup>5</sup> of Bourg-de-Four was chosen by the Syndics.

In addition, to these two hospitals, five other similar



institutions operated in Geneva at the time of the Reformation. The "Hôpital de St.-Bernard" was founded in 1327 by André de Thonney, a wealthy merchant. He put the hospital under the protection of the Prior of the Monastery of Grand-St.-Bernard, to be maintained with the help of the monks of St.-Victor. It was designed to care for the poor, but was itself the poorest of all the hospitals. This conclusion is reached by studying its inventories.<sup>6</sup>

The priors appear to have had some authority over the selection of the recteur, but de Thonney willed it to the control of the Seigneurie and the Council. The Council established its hospitalliers and changed them often, usually citing bad behavior as the grounds for dismissal.

In the same epoch, two other merchants founded infirmaries. The "Hôpital de St.-Jacques du Pont du Rhône," established in 1359, also sought to help the poor of Geneva. Here, the less fortunate could actually buy a permanent place for their last years.<sup>7</sup> Pierre du Pont, who founded St.-Jacques, ceded the right of patronage to the Dukes of Savoy from that day forward. The Dukes or their representatives chose the recteur, and usually the recteur in turn chose the hospitallier. This is one of the few social institutions with which the House of Savoy had any personal connection. In spite of its wealthy and powerful patrons, inventories show St.-Jacques to be poorly endowed.

Another merchant-inspired institution, the "Hôpital

de la Trinité," commenced in 1360 under the patronage of Girod de Melduno and his wife. It served poor mendicants, trying to promote "piety, charity, and the soul's salvation." There, pilgrims frequently spent the night when passing through Geneva. In time, though, Trinité gained a reputation as an "open house." Ironically, it did not have a chapel until 84 years after its founding. Following the death of de Melduno, patronage passed to the Confraternity of the Trinity, under the Priory of St. John. They, no doubt, exercised a certain influence over the selection of the recteur.

These were the five Genevan hospitals predating the fourteenth century, the century before the Refomation. Only the oldest has any possibility of having been founded directly by the organized Church, for its true origins are, as has been said, unknown. All the rest were founded by Genevan bourgeois. Two of the hospitals had procureurs or recteurs who were chosen by ecclesiastics; two others by the laity; and one by a confraternity.

Furthermore, the hospitalliers, the people who actually dealt with the visitors to all the hospitals, were lay men and women. Often they were couples; and they were all appointed by the secular authorities, the Syndics. In summary, the organized Church in Geneva played no discernible role in establishing any of these institutions. Occasionally, they helped to maintain the hospitals, but only at the

discretion of a wealthy founder. The Church performed some role by staffing the recteurs, but this was a rather perfunctory one. By 1400, then, the Church in Geneva had taken little initiative in either meeting the city's need for hospitals, or in directing charity and alms. Geneva's bourgeois, on the other hand, had done remarkably more.

François de Versonnay (Versonnex), who founded Geneva's one public school, also gave his city two hospitals. The "Hôpital de l'Euchariste," or "des Pauvres Honteux" as it was later known, was designed for the use of Genevans who "had fallen into indigence."<sup>10</sup> Another section in it was set aside for mendicants. The hospital was run by the "confrérie de l'Euchariste," a merchant confraternity, and its prior stipulated the recteur.

L'Euchariste was the wealthiest of Geneva's hospitals. Even so, the confraternity administering it collapsed a few decades preceding the Reformation, and control reverted to the Syndics.<sup>11</sup>

The "Hôpital de la Madelaine, de St.-Antoine et de St.-Eloy (1451)", was de Versonnay's second effort. Ostensibly it cared for the mendicants, "whose number was not small in Geneva."<sup>12</sup> At this hospital, however, the founder gave control directly to the Syndics. De Versonnay's son Aymon added a section in 1466 for pregnant women. In its rules, none with dysentery or plague could be admitted, a testimony to the limited curative facilities of these estab-

lishments.

The "Hôpital de Marlioz," or "de St.-Jacques le Majeur et de St.-Antoine l'Hermit," was situated outside the city in the "banlieu," the area one league from the city walls. Jacquemet de Sombaville opened this hospice in 1453 and built a chapel alongside during the following year. He originally directed the Curé de Marlioz and the Syndics to find a recteur and hospitallier, but this poor, small hospital was later absorbed by the "Pyssis Omnium Animarum Purgatorii," and administered directly by the Seigneurie.

Geneva, like any other European city, was regularly ravaged by the plague. During the Black Plague of 1348, 14  
5,000<sup>13</sup> persons perished, half the population of the 1464 census. Unfortunately, neither the Church nor the burghers attempted to care for its victims. During the outbreaks of plague, the Council debated putting up a hospital; however, when the pestilence subsided, the plans were put aside.

When the initiative finally came, it was, as usual, from the Syndics. During an outbreak of pestilence in 1469, the Seigneurie decided to build the "Hôpital des Pestiférés" between Plainpalais and the Arve-- a macabre location, for it was adjacent to the public cemetery. The Bishop owned this land and was reluctant to part with it. Eventually, a price was agreed upon, and the construction began in 1473.

At this point, the war between the Swiss and Burgundy intervened. The Genevans were forced to pay the Swiss a large

ransom, depleting their treasury and halting construction. The Council rented a meadow and a barn as a stop-gap measure. A Franciscan confraternity did at least build a small hospital in a single house for plague victims. However, it was closed a few years later.

Geneva fared no better against the plague than any other European city. Neither did its citizens escape panic and debauchery when the fearful and helpless population confronted this cataclysm they could neither combat nor comprehend. The "fléau de Dieu" surely took its toll on the psyche of Geneva.

The Bishop prohibited games during the plague. People complained that circulating and practicing were ignorant doctors and outright charlatans, who took advantage of the unfortunate situation for their own selfish, economic gain. There were flagellants, official proclamations "imploring divine aid," <sup>15</sup> people accused of sorcery, and a gruesome trial in 1530 against some unscrupulous individuals accused of spreading the plague to bilk the credulous.

The proceedings of this trial are instructive to understand better the social conditions and attitudes of that period. A shiftless fellow born of a wealthy family, Michel Caddo, counterfeited a case of plague. He then made a curative ointment for himself, which he hoped to peddle as a miracle cure. But by the time he was admitted to the hospital, the plague was beginning to run itself out. To continue it, he and the

hospitallier conspired to poison a few patients at the plague ward. Even more diabolically, he squeezed out the sores of the victims, put the stuff in jars, and dropped them about town. He also spread it on articles of clothing, and on doors, especially on houses where inhabitants had already died from the plague.

A poor woman who had recovered from the Hôpital des Pestiférés told what was going on, and a general outcry led to a fiendish death by degrees for Caddo, the hospitallier, some cureurs and curesses. Parts of their dismembered bodies were displayed around the city as a reminder of the evil act and its consequences. The hospital priest was implicated and replaced.<sup>16</sup> People's paranoid fear of the plague combined with the ignorance of the time to create horrific events,<sup>17</sup> including trials for witchcraft.

More practical measures for combatting the plague included forbidding foreigners and mendicants from entering the city. Healthy mendicants were made to leave, and people refusing to observe the quarantine of the sick were banished for two months. Generally, though, the measures established by the Council and the Syndics to combat the plague were more concerned with hearing confessions, saying mass four times a day,<sup>18</sup> and finding a monk to live full-time on the hospital premises.

In 1482, after new initiatives, the plague hospital was finally dedicated by the Syndics, Bishop, Vidomne, and Council officers, the men who actually governed Geneva. But

money to operate the hospital was still in short supply. Indulgences from Innocent VIII were sold by the Council in 1484 to raise money for the Syndics to apply to the hospital, and to erect a chapel beside it. The bull gave

the remission of ten years of penance, and as many Lents, to all who, being penitent, visited devotedly on Good Friday, the day of the Resurrection or the feast of St. Sebastian or St. Anthony, the chapel of the hospital, and contributed by their charity to its maintenance and completion. 19

Foreigners were not excluded from the plague hospitals, because they "were likely to be carrying many [valuable] goods."<sup>20</sup> By far the greatest improvements were the addition in 1493 of a full-time surgeon, weekly collections in all the parishes for the hospitals, and the inclusion of a resident monk as recteur. Hospitaliers were in charge of finding all the victims within the city limits, as described in the franchises, and were to be paid accordingly for their trouble.

However, by 1500 the conditions inside the plague hospital had grown deplorable. The Syndics asked the priors of all the confraternities to dedicate any excess money in their treasuries for the upkeep of the Hôpital des Pestiférés. Only one prior did so, and then just for that one year. Even a papal bull by Julius II in February, 1505, and a papal brief of 24 August, 1507, shook no coins from their coffers. This is but one further example of neglect by Geneva's ecclesiastical structure.



Surprisingly, the man to alleviate this situation was neither a Genevan merchant nor a Syndic, but the reigning Duke Charles of Savoy. In 1508 he gave money to rebuild the hospital, and financed its maintenance with a tax, or "gabelle," on Geneva's salt. The agreement provided for a full-time "administrateur-général" appointed to a three-year term by the Conseil Général. It also sponsored a priest, a surgeon, two salaried hospitalliers, and some servants. The House of Savoy had, as was mentioned, been named patrons of the Hopital de St.-Jacques; however, this gift was a direct donation, the only one of note from Savoy to help alleviate social ills in its protectorate.

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Years later, in 1533, François Bonivard, during his imprisonment at Château Chillon, directed some of his priory censes to help maintain the Hôpital des Pestiférés. Unfortunately, this hospital, like all the others in Geneva, was exclusively the product of the laity, concerned and generally quite pious men trying to meet the needs of their community. Where was the Church? "We have not registered a single subscription, a single gift on the part of the bishops." Thus, the laity were left alone to face the problems.

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An additional three institutions existed for dealing with medical and social ills. Two were lazar houses. One was situated outside Geneva at Carouge, under the direction of the curé of St.-Leger. The second was at Chêne and was governed by the curé of Thonex. Both leprosaria date from

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approximately 1260. Most likely, they sprang from ecclesiastical origins, for, as was the case in Geneva's earliest hospital, the clergy occupied a prominent place in their structure and daily life.

Carouge, situated near Geneva, and Chêne, located much further from the city walls, shared a common form of government. The parish curé was the head official, although he dealt only with the religious and judicial affairs. He said masses, heard confessions, etc., and disciplined lepers breaking the institutional rules.

Practical matters were managed by the "économe" and his wife. They, like the hospitaliers, bought and prepared food, cared for burials, and dispersed money. The économe was elected or re-elected annually by the lepers themselves. His pay was but a portion of the city's contributions for the lepers, and generally not much more than each leper's own share. A "trésorier" (who handled the group's finances) and a "prieur" (who aided in administrative duties) were also elected by the lepers to assist the curé and économe.<sup>24</sup>

Living conditions were spartan.

Each patient had a room closed by a very strong locked door; having neither window, nor bed, but only a pallet, where one enclosed the lepers and kept them on bread and water. 25

The leprosarium was meant to resemble a prison because of the contemporary belief that "who sowed things spiritually reaped them carnally."<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the lepers had a surprising

number of rights-- voting, representation, equal division of all alms received, and visitation for the married-- but they were isolated, even from one another.

The administrative malaise which gripped the Church-dominated hospitals also infected these two institutions. In 1445, the Syndics charged before Pope Felix V that the Genevan Church was not taking good care of the lepers:

the sick were neglected and often maltreated, they lacked nourishment, and the revenues were used to the advantage of the recteurs. 27

A papal bull was promulgated to correct the abuses. Half a century later, the Syndics made the same request to Pope Julius II. This reforming bull was issued in 1506.

Leprosy and related skin diseases became less common as the sixteenth century progressed. Geneva's last leper was admitted to Chêne in 1541. By 1556, Carouge contained only two old lepers. <sup>28</sup> After the Reformation, Berne controlled the baillage of Gaillard, which included the Chêne leprosarium. After the Treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis, it was returned to Savoyard hands and ceased to serve Geneva's needy. Carouge formally existed until the eighteenth century, though it had fallen into disuse by the end of the sixteenth century. <sup>29</sup>

The third and most important sanitorium was the "Pysis Omnium Animarum Purgatorii." This served the community with many additional facilities the hospitals failed to pro-

vide. Although it was established relatively late, probably 1452, its original patronage is obscured. There existed in Geneva a confraternity of "Toutes-Ames," but their recteurs were not the same as those in the Pyssis. Judging by its late founding date, it seems likely that the Syndics seized the opportunity in founding it.

Duke Louis of Savoy was persuaded in 1452 to cede his right of patronage for St.-Jacques du Pont du Rhône in favor of the Pyssis, confirmed in the same year by the Pope. Jacquemet de Sombaville, founder of Marlioz, left all his inheritance to the procureurs of the Pyssis, as did Jacques Pacquet and some other wealthy merchants. Support also came from "troncs," or collection boxes in parish churches. Each parish thus had a "boîtier," a man who collected the contributions for the Pyssis and provided a liaison. However, there was no direct source of income other than what must have been collected for masses, etc., said for the souls of dead Genevans in purgatory.

From the very beginning, the administration of the Pyssis appears to have been the duty of the Syndics. Procureurs were always laymen, elected by the Conseil Général, after nomination by the Petit Conseil and Deux Cents, for terms of three years. This is the same basic procedure used by the Pestiférés. These procureurs conducted daily business and named the recteurs of the chapels over which the Pyssis had the right of patronage.

By the advent of the sixteenth century, the Pyssis was providing necessities for the poor of the hospitals of Madelaine, Notre Dame, Bourg-de-Four, and Marlioz. It paid for their repairs and furnished whatever they lacked.

The functions of the Pyssis were many. The procureurs visited the rural poor, distributing food and other essentials. They cared for homeless children and placed orphans with families in Geneva. The procureurs buried the poor and celebrated requiem masses for the deceased. These officials also made certain that masses were said for people who donated money to the hospital. Finally, the Pyssis provided food for poor travellers passing through Geneva.

The Pyssis Omnium Animarum Purgatorii was in many respects a forerunner of the Hôpital-Général of John Calvin's day. They had a similar administrative structure; the Seigneurie and Councils founded the pair and approved their procureurs. The laity ran them and operated both institutions on a city-wide basis, seeking to provide social welfare on a very comprehensive scale. Unlike the older hospitals, their functions were not limited to merely feeding and housing foreign wayfarers and the city's poor.<sup>30</sup>

This short summary traces the medical and charitable institutions of Geneva from their foundation into the sixteenth century. This purpose is two-fold. First, to prove that the city had a long established tradition of medical and social care prior to the founding of the Hôpital-Général, a

mode of operation on which the new system could draw. In other words, the new Hôpital-Général, both in organization and in function, did not emerge out of a void, either from the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordonnances, or from the Council decrees in 1535 which officially chartered it. The city had long possessed those hospital facilities in a different form. The hospitals were supported not only by the bourgeois, but through the donations and actions of the Seigneurie and Councils. Moreover, they were widely used by the needy. It is fair to say that the Genevan people accepted their existence and expected that they would be maintained.

Second, an analysis of the founders and patrons of these hospitals indicates that the organized Church took little interest in them. It took no initiative in founding them, and little in maintaining them. That responsibility fell to the bourgeois and their elected representatives in city government.

In summary, Geneva possessed nine hospitals by 1535. All but the oldest, whose origins are uncertain, were founded by wealthy bourgeois. One was administered by the Cathedral Chapter, and one by the "prévot" of Grand-St.-Bernard. But two more were administered by lay confraternities; and three others were under the direct control of laity: one by wealthy families, one by the Dukes of Savoy, and one expressly by the Councils.

The youngest institutions, the Pyssis and Pestiférés,

were both founded by an alliance of the Syndics, the Duke of Savoy, and wealthy bourgeois. They were both administered by the city.

The signal fact here is that in none of these hospitals were Church funds organized to maintain the charities and services needed by the city of Geneva. The Church does not seem to have concerned itself with the distribution of alms or with any other means of care for the material needs of Geneva's citizenry.

## Chapter One Footnotes

1. Roget, Amédée. Histoire du peuple de Genève, vol. 1. Geneva, 1870, pp. 258-259.
2. Chaponnière, Jean-Jacques, and Louis Sordet. "Des hopitaux de Genève avant la Réformation." MDG, vol. 3, (1844), p. 165.
3. Ibid., p. 176.
4. Outbreaks of plague visited the city more regularly than the countryside. A decrease in the urban population, coupled with the debilitating effect of disease on appetite, dampened the demand for available foodstuffs and depressed its price.
5. Chaponnière and Sordet claim that the family probably chose the recteur (p. 361). However, Henri Naef (Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936. p. 20.) says positively that the choice was the prerogative of the Dukes of Savoy. Because the research of Chaponnière and Sordet was so intensely thorough (306 pages) and was culled from the original source material, it is difficult to believe they are in error. Naef, in his short summary (3 pages), has possibly confused Bourgade-Four with St.-Jacques, where both agree the Dukes of Savoy held the right of patronage.
6. These inventories are printed in the appendix information to the Chaponnière and Sordet article.
7. Therefore, its patients may not have been quite so destitute as the founder intended.
8. Chaponnière, "Des hopitaux," p. 232.
9. Ibid., p. 232.
10. Ibid., p. 247.
11. Ironically, Michel Guillet, the traitor who in 1534 plotted with the bishop to abolish the Councils and establish direct rule from Savoy through his serving as "gouverneur," was its last recteur. See also p. 62 ff. RC, January 1, 1534; February 8, 1534; February 10, 1534; February 11, 1534; May 7, 1534.
12. Chaponnière, "Des hopitaux," p. 164.
13. Ibid., p. 218.
14. Naef, Origines, p. 22. See also Appendix pp. 528-531.
15. Ibid., p. 149.
16. Related in full in Bonivard, François. Chroniques de Genève, vol. 2. (published by Gustave Revilliod). Geneva, 1867, pp. 553-569.

17. It is impossible to determine if the details of the case were really factual, since torture was probably used to obtain the confessions. Hysteria and ignorance mingled to fabricate cases of witchcraft, and torture exacted the details.

Fifteen years later, February 1545, the same plot was once again worked. This time, fear and hysteria were an even greater probable cause. Hospital employees were accused of spreading infection around the city. It was noted that most employees at the plague ward were foreign, from "Lyon, Lozanne, Thonon & Syon in Valley [Valais]." Seven men and twenty-four women were executed for witchcraft and for spreading the plague.

Roset, Michel. Les Chroniques de Genève, livre 4 (published by Henri Fazy). Geneva, 1894, Chapter 71, p. 307.

18. Cited in Chaponnière, "Des hopitaux," pp. 451-455.
19. Ibid., p. 291.
20. Ibid., p. 294. Not many victims of plague ever recovered. Their property would have reverted to the hospital where they died.
21. Ibid., pp. 313-314.
22. Ibid., p. 340.
23. Naef, Origines, p. 20.
24. Chaponnière, Jean-Jacques. "Des léproseries de Genève au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle." MDG, vol. 1, (1841), pp. 106-116.
25. Ibid., p. 111.
26. Ibid., p. 112.
27. Ibid., p. 108.
28. Gautier, Léon. "La médecine à Genève jusqu'à la fin du 18<sup>e</sup> siècle." MDG, vol. 30, (1906), pp. 99-101.
29. Chaponnière, "Des léproseries," pp. 106, 131-133.
30. Kingdon, Robert M. "Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva." AHR, vol. 76, no. 1, (January, 1971), pp. 50-69.



## Chapter Two

### The Civil Government and its Pre-Reformation Social Responsibilities

Historically, the responsibility for providing Geneva with social care rested solely on its lay leaders. This in itself was unusual, for within most medieval cities charity was the domain of the organized Church. But in Geneva, the Church seldom concerned itself with the community's alms-giving projects.

To the civil government, then, fell the task of supplementing the lay-donated hospital system. Its contributions to social welfare were advanced in two major areas. First, the general well-being of every citizen was protected in the Franchises, which the Syndics and Councils enforced; more specifically, the poor were fed in part from the confiscated produce of law-breakers. Second, the Syndics (not the Church) exercised a general supervision of the hospital system. They set basic standards for the operation and the administration of these infirmaries, and did not hesitate to correct abuses.

Contemporaneous with the founding of the early hospitals was the composition and publication of the Franchises. These 79 "Items" constitute a municipal charter outlining regulations and procedures on aspects of city life ranging from civil justice to proper marketing ethics.

Bishop Adhémar Fabri (Favre) promulgated these edicts in 1387 on behalf of the citizens of Geneva. They were approved by Pope Felix V, who was, incidentally, a Savoyard.<sup>1</sup> Every incoming Bishop of Geneva, who doubled as "Prince" of the city, was required to swear during his investiture to uphold these Franchises. The Syndics and Councils then ensured that the code was rigorously observed. An examination of these articles will help explain the civil government's approach toward organized charity.

The Franchises are more fully titled "Libertates, Franchisie, Immutates, Usus, et Consuetudines Civitatis Gebennensis." The complete title is important, because it describes the ways in which the Franchises were more than just a municipal constitution.

First, the Franchises contained the communal freedoms traditionally guaranteed Genevans, their personal liberties and their immunities from injustice. These include regulations overseeing court proceedings. For example, the Franchises certified that the vernacular was used in the courtroom. They even guaranteed a form of habeus corpus, the right to be specifically accused of one's crime and given speedy trial, and the freedom from confiscation of personal property without due process of law.<sup>2</sup> All these seem very advanced for the fourteenth century.

The latter "Items" contained statutes based on "use and

custom." They form a guide, so to speak, of every-day practices, the way Genevans were accustomed to doing things. They officially codified practices that had been accepted and observed for generations. They promulgated nothing new; rather, they confirmed "common-law" as each citizen had come to understand it. Hence, they mirror the daily life, values, manners, and attitudes of fourteenth century Geneva.

Regulations providing social services for the poor fall into the category based upon "use and custom." For example, the customary penalty for committing a petty offense (such as cheating on weights and measures, or selling old food) was to levy a small fine, ultimately directed to ecclesiastical or municipal building projects. Any foodstuffs involved were confiscated, and subsequently given to the indigent through the city's hospital system.

The sale of meat was regulated in Item 43. If the beast was misrepresented, or if the animal had died of sickness before it was slaughtered, the guilty butcher was fined five gros, once again earmarked for municipal building projects. The meat, if edible, was distributed to the poor of the hospitals.

Item 46 did the same for fishmongers. Fish were to be sold only in specific marketplaces, were not to be misrepresented, and were forbidden to be resold.

And whoever does the contrary, he is liable to pay five Genevan gros to be applied equally to public buildings and the fortifications, and the fish shall be taken

by the city and distributed among the hospitals. 3

Foreign fishmongers apprehended selling their catch outside their assigned market areas, or selling door-to-door, were fined three gros in accordance with Item 48.

And the fish may be distributed through the city authorities without fear of censure and given to the poor. 4

According to Item 52, anyone selling provisions outside the city walls on market days was fined the customary three gros; and, once again, his foodstuffs were confiscated for distribution to the needy.<sup>5</sup>

In the instances where provisions were not involved, the offender just paid a small fine which aided municipal and ecclesiastical construction.

Item 42 provided regulations for millers. Those found cheating on the weight of a sack paid three gros into the municipal treasury.

The said three gros are to be directed to public building and maintaining the city fortifications. 6

Similar merchandising laws prohibited throwing garbage on streets during feast days (Item 44), running pigs through the streets (Item 61), selling faulty wool (Item 62), and buying grapes outside the town limits (Item 66). All these infractions were taxed at the rate of three Genevan gros.

It is worth noting that these distributions were not carried out through the organized Church's infrastructure. Since the Franchises codified in law that which was already true in practice, one must conclude that the Genevan Church historically took little part either in protecting the consumer in the marketplace or in providing public alms. However, the Church's role in other areas was frequently mentioned. The Franchises describe its part in the administration of justice; in fixing the annual price of wine; and in certifying the accuracy of weights and measures used in Geneva's marketplace.<sup>7</sup>

These long-standing city regulations protected Genevans of all backgrounds from unfair practices. The 79 "Items," considered as a group, emphasized the need to respect the rights of all citizens. The dignity of man (regardless of his wealth and position) was also affirmed. The Genevan had the right to a fair trial, and the right to accurate weights and measures in the marketplace. These protections stemmed from a common attitude. Man was not created to be exploited, either by dishonest merchants or tyrannical rulers.

The plight of the poor received special attention, since caring for the poor was a divine command. Their basic needs were partially met from the confiscation of the produce of swindling shopkeepers. This ruling thereby assisted those most victimized by this commercial chicanery. These classic examples of Middle Ages' piety showed that the poor were to be remembered, and not left to go wanting.

The relationship between the Franchises and the post-Reformation understanding and implementation of social care is more than just historical, or even sociological. Its connection lies in the fact that the sixteenth century anathematized any form of "revolution." This deserves explanation, for in the last two centuries "revolution" has often assumed many positive connotations. However, sixteenth century man believed quite the contrary. To him, change was not to be entered into lightly; in truth, the age feared anarchy more than oppression. For these people, the Bible and Roman Law formed the immutable "objective" standards by which all decisions had to be justified. Deviation from these twin pillars of social order would brand any city (and all of its citizens) as despicable outlaws. In that event, no outside authority would have any dealings with that city. Alliances could not be formed; trade would be boycotted; and the city would succumb to capture and destruction.

To legitimize their seizing power from the Duke of Savoy and the Bishop of Geneva, the Councils unfalteringly provided religious and legal justification for their actions. Primarily, they were careful to show that in every aspect of city life they adhered to tradition and communal law as written in the Franchises. Geneva's rulers, like the great religious Reformers, took great pains to show that they alone provided the true maintenance of historical practices. The Duke,

the Bishop, the Savoyards-- these people were the actual revolutionaries, for they continually violated the city's Franchises. In the same manner, the religious Reformers footnoted the Bible and practices of the Early Church in order to prove that Rome, not Luther, was the "mother of innovation."<sup>9</sup>

All written apologia for the war against the Duke and Bishop vigorously quoted the Franchises. This was even true of correspondence with Berne, Geneva's ally. In the same respect, the continued practice of providing for the hospitals out of confiscations, and of dedicating a percentage of municipal fines to the poor (a practice which continued all through the sixteenth century) rested in good part upon this desire not to alter existing practices. This quest for continuity and stability must be considered to gain a proper perspective of the era.

The interest of the councillors in the hospital and the eagerness of leading merchants to volunteer time for their administration can only be understood in light of the medieval conceptions of community. This was especially true within the free, Imperial Cities. The bourgeois, particularly the councillors, carried with them the responsibility for ensuring the survival of their city. This survival was secured in two, indivisible realms.

First, the Councils had to maintain a godly city. This was accomplished by adhering to the divine ordinances, which

were laid out for all to read in the Bible. Turning aside from these would provoke God's wrath and result in the destruction of the city and of all its inhabitants, something the God of the Old Testament had so often done.

At the same time, the bourgeois had to work to ensure the material welfare of the community. Without this, the city, which was itself a living organism composed of thousands of souls, would wither and die. Thus, in order for a city to flourish,<sup>10</sup> it needed the protection of God, who would bless its citizens' labors and would assure it the material means to exist. "The borders between the secular and spiritual areas of life disappeared."<sup>11</sup>

"Whenever the town was endangered, a burgher felt his very life threatened."<sup>12</sup> "Natural catastrophes and disastrous fires were God's punishment for the sins of the town."<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the "community was responsible for the salvation of its members."<sup>14</sup> From this followed the necessity for legislating obedience to the word of God. This was secured through the adherence to the Scriptures in a communal credo, obedience to high standards of moral conduct in daily life, and care of the poor as Christ had ordained. No doubt, the Lyons food riots of 1529 proved to the Genevans beyond all doubt that God would indeed punish the city that failed to take its social responsibilities seriously.<sup>15</sup>

In view of the acceptance of these concepts in Geneva, this statement in the documents founding the hospital takes



on added significance:

It is considered that to nourish concord and obtain the peace of God, it is first necessary to take care of the poor. 16

The bourgeois had accepted the responsibility of caring for the material welfare of the poor. They conceived of it as their obligation to promote both the physical and spiritual maintenance of their town of 11,000 souls. This task had the procureurs' own interests at heart as well, since it preserved the entire community of which they were a living part.

After the Reformation, the hospital procureurs were incorporated directly into the ministry of the Genevan Church through Calvin's diaconate. This was not a contrived relationship designed to extend ecclesiastical influence into a civil area. Rather, it was a logical expression of the hospital's religious mission within the community at large. It was a direct consequence of the mentality of the medieval burgher.<sup>17</sup>

One interesting example of the importance the medieval Genevans placed on the hospital is taken from the 1455 French version of the Franchises. In a concluding statement testifying to the accuracy of his translation of the Franchises from the original Latin, Michel Montyon wrote the following:

These things written above have been received from the public registrar "Jacquemet de l'ospital [of the hospital] . 18

Jacquemet personally verified the accuracy of Montyon's

version in a testimonial in Latin, beginning "I truly, Jacquemetus de Hospitali."<sup>19</sup> Nowhere in the document is the family name of this burgher written. Nevertheless, the year of the translation, 1455, was only two years after Jacquemet de Sambaville founded the Hôpital de Marlioz. The coincidence in time and the Christian name is too close to indicate anyone other than Sambaville. The use of the hospital in place of his family name not only shows his obvious pride; also it truly indicates how widely known the gift was within the community. Within medieval Geneva, "the sister of piety was charity."<sup>20</sup>

From these twin roots (the Franchises and the bourgeois-donated hospitals), Geneva developed her modus operandi for meting out social care. Toward the advent of the sixteenth century, increasing numbers of administrative functions left to the Church in founders' wills had been absorbed by the secular authorities.

As early as 1458, the Seigneurie and the Petit Conseil began trying to limit mendicancy, a common goal throughout much of Europe during the Reformation years. These early Genevan regulations against begging tried to counter the large number of mendicants, both lay and clerical, who were crowding the city. In fact, their number was so great that they overflowed seven hospitals; many even tried to solicit free spots in private homes. Although some were sincere mendicants or pilgrims, many were ill or needy vagabonds. Still others

were just wandering thieves and swindlers. Some were perfectly able to work but preferred a life of begging. Yet others unwittingly spread the plague and other communicative diseases.

This proclamation of 1458 quoted Ambrose and Augustine. It claimed that love and charity are owed to the family before strangers, and that charity must be provided in a proper manner. "For it is not sufficient to do good, if it does not benefit the good in the manner deserved."<sup>21</sup> Begging and alms-giving benefitted no one's salvation, claimed the Council, when it was taken by those who could "win their living<sup>22</sup> by industry, work, or study."

The Councils openly declared that the mendicants were not aiding anyone's salvation; rather, they were a public nuisance. Differentiation was made between the deserving and the undeserving poor; and the efficacy of work in eliminating poverty was publicly recognized. It is even interesting to see Augustine, so frequently quoted by the Reformers, cited precisely in this context.<sup>23</sup>

In conclusion, the Council declared that all beggars must be directed to one of the seven hospitals, and that no one could give them private shelter. The foreign beggars could only stay in Geneva for one night. Also, anyone knowing of a mendicant of bad repute in the city was admonished to tell the Vidomne. Any wealthy beggar was to be reported by the rec-teur, hospitalier, or their assistants to the Vidomne immé-

ately, under penalty of a 60 gros fine.

This 1458 proclamation expresses many attitudes generally assumed to have originated with Calvin's own doctrines. Yet this expression by these Genevan councillors predated the Reformation by eight decades. The early acceptance of these attitudes may help to explain why the Reformers found such widespread support among the magistrates in the 1530's.

As demonstrated by the 1458 edict, the state was already beginning to assert its authority within the Church's traditional domain. While mendicants were assumed to be under the jurisdiction of the Church, the Councils found it both important and necessary to apply secular criteria to their activities in the city. Also, the Councils assumed additional authority over the hospitals by reserving the right to overrule an individual recteur's decisions.

Over the next eighty years (1458-1535), the Councils assumed direct administration over four more hospitals, in addition to the ones for which they were already the patrons. They did not seek these annexations, but were forced to fill a vacuum left by the disintegration of clerical responsibility. The final Council proclamations in 1535 to establish the Hôpital-Général affected the administration of few infirmaries, for most were already under Council and Seigneurie control.<sup>24</sup>

As has been mentioned, in 1452 the Duke of Savoy ceded his right of patronage over the Hôpital de St.-Jacques du Pont

du Rhône to the Syndics and the Council. They used these financial resources to found the Pyssis Omnium Animarum Purgatorii. Through the Pyssis, the Syndics and Council then administered St.-Jacques. The Pyssis also eventually administered Hôpital de Marlioz, although the time and connection are difficult to establish precisely.<sup>25</sup>

Originally, Francois Versonnex' "Hôpital des Pauvres Honteux" was administered by the confrérie de l'Euchariste, a merchant confraternity. In the 1520's, the confraternity ceased to function, and the civil government began to administer that hospital as well. It has already been mentioned that a papal brief and bull were insufficient inducement to force the confraternities to come forward in 1505-1507 and support the Hôpital des Pestiférés.<sup>26</sup>

In summary, it appears that a general economic breakdown befell the confraternities in the first two decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately for the future of the Roman Catholic Church in Geneva, no other part of the Church organization stepped forward to fill the void.

The second oldest hospital, Notre Dame du Pont du Rhône, was originally administered by the Cathedral Chapter. But by

1530, the administrative incompetence of the recteurs forced the Syndics to seize the goods of the chapel, and to ask the vicar-general for the authority to name and supervise the recteur, and to reserve to the episcopal power the institution of this official. 28

The Syndics then went further. They made this charge in 1530, on the eve of the Reformation in Geneva:

that the recteurs allocated what did not belong to them, that the hospital was falling into ruins, and that the revenues were becoming depleted by the inattentiveness of the recteurs, who usually lived away from the city, leaving their stand-ins to apply to their own use what remained of the goods, depriving the poor of them. 29

Following this scathing attack on the Cathedral Chapter's incompetence, the Chapter responded to the Syndics by surrendering everything that they had requested. Either the accusations were undeniably true, or the vicar-general was too disinterested in the hospital to dispute them. Perhaps both were true; whichever, the result was the same.

By the time of the hospital consolidation in 1535, most hospitals were no longer administered by their founding patrons. Only one hospital was still under the control of its founding families. One was administered by a confraternity; another was jointly administered by the Syndics and the Prévot de Grand-St.-Bernard. But the seven remaining social welfare institutions were already directly under the control of the Genevan Syndics and Councils.<sup>30</sup>

This situation was, in many respects, the outcome of centuries of civic precedent and policy. The civil government had long been the prime mover in the charity system, even though

the hospitals provided the theological vehicle through which the pious could work their way to everlasting life. The Roman Catholic Church in Geneva was notable by its absence in the alms-giving system, and its role only declined as the years advanced.

## Chapter Two Footnotes

1. Pope Felix V expressed reservations about Items 34, 35, 39, and 77, all of which protected usurers. Why the Bishop of Geneva agreed to them is uncertain, although the prevalent attitude toward unpopular laws was merely to fail to enforce them. See Appendix pages Martin, Paul-Etienne. "Calvin et le prêt à l'intérêt à Genève." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, p. 253.
2. Mallet, Edouard. "Libertés, Franchises, Immunités, Us, et Coutumes de la Cité de Genève." MDG, vol. 2, (1844), pp. 292-293, and pp. 312-331.
3. Ibid., pp. 340-341.
4. Ibid., pp. 342-343.
5. All the listed "Items" are found in Mallet's article and reprint of the Franchises. The authority of the Franchises extended only a short distance from the city walls. Those selling beyond that boundary paid no import duties, were not subjected to the quality controls of the Franchises, and gave unfair competition to local merchants.
6. Ibid., pp. 338-339.
7. See Items 7, 16, 17, and 70.
8. Destruction indeed befell the city of Münster, Germany, after the Anabaptists seized control of it in 1535.
9. The term was often used in Reformation-era debates in Geneva.
10. Consider the motto of Glasgow, Scotland: "Let Glasgow flourish through the preaching of Thy Word."
11. Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972. p. 46. This theme is central to the point of Moeller's entire essay. It is re-emphasized by Stephen Ozment in his book: The Reformation in the Cities. New Haven, 1975.
12. Moeller, Imperial, p. 45.
13. Ibid., p. 45.
14. Ibid., p. 46.
15. Lyons had made few provisions for the poor. During a famine, riots broke out among starving peasants drawn to the city who swelled the urban indigent. Restoring order took days. See pp. 97-98, 135-136.



16. RC, November 12, 1535.
17. See pp. 170-186.
18. Mallet, "Libertés," p. 357.
19. Ibid., p. 358.
20. Naef, Henri. Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936. p. 149.
21. Chaponnière, Jean-Jacques, and Louis Sordet. "Des hôpitaux de Genève avant la Réformation." MDG, vol. 3, (1844). p. 168.
22. Ibid., p. 171.
23. Ibid., pp. 165-177.
24. See the chart on Appendix page 531.
25. Chaponnière, "Des hôpitaux," p. 362.
26. Naef, Les origines, pp. 192-197. A similar economic crisis befell Lyons, and is described in: Davis, Natalie Z. "Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy: the Case of Lyon." Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, vol. 5, (1968), pp. 240-242.
27. Naef, Les origines, pp. 192-197.
28. Chaponnière, "Des hôpitaux," p. 203.
29. Ibid., p. 203.
30. For a chart of the hospitals' founders, their original patrons, and their 1530 patrons, see Appendix page 531.

## Chapter Three

### The Genevan Ecclesiastical Organization

The active social concern of the civil government stands in stark contrast to the behavior of the organized Church in Geneva. Although it is true that the Church traditionally played little role in providing social care, it has been shown that its participation only declined as time passed. In many respects, this decrease in activity was in fact a reflection of the caliber of men who held high ecclesiastical office in Geneva. ✓

The Roman clergy practicing in Geneva during the 1530's were a far cry from Bishop Adhémar Fabri, who promulgated the Franchises on behalf of the community in 1387. Whereas Fabri attempted in a fairly sincere way to promote the welfare of the town, his final successor, Pierre de la Baume, <sup>1</sup> was quite a different sort of man. Baume sided with Geneva's enemies, violated the Franchises, and ruled Geneva as an absentee landlord. His contributions to the town's social welfare and charities were similarly unconstructive.

The entire Church organization mirrored the decline at the top. While in some respects the slide was characteristic of trends throughout Europe at the time, the Genevan situation was particularly bad. By 1470, political considerations were clearly influencing the selection of upper-echelon Churchmen. By 1530, the organized Church was more clearly removed from the daily concerns of the average Genevan than had ever been the case before. Disinterest mingled with conflict of interest. Hence, the Church had little inclination to support the republican aspirations of the bourgeois or the social welfare of the community. Custom and law dictated that the Church hierarchy take a prominent role in the operation of city government and the administration of the city's services; in fact, this was far from true.

This apparent ecclesiastical paralysis and/or disinterest had its origins in the preceding century. By the latter half of the fifteenth century, Savoy had gained the right to nominate Geneva's Bishop/Prince. In a short while, bishops such as Adhémar Fabri were no longer seen. Qualified candidates of local stock were bypassed in favor of weak sycophants of the Duke. Consequently, these later bishops were not merely inferior to their predecessors in quality and character; they were, more importantly, little interested in the well-being of their mountainous see.

A brief look at the four bishops who ruled Geneva in the sixteenth century graphically illustrates this woeful situation. Philippe de Savoie acceded to the Cathedral chair in

1495, when he was still a young child. The noble Philippe never did receive his clerical orders. When he came of age in 1510, he instead chose the title "Duc de Nemours" and renounced his ecclesiastical office. The nomination and approval of the youthful Philippe discredited the Duke of Savoy, the Pope, and the episcopal office irrevocably.

Philippe's successor, Charles de Seyssel, proved a much better bishop. He strengthened the military security of Geneva as well as its internal policing activities and citizen protection. Where the Duke of Savoy was concerned, Seyssel proved himself to be independent both in thoughts and actions. Thus, when he died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1513 while on a pilgrimage, many suspected the Duke of having had him poisoned.

Jean de Savoie, illegitimate son of the Archbishop of Auch, was little better than the child Philippe. He managed little independence from the Duke, but neither did he seem interested in such. Habitually, Jean appointed whomever the Duke ordered. He strained his relations with the community by frequently perjuring his oath not to violate the franchises and by chronically disregarding the Syndics' right to approve his nominees. It was he who signed the execution order for the Genevan patriot Berthelier after the abortive revolt of 1519. All in all, Jean de Savoie was sickly in body, weak in character, and nothing but a "valet" for the Duke (as he was described by his contemporaries).

Following Jean's death in 1522, the Cathedral Chapter and the Syndics requested that the highly esteemed Aymon de

Gingins, Abbot of Bonmont and eldest Cathedral Canon, be nominated Bishop of Geneva. Aymon was descended from a wealthy Romande family and favored the Eidguenot cause. Unfortunately, political considerations in Italy worked against his confirmation. Savoy nominated Pierre de la Baume instead, a Burgundian noble with epicurean tastes.

Hearing of this appointment, the Genevans quickly appealed to the Swiss League for support, and many Cantons tried to intervene in Gingins' favor. To their chagrin, marriage ties between Pope Leon's brother and the Duke's sister carried far more weight in the ultimate decision. Baume was named Bishop to the consternation of the Genevans. This act further eroded the prestige not just of the office alone but also of the Papacy.<sup>2</sup>

Pierre de la Baume was not really a bad man, but he was a veritable caricature of the Renaissance bishop. His lineage was noble-- his father was Count of Montrevel, in Bresse. In 1502, son Pierre received a doctorate in theology, and shortly thereafter was named the Abbot of St.-Claude. By the end of his term in Geneva, he would also hold title (and taxes) from the Abbeys of St.-Just de Suze, Notre Dame de Pignerol, and Moustier-Saint-Jean, and from the Priories of Abois, and Lémenc at Chambéry. As was fitting for a man of his birth, Baume was also proclaimed "Count of Lyon."<sup>3</sup>

Baume travelled comfortably in Imperial, Savoyard, and Papal circles. By all accounts, he was a cultured, lettered man, who also adored food and drink. Judging by his contemporaries' journals and by his own correspondence, he was quite

a glutton. He proudly declared that his cellar contained thirty-one varieties of fine wines. He unabashedly preferred court life to the activities of his rocky diocese, causing him to be absent much of the time while enjoying his court musicians and the company of his well-heeled mistress.

Actually, Baume had his sights set upon an archbishopric, and probably regarded Geneva and its travails as a distraction from his true ambitions. When the conflict between the Duke and the Councils erupted, Baume sided with the Duke, naturally enough. Whereas a man such as Seyssel or Gingins would have appreciated the town's desire for independence, Baume was quite a different type. He vacated his see in the crucial years leading up to the decisive battles for independence in 1535-1536. His aristocratic background and indulgent lifestyle left him ill-prepared to understand why the Genevan burghers were willing to sacrifice their lives and their material well-being to gain independence from their overlords.

Directly beneath the Bishop in wealth and authority were ten to fifteen resident Cathedral Canons. Following a Papal bull of 1430, they were required to be either nobility or graduates in law, medicine, or theology. They received orders and thereupon dispensed Canon Law and some of the civil law in Geneva, including the sumptuaries.

Each canon owned a house near the Cathedral on the wealthy Rue des Chanoines, where each property constituted a "private prebend."<sup>4</sup> This policy kept some of the most expensive<sup>5</sup> real estate in the city within the hands of the Church.

It is not surprising that both the Bishop and the Cathedral Canons favored the situation as it was in Geneva. They were of noble origins, and both groups lived at a standard markedly higher than the rest of the city's inhabitants. This ecclesiastical circle had extensive holdings both outside the city walls and within. It is estimated that approximately one-third of the total wealth of Geneva was in ecclesiastical hands. The Bishop collected two-thirds<sup>6</sup> of all the municipal tolls and duties. In spite of their financial resources, the actual output of the Bishop and Canons on projects benefitting the public weal was negligible, especially in comparison with that of the Seigneurie. The Seigneurie was required to fund all of its projects (such as the hospitals, fortifications, streets, basic cleaning and services, etc.) from its one-third of the revenues.

Clearly, the top ecclesiastical officials were not good citizens, especially in the medieval conception of city and community. They occupied expensive homes, took rents and benefices, but contributed little in return.

When the council took part in reforming the monasteries,... when it concerned itself with charity and with schools, it was with the idea that the community as such, and every individual, ought to provide for the common welfare. 7

In Geneva, as elsewhere in the Imperial cities, the bishops and canons were actually outsiders, not a true part of the

city by birth or by the acquired rights of the bourgeoisie.<sup>8</sup>  
 By 1535, priests were refusing to preach from the Gospels on orders from the Bishop. The citizens of Geneva interpreted this as the organized Church's lack of concern with the salvation of their city and their souls.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the ecclesiastical unwillingness to support their hospital obligations proved the clerical disinterest in caring for Geneva's social welfare.

The Councils echoed these concerns in the two years preceding the actual break with the Roman Catholic Church. They requested the Cathedral Canons to keep civil order during the Bishop's absence, but the Canons did nothing. The Councils castigated them with this remark:

It is well known that the canons are subjects neither of the bishop, nor of the city. 10

The Councils also said that for eight years they had been fighting to maintain the city's independence, and that during that time they

had had little help from our Bishop and Prince, from the members of the Cathedral Chapter, and from the other priests. 11

Clearly, the Councils thought that the Church was falling down in its civic obligations. This abdication of clerical responsibility in both the spiritual and material realms led the people of Geneva to conclude that an appropriation of the Church's traditional duties was the only possible course that could correct this most distressing situation.



## Chapter Three Footnotes

1. Baume was the last functioning Bishop/Prince, although Bishop Aubert succeeded him to the title before the Roman hierarchy officially abolished the office.
2. Naef, Henri. Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936. pp. 59-64. This summary of the last four Bishops of Geneva is pulled largely from these pages.
3. Ibid., pp. 64-75.
4. Each house had rents and endowments on it that provided an income to the occupant. Ibid., pp. 31-59
5. After the departure of the Church hierarchy after independence and the Reformation, these houses fell empty for want of a buyer with sufficient funds. They remained so until the arrival of wealthy French refugees two decades later.
6. Monter, E. William. Studies in Genevan Government. Geneva, 1964. p. 10.  
  
Babel, Antony. Histoire économique de Genève des origines au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, vol. 2. Geneva, 1963. pp. 610-611.
7. Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972. p. 47.
8. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
9. See pages 28-31.
10. Naef, Les origines, p. 46. RC, November 20, 1534.
11. RC, October 30, 1533.

## Chapter Four

## Political Independence and Religious Reformation

The origins and progress of the Reformation in Geneva have been examined in French through the detailed, scholarly works of Doumergue,<sup>1</sup> Roget,<sup>2</sup> Delarue,<sup>3</sup> and even the Geneva Historical and Archeological Society.<sup>4</sup> In the English language, however, historians have largely relied upon the studies done by Herbert Foster.<sup>5</sup> Although McNeil<sup>6</sup> and, more recently, Kingdon<sup>7</sup> and Monter<sup>8</sup> have focused their attention on Geneva, these men have centered their efforts on Calvin and his tenure rather than on the events which brought a Protestant party to power, the period from 1532 to 1536.

For any study of this period, a return to the original source material must provide the groundwork for an historian's propositions. Translating from secondary sources can proliferate misconceptions of the period in question; and this does appear to be the cause of some ideas evolved on this subject by English-speaking scholars.

The work done by Foster gives the impression that the Gen-

even Reformation was a politically motivated defection, forcibly engineered and orchestrated by Berne to consolidate control over the French-speaking cantons. We are to believe that this conversion was wrought because the timid Genevan Councils were anxious to maintain Berne's favor, and because Antoine Fromment and Guillaume Farel's disruptive demagoguery on Roman moral degeneracy and doctrinal errors aroused a gullible population to a revolutionary pitch.

However, an examination of the original sources, the Council Registers,<sup>9</sup> furnishes a different insight which points to the conclusion that the establishment of a reformed Church in Geneva was notably the independent work of individual Genevans. These men believed that the Roman Catholic Church in Geneva should reform itself according to a formula first prescribed by Jacques Le Fevre d'Etaples. The Registers show that these Genevans were inclined toward Protestantism more by the inept, autocratic policies of their Bishop and Church than by Bernese military influence.

Over a period of three centuries, Geneva had developed a tripartite government headed by her Bishop. He was prince of the city and its environs under the Emperor as suzerain. A "vidomne," or Bishop's deputy, administered temporal justice. At the close of the thirteenth century, the House of Savoy gained the authority to nominate this officer.

The third arm of government was the enfranchised citizenry of Geneva. The community elected councils and four syndics,

and exercised limited administrative powers. The liberties of the citizens were protected in the Franchises, a constitution won in 1387, largely through the efforts of Bishop Adhémar Fabri.

By the sixteenth century, Savoy had also gained control of the bishopric. Duke Charles III tried to subvert longstanding civil liberties and bring Geneva under his direct control by demanding the right to approve Council candidates and by administering an often arbitrary justice through his chosen vicar and Bishop. Many Genevans resented this erosion of their freedoms and civil authority. Some, the "eidguenots," sought greater independence from Savoy and a closer relationship with the Swiss Confederation. The eidguenot party engineered a rebellion in 1519 which failed miserably but gave the cause a martyr, Philibert Berthelier.

By 1526, Geneva had successfully concluded military alliances with both Fribourg and Berne. Savoy took the offensive and established a sporadic blockade outside the city walls in 1529. For the next seven years, it menaced the city and disrupted commerce. Only in 1536, and with military aid from Berne, did a decisive battle free the city.

During the ten years from 1526-1536, Geneva's religious situation altered as radically as its political status. In 1526, some seven years after Luther's initial break with Rome, no Protestant movement of any sort stirred within the city. In 1530, though, the Council arrested an itinerant Protestant

preacher for disturbing the peace. He came before the Council and defended his beliefs poorly. No magistrate defended him,<sup>10</sup> and he was quietly expelled from the city. About the same time, a detachment of Protestant Bernese camped in the city; they provoked twitterings of dismay by their flagrant disregard for sacred religious articles and rites.<sup>11</sup>

Geneva's "Lutheran" party was first mentioned by the Council Registers in 1532.<sup>12</sup> It was in connection with the Council's expulsion (on June 30) of Robert Olivétan for preaching "Lutheranism" in the city's one school. This proclamation is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it is the initial admission that a group of Protestant sympathizers existed in Geneva. Second, it forced the Councils to outline their own formulation of what constituted orthodox religious practice:

Regarding the one who is preaching the Gospel, ordered that for the present the headmaster of the Schools cease to read the Gospel, and the Vicar is requested to order that all parishes and convents and monasteries preach the Gospel truly, without mixing any fables or human inventions; and that we live in "bon accord" as our fathers did, without mingling inventions. 13

The Conseil de Deux Cents' decisions described their own understanding of the role the Council was to follow in religious matters during the next four years. It also demonstrated a philosophy regarding the proper nature and scope of religious activity in the city. First, public preaching was not to be encouraged.

Second, it was the responsibility and obligation of the Churches and the Roman Catholic clergy to preach the Gospel, the "pure Gospel...without mixing any fables or human inventions...."<sup>14</sup>

Third, Genevans should live in harmony as their forefathers had.

From this and similar decisions, it becomes clear that the Councils actually sought to implement a Reformed Catholicism as put forward in the works of Jacques Le Fevre d'Etapes (1450?-1537). They wanted to keep the historical practices and unity of the Roman Church, but to seek out any corrupt "inventions." The Councils were attempting to press the Church in Geneva to purify itself and to meet the Reformers' demands head on.

For example, on March 13, 1533, the Deux Cents gave permission to Pierre Vingle, a printer, to publish a French Bible<sup>15</sup> --but conforming to the Antwerp edition.

The Antwerp Bible was Le Fevre's translation. By authorizing its publication, the Councils were also showing their support for his ideals. Although Le Fevre, like Erasmus, concurred with Luther on many points of theology, he was never willing to countenance a formal break with Rome. This was due in part to his advanced age at the time the separatist French reforming movement actually left the Roman Church. Le Fevre died one year after Calvin's arrival in Geneva.<sup>16</sup>

Le Fevre represents in many respects a transitional phase. He stressed internal ecclesiastical reform, just like the Genevan

Councils first did. Similarly, his translation of the Bible (the first available in French) was used in Geneva only until Robert Olivétan's later "Neuchâtel" edition. Both in France and Geneva, internal reform represented an integral, but transitory, phase in the process to Reformation. It stressed accommodation, the willingness to unite on the strong points of both sides. Unfortunately, as the religious dispute polarized opinions, the middle ground disappeared.

The Council defined the references to "fables" and "human inventions"<sup>17</sup> as the Invocation of the Saints and the Virgin Mary, Purgatory, images, prayers to the dead, etc.,<sup>18</sup> all those familiar arrows slung in the Reformers' quiver. Pursuing Le Fevre's reformed Catholicism a step further, it may be inferred that living in harmony as did "our fathers"<sup>19</sup> also alludes to the Early Church, the Church institution before the introduction of those incorrect practices by the see of Rome.

The Council was not just defining limitations for the Protestants; it was also trying to admonish the local Roman Church. This intrusion earned neither the interest nor the approval of the local Church hierarchy. Although the Councils initially wanted to follow the mediating course of Le Fevre, they inevitably clashed with the Bishop of Geneva. Clearly, the confrontation was not their original intent.

By following this mild course of reform, the Councils hoped to accomplish two things. The most important was to stop the religious disturbances which had broken out in Geneva and, on several occasions, had involved large numbers of armed citi-



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zens. This civil violence was most inopportune, because Geneva was at war with her overlord, Savoy, in a fight for political independence. Civic unity and attention to the defense effort were essential to insure the city's survival.

The Council's second objective was to appease their ally, Fribourg, who accused Geneva of flirting with "Lutheranism."<sup>21</sup> In this era (1532-1533), Berne made no similar demands on, or meddling references to, Geneva's religious problems.<sup>22</sup>

At this time, the Bishop of Geneva was outside his see, enjoying the diversions of a number of European courts. Fribourg demanded that he be recalled to quell the disturbances and maintain order.<sup>23</sup> Both the Syndics and Councils agreed that they would receive the Bishop whenever he wished to return.<sup>24</sup> The Council Registers, nonetheless, consistently blame the priests and their supporters for this civil tumult. On December 31, 1532, the Registers record that to bring order, armed men delegated by the Councils approached "...toward the priests assembled on the Rue des Chanoines, to turn them aside from the violence they wanted to do."<sup>25</sup> Catholic citizens rang the city's alarm bell and began other skirmishes in an attempt to discredit the "Lutherans" in the eyes of the city's non-committed. On March 28-29, 1533, such an incident did occur; the Council Registers provide a sizable list of supporters on both sides.<sup>26</sup>

At this same time, the reforming community remained far from an inactive and persecuted minority. Council Registers attribute image-breaking, some attacks on priests, and occasional attempts to disrupt religious services on Protestant-leaning Gen-



<sup>27</sup> evans. However, these were fewer in number. More especially, the large-scale disturbances which embroiled the entire city originated from situations sparked by the priests and their supporters.

Berne submitted an official letter on March 25, 1533, demanding that preacher Guillaume Farel be allowed to proselytize openly.<sup>28</sup> The Registers show, however, that the letter was only issued after personal requests were presented in Berne by Geneva magistrates Baudichon de la Maison neuve and Claude Salomon.<sup>29</sup> Both are mentioned in records as "Lutheran" supporters;<sup>30</sup> and Salomon was even one of those attacked by priests in the disturbances of December 31, 1532.

It could not be said, even before this missive from Berne, that the Councils were totally opposed to Antoine Fromment's preaching of the Gospel. Fromment, a native of Dauphiné, carried on a ministry of home services and preaching in Geneva after Olivétan's expulsion in June, 1532. He was protected by the Syndics from the mobs during the disturbances of March 26-30, 1533. Importantly, he could have been forcibly expelled for his preaching by the Councils and banished from the city, a punishment they did mete out to others they regarded as troublemakers.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps, they found nothing to oppose theologically in his message.

The Syndics answered Berne's letter with a lengthy statement in keeping with the ideals of reformed Catholicism and public safety. First, no one could preach without a license from the Syndics, Superior, and the Conseil de Soixante. Second, all

preaching must follow the Holy Scriptures. There were to be no large outdoor meetings, and no meat was to be eaten on Friday. This edict of March 30, 1533, is the most specific attempt thus far by the Councils to regulate the religious life and development of Geneva. Their formulae, again, were Evangelical preaching and the traditional liturgy. The Councils, especially the Petit and Deux Cents, had begun to see an ever-growing need to assume responsibility for regulating the religious evolution of their city.

It would be naive to suggest that Berne would not have favored Geneva's conversion to Protestantism. However, the Bernese were crafty diplomats, hardly theological purists. They were the allies of Roman Catholic Fribourg as well; yet they never tried to lure that city away from her steadfast Catholicism. Berne's foremost consideration was having an ally at that important junction where France and Savoy met and where the pass controlling the eastern approach to the Swiss plateau was situated. Also, supplying military aid to Geneva gave Berne a good excuse for maintaining suzerain control over the other French-speaking Swiss regions between Berne and Geneva. Berne did not attempt to meddle in Genevan religious affairs until it became clear that internal pressure would support such behavior. Moreover, Berne was overextended on its western front and militarily threatened by the mountain cantons. Even worse, the 1528 Bernese Reformation decrees had led to open revolt in the Bernese Oberland. Berne's peasants were exhausted by successive years of war on different fronts.

Actually, there were many more demands by Fribourg to bring

back the Bishop and to abandon "Lutheranism" than similar requests by Berne to allow Farel and Fromment to preach openly.

The most traumatic of these religious disturbances nearly touched off a disastrous confrontation with Fribourg. On the night of May 4, 1533, Cathedral Canon Verly, the son of an influential Fribourg family, and some priests tried to excite and rally the Catholic Genevans, crying "où sont les Chrétiens? qu'ils viennent apres moi, venés, venés!"<sup>33</sup> Verly and his band attacked a group of citizens, one of whom fatally wounded Verly. Rioting continued into the early hours of the morning.<sup>34</sup>

Geneva held a lengthy trial and asked Fribourg, Berne, and the Bishop to come and make peace. Fribourg brought an army and camped in Nyon,<sup>35</sup> not far from the city. The Bishop finally did return to Geneva on July 1 to reassume his position as defined in the Franchises (that is, as Prince and chief judicial officer). One of his first acts was to release from jail three priests arrested for sounding the alarm bell and inciting the civil disturbances of May 4.<sup>36</sup>

The Registers do not picture the Bishop as frightened, vacillating, and unable to deal with the civil disruptions as some historians have maintained.<sup>37</sup> Rather, the Bishop tried to exceed his authority and force the Councils to accept the violations of Genevan civil liberties as guaranteed in the Franchises. Such accession on the Councils' part would have set dangerous precedents.

On July 2, 1533, the Bishop ordered some banishments removed. On July 3, the Deux Cents assembled the Conseil Général,

which told the Syndics to ask the Bishop not to revoke banishments without the permission of both the Syndics and the Councils. His flagrant violation of established practice inclined the Conseil de Deux Cents on July 4, 1533, to show him a copy of the "Libertée de Genève," written June 22, 1459. This was all to no avail. On July 5, the Bishop asked the Councils to travel beyond their geographical jurisdiction to help his officers arrest a number of criminals. The Councils maintained that to do so was a violation of the Treaties of St. Julien and Pay-<sup>38</sup>erne, which would provoke the Duke of Savoy.

That same day (July 5), the Bishop asked that the proceedings of the Verly case be convened in the presence of his counsel. He was answered that his request ran "...contre nos libertés." However, to "remove suspicion" and reach a compromise, the Syndics and councilmen agreed to allow representatives of Fribourg and Berne sit in, "...but only to listen, not to<sup>39</sup> question."

Two days later, the council ordered that prisoners held by the Bishop through his procurator fiscal in the Verly trial be turned over to the Councils, as the law stated. The procurator fiscal replied, however, that although he was indeed holding the nine prisoners, the Bishop had decided to begin the proceedings on his own, and the Councils could send their counsel if they wished. The Bishop told the Councils that he was beginning legal action on his own in order to see justice quickly done, at the request of the "Gentlemen from Fribourg and the relatives<sup>40</sup> and friends of the departed M. Verly."

The Councils were outraged. At a gathering after dinner the same day, they decided to send a delegation to the Bishop and to the ambassadors of Fribourg, begging that the Franchises not be violated.<sup>41</sup> However, this trend continued. The Conseil de Soixante on July 8 requested that the Syndics and five to ten "veillards" go and remind the Bishop that his actions wantonly abrogated the Franchises. Furthermore, Bishop de la Baume was asked to turn over the nine stipulated prisoners. His open disregard for Genevan judicial rights was the cause of tremendous anger throughout the city.

The arrival in Geneva of Verly's parents, relatives, and friends, plus 80 of their personal guards and servants caused some concern among the townspeople. Moreover, the armed Fribourgers outside the city walls and the official disdain they showed for the legal proceedings surrounding the case cast ominous shadows over Fribourg's real intentions. In fact, at this very time, some Fribourgers attacked a group of Genevan "Lutheran" sympathizers off hunting in the countryside. In response to Fribourg's actions and attitudes, guards were ordered posted on the city walls, and the gates shut.<sup>42</sup> Verly's father declared that he and the officials from Fribourg "...came to see justice done"<sup>43</sup> and demanded that the proceedings be accelerated.

At this tense juncture, Geneva's ambassadors went to Fribourg and Berne to ask for assistance. Fribourg, eager to establish the authority of the Bishop and get on with the trial, asked

Geneva on July 8 to "forget for now" the Franchises. Berne, on the other hand, advised that same day "...that we consent to nothing, because it is completely against our Franchises."<sup>44</sup>

Thus, Berne agreed that the Bishop of Geneva was usurping the rights of the Councils and the citizens, and offered to intercede with the Bishop and Fribourg in the Councils' behalf.

Berne carried out its promise and engineered a compromise that did preserve Genevan liberties.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, many Genevans were so incensed against Fribourg that a crowd of forty people combed the town searching for Verly's parents.<sup>46</sup> With Fribourg's troops still encamped at Nyon, the gates remained locked.<sup>47</sup>

The alienation of Geneva from its Bishop was completed when the Councils asked him to aid the defense effort against the Duke by raising money from the clergy to help pay some of the 9,900 écus due Berne by the Treaty of Payerne. Bishop de la Baume left Geneva and retired to Gex on July 14,<sup>48</sup> but he maintained his position in Geneva by correspondence. Additional requests for money were treated "lightly"<sup>49</sup> by the Bishop. In truth, Geneva was bankrupt. It could not afford to pay Berne,<sup>50</sup> and also owed money to Basle.

The leaders of the Deux Cents noted on October 30, 1533, that for eight years they had struggled to maintain their city's independence and "we have had little help from our Bishop and Prince, from the members of the Cathedral Chapter, and from the

other priests."<sup>51</sup>

Through these vexing months, the Councils still pursued a reformed Catholicism. On May 23, 1533, booksellers were permitted to sell Old and New Testaments, but not religious tracts or placards, the prime offensive weapon of the Reformers.<sup>52</sup>

Selling the Bible was essential to the Councils' belief in a Church true in its preaching to the Holy Scriptures and faithful in its liturgy to the traditional practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Eventually, the Bishop even crossed swords with the magistrates on this matter. On October 24, he told Claude Boulard (a monk) that preaching in Geneva should follow "custom," which Boulard reported to the Deux Cents. The Council, in turn, contradicted the Bishop and ordered Boulard not to preach anything that could not be "proven by the Holy Scriptures."<sup>53</sup>

Bishop de la Baume reacted to that decree by ordering, in a series of letters to the Councils on November 30, that all preaching of the Gospel be prohibited.

All the Council rose and left, completely astonished that one was prohibited from preaching the Gospel in this time when one was accustomed to reading and publishing it. <sup>54</sup>

Obviously the Bishop's letters were determined "excessive." On December 2, the Councils ordered that the preaching for Advent be exclusively from the Gospel "to avoid discord."<sup>55</sup> The members of the Episcopal Council were asked to "conform to the Franchises



and [to] the edict made last March."<sup>56</sup> This was the edict passed after the riots of March 26-30, 1533, which stressed evangelical preaching, civil harmony, and the Roman rite. Even with all of these careful proclamations, the foolhardy truculence of the Dominican preacher for Advent, Guy Furbity, would seriously enmesh the Councils with the Bernese leadership until the spring of 1534.<sup>57</sup>

By the end of 1533, the authority of the Bishop had shrunk immeasurably in the citizens' esteem. He had attempted to deprive them of their liberties as guaranteed in the Franchises. He declared himself disinterested in helping them fight for their freedom, nor would he assist in the payment for the city's defense. He clashed with the Councils over their understanding of the proper practice of religion, especially by his prohibition of evangelical preaching. Finally, in 1534, Bishop de la Baume began to openly subvert Geneva's political and religious freedom.

A riot on February 3, 1534, killed a draper and wounded a councilman. Both were evangelical sympathizers. After the Syndics quelled the riot, they were told that the two murderers, Claude Pernet and Jean Portier, were hiding in the Bishop's Geneva residence. Following an unsuccessful search, a boy overheard some priests saying that the two had taken refuge instead in the bell tower of St. Peter's Cathedral and were heavily armed. After the pair were captured, tried, and subsequently executed, letters were found in Portier's apartment (which incident-



ally was in the Bishop's town house), linking Portier, the Bishop, and the Duke in a scheme to do away completely with the Syndics and Councils, and to establish autocratic rule directly from Savoy.<sup>58</sup>

The plan was evolved by the priests, Portier, and episcopal officer Michel Guillet;<sup>59</sup> approved by the Bishop; and delineated in a series of letters written by Portier to the Cathedral Chapter and the Episcopal Council. The plot would have created a

"gouverneur" and a "lieutenant au temporal," with all power to punish criminals, [plotted] the date 12 January last, and also would have established a "Lieutenant des soldats" and "Conseillers de Fribourg" with such power against our liberties and "franchises," especially in the proceedings of criminal trials as has concerned the Syndics and citizens of Geneva from time immemorial. 60

Over the next two months the Councils also learned that the Duke planned to govern Geneva by appointing Guillet as his chief counsellor, and that the plot was to have been carried out by Pentecost,<sup>61</sup> 1534. Michel Guillet revealed in July, 1534, that the Bishop of Geneva (who was not only a Savoyard but also a courtier of the Duke) had planned to abdicate in favor of the Duke's son, "who is notoriously our enemy."<sup>62</sup> By implementing this scheme, all the Bishop and Duke's problems with the Geneva Councils would have been ended; and with them all of Gene-

va's civil liberties. The Fribourgers, who also stood to gain substantially in influence, denied all complicity.<sup>63</sup>

These events provided the catalyst within Geneva. After this disclosure there was no mistaking the intentions of the Bishop, nor his complicity with the Duke.

Curiously, Herbert Foster, in "Geneva before Calvin," makes no mention of these events, nor even of this plot's very existence. He says that the city's estrangement from the Genevan Roman Catholic hierarchy until 1533 was purely political, and following that year centered upon Geneva's rejection of clerical immorality.<sup>64</sup> Clearly, the moral corruption of the clergy was not an issue.<sup>65</sup> What did concern the Genevans was their Bishop's refusal to accept the theological and political guidelines set down by the Councils, who were the elected representatives of the Genevan people. These guidelines had been decided before Pierre de la Baume returned to Geneva in July, 1533.

Even after the discovery of the plot, Fribourg (on March 27, 1534) once more asked Geneva to reaffirm its allegiance to the Bishop and protested Farel's preaching.<sup>66</sup> The Councils reminded Fribourg that "it appears that the Bishop himself is the cause of the last war we have had;" however, they made clear their intention to maintain the alliance between the two cities.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, because of continued "Lutheran" preaching within the town and the Councils' disregard for the Bishop, the Registers record that Fribourg (on May 14) asked that the letters of

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bourgeoisie be returned and the alliance terminated.

Fribourg's behavior in this period is a bit perplexing. It was Geneva's ally before Berne, from 1519 in fact. But in the Verly case, Fribourg appears to have collaborated secretly with the Bishop and acted against the Franchises.<sup>69</sup> Also, it seems difficult to believe that Fribourg was as totally unaware of the plot of February, 1534, as its representatives claimed, owing to its close relationship with Pierre de la Baume and to its insistence that his authority be recognized. Strangely, on May 17, 1534, one of the officials from Fribourg mentioned making war on Geneva "some day."<sup>70</sup> If anything, it may be said that Fribourg's objectives did include helping free Geneva from the Duke. But its paramount aim was to keep Geneva Catholic by maintaining the Bishopric of Pierre de la Baume. Whereas Berne helped Geneva preserve its personal and political liberties, Fribourg showed no interest in this sphere at all.

Concurrent with the February 3 riot and the discovery of the episcopal plot, the Councils had to deal with yet another crisis. The Dominican preacher for Advent, Guy Furbity, delivered a vitriolic sermon against the religious practices of the Protestant Germans, which thus included the Bernese. He compared them to "Turks," "drunkards," and "blasphemers," not to mention "murderers" and "madmen."<sup>71</sup> The Bernese ambassadors protested and demanded that he be punished; the Councils agreed.<sup>72</sup>

As might be expected, the religious structure did not concur with the Councils' decisions. First it was agreed that Furbity would be tried under the Franchises, and that he would publicly retract. He, on the other hand, wished to be tried un-

der ecclesiastical law. Later, he denied even making the said assertions in his sermon. Furbity's behavior put the Genevan Councils in a very weak and defensive position with Berne.<sup>73</sup>

The Bernese presented a list of their demands to the Deux Cents on January 5, 1534, repeated on February 13 and 15, 1534. They asked that Furbity be punished, and that Guillaume Farel, a more fiery preacher than Fromment, be given unrestricted rights to preach in Geneva. And, they wanted the 9,900 écus due from the agreement of Payerne.

The Council's answer was consistent with previous responses to Bernese requests. Geneva realized that it owed Berne the debt, but could not yet afford to pay because of the wars' toll on the municipal treasury. Furbity would certainly be punished, but rather than have Farel preach, Geneva had already planned to have an evangelical Franciscan speak during Lent. The Council admitted that they feared public disturbances should Farel come.<sup>74</sup>

In spite of this rejection, Farel arrived on March 27, armed with letters from the "Messieurs de Berne." The Bernese had used Furbity to good advantage, and the Genevans felt they could not refuse the request. As the Council said to Fribourg,

if Farel preached, we have not given him a place to do so, but he took it himself, having come with the Ambassadors from Berne to maintain the honor of God and of the Lords of Berne against the "Jacopin" who preached during Advent...we must keep the good will of the Lords of Berne. 75

Guillaume Farel, a native of Dauphiné, originally believed,

like Le Fevre, in the ideals of simply purifying the Roman Church. They spent time together at Guillaume de Briçonnet's Meaux Community.<sup>76</sup> However, Farel converted to the Protestant cause at Paris and fled during the persecutions to Basle. Eventually he and the Vaudois preacher Pierre Viret converted Neuchâtel and Lausanne. Because of his religious beliefs and his ability to arouse crowds, Farel was favored by the Bernese authorities.

Although the Councils could not remove Farel, they restricted his preaching to the Couvent de la Rive area and ordered him not to preach on Holy Days.<sup>77</sup> Viret and Farel participated in some public disputations, and the rounds of riotous image-breaking that generally trailed in Farel's wake soon followed.

The Conseil de Deux Cents ordered, on May 24, 1534, that broken images should be repaired, consistent with its attitude in previous instances to continue Catholic practices. But by July 26, one month after it was reported that the Bishop and Duke were planning to meet in Chambéry to map a campaign, and nine days after artillery emplacements were seen going up against the city, the Councils issued this statement:

On which matter the Council concludes that such images ought to be removed and destroyed according to the law of God, nevertheless, these people ought not to do it without orders and permission, because it is an action belonging to a magistrate. 78

Support for the Catholic system diminished further after

a public dispute between Furbity and the three Reformers (Fromment, Farel, and Viret) on January 29, 1534. Although Furbity was a Dominican doctor from the Sorbonne, he lost every point. Sequels on June 8 and July 24 gave the Reformers a further chance to impress the public.<sup>79</sup>

These debates brought the theological issues, as seen by the Reformers, into public focus. As 1534 ended, Viret and Farel openly preached, baptized, and performed marriage ceremonies.<sup>80</sup> Bishop de la Baume excommunicated the entire city,<sup>81</sup> and the Councils decided on October 1, 1534, that the "episcopal see must be considered vacant."<sup>82</sup> As a result, many Catholic citizens departed and joined the Bishop's forces at his castle at Peney. These "Peneysans" waged war on Geneva until the castle fell in 1535. After their defeat, some Catholic Genevans were tried as traitors, including the influential Jacques Malbuisson, who was executed.<sup>83</sup>

The Duke and Bishop besieged the city from late summer until January, 1536. During these months, the Reformers assisted on the battlements while the ecclesiastical order was, at best, inactive in the defense effort. Protestant Neuchâtel prepared and sent 700 men to aid Geneva; and Berne eventually sent its troops according to the combourgeoisie.<sup>84</sup>

The Evangelicals' stature and respectability were further enhanced when Viret was poisoned on March 6, 1535, in what was publicly assumed to be a Catholic plot, although direct connections were never proven.<sup>85</sup> Popular support for the Reformers mushroomed after this and after a final great disputation spon-

sored by the Councils on June 8, 1535. The Reformers were so successful that they even converted their opponents. <sup>86</sup>

From this final forum, the Councils meant to decide Geneva's part in the Reformation. Following the debate, though, they were slow to come to conclusions. Claude Bernard and some Protestant citizens demanded a decision from the Deux Cents on June 28, 1535, claiming

that everyone knows we had a public disputation by which one clearly saw that images, the mass, and other inventions and idolatries ought to be removed...asking that we proceed to a sentence and end the affair. <sup>87</sup>

But the Councils still hesitated to produce their conclusions. Farel seized the Eglise de la Madelaine on July 30, 1535. When hauled before the Councils, who reminded him that his preaching was restricted to the "accustomed places," Farel replied "it is more important to obey God than men." <sup>88</sup> Farel and his supporters took over the Cathedral of St. Peter on August 8, 1535, and smashed the images in it. <sup>89</sup>

On August 10, Farel, Viret, and two priests came before the Deux Cents and disputed privately for the Council. After consulting with the priests in private, the Council decided to temporarily suspend the mass, to inventory all Church property, and "to write to the Lords of Berne, in order that on their response one can better find one's way." <sup>90</sup>

The Councils had delayed their decision for very practical reasons. On the 10th of August (the Registers indicate) the



Deux Cents feared a general mutiny should the mass be suspended. A year earlier,<sup>91</sup> Berne's reformer Haller had estimated that two-thirds of the Genevans favored the Catholic way.<sup>92</sup> Now (1535) the Councils assumed that substantial support for Rome must still exist. More importantly, Geneva needed civil calm and solidarity to fight the war against the Duke and the Bishop.

On August 12, 1535, a large number of Roman Catholic ecclesiastics were called before two councilmen and the Syndics, and they were asked to justify images, the mass, etc. The Syndics and Councils were "angry"<sup>93</sup> that the priests had been invited to these disputes but failed to attend and never even submitted a summa of their beliefs in absentia. The priests replied

one after another that they had nothing to answer to the summary of the disputation [of August 10], but they were simple men who had been accustomed to living as their fathers taught them, not enquiring about such things; that is why they ask to be left in the service that they performed before, offering to serve the city as they had done. 94

During the debates of August 10-12, the Councils finally made their decision. They voted to suspend the mass, and ordered "that all goods of the Churches be inventoried." On this decisive day, the Councils accepted supreme authority for directing the religious life of Geneva and began to secularize Church property.<sup>95</sup>

On August 13, some priests began leaving Geneva, many with Church property. The Councils responded by ordering



that no one leave without having permission from the Syndics, [and that those who do leave]...renounce their citizenship. 96

Over the next few months, all the religious orders departed from Geneva, and the Councillors and Syndics confiscated Church property.<sup>97</sup>

All subsequent events are merely postscripts, for by these actions the Councils had taken total control over the Church in Geneva. Early in 1536, the Deux Cents assumed the lapsed civil functions of the Bishop and the Cathedral Chapter.<sup>98</sup> After allowing support for the Reformation to consolidate for ten months, the official decision was put before the Conseil General and approved on May 21, 1536.<sup>99</sup>

The priests, by their confession of August 12, gave their final refusal to support the program of reformed Catholicism. The Councils required many months of deliberation and coaxing by Berne, Farel, and the Genevan Protestants to finally eliminate the Church structure, something which they had never planned to do. In the end, the Councils adopted the Zwinglian formula that the Church and State were one unit with both a religious and a political side. "The cement was the moral interest common to both."<sup>100</sup> This moral interest might better be described as a concern for the common good of the city. The citizens themselves unanimously approved the Councils' ultimate action.

Herbert Foster writes that immorality was a compelling reason for the Genevan Reformation.<sup>101</sup> But in the Registers,

entries which are unfavorable to the Roman Catholic Church before the suspension of the mass in August, 1535, never speak of immorality, but of the Church's inciting civil disturbances, conspiracy, murder, and failure to preach the Gospel. Complaints about moral laxity during this period appear much later. A list of moral crimes was compiled by magistrate Michel Roset, years after the Council's vote to suspend the mass.<sup>102</sup> It documented sixteen incidents of immorality committed by members of the Church from 1483 and seems to come as additional justification for the Reformation vote rather than as a compelling reason for it.<sup>103</sup>

The incidents regarding immorality in the pre-Reformation era and recorded in the Registers are few indeed. A woman who complained about seeing a prostitute in the Couvent de la Rive was herself beaten by two Franciscan monks on May 4, 1534.<sup>104</sup> The Councils asked on May 31, 1534, that loud, frenzied dancing be done inside, because of "tumulte"<sup>105</sup> rather than because of any moral strictures. With such noise, the guard had difficulty hearing the approach of invaders! A similar proclamation for dancing was made on April 16, 1535, "pour bien de paix."<sup>106</sup> The departure of the monks from St. Victor's priory with their prostitutes and concubines (at the time the monastery was pulled down to build city fortifications) is mentioned, but without great outcry against clerical indecency.<sup>107</sup> These are about the only references in the Registers decrying immorality, for one reason or another, before the vote to suspend the mass.

Berne's attempt to assume the position of Vidomne and Prince, which Foster writes of, <sup>108</sup> occurred in February, 1536, seven long months after the Councils had voted to terminate the Roman rite. By this time, the Roman Catholic Church had actually ceased to function; by this time, many of the clergy had already left the city. The Councils had assumed nearly total control over the city's social institutions, the religious life of Geneva, and all Church property. The official decisions to embrace the Reformation in May, 1536, were all post facto.

The deference to the opinion of the "Messieurs de Berne," mentioned in the Registers on August 10, 1535, <sup>109</sup> which Foster finds as evidence for Geneva's pursuing whatever Berne commanded, must be understood in its context. The Councils had long been stalling to allow support to consolidate for their final vote. Although they sought Berne's good will and probably its moral support as well, it was, after all, the Councils' decisions which effected the Reformation in Geneva. With that in mind, one questions Foster's conclusion that the same men who fought so bitterly with Savoy, the Bishop, Fribourg, and Berne to preserve their political independence, and with the Bishop and Fribourg to pursue their own religious life, would so willingly surrender control of that life to the Bernese.

The Registers maintain that Geneva's Councils chartered a course from 1532 which included evangelical preaching, traditional Roman Catholic religious practices, political freedom, and personal liberties. However, Pierre de la Baume forbade

Geneva's monks and priests to preach the Gospel and tried to deprive the Genevans of their rights as guaranteed in the Franchises. Eventually, he waged war on them and allied himself with their ancient enemy, the Duke of Savoy.

The priests, for their part, also refused to follow the Councils. They displayed a minimal theological understanding and showed no inclination to adopt evangelical preaching. Surprisingly, they participated very little in the public disputations arranged to justify their beliefs, even when their very way of life was at stake. The priests were at the center of many public disturbances, and by 1535, many deserted Geneva for the Bishop and the Duke.

Judging by its actions, Catholic Fribourg demonstrated only a secondary interest in preserving its ally's political independence. Yet that was central to Geneva's conflict with Savoy. Instead, Fribourg directed its energies to perpetuating the episcopal system. The discovery of the plot between the Bishop and the Duke, the success of which would have given Fribourg two powerful positions in Geneva, must have been bitterly disappointing to many.

In summary, the Registers record that Geneva's Roman Catholic influences failed to work for the common good of the community as defined by the Councils. Following the departure of the Bishop, many Catholic Genevans left to actually fight against their city. They did not support religious reform, nor would they work for political freedom.

On the other side, Berne proved itself a reliable ally who worked to preserve personal liberties and the freedom of the city. Berne certainly did want Protestant preachers in the city, but never threatened to dissolve the alliance if they were not installed. Fribourg, for its part, had often threatened to withdraw support and eventually did.

There is nothing to suggest that Geneva's Reformation was a decision of political expediency, "to take sides with the strongest," as Foster says.<sup>110</sup> Certainly Geneva felt pressured by Berne to permit Farel's preaching, but that in itself was but one incident in a four year evolution to the vote of May 21, 1536.

Had the Bishop and the priests been willing to accept some reforms, the Bernese would never have been able to push Farel on the Genevans. In fact, internal demands for Protestant preaching mounted as time went on and provided that greatest impetus within the city for religious reform. Had there never been any native support for the preachers, Berne would have been forced to keep a low profile, as it did in the religious life of Fribourg. For Geneva, political considerations coincided with religious ones, but the Genevans did not surrender their religious freedom for political gain or opportunism.

In actuality, the Genevan Reformation was not unique. Even Berne's military conquest of the Vaud did not provide the crucible wherein Geneva's Roman Catholic Church melted away. The outstanding analysis of the Reformation in the Imperial Cities provided by Bernd Moeller and supplemented by Stephen Ozment<sup>111</sup> helps reach

the truth of this proposition. For Geneva was indeed an Imperial City, and its progress toward Reformation followed the same pattern as was seen in its sister cities to the north and east. This progression was retarded in time by Geneva's distance from the major trade routes over which the new ideas were carried.

As in the other Imperial Cities, the overriding concern of the native burgher (bourgeois) was the collective salvation of the city and its citizens. When the Church failed to provide preaching of the Gospel, radical change was necessary to stem the tide toward what the bourgeois saw as a collective damnation.

Consider the similarity between Geneva's 1532-1533 demand that the Gospel be preached in its purity and this 1524 Constance edict, to preach

...according to true Christian understanding, without any admixture of human traditions that have no basis in the holy biblical Scriptures,...and especially to omit all fables, useless little things. 112

The alienation of the Church throughout the Imperial Cities from the bourgeois was also a common theme. By 1535, the Councils noted that during their eight year struggle for independence they had received no support from the Bishop of Geneva, the Cathedral Chapter, or the priests.<sup>113</sup> One year earlier, the Councils rebuked the Cathedral Canons, saying "it is well known that the canons are subjects neither of the bishop nor of the city."<sup>114</sup> Moeller says that this conflict between Church and

city was an old one, for the Church officials were not ordinarily citizens and did not work in harmony with the communal will. 115  
 The Reformers eliminated this tension by making the Genevan Church a city Church, and harmonizing the Church's external policy with the policy of the city Councils.

Both Moeller and Ozment agree that the Reformation in the Imperial Cities passed through three stages. In the first, the few indigenous Protestant sympathizers gathered around a preacher and demanded before the Councils that he be allowed to preach freely. Next, the Protestant party tried to ensure the preacher's safety and gain converts in the middle strata of the bourgeois. Finally, the government consolidated and supervised the resulting change, usually through a series of debates and broadly-based votes. The Councils' supervisory role ensured a direct and orderly transition of religious and social institutions. Clearly, the description of Geneva's stages to Protestantism follow this pattern precisely. 116

The Reformation, concludes Moeller, was never the work of a town government.

For the most part, the magistrates were anything but a motive force behind the Reformation. They were more often a brake ....we should realize the councillors felt personally responsible for making peace. 117

In Geneva, as elsewhere, the councillors tried to maintain peace by placating both groups. Although the Genevan Reformation was officially accepted by a vote in 1536, by the time the vote was actually taken, the Reformation was a fait accompli.



Both historians also agree that the theology of Bucer and 118 Zwingli was in part a by-product of their own social environment. Both men's conceptions of membership in the institutional Church paralleled the contemporary sense of belonging to the city, something Luther could not understand. The Eucharist took on the additional conception of a "badge of membership" in the corporate body which was the medieval city. Emphasis was placed on educational and social welfare to improve the common weal of the city. The Reformed conceptions of the clergy brought the cities' belief in republican government to the ecclesiastical organization. It was not surprising, then, that the Bucer-Zwingli Reformation, rather than a Lutheran one, triumphed in Geneva. Geographical location, needless to say, also played a large part in the direction taken by the Genevan Reformation. As the years and events unfolded, Berne and the Vaud established themselves as reliable allies with similar conceptions of personal liberties and religious practice.

In summary, the normal process of Reformation within the Imperial Cities was at work here in Geneva. Berne aided the Protestant side, but less obviously and forcefully than Fribourg tried to assist the Roman Catholic sympathizers. In the end of the day, the alienation of Geneva by its spiritual and secular overlord left the magistrates no other option but to adopt the Reformation. Geneva became at once independent and Protestant, creating a permanent association between the two in the minds of its citizens.

The Registers show the Genevan Councils' understanding of



the proper functioning of the Church, formulated as early as June, 1532. It included many elements of the French humanist reforming movement, such as expressed at Meaux. Le Fevre's Bible was published and sold in bookshops, and the Councils asked the Church to justify its practices and doctrine with Biblical references. Even Geneva's Reformers, Farel and Fromment, spent considerable time in French Roman Catholic reform circles before their decision to convert to Protestantism. Unfortunately, the same belligerent attitudes in the religious hierarchy that doomed the Meaux Community <sup>119</sup> also befell Geneva, and impeded the Councils' expression of those religious beliefs. Later, in 1536, the Councils began many enlightened social institutions, similar in form to those that had developed at Meaux. They founded the new general hospital, began universal primary education, and reformed the prison system. Perhaps Farel himself acted as a catalyst for these changes.

The Registers also show a direct relationship between the ecclesiastical structure's recalcitrance and the Councils' expropriations of their authority. The Councils took control reluctantly, trying to work through the Genevan Roman Catholic Church rather than around it. After episcopal acts such as the prohibition of preaching and reading the Gospel, the plot of February, 1534, and the final excommunication order, largescale acquisitions of Church authority by the Councils became a necessity. The Councils drifted closer to Protestantism with each successive attack on personal liberties and their understanding of religious prac-

tice, not with each Bernese demand.

The Church's behavior served to alienate many of the Catholic faithful, and left those who wanted the mass in a weakened position to try and support it. The Registers fail to record any outbreak of civil reaction even after the decision to suspend the mass. Fribourg's attitude toward Geneva's civil liberties further discredited the Catholic Church, and made being a patriotic libertarian and a Roman Catholic seem mutually exclusive.

As the years progressed, the association deepened. Protestantism was seen as the natural ally of political freedom, while Roman Catholicism, represented by Savoy and Spain, became the embodiment of tyranny and oppression. Geneva was unique in many ways. It became a city-state just as most other city republics were succumbing to princes and emperors. And, it had become independent and Protestant at the same time. The collective consciousness of the city was steeped in the connection between both new beginnings.

Eventually, then, the citizens and the Councillors failed to see the value of maintaining a hierarchy that had contradicted and obstructed their wishes for four full years. No great public outcry at the clergy's moral abuses materialized; the negative reaction came in response to a Church and a Bishop whose policies were even farther from their wishes in 1536 than they were in 1532.

## Chapter Four Footnotes

1. Doumergue, Emile. Jean Calvin: les hommes et les choses de son temps, 7 vols. Lausanne, Neuilly sur Seine, 1899-1927.

Le caractère de Calvin, 3 vols. Paris, 1921.

2. Roget, Amédée. L'église et l'état à Genève du vivant de Calvin. Geneva, 1867.

Histoire du peuple de Genève, 7 vols. Geneva, 1870-1883.

Les Suisses et Genève, 2 vols. Geneva, 1864.

3. Delarue, Henri. "La première offensive évangélique à Genève, 1532-1533." BHG, vol. 9, (1948), pp. 83-102.

4. Jullien, Alexandre (ed.). Histoire de Genève. Geneva, 1951. See especially Edouard Favre's chapter (171-186), and Henri Naef's chapter (187-217).

Another good source, especially for the background to the Genevan Reformation, is the following:

Naef, Henri. Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936.

An invaluable companion for related events in the Vaud is:

Vuilleumier, Henri. Histoire de l'église réformée du Pays de Vaud sous le régime bernois, 4 vols. Lausanne, 1927-1940.

5. Foster's work on the Genevan Reformation cited in this work is:

Foster, Herbert D. "Geneva Before Calvin (1387-1536). Antecedents of a Puritan State." AHR, vol. 8, no. 2, (January, 1903), pp. 217-240.

Another work on Geneva follows:

"Calvin's Programme for a Puritan State in Geneva." Harvard Theological Review, vol. 1, no. 4, (October, 1908). pp. 391-434.

6. McNeil, John T. The History and Character of Calvinism. New York, 1954.
7. Kingdon, Robert M. "The Control of Morals in Calvin's Geneva." The Social History of the Reformation. Buck, Lawrence P. and Jonathon W. Zophy (eds.). Columbus, Ohio, 1972. pp. 3-16.

Kingdon, Robert M. "The Deacons of the Reformed Church in Calvin's Geneva." Mélanges... Henri Meylan. Geneva, 1970. pp. 81-90.

"The Economic Behaviour of Ministers in Geneva in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century." ARG, vol. 50, (1959). pp. 30-39.

Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France 1559-1563. Geneva, 1956.

"Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva" AHR, vol. 76, no. 1, (January, 1971). pp. 50-69

8. Monter, E. William. "L'amortissement de la dette publique genevoise au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle." BHG, vol. 13, no. 3, (1966). pp. 267-282.

Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967.

"Le change public à Genève, 1568-1581." Mélanges... Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963. pp. 265-290.

"Crimes and Punishments in Calvin's Geneva" ARG, vol. 64, (1973). pp. 281-287.

Studies in Genevan Government (1536-1605). Geneva, 1964.

Monter, in Calvin's Geneva, gives the best précis available in English of the years 1532-1536. He also recognizes that too much attention has been paid to Calvin at the expense of Geneva and its own traditions.

9. I have worked from two compilations of the Council Registers. After first researching from the Extraits, I checked the references against the complete set.

Flournois, Jacques. Extraits des Registres Publics, 1532-1536. Geneva, 1854.

Emile Rivoire, Victor van Berchem, and Frederick Gardy. Registres du Conseil de Genève, vol. 1-13. Geneva, 1900-1940.

Only volumes 12-13 cover the Reformation years. Apportioning weight to all the original source material available from 1530-1536 quickly confronts the researcher. In addition to the Council Registers, three personal chronicles from that era survive:

Bonivard, Francois. Chroniques de Genève (pub. by Gustave Revilliod). Geneva, 1867.

Fromment, Antoine. Les Actes et Gestes merveilleux de la cité de Genève. Geneva, 1854.

Jussie, Jeanne de. Le levain de Calvinisme, où commencement de l'hérésie de Genève. Chambéry, 1640 (approx.).

All three have serious historical limitations. Bonivard wrote his volume after having been appointed city archivist during his latter years. The Chronicles are assembled recollections a decade (1542-1546) after the event. Even worse from a standpoint of accuracy, Bonivard was imprisoned at Chateau Chillon until the Bernese siege of 1536; thus, all his information is second-hand. His accuracy in general has come under fire in recent years. For a summary of the dangers of using Bonivard as a source, see pages 131-132.

Fromment, like Bonivard, wrote years after the events he described. In another parallel, neither manuscript was published (because Calvin thought their style was too coarse and unpolished) until the mid-nineteenth century. Unlike Bonivard, Fromment was an eyewitness to most of the events he described. Although his sequence of events sometimes differs from the Registers, no substantial problems exist. His is a very human account of this period from the evangelical side.

Jeanne de Jussie poses greater problems. She was Mother Superior to a cloistered order. Other than the events she described around the convent, her sources were also second-hand. Her book provides a subjective apology for the Roman Church in the Reformation era, and often an interesting companion to events Fromment interpreted.

In view of the aforementioned situation, the Registres du Conseil are the most reliable source available.

10. Delarue, "La première," pp. 83-88.
11. Ibid., and Jussie, Le levain, pp. 11-14.
12. July 25, 1532 (RC). RC, December 31, 1532: "Syndics convened the Council after dinner...and called...and others from the party of the new Preacher."
13. RC, June 30, 1532.
14. Ibid.
15. RC, March 13, 1533. Jean Chautemps probably bankrolled this venture (Delarue, "La première," pp. 100-101).
16. Bedouelle, Guy. Le Fevre d'Etapes et l'intelligence des Ecritures. Geneva, 1976.

Renaudet, Augustin. Préréforme et humanisme à Paris pendant les premières guerres d'Italie (1494-1517). Paris, 1953.

17. RC, June 30, 1532, and often repeated. For example, RC, March 30, 1533: "Without novelties of word or action." RC, April 2, 1533: "to live according to our customs." RC, December 2, 1533: "ordered...that the preacher for Advent only preach the Gospel." RC, February 13, 1534: "we ask only that he preach the Holy Gospel and the true words of Our Lord."
18. RC, February 16, 1534 and August 9, 1535. The use of images and other Roman practices was frequently discussed in Council meetings in late 1534 and throughout 1535.
19. RC, June 30, 1532. Other references to following established Genevan practice follow: RC, March 30, 1533: "live by the past without making innovations." RC, April 2, 1533: "let us live according to our customs."
20. RC, June 8, 1532 (a fight about some placards). RC, July 2, 1532 (see Roget, Suisses, vol. 2, pp. 19-96). RC, December 31, 1532. RC, February 14-15, 1533. RC, March 28-30, 1533. RC, May 4, 1533. RC, July 14, 1533.
21. RC, July 25, 1532. RC, May 20, 1533.
22. The Bernese were primarily motivated by politics in this case, not theology. Berne needed an ally first, not a confessional partner.
23. RC, July 25, 1532. This is the earliest reference, but it was repeated, especially RC, May 20, 1533, after Verly's death.
24. RC, July 25, 1532. RC, May 20, 1533.
25. The violence of the priests was recounted on a number of occasions. RC, December 31, 1532. RC, March 26-30, 1532. RC, May 4, 1533. RC, May 9, 1533 (some priests were examined in Verly's death inquest). RC, July 7, 1533. RC, May 4, 1534. RC, May 16, 1534 and July 12, 1533 (some priests rang the alarm bell to arouse the citizens to riot). See also Fromment, Les Actes, pp. 47-64, 84-86.
26. RC, March 28-29, 1533.
27. RC, July 2, 1532 (broke an image). RC, March 7, 1533 (Baudichon de la Maison neuve attacked a priest). RC, July 14, 1533 (another image broken). May 4, 1534 (a woman taunted a priest caught cavorting with a prostitute).



28. See Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 223.
29. RC, March 25, 1533.
30. RC, March 28, 1533. See also Roget, Suisses, vol. 2, p. 27.

Baudichon was unquestionably one of the most interesting personalities to emerge from this era of Genevan history. Roget considered Baudichon a mere hot-head; he claimed Baudichon's motivation was personal aggrandizement, rather than religious conviction. On the night of February 18, 1510, Roget noted that Baudichon and his brother were both arrested for disorderly conduct.

If he was mercurial, Baudichon also had his redeeming merits. Roget also noted that Baudichon was regarded by his contemporaries in reasonably high esteem, for at one point he was chosen leader of a work detail in 1513 that repaired the city fortifications (Suisses, vol. 2, pp. 9-10). Baudichon served regularly on the Conseil de Soixante and served on many select committees.

He came into his own, however, in the Reformation era. On March 7, 1533 he insulted a priest. At another time, the Deux Cents ordered the Soixante assembled and ordered that "no one call Baudichon de la Maison neuve." (RC, July 7, 1534).

Verly's parents attacked him and his brother on August 5, 1534, and a group of priests followed up with an assault of their own on December 22, 1534. Shortly thereafter, he was imprisoned in Lyons while on a business trip on charges of heresy. The city Councils had to ransom him from the Lyonnais. (Fromment, Les Actes, p. 75).

During the war, he was honored with the prestigious military post "Captaine générale" (RC, October 9, 1535). In spite of this, he was arrested for foraging in the countryside after the deliverance by Berne, when food was still in short supply.

Later in life, he often served as chief negotiator for Geneva to buy grain in foreign markets, and gained a reputation for his ability in business affairs. (See pp.

Whatever final estimation is made of Baudichon, what remains beyond all dispute is that no individual Genevan worked with greater effort and constancy for the Reformation.

31. RC, December 2, 1533. Alexandre du Moulin, a Parisian, was banished for life for shouting in public that a recent sermon by a Roman priest violated the "Holy Letters." In the same decree, Fromment was ordered imprisoned if he could be found, but the sentence was never carried out. Fromment wrote of his escapes in Les Actes, pp. 45-64, 84-86, 90-104.

It may be possible that this was the same Alexandre du Moulin from Paris whom some think contributed to Calvin's understanding of interest-taking (See p. 458 footnote 29).

32. An excellent summary of Berne's own political situation and motivation can be gleaned from the following article:

Muralt, Leo von. "Berns Westpolitik von 1525-1531." Zwingliana, vol. 4, no. 2, (1927), pp. 470-476.

Muralt does not contradict this premise. Berne's primary interest was conquest of the Vaud and continued friendship with Fribourg, since Berne was blocked on all other fronts and both Oberwalden and the Valais threatened war.

33. RC, May 4, 1533. This was not the first time Verly had been involved in religious violence. Roget recorded that on June 8, 1532 Verly trampled an evangelical placard. Jean Goulaz, a friend of Baudichon, raised another. Verly then struck Goulaz, who in turn drew his sword and cut the Canon's arm. Goulaz was ordered to pay a 25 ecus fine.

The struggle between both sides had support from the allies, though Fribourg was more vocal about the prohibition of evangelical preaching than was Berne to further it. To actually count references from both is difficult, because often the same demand was repeated every day for a period. Also, the difference between a direct demand and a reference amid a long summary of other matters is difficult to weight. Without doubt, though, Fribourg insisted that evangelical preaching cease first in June, 1532. Berne did not begin making its own demands in earnest until January, 1534, mainly after the Furbity incident. Nevertheless, the count follows:

Fribourg, that Geneva avoid "Lutheranism": RC from June 24, 1532; July 25, 1532; February 9, 1533; February 21, 1533; July 4, 1533; December 27, 1533; January 8, 1534; January 11, 1534; January 12, 1534; February 7, 1534; February 10, 1534; February 11, 1534; February 22, 1534; March 27, 1534; March 29, 1534; March 30, 1534; April 11, 1534; April 13, 1534; May 1, 1534; May 14, 1534.



Berne, to allow Farel, Viret, and/or Fromment to preach: RC from March 25, 1533; March 26, 1533; December 23, 1533; January 7, 1534; January 10, 1534; January 27, 1534; February 10, 1534; February 11, 1534; February 15, 1534; February 22, 1534; March 7, 1534.

34. See Geisendorf, Paul-Frédéric. "Le meutre du Canon Werly." Almanach du Vieux Genève, vol. 25, (1949-1950). pp. 17-23.
35. RC, July 8, 1533.
36. RC, July 2, 1533. The Vicar General had prohibited the procurator fiscal from assisting with the questioning of the three priests on May 18, 1533 (RC).
37. Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 222.
38. RC, July 5, 1533. The "Arrêt de St.-Julien" was a cease-fire negotiated by nine Swiss cantons between Savoy and Geneva's allies on October 19, 1530. In case of aggression by the Duke, the Vaud was to become property of Berne and Fribourg, who were then entitled to come to the assistance of Geneva. However, if the Genevans violated the pact, they were to be abandoned to the Duke by their allies, and the Duke's lands around Geneva were to be restored. In either case, Geneva was to pay Berne and Fribourg for defense already rendered. Berne's share was 9,900 gold écus.

This cease-fire was formalized into a treaty by the "Sentence de Payerne," signed December 31, 1530. This time, eight Swiss cantons acted as negotiators. The Duke was required to pay Berne and Fribourg for war damages he had incurred. The temporal authority of the Bishop of Geneva was to be recognized, and Savoy retained the office of vidomne within the city. These compromises legitimized the existing status quo at the time of these agreements. See Histoire de Genève, pp. 191-193.

39. RC, July 5, 1533.
40. RC, July 7, 1533.
41. RC, July 8, 1533.
42. Baudichon was one of the "Lutherans" attacked by "cavaliers" RC, August 5, 1534; RC, July 7, 1533.

The gates were ordered shut: (RC, July 6, 1533; RC, July 10, 1533).

43. RC, July 7, 1533.
44. RC, July 8, 1533.
45. RC, July 9-10, 1533. See also Rivoire, Registres, vol. 12, p. 308, footnote 1.
46. RC, July 14, 1533.
47. RC, July 10, 1533.
48. RC, October 24, 1532; RC, August 30, 1533; RC, August 31, 1533; RC, September 1, 1533; RC, October 31, 1533.
49. RC, October 30, 1533.
50. RC, October 11, 1532; RC, January 2, 1533.
51. RC, October 30, 1533.
52. RC, May 27, 1533.
53. RC, October 24, 1533. Claude Boulard was the rector (procureur) at the Couvent de la Rive, the Franciscan monastery. See Rivoire, Registres, vol. 12, p. 370, footnote 1.
54. RC, November 30, 1533. See also Rivoire, Registres, vol. 12, p. 390, footnote 1; and vol. 12, p. 395, footnote 1.
55. RC, December 2, 1533.
56. Ibid.
57. See pages 65-66.
58. RC, February 6, 1534; RC, February 8, 1534.
59. Guillet, ironically, was the last rector of the Hôpital de l'Euchariste. See p. 21, footnote 11.
60. RC, February 10, 1534.
61. RC, May 7, 1534.
62. RC, July 7, 1534.
63. RC, February 11, 1534.
64. Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 223.
65. See Ozment, Stephen E. The Reformation in the Cities. New Haven, 1975, pp. 8-12. Ozment does not believe that popular dissatisfaction with clerical immorality played a decisive role in the the decision to embrace the Reformation anywhere in the Imperial Cities. Geneva would certainly prove him correct.

66. RC, March 27, 1534.
67. RC, March 29-30, 1534.
68. RC, May 14, 1534.
69. On July 7, 1533, the Bishop of Geneva took control of the Verly proceedings "himself at the request of the Officials from Fribourg." (RC, July 7, 1533). The following day, the day, the Syndics went with the Bernese ambassadors to the Bishop "where had come a committee from Fribourg... who in the presence of the Bishop complained of us...and asked for justice." (RC, July 8, 1532).
70. RC, May 17, 1534.
71. RC, January 27, 1534.
72. RC, January 27-29, 1534.
73. RC, January 25, 1534; RC, February 11, 1534; RC, February 15, 1534; RC, February 20, 1534; RC, February 22, 1534. The case prominently occupied the Council Registers during January-June, 1534. Froment gave a fair summary of Furbity's vacillations in Les Actes, pp. 87-89. Eventually, Furbity spent two years in jail.
74. RC, February 20, 1534.
75. RC, March 29, 1534.
76. Meaux, a diocese near Paris, was the locus of the French Christian humanist reforming movement. A number of the people who strongly influenced Geneva's reformed Church, especially Farel and Le Fevre, spent time there. Eventually, fears of the "Lutheran heresy" led royal authorities and the conservative faculty at the Sorbonne to disband Meaux.
77. RC, April 2, 1534.
78. RC, July 26, 1534.
79. "La Dispute de Rive" is well documented in Histoire de Genève, pp. 201-202, and Roget, Suisses, vol. 2, pp. 145-147.
80. Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 224.
81. Done August 22, 1534. See Histoire de Genève, p. 200. See also Rivoire, Registres, vol. 13, p. 75, footnote 1.
82. Done October 1, 1534. See Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 225. Also, Histoire de Genève, p. 201.

83. RC, April 2, 1535; RC, July 13, 1535; RC, July 17 1535.
84. The Neuchâtel contingent of volunteers, whose number is put at only 500-600 by the Histoire de Genève, won a victory although vastly outnumbered at Gingins on October 10, 1535; this temporarily broke the seige. Histoire de Genève, pp. 200-202. See also Roget, Suisses, vol. 2, pp. 172-175. Also, Fromment, Les Actes, pp. 191-199. The approach of "Swiss" troops was reported to the Council September 22, 1535 (RC, September 22, 1535).
85. Histoire de Genève, pp. 202-203.
86. Roget, Les Suisses, vol. 2, pp. 144-145. One Roman Catholic supporter at the debate, Pierre Caroli, was a Dominican doctor of theology at the Sorbonne. Although he publically converted, later in his life Caroli returned to the Roman Church.
87. RC, June 28, 1535.
88. RC, July 30, 1535.
89. RC, August 8, 1535.
90. RC, August 10, 1535.
91. Located in a letter to Martin Bucer dated September 22, 1534.
92. Quoted in Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 225.
93. RC, August 12, 1535.
94. Ibid.
95. RC, August 10-12, 1535.
96. RC, August 13, 1535. See also RC, August 15, 1535.
97. RC, August 16, 1535.
98. Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 227.
99. RC, May 21, 1536.
100. Vuilleumier, Histoire, vol. 1, p. 211.
101. Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 221.
102. Contained within Flournois, Extraits, pp. 101-105.
103. The complete was: "De l'impudicité des gens de l'Eglise de Genève avant la Reformation."

104. RC, May 4, 1534. It should be noted that this woman spied the prostitute emerging from the gates of the Franciscan monastery. There appears to be nothing to indicate that the prostitute's visit was with a purely spiritual intent.
105. RC, May 31, 1534.
106. RC, April 16, 1535.
107. RC, August 18, 1534.
108. Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 228.
109. Ibid., p. 225, See also RC, August 10, 1535.
110. Foster, "Geneva Before," p. 224, footnote 2. This assumption is also questioned by Henri Naef, Les Origines, pp. 359 ff.
111. Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972.
- Ozment, Stephen E. The Reformation in the Cities. New Haven, 1975.
112. "Instruction to All Preachers on How the Gospel of Christ Is to Be Preached and Taught in Constance," (February, 1524). Quoted in Moeller, Imperial, p. 149.
113. RC, October 30, 1533.
114. RC, November 20, 1534. For further amplification, see Chapter 3, which discusses the Genevan ecclesiastical structure.
115. Moeller, Imperial, pp. 42-49.
116. Ibid., pp. 62-63, and Ozment, The Reformation, pp. 130-131.
117. Moeller, Imperial, p. 61.
118. Zwingli actually served as an alderman in Zürich.
119. Meaux was disbanded by King Francis I at the urgings of the conservative faculty at the Sorbonne.

New Genevan social institutions centered around the new Hôpital-Général, which consolidated eight medical and social care centers, fed the poor, cared for orphans, provided poor relief and organized charity, plus gave a number of other services. The Councils also joined two prisons, began universal primary education, and developed a more progressive attitude toward the provision of social services than had previously existed in Geneva. For a brief summary, see: Kingdon, Robert M.

"Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva." AHR, vol. 76,  
no. 1, (January, 1971), pp. 50-69.

## Chapter Five

## The Consolidation and Reform of the Hospital System

In spite of the disruptions of war and a faltering economy (which prevailed throughout the decade of 1526-1536), Geneva's citizens created many new political, social, and religious institutions; most of these have in fact continued with but little alteration down to the present. These institutions were in large part a response to the unusual demands of the day, and often constituted a radical break with the past. It is important to note that the schools and hospitals were all created by the secular Councils and were directly answerable to them. They no longer owed their foundation or preservation to the Dukes of Savoy or to the Church, as had often been the case prior to 1526.

By 1535, Geneva was fighting for its independence from both the Duke and the Bishop, a war which severely strained the meager resources of the city. Soldiers and civilians, injured in the war and by the Duke's pillaging, were all taking up beds in the hospitals, which had already been filled to capacity as early as 1458. Equally important, the war produced such an econ-



omic crisis for the city that the number of destitute dependent upon civic charity increased tremendously.

Blockades by the Duke, Savoyard raids into the hinterlands which provided Geneva's grain, and the general European rise in food prices during these years exacerbated the wound opened by raising and caring for troops. Geneva paid for the billeting and salaries of her allies' troops as well as for her own. Moreover, the Genevans still owed Berne 9,900 écus from the earlier Payerne agreement. Money to fund the hospitals must, therefore, have been in short supply. Added to all of this was the general breakdown of the religious agencies, the confraternities and the Cathedral Chapter, which were responsible for the hospitals. Social services were further impeded by the antagonistic stance of the Church and Bishop Pierre de la Baume, who clearly supported the Duke of Savoy and his claim to authority over the Councils and Geneva's citizenry.

As early as 1507, a monk suggested the consolidation of the seven various hospitals into one. In 1531, the Conseil de Soixante ordered that someone "research the laws of the hospitals and that one put them all the hospitals in only one to succor the poor." <sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, it was not until the reforming measures of 1535 that decisive action was finally taken regarding the hospital situation. On September 29th of that year, the Petit Conseil introduced in the Deux Cents a compilation of articles favoring a total reorganization of this out-moded and overcrowded system. The basics of the document provided for the con-



solidation of the seven hospitals and the Pyssis Omnium Animarum Purgatorii into two. One was to be situated in the former convent of Ste.-Claire and was designated to cover the needs of the citizens of Geneva. The second, near the Pont du Rhône<sup>2</sup>, was to be used by travellers and wayfarers.

On October 5, the Council took up the specific format for the main hospital. Five procureurs, members of the Conseil de Deux Cents, were established to oversee the Hôpital-Général and select one man (again to be called the "hospitallier"<sup>3</sup>) to live permanently in residence. The procureurs also named guardians for the public wards and acted as a sort of legal watchdog by providing some notarial services for the poor.<sup>4</sup>

Claude Salomon, called "Pasta," was elected by the Deux Cents on November 12, 1535, as the first new hospitalier. Salomon is regularly mentioned in the Council Registers as a long-standing proponent of the preachers. As early as December 31, 1532, he was attacked by priests for his evangelical sympathies. In March, 1533, he travelled with Baudichon de la Maison neuve to Berne to petition for Farel to preach in Geneva. Salomon frequently provided food and accommodation for Fromment and Farel, as well as whatever other aid he could to further their efforts.<sup>5</sup> In keeping with his charitable nature, he sold most of his goods upon assuming his position as hospitalier in order to help the poor with whom he was now to be living and working directly.

Salomon and his wife, who was approved as his associate in the hospital, were permitted to live in the institution, amidst the remainder of their belongings, unless complaints were raised about their competence. If approval were not given to the Salomons' work and conduct, they could then remove their property and themselves and return to their previous domicile.

On November 14, 1535, the Conseil General approved all the measures taken thus far by the Deux Cents for the founding and funding of the hospitals, as well as their statement of both philosophic and pragmatic objectives. In addition, five days later, the Councils assigned Claude Roset, "secrétaire de la ville," and Andre Viennois, a notary, to research laws applicable to the new hospital system.<sup>6</sup>

Funds for the new hospital were provided out of Roman Church property. The Council decrees to suspend the mass on August 10, 1535, had also mandated "that all goods of the Churches be inventoried."<sup>7</sup> The priors of the confraternities were constrained to turn over their organizations' property to the new hospital procureurs.<sup>8</sup> The Council further "ordered that no one be permitted to depart without showing permission from the Syndics,"<sup>9</sup> a means by which clerics could be prevented from leaving Geneva with Church property in their possession. Even before this decree, many had been reported absconding with ecclesiastical goods. Those who remained in Geneva were most uncooperative, and unwilling to relinquish their Churches' property to the civil authorities. The situation became such that the procureurs of

"l'hôpital des pauvres" (another name applied to the Hôpital-Général) had to demand the cloth and furniture from the Cathedral of St. Peter and the neighboring parishes be given them for the use of the poor.<sup>10</sup>

On November 12, the procureur of l'Eglise de la Madeleine actually refused to give his parish's goods to the hospital; in fact, the priests of the parish were accused of trying to start an insurrection over the incident. Thereupon, the Councils ordered all Churches to take their goods directly to the hospital, although at the same time they also offered the priests a final opportunity to prove the evangelical preachers wrong.<sup>11</sup>

In response to the continuing refusal by the Roman Church to lawfully surrender its property, two notaries were delegated to research and inventory all the goods belonging to the parishes and old hospitals. Thus, by the close of 1535, Church property was slowly falling under direct civic control. The precious metal and gems from the Churches were taken to the "Maître de Monnoye" to be used in minting the city's new currency.<sup>12</sup> Any goods which could actually be used within the hospital were brought there. During the removal of goods from the monastery at Palais, the Councillors decided to post guards in order to keep thieves from pillaging the goods before their sale.<sup>13</sup>

In this instance, and indeed throughout this tumultuous period, the magistrates might well have remembered the Lyonnais "Rabeine," or food riots, of 1529. There, about 2,000 starving

men, "women, and teen-agers looted the municipal granary, the Franciscan monastery nearby, and the homes of several wealthy men." <sup>14</sup> Restoring order took many days. How directly the Genevan Councillors were influenced by this event is impossible to say, but they were certainly aware of Lyons' problems. And, even more importantly, they were seriously attempting to make this period of transition as simple and peaceful as possible.

The Council's proceedings of November 12 included their rationale for having a hospital, and enshrined it within this classical statement of Middle Ages' piety:

On which it is considered that to nourish concord and obtain the peace of God, it is first necessary to take care of the poor. And it is resolved that not only those from the parish of the Madeleine, but also all the other parishes, Churches, and chapels bring their goods from these said Churches to the hospital. 15

The same resolution was put before the Conseil Général on November 14. It again shows the connection for these men between piety and pragmatism.

The people having heard: they concluded unanimously that the said hospital had been dedicated to a holy purpose, that the other hospitals have been very wisely joined to form it, that all the goods of the Churches, chapels, parishes, monasteries, convents, and the like, applied by our predecessors to pious uses, ought to be applied to the most pious use of caring for the poor. 16

The acts creating the new hospitals united religious and practical motivations. The magistrates thought that care of the poor was a fulfillment of God's will, a belief born in Middle Ages' piety and reinforced by the new humanist and Protestant ideals. At the same time, this credo did deliver certain pragmatic results: providing for the poor engendered better social order by decreasing disease and the incidence of civic disobedience.

It must be remembered that these men acted first from religious impulse. Their view of the world was an holistic one, where proper purity of motivation was essential to achieve the desired goal. Effort without religious ethic was doomed to failure; yet good intentions without proper performance of duty were likewise ineffectual. It is impossible to separate the religious and pragmatic aspects of the approach to any social problem taken by these sixteenth century men. For them, only the proper theological attitude teamed with practical effort would bring about God's blessing of an harmonious city. That an atheist or a corrupt cleric providing the same services could achieve the same social results was unthinkable.

One point in the new Protestant theology which also affected their philosophy of social welfare was the concept of earned salvation. No longer was Heaven to be achieved through donations for masses or gifts to the poor mechanically given. Rather, Protestantism sought the alleviation of social ills as man's Christian obligation to his brother. It was no longer

an automatic assurance of a future hope but a present-day responsibility.

Although the hospital's main function was to care for the physical needs of the poor, their spiritual needs were seen to as well. The volunteer workers "preached the word to them;"<sup>17</sup> and the blind minister, Couraud, when he visited Geneva, "also instructed the poor of the hospital."<sup>18</sup> Charity was not just philanthropic; it was a reflection of the life and commandments of Christ and the Bible, diffused into the daily life of the city. The councillors cemented their religious and pragmatic goals through pious example and a well thought-out, unified approach to welfare administration.

Perhaps because it was run by merchants instead of clerics, the new social welfare system was better organized. It provided far more care for the same amount of expenditure than did the old, fragmented system. The economic advantages of a central building with one administration had not escaped the Seigneurie.<sup>19</sup> A survey of the amount of money taken from the older hospitals and the amount put out to support the new Hôpital-Général shows that the city actually saved money while expanding services. Revenues from all sources were far in excess<sup>20</sup> of the operating costs of the new hospital.

Not only did the old hospitals disappear; the monasteries and convents, emptied of their inhabitants, were likewise converted to new uses. Couvent de la Rive, the Franciscan monastery, housed the new school initially, but was pulled down in 1554. Ste.-Claire, of course, lodged the Hôpital-Général



until its demolition in 1707. The monasteries outside the city walls, St.-Victor (Benedictine), Notre Dame de Grace (Augustinian), and Palais (Dominican), were all destroyed about 1535 in the fauxbourg defense preparations. L'Eveché (the Bishops of Geneva's town house) served as the municipal jail.<sup>21</sup>

In the new year (1536), the annual "censes" due the Churches and the old hospitals were transferred to the new hospital. The Councils "ordered to make known that all who owe 'censes' to the Church pay them to the Hospital."<sup>22</sup>

Following Geneva's Reformation and military deliverance by the Bernese army under Nagueli, the Councils asked the procureurs of the "mandements" (the districts outside of the city) to pledge fidelity to the Councils and hospital. Since the civil body had assumed the lapsed authority of the Bishop and ecclesiastical orders and chapters, they were owed the loyalty and accompanying censes of these outlying areas.

St.-Victor was the mandement encircling the priory where François Bonivard held his prebend. After disbanding the monasteries, the Councils sent "J. Coquet to go there to make the men of that mandement come to pledge their oath to our hospital."<sup>23</sup> Procureurs from the four parishes in Thy pledged their allegiance on February 11, 1536;<sup>24</sup> and the mandements of Jussy were asked to do the same the following day. On February 14, "one gave charge to Chastellian Favre to put under our hand the censes, rents, 'dismes,' 'couvées,' and other goods which are due from the mandement."<sup>25</sup> Eventually,

procureurs from Peney, the "abbaye de Bellrive," Chouilly, Satigny, Vandoeuvres, Burdignin, Dardagny, and other small villages and districts around Geneva pledged their fealty to the Councils, and pledged their censuses (once due to the Roman Church) to Geneva's new hospital.

The fate of the pre-Reformation hospitals followed the same pattern as the Church's possessions. Furniture and useful objects were removed and placed in the new Hôpital-Général. The buildings were either converted to other purposes, or sold. Notre Dame du Pont du Rhône was transformed into a "grange," or barn-like structure capable of housing people. Hôpital du Bourg-de-Four was annexed in 1539 into the Hôpital-Général at Ste.-Claire and used as a livery stable.

No mention exists of St.-Jacques du Pont du Rhône, nor of Hopital de la Trinité. Because both were small and impoverished, they very possibly finished like Hôpital St.-Bernard. A wealthy merchant bought that building for six deniers, had it razed, and built a large house on the grounds. The hospital's goods and "loyers" were sold for 385 florins and given to the Hôpital-Général.

The Hôpital des Pauvres Honteux, the wealthiest of all the original hospitals, was closed immediately after the formation of the Hôpital-Général, and it is often mentioned in hospital records. However, its rents did not automatically revert to the new hospital; the Syndics put the rents into the city treasury instead.



Versonnay's other hospital, Madelaine, was rented to some couples in 1540. No one is terribly sure what happened to Hôpital de Marlioz, although it was fairly well absorbed into the Pyssis Omnium Animarum Purgatorii before the consolidation of all the hospitals in 1535. As for the Pyssis itself, the facilities it provided served as a prototype for the functions of the new Hôpital-Général. The Syndics and Councils allowed the Pyssis to operate until 1542, when it was inventoried and absorbed by the new hospital. Presumably, by that time the placing of foundlings, etc., had been completely incorporated into the regular functions of the Hôpital-Général.

The Pestiférés alone remained unaltered by the new edicts. It had been established by secular authority and was administered by the town, so there was truly very little that needed to be done to bring it into line with the other two institutions. It remained at Plainpalais in its same capacity into the eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Because it was only in operation during outbreaks of plague, little mention is made of it in the Council Registers.

On September 10, the one town school was moved to the Couvent de la Rive,<sup>27</sup> two weeks after an investigation reported that the existing building was cold and uncomfortable, especially for the resident "rector scholarium."<sup>28</sup>

The decision to create primary schooling for all Genevans had been included in the Reformation decrees of May 21,

1536: "one should nourish and teach the poor."<sup>29</sup> The poor paid no tuition, and the more fortunate a mere 3 sols per semester. Teachers were to be trained before they could begin instructing, a law that was overlooked in the first year's administration of the new public school.<sup>30</sup>

The overwhelming changes in the old Genevan hospital system had some human casualties among the aged of the former staff. On March 7, 1536, two women from an old hospital asked for food and shelter, to which the Council "resolved that they be retired to the large hospital and that they be cared for in serving the poor."<sup>31</sup> A former Franciscan (though it is not recorded if he was an hospital worker) "begged that we provide for him during his life: [it is] ordered that he be received into the hospital and treated fairly."<sup>32</sup> These two instances provide a strange contrast with the fate of the nuns of Ste.-Claire, who were expelled from Geneva for their failure to convert to the Reformed Church.

Following Claude Salomon's death, an entry of January 28, 1536, records

Mtre. Guillaume Farel, Cl. Bernard, Conrad Vity and other procureurs of the hospital came to say that today Claude Salomon called Pasta hospitallier was dead, asking that we elect another. Ordered that the said procureurs nominate one to us. 33

Thus, on February 22, 1536, Louis Bernard was nominated the new, and second, hospitallier.<sup>34</sup>

One month later, Salomon's widow Valentine came before the Council to request the return of their personal belongings which had been used at the hospital,

as was promised them, and in particular the house her husband owned, and a meadow of the confrerie of St.-Eloy and St.-Sebastian. 35

In his final testament, Salomon left everything else to the poor "to the imitation of which many other wealthy men, and also the faithful, gave much and freely." <sup>36</sup>

From all these entries and examples comes a strong sense that the Councils were trying to conscientiously care for all the less fortunate within the city. The hospital was used by the Councils not just to secure medical services and distribute food, but also to provide shelter and even permanent lodging for all those in need. Begging within Geneva's limits was now strictly forbidden, and a special guard was chosen and salaried to force mendicants to report to the hospital. <sup>37</sup>

The members of the hospital board included Claude Bernard, a long-standing Protestant sympathizer. He, along with Salomon, had helped introduce the resolution of January 1, 1534, stating a desire, indeed an intention, to live by the Word of God alone and asking the parishes to preach that Word. Bernard also requested the Council on June 28, 1535, to reach a final decision, one way or another, regarding the fate of the Reformation following the dispute at the Couvent de la Rive. Bernard

himself took over much of the actual business of closing down  
 the old hospitals and putting the new one on sound footing.<sup>38</sup>

The other procureurs named in the November 14 proclamation were Aimé Vuillelm, Jean-Ami Curtet, and François Conte. Like Conrad Vity and Claude Bernard, neither Vuillelm nor Conte were ever mentioned on the rolls of the Petit Conseil. Jean-Ami Curtet, on the other hand, attained a greater prominence in sixteenth century Genevan government. He was elected Lieutenant in 1536 and chosen a Syndic in 1537. The next year, following Genevan custom, Curtet retired to the Petit Conseil. He must have been a devoted member of the Guillermin party, for his name is absent from the Petit Conseil in 1539, 1540, and 1541. However, in May, 1541, he was returned to the Petit Conseil with Calvin's other supporters and became a Syndic once again the following year. During the next two decades, he remained on the Petit Conseil, and again achieved the offices of Lieutenant and Syndic.<sup>39</sup>

The mention of Guillaume Farel in the proclamation as well may help indicate the importance he, as head of the pastors, placed on the hospital. The present hospital procureurs and the hospitallier had been long-standing companions and supporters of Farel. Farel's interest is not surprising because at the Meaux community (the formative years of Farel's theological life) he saw the operation of a community hospital first-hand. The French humanist group had established such an institution, and its director was none other than Jacques Le Fevre d'Etaples, the man

Farel claimed as his own "spiritual father."<sup>40</sup>

Le Fevre was named "directeur" of the hospital at Meaux and vicar-general...Guillaume Farel, being neither a theologian nor a priest, could not be provided with an ecclesiastical charge; but, with some others...he fulfilled the office of preacher in one of the thirty-two "stations" into which the bishop had divided his diocese. 41

Farel brought to Geneva a belief in the purpose of the hospital for dispensing Christian charity to the needy. This was but one further source of support, and influence upon, the creation and institution of Geneva's new hospital system after the Reformation.

Antoine Fromment provided an eyewitness account of contemporary Genevans confronting their new hospital in the first years of the Reformation.<sup>42</sup> He claimed that immediately after the acts founding the hospital there were public collections and bourses

as much for the poor of the city as for the poor shoeless wayfarers, to which collection men and women each gave according to his piety, some money, some others clothing; some others presented beds, couches, utensils, their homes, and all that was necessary for the poor. 43

Fromment even relates that people volunteered their services "like deacons...enquiring among themselves and distributing

what was necessary." <sup>44</sup> This picture of spontaneous giving is heartwarming, though not mentioned in the Council Registers. Nevertheless, such collections were frequently held and sanctioned by the Franchises. <sup>45</sup>

During the interlude between the founding of the hospital in September, 1535, and the establishment of a Reformed Church in May, 1536, the hospital must have had to rely on such assistance as described above by Fromment. Although the system had been chartered in November, 1535, the actual daily operation of the hospital was not delineated until much later. Council Registers accord little mention to hiring anyone beside the hospitallier and the guard to prohibit mendicancy. The diaconate, which played the supporting role in Calvin's scheme for the institution, had not yet been established.

Sadly, the description provided above of the Genevans' response to the immediate needs of their new hospital system is not a complete one. Some of the city's inhabitants saw the money flowing from former Church goods not as a reason for praise or personal spiritual regeneration, but as a clear-cut opportunity for easy gain. They became "recepueurs" (receivers), in an official capacity, but failed to turn all the money and even all the goods collected over to the hospital administration. Calvin alludes to this in the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances. <sup>46</sup> He seems to substantiate that these abuses occurred when he wrote in the rules for "Procureurs de l'hôpital" in the 1541 Ordonnances

that those who wish to provide charity are assured that the goods will not be used in ways other than they intended them. 47

The official office of "receveur de l'Hôpital" was not actually created until 1575, long after the Ordinances. The receveurs were then elected to three year terms by the Deux Cents. Until 1575, the hospitallier ordinarily acted as the receveur, as well as fulfilling his other responsibilities. <sup>48</sup>

As may be expected, Fromment claims that during the two year expulsion of Farel and Calvin (1538-1540), things degenerated rapidly in the Genevan Church and social welfare system. Fromment declares, hyperbolically, that many former Roman Catholic prelates, abbots, prebends, etc., entered the new Church hoping to continue the easy existence they had known in the Roman Church. Many worked their former benefices, receiving censes ostensibly to forward to the hospital. However, much of the money found its way into their own pockets. Other untrained laity sought to become ministers for the prestige or benefits the position provided. The discipline and tests of competence for ordination which Calvin demanded were waived after his exile by a municipal government seeking a weak and dependent Zwinglian Church. These actions forced a mass defection of Geneva's conscientious preachers, and the school master.

Thus, while some people were sincerely giving their goods



to the hospital, all these wolves amidst the flock "bought them, and made riches from the Gospel and the goods for the poor."<sup>49</sup> This chaotic picture of the hospital during Calvin's absence helps to explain the proclamation at the time of his return to "put things back into the order they were in four or five years ago."<sup>50</sup>

In spite of the few serious problems and setbacks accompanying the creation and institution of Geneva's hospital system after 1535, the hospital reforms were all-encompassing and progressive. Yet, at the same time, they maintained the city traditions for serving the needs of the poor that had been established over the preceding two centuries. The Councils unified the scattered, individual, unproductive efforts into a comprehensive, city-wide approach to social welfare in order to more effectively, and inexpensively, serve the poor. This same process did occur in other Reformed cities as well.<sup>51</sup>

## Chapter Five Footnotes

1. Odier-Cazenove, Jean-Jacques-Louis. L'hôpital de Genève, depuis son origine jusqu'à 1842. Geneva, 1862, pp. 5-6.
2. Roget, Amédée. Les Suisses et Genève, vol. 2. Geneva, 1864, p. 191.
3. Ibid., p. 191.
4. A notary was a legal official one step below lawyer. He drew contracts, offered legal advice, and generally held a prestigious position in the community.
5. Kingdon, Robert M. "The Deacons of the Reformed Church in Calvin's Geneva." Mélanges... Henri Meylan. Geneva, 1970, pp. 83-84.
6. RC, November 19, 1535.
7. RC, August 10, 1535.
8. Roget, Les Suisses, p. 191.
9. RC, August 13, 1535.
10. RC, October 12, 1535.
11. RC, November 12, 1535.
12. RC, November 26, 1535. When this Church was inventoried, the Councils gave Claude Salomon articles he could use in the hospital like furniture and drapes. Claude de Savoye took possession of its silver cross to mint coins.
13. RC, November 12, 1535.
14. Davis, Natalie Z. "Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy: The Case of Lyon." Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, vol. 5, (1968), p. 229.
15. RC, November 12, 1535.
16. RC, November 14, 1535; SD, vol. 2, pp. 303-304, fol. 683, (November 14, 1535). Also, Odier-Cazenove, L'hôpital, p. 18.
17. Fromment, Antoine. Les Actes et Gestes merveilleux de la cité de Genève. Geneva, 1854, p. 232.
18. Ibid., p. 238.
19. Although the wayfarers and plague hospitals did exist, they were limited to those functions and were funded separately. They will not be included in discussions of "the hospital" unless specifically named.

20. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1969, p. 156.
21. See Appendix, p. 529.
22. RC, February 26, 1536.
23. RC, February 7, 1536.
24. RC, February 11, 1536.
25. RC, February 14, 1536. See also Monter, E. William. Studies in Genevan Government (1536-1605). Geneva, 1964, pp. 76-78. Monter contends that the mandements reported speedily and willingly hoping in turn to gain greater autonomy and lower taxes from their new overlords than Savoy had granted.
26. Chaponnière, Jean-Jacques, and Louis Sordet. "Des hôpitaux de Genève avant la Réformation." MDG, vol. 3, (1844), pp. 165-471 passim.
27. RC, September 10, 1535.
28. RC, August 27, 1535. The history of the Genevan educational system has been amply documented. For a brief summary concentrating on Calvin's theological reasons for schooling and the relation between Calvin, the "docteurs," and educational practice, see: Henderson, Robert W. The Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition. Philadelphia, 1962, pp. 21-71.  
A complete bibliography for public instruction may be found in: Geisendorf, Paul-Frédéric. Bibliographie raisonnée de l'histoire de Genève des origines à 1798. Geneva, 1966, pp. 178-186, entries 1903-1972.  
Perhaps the most definitive work on John Calvin's Académie is: Borgeaud, Charles. Histoire de l'Université de Genève, 2 vols. Geneva, 1900.
29. RC, May 21, 1536.
30. Roget, Amédée. Histoire du peuple de Genève, vol. 1. Geneva, 1870, pp. 2-4.
31. RC, March 7, 1536.
32. Ibid.
33. RC, January 28, 1536.
34. RC, February 22, 1536.
35. RC, March 21, 1536.
36. Fromment, Les Actes, p. 237.
37. RC, November 14, 1535.

38. Kingdon, Robert M. "Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva." AHR, vol. 76, no. 1, (January, 1971), pp. 64-65.
39. RC, passim.
40. Bedouelle, Guy. Lefevre d'Etaples et l'intelligence des Ecritures. Geneva, 1976, p. 96.
41. "Comité Farel," M.G. Borel-Girard, Pres. Guillaume Farel 1489-1565. Neuchâtel and Paris, 1930, p. 112.
- Farel once said of LeFevre, "I have never known such a person, and I cry thanks to God that I have tried and followed him as much as I could." Farel, Guillaume. Du vray usage de la croix. (Re-edited) Geneva, 1865, p. 129.
42. Fromment, Les Actes. Although many historians dismiss his journal, which was written twenty years after the events he described, I have found that they do not differ from the Council Registers in content or tenor. Occasionally, their sequence or dating varies. Nevertheless, his is a valuable eyewitness account of Geneva during the Reformation.
43. Ibid., p. 233.
44. Ibid., p. 233.
45. Chaponnière-Sordet, "Des hopitaux," p. 285.
46. Bergier, Jean-François, and Robert M. Kingdon. Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève au temps de Calvin, vol. 1. Geneva, 1964, p. 7.
47. Ibid.
49. Fromment, Les Actes, p. 238.
48. Odier-Cazenove, L'hôpital, p. 18.
50. Roget, Histoire, vol. 1, p. 258.
51. See Chapter 7.

## Chapter Six

## The Renaissance and the Dignity of Man

The great pool of ethical concern reflected in various sixteenth century Genevan social institutions flowed from many different wellsprings. In the 1520's, other European cities experimented with expanded educational, health, and welfare facilities. Of course, this reservoir of new ideas was piped around Europe by the printed word and travelling merchants. These new movements were nurtured by an ethical concern for man which was at the same time both religious and secular, a concern fed by the currents of thought that streamed from the new, academic humanism.

The largely neo-pagan Italian Renaissance rediscovered the classical writers. They made the writings of Cicero, Seneca, and the Greeks known to moderns; many of these in fact radiated a definite concern for the human situation. In addition, studying ancient society in detail provided a means for comparison with contemporary societies in which the humanists lived. The medieval sense of time and history caused thinkers

to regard these ancient standards as contemporary models. Thus, the solutions offered for Rome and Athens were thought to be equally applicable for Florence and Venice.

Following the rediscoveries of these ancient texts, interest in the classical languages accelerated. Comparing differing editions of the same work occupied some of the best minds in Europe from 1450 until 1520. The locus of Renaissance study slowly moved from Italy to Paris, eventually making the North the intellectual center of Europe for the first time in history. In Paris, Erasmus of Rotterdam established himself as the greatest thinker of the age. Guillaume Budé of Paris was deemed the finest Greek scholar; the German Reuchlin the most learned in Hebrew. All of these men began their studies in the secular classical works, but then moved on to study early Christian literature. Their usual exegetical techniques were applied to the Vulgate; and the results of their studies burst the dam that had held Western Christianity together over the centuries.

Until this time, the Vulgate was the only authorized version of the Bible available, although it was not widely read. The humanists found some glaring errors in its translation from the most primitive sources, which caused a sudden spate of interest in Biblical studies. At first, the scholarship was purely textual. However, once men such as Le Fevre, Luther, and Calvin (who worked in the original languages) gained new religious insights from their studies, Biblical scholarship moved from rote academic procedure to theological deliberation. It was quickly

discovered that the theological implications of the New Testament particularly were often at odds with official Church doctrine. Hence, these reformers were not devising revolutionary meanings and practices,<sup>1</sup> but were striving to return the Church to its original purity, as set forth in the New Testament.

The same method of textual criticism which was applied to the classics and to the Early Church writings was also directed to law, particularly by Alciat, L'Estoile, and Budé. Consequently, many scholars of theology (including Calvin and Beza) did courses in law. Since most cities in Europe, and especially the Imperial Cities, were governed by Roman Law, the elimination of any legal inaccuracies was considered crucial.

Study of the ancient texts of Roman Law and the Justinian Code showed that once again errors in translation and consolidation over the centuries had actually modified the original system of law. Although fifteenth and sixteenth century society believed itself to be still governed by ancient Roman Law, the modern codes were often quite different from their "progenitors." Through the centuries, the variations had created a mutant strain of Roman Law which had accommodated the societies and their legal demands quite well. Now, the belief in the immutability of Roman Law was dashed forever. As a consequence, sixteenth century man discovered that the law possessed an inherent flexibility. A number of men initiated substantial legal reforms that echoed the ethical and moral philosophies of the ancient jurists (Solon, Seneca, and Cicero), but accommodated new



social practices when the situation demanded. Along the same lines, legal reform permitted an easier transformation in the character of social institutions.

Another aspect of the Renaissance which engendered an interest in social institutions was its belief in the dignity and inclination of man "to good...which we may follow, provided we are imbued with faith and piety."<sup>2</sup> This statement by Erasmus demonstrates the willingness of humanist thinkers to place confidence in man's nature and emphasize Christian ideals such as brotherly love and concern. The combination of Christian theology with humanist ethics stimulated clerical and lay interest in social action and concern.

The humanists themselves were often tutors to the sons of the wealthy and powerful, presenting their ideals in the course of instruction. Thus, prospective burghers and princes were imbued with the "new learning" at an early age. In Erasmus' Institutio Principis Christiani, he reminds his pupil Charles V of his moral obligations to his subjects, and the need for and benefits of ruling as a Christian should. In the Enchiridion Militis Christiani,

under the heading: Opinions worthy of a Christian, he laments the extremes of class, national hostility, professional envy, and rivalry between religious orders, which keep men apart. Let everybody concern himself with his brother. 3

In the humanist writings, Christian and secular ideals were allied. The humanist belief in social responsibility and the implication of mutual interaction between the ruler and the governed were echoed later in the political works of John Mair (Major) and François Hotman. In this area, Erasmus and the other humanists helped to sink the foundations on which the rationale for improved social care was built. Their popular appeal, their revival of Latin, the education they gave to their students, and the invention of the moveable-type press put the humanists' ideals in the minds of those who would rule Europe in the sixteenth century.

In time, the humanists' proteges did attain positions of responsibility. For Jacques Le Fevre d'Etaples, the fruition of his teaching came when former student Guillaume de Briçonnet attained the bishopric at Meaux. Briçonnet put Christian humanism to work by creating an utopian town where social services were provided within the community at large, and not just within the organized Church. Le Fevre attained the position of head administrator, first of the leprosy ward, and later of the entire Meaux hospital. Briçonnet believed that clergy should take assignments in the town, outside of the Church walls, in order to provide social services to the entire community.

Ultimately, many centers of humanist idealism, such as Meaux, or Budé's "communauté des savants" at the Collège de France, fell into disfavor with the French king, Francis I. The incrim-

ination by association of social reform with the "Lutheran heresy" prompted reactionary measures from orthodox faculties of theology, such as those at Paris and Louvain. In fact, Roman Catholic social reform movements were generally viewed with the same suspicion that met the theological reformers who still wanted to remain loyal to the Church of Rome. The overzealous reaction of the Roman hierarchy impeded the new expressions of social reform in Ypres, in Spain, and elsewhere. In time, the Inquisition took nearly all the dynamism out of the movement. Concerned individuals decrying mendicancy and other forms of sanctioned poverty and begging in Roman Catholic countries gave up their cause when faced with charges of heresy.

At the same time that Latinization and printing made Europe a more internationally-minded community, national and racial pride began to appear, especially in Germany. Another change in intellectual attitudes from the previous century was the light in which thinking men viewed the clergy. Humanists shied away from monasteries and tight religious orders. They appealed to "Everyman," not the clergy alone, thereby giving greater status to the laity. Because the humanists' ideals were not well received by the established Church, and because the early Roman Catholic reformers were similarly ill accepted, both groups made appeals to the secular power structure. This intensified the power and the corresponding moral responsibility incumbent upon these groups. It is no surprise, then, that secular leaders should take the initiative in implementing welfare reform.

Greek philosophy in general was essentially "rediscovered" in the medieval period. Aristotle, with his dogmatic positions

on the nature of the cosmos, science, logic, and the State, became the overbearing authority for the majority of medieval thinkers and the unquestioned basis for these same men's discoveries and intellectual development. Even "...for St. Thomas Aquinas, he was simply, and to the exclusion of all others, 'The Philosopher.'" <sup>4</sup>

Aristotle viewed the universe as eternal, unchanging, totally integrated in every possible aspect, and able to be logically, scientifically explained and dealt with. History provided the continuing example, the dependable proof of man's theories and the world's ongoing unchanging and thoroughly logical existence.

Aristotle's "God" was necessarily beyond this physical world. However, he was not simply transcendent in the Christian sense of the word; this God did not involve himself in or respond to the world in any way. Hence the need for a strong, involved earthly Church to act unilaterally for Him. It is not surprising that Aristotle's philosophy determined many characteristics of the Medieval Church; it also foreshadowed a good number of its inherent weaknesses.

The force of Aristotle's philosophy began to decrease in the early part of the Renaissance, although even in the sixteenth century Melancthon admitted Aristotelian influence upon his works. Aristotle's thought came to be looked at as a "static, dogmatic, monolithic whole."<sup>5</sup> The scientific revolution, begun, in mathematics, by William of Ockham (in the 14th century), and continued most notably by Nicholas of Cusa (in the

15th century) and Copernicus (in the early 16th century), did a great deal to finally destroy Aristotle's unquestioned authority.

Even outside of the scientific realm, Aristotle was losing favor amongst the most influential of Renaissance thinkers.

In an academic world dominated by the thought of Aristotle and the methodology of scholasticism, [Petrarch] challenged the authority of both, asserting ...the superiority of the Greek philosopher Plato. 6

In fact, during this time period and perhaps even under Petrarch's influence, Platonist academies were being established all over Italy.

While Aristotle's philosophy could be broadly categorized as one of the physical world, Plato's is more aptly described as one of ideas. In his system, the division between the material world and the spiritual world is basic. Plato's "God" (the Demi-Urge) creates the physical world out of pre-existent Matter, using the Ideals (Beauty, Truth, and Virtue) and the Forms (the ideal, purely rational essence existing in the spiritual realm for each object existent in the physical realm) as his blueprint. However, since the Demi-Urge is not omnipotent, and since Matter itself can only be molded, not created, the physical world is but an impoverished reflection of the Forms (the spiritual world). Although such a concept of God (not omnipotent and not the Creator ex nihilo) is clearly not Christian, Augustine and even Erasmus found

Plato's ethics, metaphysics, and politics a basis for their own works.<sup>7</sup>

Both Aristotle and Plato view the city-state as the ideal community. All of the produce and resources necessary for the community's existence should exist within the geographical area so that it might be self-supporting. Imports, if at all necessary, should be minimal. Since men are born with different native abilities and intellectual levels, society must divide itself into classes, with each citizen segregated according to native capacity and/or acquired skill. Each individual has his own duties to perform as diligently as possible in order for the entire community to survive.

For Aristotle, the total community will flourish if each man performs at his very highest potential and works continually toward moral perfection, and if (equally importantly) there are wise laws governing the community. Here Aristotle's authoritarianism appears with his opinion that "the master/slave distinction is a natural and permanent feature of society."<sup>8</sup> The ruler rules; the slave is ruled; no other real relationship of responsibility exists between the two. Society in general should provide the best climate possible for its members' development, and each man should do his best at his own level. However, this will only occur through the most careful legislation. The ruler must legally bind his citizenry to the "good life." He is not personally or morally responsible for the travails, vicissitudes, or

moral decline in the lives of his people.

Plato similarly does believe in the interdependence of a community's members and in appropriate class divisions, although far less according to birth than Aristotle and far more according to moral and intellectual strength. However, the ruler best fitting Platonic standards is described thus:

All that he says and does will be  
said and done with the view to  
what is good and proper for the  
subject for whom he practices his  
art. 9

Because Plato's philosopher-king is the wisest and most virtuous of the community, he is personally responsible for the total well-being and development of his people.

It must be remembered that for both Aristotle and Plato, this ruler was purely secular. The religious realm was but an additional class or sub-group of society, which was solely concerned with the culture's emotional/spiritual side. The State, in the form of the philosopher-king, was responsible for its/his people in every aspect of their lives.<sup>10</sup>

By the beginning of the Reformation, then, Plato was the ancient philosopher in ascendance because of (1) the decline in Aristotle's credibility; (2) the enthusiasm of prominent, respected Renaissance critics (such as Petrarch and Boccaccio) for his works; (3) his emphasis on the division between the spiritual world and the material one; and (4) his influence upon the



thought of Augustine. This latter point was indeed important for the Reformers in that they had been turning away from the likes of Anselm and Aquinas and toward the Early Church writings, the Patristics and Augustine especially. In this area their textual criticism could rediscover "original" Christianity, untempered by time, ritual, and the Church (in the institutional sense).

With Plato now providing a part of their philosophical basis, the Reformers and other Renaissance thinkers could comprehend, and indeed help to initiate, a separation of religious and political functions, the Church and State we know today. The Church became the guardian of the spiritual part of man's life, whereas the political government assumed many of the traditional ecclesiastical functions (justice, education, legislation, charity) which served man's material needs. By the time one arrives at Calvin's Geneva, the civil role of the Church was just to guard against abuses in the secular world through the proper interpretation of the Word of God, a self-imposed limitation of the Church which Calvin opposed.

The humanist circle at Geneva was a rather small one and turned, for the most part, around Ducal appointments. Cornelius Agrippa was unquestionably the brightest star of the contingent. He was a statesman as well as a classical scholar and pietist, born in Cologne in 1486 and settled in Geneva in 1521. While in Geneva, he was on the best of terms not with the merchants who served in the town government, but with the cosmopolitan, well-

educated Cathedral Canons, ducal courtiers, and local nobility. Agrippa brought the international humanist writings to Geneva, but he himself sided with the Duke and departed Geneva before  
<sup>11</sup>  
 1530.

As was fairly common among the older generation of humanists, Agrippa was attracted to the writings of Luther, but was unable to countenance a break with the Roman Catholic Church.  
<sup>12</sup>  
 Had he done this, of course, he would have ruptured his important Savoyard court ties. In fact, Agrippa even took part, rather ineffectually, in the dispute at Lausanne against Farel and Viret in 1536.

Agrippa's associate and disciple was François Bonivard, opinions of whom vary. Although he was well-read and lettered when compared with his Genevan contemporaries, modern research has found him an undisciplined, amateurish writer whose historical accuracy is, at best, questionable.  
<sup>13</sup>  
 Unlike his friend Agrippa, Bonivard was passionately devoted to the Eidguenot cause. Bonivard did not favor the Roman Church, nor did he like Luther. Undeniably, he chafed under the reformed Genevan regime.

Regardless of their viewpoints, these two men and their small group of friends brought the ideas of the great humanists to Geneva. It is impossible to say to what extent their literature actually permeated the thinking of the city's decision-makers. At any rate, a positive link between the humanist movement  
<sup>14</sup>  
 and Geneva can be established.

In addition to the Erasmian humanists, a number of major Protestant tracts circulated through Europe which, as a part of their message, urged the alteration of commonly-held conceptions regarding social care. Most arrived at these conclusions through condemnations of contemporary Roman Catholic theology and practices. They aimed their assaults on the abuses of monastic life, and on the mismanagement and corruption of the high Church officials who oversaw the wealthy endowments left to charity by pious donors.

Along with these polemics, some Protestant utopian literature emerged, especially during the 1520's. Much of it was centered in Southern Germany and the Swiss cities. Basle, a cosmopolitan center with a strongly humanist heritage and a powerful printing industry, attracted more than its share of these publications.

One of the most interesting is the "Fifteen Confederates," a series of fifteen pamphlets written by Eberlin von Günzburg and published in Basle during 1521. These pamphlets centered their attack on clerical corruption. Günzburg proposed regulations for an ideal state called "Wolfaria" ("where all fares well"). Although changes in the hospital system occupied only one segment of his plan, they nonetheless had their place.<sup>15</sup>

First, Günzburg favored the abolition of all but two monasteries and two convents per region.

All others are to be dissolved  
and made over into hospices for  
the poor, for retired city ser-

vants and their children, and for pilgrims.

All endowments beyond what is needed to support the four regional cloisters and those converted into hospices shall be put into a common chest. 16

Old and sick clergy are to enter hospices. 17

On the subject of wills and endowments he wrote the following:

Every adult shall write a will. Nothing may be left to a public institution serving the common interest—schools, churches, and hospices—without the knowledge and permission of the magistrate. This lest they become too rich and occasion tumult. 18

Günzburg proposed these reforms in 1521, long before Zwingli implemented similar changes in Zürich. The basic themes common to all the Protestant cities which altered their social welfare systems are found here, in the "Fifteen Confederates." The magistrates were to oversee these new organizations and to regulate them better than the clergy had in order to prevent abuses. The established Roman Catholic charity system, which was based upon collecting endowments to earn their donor's salvation, came under attack from theological and institutional reformers. The monasteries were to be dissolved, and the buildings used as hospitals and schools. Old and sick clergy were to make use of these hospitals, and all the poor were to be treated respectfully. "Ostentatious living shall be swiftly controlled

lest resentment erupt among the poor."<sup>19</sup>

Many of these ideas are very similar in wording and tenor to statements found in council proclamations a decade later in Geneva. Their exact relation, however, is difficult to establish. As a group, the Genevans had a notoriously poor command of the German language, as evidenced in the problems which arose out of the Articulants' 1540 treaty with the Bernese. In this case, Genevan negotiators were outmaneuvered through their poor comprehension of spoken German. A decade later, Michel Roset was sent away to be educated in Zürich in order to provide Geneva with a councillor who could understand and converse with their new allies.

On the other hand, numerous trade links existed with Basle, especially through Geneva's borrowing of large cash sums to meet civic debts in the 1530's. Farel spent a long period of time in Basle, and there would be little doubt that he came into contact with "Wolfaria." The Eidguenot party certainly looked to the German-speaking Swiss for their support and inspiration; and no doubt the contents of Günzburg's utopia, if not the tract itself, was communicated in conversation with them.

At any rate, the ideas contained therein were not as novel as their format and purpose. Their critical statements echoed the sentiments of St. Bernard. In Paris in the year 1125, he wrote:

Oh, vanity of vanities, yet no  
 more vain than insane! The  
 Church is resplendent in her  
 walls, beggarly in her poor.  
 She clothes the stones in gold,  
 and leaves her sons naked. 20

Similar attacks on the Roman Catholic charity system had also been made by the humanists. The special importance to Geneva of "Wolfaria" was its date and place of publication. The "Fifteen Confederates" preceded all the major institutional reforms of Zürich, Strasbourg, and Lyons. They helped to provide a theoretical base for the new Protestant regimes that were emerging in Southern Germany and Switzerland. They also attest to the growing demand for change that was common to so many different groups at this time, a demand which surely found its way into the Protestant party in Geneva.

Undoubtedly, Geneva also came into contact with fragments of Nicholas Manuel's 1523 "Totenfresser," a six-act drama written and performed in Berne. Like the "Confederates," this work also attacks clerical abuses, but uses satire and fails to propose an utopian solution. The play is a series of satirical vignettes of clerical life, where priests, mendicants, concubines, etc., follow one another describing their indolent life and decrying the advent of Scripturally-informed laymen who wish to amend their existence.<sup>21</sup>

This play found a responsive audience among the Bernese. "Totenfresser" possessed an important additional benefit for,

being a play, it could carry its message easily to the non-literate. In view of the close political and cultural ties between the Eidgenots and Berne, it seems likely that at least the themes of "Totenfresser" were circulated among the Genevans.

By 1535, the cry for social reform sprang from many divergent groups. First the scholastic humanists and later the religious reformers spoke of the need to channel new life into social care. They wanted to take the control of money and goods away from corrupt ecclesiasts and divert it into the hands of pious laymen. In this way, a system of civic safeguards could ensure the proper administration of public charity. The newly reformed communities which had just altered their religious allegiance had to make some form of change in the administration of social welfare; and they listened carefully to the novel ideas flooding Europe.



## Chapter Six Footnotes

1. See Chapter 2, especially pp. 28-31.
2. Huizinga, Johan. Erasmus and the Age of Reformation. New York, 1924, p. 107.
3. Ibid., p. 54. Institutio was written as an instruction book for Charles V. Interestingly, the future Pope Adrian VI was tutor to both Charles and Erasmus, though at different times. See: Sowards, J. Kelley. Desiderius Erasmus. Boston, 1975, p. 72.
4. Kaplan, Justin D. Aristotle. New York, 1958, p. x.
5. Lloyd, G.E.R. Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of His Thought. Cambridge, 1968, p. 19.
6. Green, V.H.H. Renaissance and Reformation. London, 1964, p. 36.
7. The philosopher-king of Plato's ideal state was echoed by Augustine's "sacred ruler" in the City of God.
8. Lloyd, Aristotle, p. 305.
9. Plato, The Republic (tr. Francis M. Cornford). London, 1968, p. 24.
10. Hence, a division between Church and State could evolve during the Renaissance from this Platonic background.
11. Naef, Henri. Les Origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936, pp. 309-340.
12. Moeller, Bernd. "The German Humanists and the Beginning of the Reformation," Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972, pp. 19-37.
13. Bonivard's accuracy has recently come under fire from two modern historians:  
  
Geisendorf, Paul-Frédéric. Bibliographie raisonnée de l'histoire de Genève des origines à 1798. Geneva, 1966, pp. 35-36.

"Believed blindly through the centuries, Bonivard has been greatly run down by Galiffe and his school. It is certain that he worked on the original documents first hand, and that much of the information furnished by him has its value. It is no less certain that he made many errors, voluntarily or not, and that his literary style itself, while sparkling and savory, often stood in the way of the veracity of his reports."

Bergier, Jean-François. "Commerce et politique du blé à Genève aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles." RSH, vol. 14, no. 4, (1964), p. 541, footnote 78:

When speaking of some relevant information in Bonivard's Chroniques, Bergier says "One does not know from whence he pulled this information, highly suspect like everything he pretended to see in the archives."

A translated sample of Bonivard's works appear in:  
Gribble, Francis. Lake Geneva and its Literary Landmarks. Westminster, 1901, pp. 17-42.

14. The best summary of the impact of humanism on Geneva is in: Naef, Les Origines.

A thorough list of pre-1517 French publications was compiled by:

Renaudet, Augustin. Préréforme et humanisme à Paris pendant les premières guerres d'Italie (1494-1517). Paris, 1953.

Although contact with Lyons and France was considerable, many more of Geneva's ideas probably came from political and mercantile relations with Germany and the Swiss League.

15. Ozment, Stephen E. The Reformation in the Cities. New Haven, 1975, pp. 91-108.
16. Ibid., p. 100.
17. Ibid., p. 102.
18. Ibid., p. 101.
19. Ibid., p. 106.
20. Quoted in Tawney, Richard H. Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. London, 1937, p. 29.
21. Ozment, The Reformation. pp. 111-116.

## Chapter Seven

## Other Cities' Attempts at Poor Relief

Geneva's overall plan and implementation for its reorganized welfare system in the sixteenth century was derived essentially from two sources. The first, as previously discussed,<sup>1</sup> was the city's own long-standing tradition and customs for aiding and comforting the poor. But the second emerged from the effective, contemporary models provided to Geneva by a number of geographically and culturally diverse European cities. This chapter will discuss some of these cities: their alternate methods for administering public charity, their influence on Geneva's formulations, and a comparison between their own and Geneva's ultimate organization in this area.

By 1535, Venice, Nürnberg, Lyons, Strasbourg, and Zürich had all undertaken substantial changes in the administration of their public welfare systems. Tudor England had drafted an impressive proposal for poor-law reform. Charles V was planning to revamp it in the Low Countries. The geographical distance and religious variation of these clearly indicates that by

1535 welfare reform was an idea whose time had come. These changes were being implemented, or at least discussed, almost universally; and the similarity to those proposed in Geneva should indicate that Genevan magistrates were well aware of them. Merchants regularly travelling through, to, or from Geneva on the trade routes which linked Southern Germany and the Swiss cities with Lyons, Italy, and Savoy no doubt helped speed communications and the interchange of ideas.<sup>2</sup> It must be remembered that the cities' councils were composed almost entirely of merchants and notaries. Hence, the strong trade connections made the Genevan merchant/magistrate the most knowledgeable and perhaps even the most avant garde in this field of welfare reform.

In 1526, the Spanish Catholic humanist Juan Vives published a small book entitled De Subventione Pauperum which incorporated the prevailing ideas of Erasmus and the other humanists into a plea for organized poor relief. The book was deemed influential by the magistrates of Ypres when their welfare system was totally revamped in the 1520's. Still other city fathers cited the works of John Mair when drafting similar reforms.<sup>3</sup>

For Geneva, however, it was a set of cities which exerted the strongest influence on its welfare reform: Lyons, Zürich, and Strasbourg. Lyons was Geneva's closest, largest neighbor and major trading partner. Zürich provided the basic pattern for reform which all of the Protestant Swiss cities follow-

ed. Hence, the Genevan Eidguenot party would seriously contemplate any change which Zürich had adopted. Finally, Farel and Calvin (Geneva's great religious leaders) were both influenced by what Martin Bucer implemented in Strasbourg. In addition, Strasbourg instrumented its beginning reforms very early on.

By 1500, the trade fairs which had given Geneva her mercantile importance in the previous century had been eclipsed by those in Lyons.<sup>4</sup> The fairs brought not only wealth but also large numbers of beggars and poor seeking a share of that wealth. Writings of that period from the Lyonnais (including those of Rabelais) tell of beggars and victims of famine coming from as far away as Burgundy. In some cases, while attempting to earn their salvation, Lyons' bishops invited foreign beggars to receive relief. Unfortunately, their number sorely taxed the inadequate resources of Lyons.<sup>5</sup> Victims of famine and disease<sup>6</sup> died in the streets, and beggars of all sorts disrupted life.

Poverty was not usually shamefaced, did not remain quietly sick behind closed shutters; instead it poured into the streets with begging, noise, crime, threat of disease, and rioting.<sup>7</sup>

Eventually, some Catholic clergymen began to join Lyons' secular officials in proclaiming that

"the poor are on the cross of adversity as much for the salvation of those who aid them charitably as for their own salvation," but they must not be so wretched that they fill the city with their complaints and their corpses.<sup>8</sup>

The long tradition of unified secular activity for poor relief found in Geneva did not exist in Lyons. In fact, it was rarely expressed among Geneva's counterparts throughout Europe. Lyons had nothing like the Franchises or Council-run hospitals to form a base on which to build a welfare system. Not until the creation of the Aumône-Générale in 1534 did Lyons actually develop an administration for public services.

Lyons, like Geneva, had suffered a breakdown in the traditional Roman Catholic charity system in the early sixteenth century. Typical, cleric-dominated charity was chaotic and woefully inadequate. Hence, its confraternities, like Geneva's, had to surrender control of some charitable projects to the city councils. Although one guiding light of such reform in Lyons was a Catholic clergyman, he was virtually alone. "In fact, the leaders of the Church were rarely there at all."<sup>9</sup>

Zürich, unlike Lyons, adopted the Reformation, and thus had to confront similar decisions regarding Roman Catholic Church property as did Geneva. As early as 1520, even before a definitive vote for the break with Rome, funds designed for the chanting of "Salve Reginas" in Zwingli's Grossmünster were redirected to poor, sick indigents at the city hospital. That same year, the city's Council centralized the welfare system and appointed its own officials to distribute food and gifts to the poor,<sup>10</sup> thus removing charity from the Church's domain.

Zwingli originally believed, in true Medieval fashion,

that poverty was a condition imposed by God, and that through poverty, without the seductive encumbrances of wealth, one could more easily attain salvation. In time, however, he modified his understanding as his opposition to contemporary monastic life and the sacrificial aspects of the mass grew. He denounced monastic poverty as mere hypocrisy, for the monks' lives indicated their true goal as a well-fed, idle existence.

Zwingli thence concluded that possessions which enabled man to satisfy the basic requirements of life were morally justifiable. Poverty was not a state to be encouraged, since it carried with it either hypocrisy, or theological error: the concept of salvation by works. Rather, it was the Christian's duty to provide for the needs of his brother, and to eliminate debasing poverty. Thus, Zwingli turned away from the notion of poverty as an agent to salvation and accepted the possession of the essentials of life as necessary and indeed ethical.

In his plan, Zwingli asserted that certain portions of Church income should be redirected to the service of the poor. This emphasis turned religious practice away from the encouragement of individual donations enabling the pious to "earn" their salvation. Instead, a concentrated, city-wide effort was needed to eliminate the suffering of Christian brothers.<sup>11</sup>

It seems likely that Zwingli borrowed the actual format for poor relief from a South German reformer named Ambrosius Blarer. Blarer submitted a plan to Zwingli in 1523 for Zürich similar to ones which had already been implemented in certain<sup>12</sup>



South German cities, where a number of progressive reforms were made.<sup>13</sup> Zwingli approved his scheme, and it was subsequently implemented in Zürich.

The Catholic Church in Zürich was suppressed in 1525, and former Church goods were confiscated and dedicated to the poor. Mendicancy was outlawed. The hospital system received not only the city's unfortunates, but it also accepted foreign wayfarers. Soup cauldrons provided food for the poor and for school children in every quarter of the city. Rural parishes were likewise required to care for their own ill and indigent.

The centralized administration of this welfare organization was carried out in every district of Zürich by an ecclesiastic and a layman, who both distributed food and gifts to the poor and reported to the Council on conditions in their areas. On the whole, this administrative change was most analogous to Geneva's own reforms. This is not surprising, for Zürich's changes did create a model for the reformed cities in the rest of German-speaking Switzerland, including Berne. While the Genevan Councils admired the Zwinglian formula for Church-State relations, it must be noted that Geneva's reforms differ in some crucial ways, and prove that they were strongly based on already-established Genevan traditions.<sup>14</sup>

The Bernese undertook Zwinglian social reforms after the 1528 decision to institute the Reformation in their own territory. After the acquisition of the Vaud in 1536, they carried out the same sorts of alterations there, for, basic-

ally, the Bernese were extremely compassionate landlords. Even before this conquest, Berne and Baslê had encouraged French religious refugees to preach and teach in the Vaud and Neuchâtel, both of which regions were poor and backward. Estimates of mendicants and other wandering poor in this area ranged as high as 10%.<sup>15</sup> Until the advent of these intellectually enlightened refugees and their teaching, the spirit of the Renaissance (which generally preceded the Reformation) was largely absent in Romande Switzerland.

As a part of the major Bernese reforms, Church property was auctioned in order to eliminate the public indebtedness of Lausanne. (Incidentally, a portion of the proceeds were paid as a peace tribute to the devoutly Catholic Fribourgers, who eagerly accepted them.) A university was then established in Lausanne, two decades before Geneva's. It was heavily endowed by the Bernese with grants and scholarships and staffed by French refugees, including Theodore de Bèze. Finally, poor Vaudois were treated without charge in the Bernese-instituted hospitals, which also cared for orphans and gave relief to plague victims.<sup>16</sup>

Geneva had a history of strong commercial links with South German cities as well (especially Nürnberg, Augsburg, and Ulm), which had been built around Geneva's trade fairs.<sup>17</sup> Non-business discussions between these German and Genevan merchants certainly<sup>18</sup> must have covered the Germans' reorganization of their monasteries, public education, and social care, for many of the cities<sup>19</sup> had strong reform movements supporting Luther from an early date.

In Nürnberg, the Lutheran Reformation was proclaimed in 1525, quite early indeed. Bonivard's "Chronicles" from 1526 reported that Nürnberg merchants aroused the curiosity of Geneva by their refusal to fast on Fridays or during Lent.<sup>20</sup> Baudichon de la Maison neuve, one of the most active supporters of the Protestant cause, quickly followed their lead and imitated this practice.<sup>21</sup>

Augsburg and Ulm had strong Bucer-Zwingli leanings and employed quite radical changes in their approach to public charity.<sup>22</sup> Yet, almost everywhere, this revamped charity was administered largely through civic channels. In each of the Reformed cities, there was a great emphasis "to renovate public charity, public instruction, and civil discipline."<sup>23</sup>

Strasbourg, the second citadel of Reformed theology (after Zürich), followed a course for meeting its social obligations that was similar to Geneva's, although it came about much earlier. In the thirteenth century, magistrates complained that the Church was neglecting its social duties, and so took control of the majority of Strasbourg's hospitals and other charity institutions in 1263. They decreed in 1411 that the poor had a responsibility to work if they were able, and three years after outlawed begging by the able-bodied. These edicts were similar in tone and content to the 1458 Genevan proclamation.<sup>24</sup>

Earlier, Strasbourg had suffered from an incoherent, individualized approach to alms that characterized most medieval

cities. Donors

left money and property to a profusion of agencies and provided explicit and particular instructions for gifts to the needy. One might provide that bread should be distributed to twenty-five beggars on Christmas Eve, another that a penny be given to sixteen poor men on St. Martin's Day. Each individual request had to be carried out. 25

Thus, personal legacies provided specific gifts to a few of the needy with the expressed purpose of helping their donor earn his soul's salvation.

Between 1522 and 1524, even before Bucer came to Strasbourg, the magistrates began a thorough-going reform of the entire public charity system, designing a single administration to provide for all of the city's poor. These changes were wrought by enlightened laity and religious reformers and were further propelled by the recent dissolution of the monasteries and convents. The collapse of the established system for social care demanded some formulation in its place. Hence, "...well before the Reformation the care of the poor of the city was no longer exclusively in the hands of the Church. It was shared by the civil authority."<sup>26</sup>

Strasbourg instituted universal public instruction for both sexes. The educational system was patterned closely after the one Zwingli designed for Zürich.<sup>27</sup>

The councillors of Strasbourg also established a committee of magistrates called "Almosenherren," similar to Geneva's

hospital procureurs. Then, they put an administrator of poor relief into each parish. As in Geneva, some monastic buildings and ecclesiastical property were turned over to the care of the poor. But unlike Geneva, the weak link was funding. Confiscated Church property did not provide sufficient revenue to meet the hospitals' needs, and voluntary giving added little. In the end, religious refugees overburdened the system and led the pastors to charge that the poor were subsisting in scandalous conditions.

28

Although the parallels are strong, the actual connections between Geneva and Strasbourg are difficult to assess. Certainly they are less direct than Zürich's. The mapping of trade routes shows that Genevan merchants did engage in commerce with Strasbourg. In the 1540's, purchases were surely made from the Alsatian grain markets by Genevan merchants. Also, Calvin's influence was on the ascent. At the very least, Strasbourg represents one more city which overhauled its machinery providing for the less fortunate; and, like Zürich and Geneva, it did so within a Protestant context.

All of these new welfare institutions around Europe shared some basic characteristics. First, their administration was centralized for greater effectiveness and economy. Most, in fact, were developed and overseen by laymen. Next, they offered their citizens a unified and fairly comprehensive system of social care. Nearly all, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, sought to limit or outlaw begging. Finally, those in Catholic areas encountered

stiff opposition from some orthodox Catholic faculties who linked reform in general with Lutheranism.

This overview of Geneva's contemporaries' situations provides some means of comparison with Geneva's own response. Certainly, these reform projects provided ideas for the Councillors to draw upon when making their own plans for Geneva. The interlude between the confiscation of Church property and the establishment of the new hospital system, plus the lists of committees which were drawn up to found the hospital, all indicate that considerable thought went into the new measures. Indeed, a confluence of varied sources gave rise to the Hôpital-Général's final form.

The historical foundation upon which the Hôpital-Général was built was Geneva's own traditions of social care, which in turn were based upon the already existing hospital system and the city Franchises. The hospitals were customarily a function and responsibility of the secular side of the city (a situation not existing in most other European cities at this time), although nominally they were under ecclesiastical administration.<sup>29</sup> All, or nearly all, were founded by wealthy bourgeois; and, by the time of the Reformation, the overwhelming majority were administered by the Syndics and Councils. The gifts to maintain them came from private individual donors, most of whom were laymen. The two newest establishments, the Pyssis and the Hôpital des Pestiférés, were founded and run by the secular authorities on much the same organizational lines as the Hôpital-Général was to



be.

The Franchises, for their part, provided for the poor out of the food confiscated from petty violations of city ordinances. This and general collections were part of the "Usus et Consuetudines" of the town, again Genevan tradition.

External, contemporary forces likewise molded the new hospital's final organization. The men who brought the Reformation to Geneva were deeply interested in the concept, purpose, and responsibility of the hospital within the community. Farel, and all those influenced by Le Fevre and his circle, appreciated the importance of the hospital for distributing alms and caring for the unfortunate. Fromment devoted a considerable section in his Actes et Gestes to the Genevans' open-hearted affirmation of the hospital's aims. The men who founded it, particularly Claude Bernard and Claude Salomon, were long-standing supporters of the Reformation, even siding with the preachers, Farel and Calvin, during their expulsion. The hospital, then, was imbued with a deep religious significance and backed by men of deep religious faith. Originally, in the hands of the Roman ecclesiastics, the hospital system had provided the wealthy with a simple, automatic means of literally "earning" (paying for) their salvation through charitable support. Ultimately, under the Reformers, it shaped the development of the diaconate and symbolized the philosophy of each man being truly responsible for the welfare of his brother without any twisted expectation or motive of being able to thus



earn some final reward.

By 1535, welfare reform was in the air all over Europe. Many cities beside Geneva were making institutional reorganizations which were surely known by and of interest to the leaders of Geneva. Chief among these changes everywhere were centralized administration, comprehensive social services, limited begging, and greater lay control, although a number of these (especially lay control and limitations on begging) had been underway in Geneva for nearly a century.

Internally, Geneva was forced by political and social circumstances to make some adjustments to maintain its hospital system. The war with Savoy put a severe strain on the seven hospitals' capacities and on the city's budget; the defection of the Bishop and the later confiscation of Church property made major changes in administration mandatory. However, these changes were bound to be ultimately successful in Geneva because of the tradition of public welfare, the basic funds available to carry out the necessary reform projects, and the presence of such motivating spiritual leaders as Farel and Calvin.

## Chapter Seven Footnotes

1. See Chapters One and Two, pp. 1-39.
2. See the map of Genevan trade routes, Appendix p. 543.
3. Kingdon, Robert M. "Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva," AHR, vol. 76, no. 1, (January, 1971), pp. 50-51.  
  
Davis, Natalie Z. "Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy: the Case of Lyon." Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, vol. 5, (1968), pp. 217-220.  
  
Buck, Lawrence, and Jonathon W. Zophy, (eds.). The Social History of the Reformation. Columbus, Ohio, 1972.
4. Bergier, Jean-François. Genève et l'économie européenne de la Renaissance. Paris, 1963.  
  
Babel, Antony. Histoire économique de Genève des origines au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, 2 vols. Geneva, 1963.
5. Clearly, such blanket offers were not the intent of Geneva's leaders, so Geneva escaped the worst of Lyons' difficulties.
6. Davis, "Poor Relief," pp. 229, 240, 256.
7. Ibid., p. 225.
8. Ibid., p. 240.
9. Ibid., p. 236.
10. Courvoisier, Jacques. Zwingli. Geneva, 1947, pp. 88, 100-101.
11. Köhler, Walther. "Armenpflege und Wohltätigkeit in Zürich zur Zeit Ulrich Zwinglis." Neujahrsblatt der Hilfsgesellschaft in Zürich auf des Jahr 1919. Zürich, 1919.
12. Letter from Zwingli to Blarer, October 9, 1523, in Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke, Corpus Reformatorum. vol. 7, pp. 123-124.  
  
Egli, E. (ed.). Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation in den Jahren 1519-1533. Zurich, 1879, Item 426.

I am indebted to Sherman Isbell and Hans R. Lavater of the University of Berne for bringing these three references to my attention.

13. Buck and Zophy, The Social History, passim.  
Farner, Oscar. "Die soziale Umformung." Huldrych Zwingli. Seine Verkündigung und Ihre Ersten Früchte 1520-1525. Zürich, 1954, pp. 519-539.
14. Courvoisier, Zwingli, pp. 100-101.  
Biéler, André. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959, p. 60.
15. Vuilleumier, Henri. Histoire de l'église réformée du Pays de Vaud, vol. 1. Lausanne, 1927, pp. 394ff.
16. Ibid., pp. 429-433.
17. Refer again to Bergier's map, Appendix, p. 534.
18. Again, it must be remembered that the merchants were the most numerous and influential group in these cities' governments; and so, ideas on civic innovations would logically pass from the notice of one town to another during conversations between respective merchants. Another factor that facilitated this rapid flow of information was the structure of town social life. Houses were built close together and were stuffy; at-home entertainment was often subordinated to meeting out of doors in the neighborhoods. One cannot read the Council Registers and allied material without realizing that people in the community maintained closer daily contact with their neighbors than is the case today.
19. Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972, passim.
20. Francis Gribble cites Bonivard as follows: "They [Reformation ideas] were introduced by travelling merchants from France and Nuremberg, who ate meat on Friday in defiance of the Church." Discussions of theology followed, which quickly covered the major Reformation issues. (Gribble, Lake Geneva and Its Literary Landmarks. Westminster, 1901, p. 47 ).
21. Næf, Henri. "Luther et les Genevois." Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936, pp. 405-468.
22. Buck and Zophy, The Social History, is devoted in large part to the study of Nürnberg, especially in these chapters:  
Gottfried Seebas, "The Reformation in Nürnberg," pp. 17-40;  
Phillip Blebb, "The Lawyers, Dr. Christoph Scheurl, and the Reformation in Nürnberg," pp. 52-72; Jackson Spielvogel,

"Patricians in Dissension: A Case Study from Sixteenth Century Nürnberg," pp. 73-90; Charles Demil, "Hard Work, Good Work, and School Work: An Analysis of Wenzeslaus Linck's Conception of Civic Responsibility," pp. 41-51.

The final chapter is most important for understanding the development of social concern and care during Reformation-era Nürnberg.

23. Moeller, Imperial Cities, p. 92.
24. See Chapter Two, especially pp. 32-34.
25. Chrisman, Miriam Usher. Strasbourg and the Reform. New Haven, 1967, p. 276.
26. Ibid., p. 44.
27. Ibid., pp. 260-275. One of Zwingli's most important reforms was to secure state funding for teachers' salaries. Previously, instructors were totally dependent on their students' tuitions for income. If few students elected the course, the instructor made little. In the new, Zwinglian system, a teacher was to concentrate on instruction, and not be condemned to seeking students' favor to ensure a living.
28. Ibid., pp. 279-283.
29. Finally, about 1530, all the Church's responsibilities in the hospital system were absorbed by the Councils because of ecclesiastical neglect. For a precise dating for each hospital, see the chart on Appendix p. 531.

Section Two

The Operation of Geneva's Welfare Institutions  
and Calvin's Role in Them

## Chapter Eight

## Calvin's Theology for Care of the Poor

Calvin, like Geneva's Councils, imbued the new hospital system with a religious and social mission, a medieval notion cherished by most Reformation leaders. However, the actual form taken by Genevan civic charity united the city's traditional methods of care (as evidenced in the previously-established hospitals and in the Franchises) with the many new approaches coursing through Europe's lifeblood at that time. Zurich, Basle, Lyons, Berne, and Strasbourg (the cities which most directly influenced Geneva and its prominent citizens) all inaugurated substantial refinements in meeting their social obligations. These were characterized by a comprehensive, city-wide attack on all social ills and centralized, Council-dominated administration.

Although these reforms were not exclusively a product of the Reformation, the two movements were indeed contemporaneous. As importantly, they blossomed from a similar Christian understanding of "ministrare ad hominem." At the very least, the new welfare formulations demanded substantial changes in the way that

the fragmented Roman Catholic charity system, centered as it was on earning one's salvation through individual acts of piety, had been operating. In some Catholic cities, reform-minded people did effect these changes, generally without the support of the local Church hierarchy. Many orthodox Catholics believed that altering established methods of welfare provision precluded a spread of the Lutheran heresy. While the Reformation was not essential for hospital reform, as witnessed by Lyons, it certainly did make it easier. The Reformation successfully challenged other established habits as well, providing theological justification for these new ways of distributing alms.

In Geneva, many of these important welfare improvements (such as lay control and a comprehensive distribution of alms) were well under way a full century before the Reformation. The management and purpose of the Pyssis are the most outstanding example. The Roman Catholic Church in Geneva and its courtier bishops took little interest in any sort of social welfare system. Indeed, much of their authority in administering charity had been eroded by the secular leaders of the community well before the abolition of the mass in 1535. In Geneva, as in most Protestant cities, the impetus for religious and social reforms sprang from the lay community.

The combination of the many previously-described influences created the new Hôpital-Général and endowed it with an organization and method of operation in use by the time that John



Calvin arrived in Geneva (late in 1536). During his years in Geneva, Calvin made significant contributions to the hospital. However, the learning process was not one-sided. Evidence exists to indicate that his own thoughts on social welfare were profoundly influenced by what he saw implemented in Geneva.

It would, of course, be erroneous to think that Calvin came to Geneva without any ideas of his own for the care of the needy. Calvin was a humanist scholar, having studied at Paris, Orléans, and Bourges (all recognized centers of French humanism), and wrote a highly regarded commentary on Seneca's De Clementia.<sup>1</sup> He was certainly aware of Vives and Major's works. He was familiar with the Meaux community; he read, knew, and admired Le Fevre. Of greatest importance, during Calvin's sojourn at Strasbourg, he participated in the work of that city's Churches as pastor of the French-speaking congregation.

In Strasbourg, Martin Bucer, head of the city's pastors, had supplemented municipal welfare projects with a scheme for distributing public charity through the Reformed Church, which he had helped institute. Bucer was also a well-read humanist who published his own research. In his first major work, Das ym Selbs (1523), Bucer professed a desire that alms-giving should emanate from piety: "The Christian should not just live for himself, but ought to put himself to the service of his brothers."<sup>2</sup>

To implement these ideals, Bucer needed a visible Church structure. His theological aspirations were channelled through the existing institutions which preceded him in Strasbourg. The Mehrere Hospital and the civic welfare system had been re-

vamped and substantially altered in function between 1523 and 1524 by the city's burghers, the same people who lent considerable assistance to the establishment and preservation of the Alsatian Reformation.<sup>3</sup> This reorganization preceded Bucer's rise to prominence in the city.

Bucer's offertory during the regular Sunday service provided the opportunity "to bring charitable gifts to the poor."<sup>4</sup> Although his devotional and humanist writings were studied and admired by Calvin, perhaps Bucer's greatest contribution to Calvin was his teachings on ecclesiastical organization. This is certainly true for tracing stages in Calvin's understanding of organized alms-giving. Bucer believed that it was through the Church visible that the Gospel should be professed and practiced in the world.

At Strasbourg, Church duties were divided among four offices. Bucer believed that God had

constituted and ordained the open public ministers of the Church. Doctors, pastors, governors, deacons, all dispensers of public alms, in short, all the persons who serve to properly and decently regulate and oversee the Christian community, and to advance the glory of Christ. 5

Within the Christian ministry, then, were four orders, which differed in function, not in rank. One of these was the diaconate.

From their inception, God called the deacons to be "stew-

ards of communal alms." <sup>6</sup> Their function, therefore, was more than merely distributing charity. They managed properties and endowments and helped to govern the many institutions through which charity was funnelled.

During Calvin's stay in Strasbourg (1538-1541), Bucer published his handbook on pastoral care, "Von der wahren Seelsorge" (1538). After defining the ministry, Bucer went on to describe its twin functions:

the service of the souls (Dienst des Seelsorger), and service concerning material matters (Dienst der lieblichen Vernehmung für die Dürftigen). <sup>7</sup>

The proper administration of these duties ("ministre et serviteur") made certain that the poor and faithful lacked nothing necessary to live, enabling the contemporary Church to fulfill its Gospel obligation.

The care of the material needs of the congregation fell largely to the deacons, while the ministers and presbyters dealt mainly with the first duty, the service of the souls. The ministry

consists of the administration of the word, sacraments and discipline of Christ, which belongs especially to bishops and presbyters; the other of the care of the needy, which was formerly entrusted to persons who were called deacons. <sup>8</sup>

By the true administration of the Word of God, Bucer

meant "preaching, dogmatics, penitence, consoling, care of the poor, in which consists the pastoral ministry (Hirtendienst)."<sup>9</sup> One in the series of questions posed to ordinands was the following:

Whether he acknowledges that it belongs to the true communion and discipline of the Church that none should appear empty-handed in the presence of the Lord in the more plenary assemblies of the Church... but that the faithful should always bring some contribution towards giving food and drink and hospitality and clothing and care and refreshment to Christ and his little ones. 10

It is important to remember that contemporaneous with Calvin's stay in Strasbourg, Bucer was developing and practicing this view of the diaconate, an idea which Calvin later adopted. Also, Bucer was in the process of setting up the ecclesiastical organization for Hesse at the invitation of the Landgrave.

Bucer's influence on Calvin's thought cannot be overemphasized. Although social welfare was being promoted by the Zwinglian Reformed Church, it was not administered through the diaconate.<sup>11</sup> The 1525 "Zürcher Chorgerichtsordnung" was vague about the precise nature of that ministry.<sup>12</sup> Berne's "Gemein Reformation..." of 1528, proclaiming the Reformation in Bernese territory,<sup>13</sup> failed to mention the diaconate altogether.

But in 1529 the Basle "Kirchenordnungen" did tackle the purpose and obligations of the diaconate in a paragraph entitled "The deacon's duties."<sup>14</sup> It is interesting to note that Basle

left his assignments almost unaltered from what they had been in the Roman Catholic scheme. Within Basle's ecclesiastical hierarchy, the deacon was the pastor's underling. He remained the traditional auxiliary of the pastor in the sacerdotal duties and worked as his laboring assistant. It was decided that the deacon

shall maintain a resting room for the use of the pastor or those who are taken ill or those upon urgent Church business. In the company of the pastor, to attend Christenings, visit the sick, spread comfort through the Word of God and assist the priest at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. 15

Basle also provided for subdeacons. Oecolampadius, Basle's reformer, tried using lay assistants to aid parish pastors. In this way, the manpower and reach of the Church could be augmented, and the Church's mission be expanded beyond the limits forced upon it by having so few qualified pastors in the field during the early years of the Reformation. 16

The Bernese were quick to adopt this idea, using deacons as assistant pastors in their own rural territory. This was especially true in the Vaud, where trained preachers were even harder to come by. 17 These men have been called "pasteurs en sous-ordre" or "Helfer." 18 Such deacons thereby increased the amount of territory covered by each pastor. The deacon preached in his place when he had to be elsewhere and assisted at the Eucharist. These men also helped to educate the country folk, so that by the seventeenth century, they were carrying on a sec-

ular teaching ministry in addition to aiding the local pastor. 19

These Swiss deacons contrast dramatically with their counterparts in Bucer's Church. Perhaps the demarcation of function actually lay between the German-speaking Swiss cantons on the one hand and the Reformed principalities of Germany on the other. <sup>20</sup> In addition to Strasbourg, the principality of Hesse's 1526 "Reformatio Ecclesiarum Hessiae" asked the deacons to provide works of charity and care for the poor: "Deacons chiefly watch over the poor and infirm, but also to others there is the charity of good works." <sup>21</sup> In Hesse, social care was the deacon's primary duty.

As Bucer and Calvin recommended, deacons were to be elected according to Paul's specifications in I Timothy 3:8. A more complete list of their duties <sup>22</sup> fell under the chapter <sup>23</sup> headed "De Diaconis Ecclesiarum, et pauperum provisione." Hence, within the Bucerian wing of the Reformed Church, deacons served the poor and visited the sick. In the Zwinglian areas, however, the deacon was the pastor's assistant and "right-hand man." His was a less autonomous ministry, and within a vertical religious structure he occupied a spot similar to the one deacons and subdeacons held in the Roman Catholic scheme.

Calvin not only professed a deep admiration for Bucer; more importantly, he agreed with him on every important theological issue, including the need for a Church discipline and an ecclesiastical constitution. <sup>24</sup> He certainly concurred with Bucer's plans for the diaconate, for he incorporated them into

the Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541.

In the Ordinances, Calvin also delineated a four-fold ministry of which one branch was the diaconate. For Calvin, the scriptural warrant for instituting the diaconate could be gleaned from Acts 6: 1-6. He wrote in his commentary on Acts that "Luke declareth here upon what occasion, and to what end, and also with what rite, deacons were first made."<sup>25</sup>

In this particular passage, the Hellenists complained to the Apostles that their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. The Apostles' solution was to choose seven men to conscientiously wait on tables for the poor, thus relieving the twelve of this duty, and enabling the Apostles to devote more time to preaching the Word. These seven men, wrote Calvin, were the Church's first deacons. They were ordained by the Apostles through the laying on of hands (Acts 6: 6).

When man was in his unfallen state, wrote Calvin, each gave as God called him to. Unfortunately, our corrupt and fallen natures prevented the Holy Spirit from communicating our brothers' needs to us and ensuring a Christian response from us. To bridge this gap, a terrestrial organization had to be created to inspire and deliver Christian charity.<sup>26</sup> Care of the poor was conceived as a sacred office and a part of the total Christian ministry:<sup>27</sup> "We know what a holy thing it is to care for the poor."<sup>28</sup> Thus, the deacons were called to be "stewards for the poor."<sup>29</sup> They were the Church's social welfare of-



ficers and, to some extent, its business managers as well.

It was not only in Acts that Biblical justification for an alms-giving diaconate could be found. From Paul's first epistle to Timothy, Calvin compiled the following qualifications for a deacon:

Deacons ought to be serious and modest in their living, temperant, they ought not to be lazy at all, nor double-tongued; and then, they ought not to be given to wine, nor dishonest gain, and they should have the secret of the faith in good conscience, and they should be proved before being set in office. 30

These are simply a rephrasing of Paul's own list in I Timothy 3: 8.

In a more creative vein, Calvin suggested three virtues that would benefit a deacon. The first is that he sincerely have pity and understanding toward the plight of the poor. He should not be hypocritical about wanting to help them, so that he is doing it for his personal glory while inwardly despising them. Secondly, not only should the deacon avoid drunkenness, as Paul declared, but also he should abstain from the overconsumption of food and all other material goods. Not only would the temptation to dip into the charity coffers be lessened, but a man accustomed to simple living would be a better judge of how to wisely spend for the poor. Lastly, those who love profit should not seek the diaconate in order to avoid worldly temptation.<sup>31</sup> Surely, at the worst, the purveyance of supplies

gave an opportunity for graft and, at the very least, probably provided some valuable advance business information on commodity transactions.<sup>32</sup> A testimony to Geneva's ability to choose virtuous men for the diaconate is this: no substantiated charge of corruption was even levelled against them in Calvin's lifetime.<sup>33</sup>

Calvin also considered the place of women in the diaconate. In I Timothy 5, Paul described how widows served the poor.<sup>34</sup> Calvin thus incorporated women into this fourth branch of the ministry. In speaking of the charge to serve the poor, he said that "women, from their side, also look to fulfill it."<sup>35</sup> He wrote, in the Institutes, of I Timothy 5: 10, that "...women were not able to exercise any other public office than caring for the poor."<sup>36</sup> Within Geneva, this amounted to assisting the hospitallier, either as his wife or as one of the "couples" or servants. Of course, women were never officially incorporated into the diaconate of the Genevan Church because of social strictures regarding the position of women generally at the time.

Calvin noted that when choosing a deacon, as well as when selecting a pastor, the minister's wife should be evaluated along with the man himself. Wives should "be mirrors to edify by their good example to all others."<sup>37</sup>

From the Bible and the Church fathers, Calvin was able to conclude the following:

Apparently, the state of the diaconate has not been at all for this time what it used to be under the Apostles. For they received the daily alms from the faithful, and the annual rents, to

save them for their true purpose,  
 that is to say, part for the sus-  
 tenance of the ministers, part for  
 the poor, all nevertheless with  
 the suthority of the bishop, to  
 whom they gave account each year. 38

Calvin believed that these Apostolic intentions had been subverted by the Roman Catholic Church. First, even against the explicit decrees of the Council of Antioch, it was now bishops, rather than deacons, who were the guardians and dispensers of ecclesiastical property.<sup>39</sup> Calvin chided them with the proverb that "for whosoever is careful for his own table, he taketh leave to be vacant from other men's tables."<sup>40</sup> This would be an accurate description of the episcopal situation in Geneva during the four decades preceding the Reformation.

To Calvin, present-day deacons were little more than apprenticesed priests, and the diaconate "only a degree in order to be promoted to priest."<sup>41</sup> The deacon was involved with sacerdotal duties to the exclusion of providing for the poor,

for they enjoin them to other things,  
 like serving at the altar, chanting  
 the Gospel, and I know not what other  
 hubbub. 42

The only liturgical duty which reflected their Apostolic heritage was "receiving the offerings that are made before the consecration."<sup>43</sup> The Roman Catholic Church had even built up a complex hierarchy of subdeacons, deacons, and archdeacons, which had neither scriptural warrant nor sacred purpose.<sup>44</sup>

With bishops administering Church goods at their personal discretion,<sup>45</sup> and the deacons now failing to fulfill their scriptural calling,<sup>46</sup> the net result was that the poor were no longer being cared for. All of the offerings of the faithful were going to provide an easy life for the ecclesiastics, and for building ornate and expensive structures for their pride and enjoyment.<sup>47</sup> But the poor, those whom the Apostles sought to serve when they created the diaconate, were not receiving the care and nourishment they deserved and desperately needed. Moreover, their entitlement to such<sup>48</sup> was clear.

In the Institutes, Calvin wrote that one who felt called to be a deacon was to so signify. His qualifications were then to be checked against Paul's requirements in I Timothy 3:8. The deacon was ultimately accepted or rejected "by the consent and suffrage of the people;"<sup>49</sup> for Calvin pointed out that deacons were first ordained in Acts 6:2 with "the people seeing and approving them."<sup>50</sup> After the deacon was so approved by the congregation, he was to be ordained. In the Ecclesiastical Ordinances, however, this procedure is far more detailed and specific than this exposition from the Institutes.

A deacon's ordination, like that of any other member of the ministry, proceeded with the laying on of hands. Again, this was an apostolic practice Calvin wished to continue in order to "bless and consecrate"<sup>51</sup> one to the service of God.

Calvin distinctly prescribed in the Institutes that the other ministers put their hands upon the head of the new deacon, and thereby receive him into the Church's ministry.

Calvin did realize that the superstitious "common people"<sup>52</sup> often treated this act as something magical which had supernatural power of its own, outside of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the town Councils refused to permit the laying on of hands as part of the ordination ceremony, so it was never performed in Geneva. The technical reason given for their refusal was the superstition built up around this holy service. Perhaps, in fact, it was the direct connection with the Roman Catholic Church's practice that most disturbed the magistrates and urged the denial as an additional, symbolic break with the past.

An interesting aspect of Calvin's diaconate was his belief that while it fulfilled two major services, a deacon should specialize in only one of them. There were deacons to nurse the sick and the poor, and deacons to govern and apportion the commodities dedicated to them. Some believe that this distinction was an arbitrary one created to accommodate the practices extant at the Genevan Hôpital-Général.<sup>53</sup> There, those designated procureurs secured and governed the alms. At the same time, the hospitallier and his assistants distributed charity to the needy and attended to their other requirements as well as possible.

Tracing the historical development of Calvin's understanding of the diaconate through his writings, however, indicates a

greater reason existed than Geneva's hospital system. John Calvin's two-fold role for the deacons grew out of his mentor Martin Bucer's concept of the ministry as put forth in "Von der wahren Seelsorge," 1538.<sup>54</sup> Bucer believed that Christ's Church ought to both care for the poor and provide the material necessities of life.

Originally, in the 1536 edition of the Institutes, Calvin wrote simply that deacons were created by the Apostles to provide for the poor. This was, of course, two years before Bucer published his two-fold concept of "ministry."

The office of the deacons is to provide care for the poor and to minister unto them. Hence, they have that particular name and are regarded, as it were, as ministers. 55

Subsequently, although during that same year, Calvin came to Geneva from Strasbourg. Any mention of the deacons was entirely absent from the 1537 Genevan "Articles," which had been drafted in large part by Guillaume Farel.<sup>56</sup>

The functions assigned to the deacons in the 1539 edition of the Institutes closely paralleled those of the Genevan hospital officers. This edition did appear in print after Calvin and Farel had been asked to leave Geneva. But Calvin wrote the following:

Scripture specifically names deacons those who are constituted by the Church to dispense alms, and who are as receivers or procureurs to the poor. 57

In spite of the apparent similarities between the duties described in this passage and those fulfilled by the officers of the Genevan hospitals, one is equally struck by what is absent. First, there is no mention of actually caring for the sick and poor, no ministering in the "Seelsorge" sense, which became so strong in the later editions. At this point, Calvin does not appear to have borrowed any of Martin Bucer's concepts of the diaconate. What Calvin has written here repeats the original Apostolic conception of the poor (Acts 6:2). Secondly, he does not specifically say that there are to be two distinct types of deacons.

The next exposition of the diaconate occurred in his Pauline Commentaries, especially the one for Romans, which were written in the winter of 1539-1540. This was slightly more than one year after Bucer published "Von der wahren Seelsorge," and also just after the Hesse Ordinances of 1539 (another Bucer project). By 1539, Calvin was well-established in Strasbourg and probably never expected to even see Geneva again. He participated in the life of the French parish and became a close confidant of Bucer.<sup>58</sup> The two worked together on a daily basis and attended the reconciliatory councils together.<sup>59</sup> This was an important period not just in Calvin's life but also for the future of the Protestant movement. Emperor Charles V called a council of Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians, in order to force them to reconcile their differences. Pressured by the necessity of creating solid affirmations of their



faith, people like Calvin, Bucer, and Melancthon began delineating their ideas of the precise nature of the Church, the ministry, and other major issues of Christianity. During the Strasbourg years, Calvin came to an explicit understanding of many of these controversial points, including the diaconate. And so, once he returned to Geneva, he put them into force within that city's Church.

In the Commentary on Romans 12:8 ("he that giveth, in singleness, those that show mercy, with cheerfulness"), Calvin wrote

By givers, of which he speaketh here, he understandeth not those which gave of their own, but deacons, who were appointed for the distribution of the public goods of the Church. By those that show mercy, he understandeth widows, and other ministers, who, according to the custom of the old Church, were ordained to see unto the sick; for they are two diverse offices, to minister necessary things unto the poor, and to bestow their labor in seeing to them. 60

In this passage, he unequivocally claims "two diverse offices" to care for the poor: the first to provide for their material needs; the second to visit and to minister unto them. Calvin's borrowings from Bucer to justify the four-fold ministry have already been established, largely by Calvin's use of the same Biblical passages employed in Bucer's own writings.<sup>61</sup> Now, at the end of his tenure in Strasbourg, Calvin was clear-

ly asserting a two-fold diaconate divided along the afore-mentioned Bucerian lines as well. The 1541 edition of the Institutes recommended

two kinds of deacons, of which the first are to serve the Church itself by organizing and dispensing the alms of the poor, the second, attending to the sick and the other poor. 62

Another place in the Institutes clarified the division:

In the first place, he denotes the deacons who administer the alms; in the second, those who have the charge of thinking of the poor, and serving them, as were the widows, of which he [Paul] makes mention in Timothy [I Timothy 5:10]. 63

By the time that Calvin was asked to return to Geneva, which he did quite reluctantly, his notion of the diaconate had solidified.<sup>64</sup> Although he might well have had the Geneva situation in mind in the passage from the 1539 Institutes,<sup>65</sup> by 1541 John Calvin was quite far from Geneva mentally as well as geographically.

Another factor for consideration of Calvin's understanding of the diaconate is his personal history. Although he and Farel recorded no pique or bitterness toward Geneva after their expulsion, Calvin did not look back to the city as a theological example. Also, by the time the concept of the twin purpose of the diaconate became clear in Calvin's writings (1540-1541), he fully expected to spend the rest of his life in Strasbourg. What was in retrospect a hiatus would have seemed at the time to

be permanent. By 1540, Bucer's influence must have dominated his thought, not the influence of Geneva. Even on his death-bed, Calvin acknowledged his debts to Strasbourg. He borrowed the Strasbourg Sunday prayer form and composed the Genevan baptismal from theirs. Some of the Genevan psalms were even sung to Strasbourg tunes.

Upon his return to Geneva, Calvin became more flexible and practical. At any rate, his personal beliefs regarding Church government were never maintained so dogmatically as were his theological beliefs. A good demonstration came in Calvin's recommendation that the Polish Reformed Church keep the three-fold ministry, which was familiar to the people, rather than have its government become a stumbling block to the spread of Reformed theology.

Another example of Calvin's new-found willingness to compromise can be judged by this story concerning his 1540 "Little Treatise on the Holy Supper of Our Lord," which sought to reconcile Lutheran and Zwinglian viewpoints. Its success may be seen in this anecdote:

In 1545 the book was published in Latin and thus made available to Luther. Melancthon's son-in-law, Christoph Pezel, reports that Luther picked it up in a book shop and praised it highly, saying: "I might have entrusted the whole affair of this controversy to him [Calvin] from the beginning. If my opponents had done the like we should soon have been reconciled." 67

Each of these examples importantly illustrates just how undogmatic Calvin could be on matters he deemed to be of secondary importance to the Christian Church. He was willing to bend on the exact nature of the diaconate, a relatively minor issue, to avoid unnecessary difficulties. Thus, in the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordonnances, and in local sermons, Calvin tapered the Genevan diaconate to fit the existing situation at the Hôpital-Général. Calvin's Genevan sermons on I Timothy, delivered in the autumn and winter of 1554-1555,<sup>68</sup> specifically define deacons only as the two types of officials at the Genevan hospital:

this makes known that deacons,  
that is to say the "hospital-  
liers" and the "procureurs" of  
the poor... 69

In describing both the ministry and the hospital, Calvin personally admitted that he bent the conclusions of his Biblical research to fit the existing situation at the Hôpital-Général in order to avoid conflict.

There have always been two types of them [deacons] in the ancient Church. One was deputed to receive, dispense, and maintain the goods of the poor, as much the daily alms as possessions, rents, and annuities. The others, in order to care for and think of the sick, and to administer the rations to the poor, which custom we yet hold at present. And in order to avoid confusion, because we have "procureurs" and "hospitalliers"... 70

To compare this with the two passages first entered in the 1541 edition of the Institutes, it is plain that distributing alms was originally conceived as a function of the first ministry, the provision of material needs. However, to "avoid confusion," Calvin lumped the distribution of rations into the second category, which up until then had simply been the ministry of the care of souls. Rather than make an issue out of such a minor difference when speaking to the people of Geneva, Calvin was willing to divide the diaconate along the lines already existing in the city. The first type of deacons simply became the procureurs and the second sort the hospitalliers. However, for international consumption, Calvin maintained the Bucerian demarcation through subsequent editions of the Institutes and the Commentaries. The 1559 Latin and the 1560 French editions of the Institutes both advance the two-fold diaconate based on obtaining and dispensing alms, for the one part, and caring for the sick and poor on the other.

Calvin's Genevan deacons were officially established in the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances. Before that date, the officers of the Hôpital-Général were just city magistrates, secular officials, with no connection to the Church. The Ordinances form, in so many respects, the salient landmark for measuring standards of operation in the early years of the hospital. They certainly provide that first milestone for gauging the rest of the Church in Geneva.

The need for the Ordinances emerged from the tumultuous

events of 1538 which led to Calvin's dismissal. After the official vote by the Conseil Général on May 21, 1536, to embrace the Reformation, the city's religious life suffered from the temporary anarchy that follows most "revolutions." Calvin and Farel sought to implement measures to better order the religious life of Geneva, but some were unpopular, especially a municipal confession destined to be signed by every household in the city.

In a swift reaction, a majority of the city's councillors asked Calvin to resign his pastorate and leave Geneva in 1538. It was at this point that he went to Strasbourg to lead the quiet life of a scholar and pastor. But the 1540 elections went to Calvin's supporters, whereupon he was asked to once again assume his post. After much coaxing Calvin relented, but only on certain conditions. One of these was that an ecclesiastical constitution be framed which would be binding on the civil powers as well as on the Church. After all, much of the contention that marred Calvin's first stay in Geneva emanated from ill-defined boundaries over final authority in matters such as excommunication or deciding the city's liturgical rite. The Ecclesiastical Ordinances sought to definitively settle all squabbles between the Church and the Republic by clearly setting forth the duties and domain of each.

The commission which drafted the Ordinances was composed of magistrates Claude Pertemps, Ami Perrin, Claude Roset, and Jean Lambert. All were members of the Petit Conseil, and all

were long-standing supporters of John Calvin. Joined to this committee were two councillors from the Deux Cents, Jean Balard and Ami Porral. These six men were assigned the official task of drafting the Ordinances in conjunction with the Genevan Company of Pastors. In actuality, these councilmen gave their approval to Calvin's ideas for the structure and language of the charter.

After five weeks of deliberations, on November 3, 1541, the committee presented its finished product to the Petit Conseil. These articles were unanimously adopted by the Conseil Général on November 20, 1541.<sup>71</sup>

One part of the Ordinances provided for choosing the Church's deacons and tied them directly into the operation of the Hôpital-Général. Within the Ecclesiastical Ordinances, Calvin was more specific about the selection of deacons and their duties than he had been in the Institutes. He wanted the four procureurs and the one hospitalier to be elected "like the 'anciens' [the Genevan Church elders] and approved by the Consistory."<sup>72</sup> Calvin believed that this procedure would comply with the Pauline format for selecting deacons, as set forward in I Timothy 3.

For their part, the twelve elders were nominated by the Petit Conseil: four from the Conseil de Soixante, and six from the Conseil de Deux Cents. This slate was then sent to the Conseil de Deux Cents for final approval.<sup>73</sup> Even after their selection and at the beginning of each year, the Seigneurie



reviewed the elders to decide if any needed to be replaced. The wording of the Ordinances plainly states that anciens were not meant to be substituted "often" or "without cause" as long as they "performed their duties faithfully."<sup>74</sup>

Because Geneva mustered twelve anciens and only five deacons, their respective selection procedures could not be exactly the same as the Ordinances first imply. Of the first four procureurs elected in 1542, two were members of the Deux Cents,<sup>75</sup> and the other two held seats on the Petit Conseil.<sup>76</sup> From 1542, at least two of the four procureurs sat on the Petit Conseil.<sup>77</sup> Often, a procureur was concurrently an elder on the Consistory, particularly from 1552. Also starting in 1552, one Syndic joined the four procureurs in administering the hospital; the sole Syndic chaired the committee.<sup>78</sup>

Procureurs, like other city officials, were voted into office during the February of each year. The incumbent Petit Conseil nominated them from that year's incoming Councils. The Petit Conseil then passed these nominees to the Deux Cents for their approval. Following this, the slate of procureurs, Syndics, and other city officials went to the Conseil Général for final approbation. Of course, since the lower two councils could only approve or reject the Petit Conseil's nominees, they had little real power over the procureurs' selection.

The deacons (the procureurs and the hospitalier) took essentially the same oath as the preaching ministers, one approved by the Petit Conseil in July, 1542.<sup>79</sup> They pledged to serve the Church and its people, faithfully announce the Word

of God, and obey the laws of the Seigneurie.

A good indication of the religious and clerical importance originally accorded the hospital officers is this: although the 1543 "Edits" (the civil constitution) contain the oaths of the secular city officials, they do not mention any pledges for the hospital procureurs.<sup>80</sup> Whereas some historians see the deacons as just another standing committee of the Deux Cents, Calvin and the Councils believed them to be lay ministers. To consider them as secular administrators ignores the conception of Church and State in Calvin's Geneva, where the Councils and Church united to advance the Kingdom of God. That work included preaching the Word and providing for the material security of man, the total good of the community. It is an idea common to the medieval city, one again practically expressed in Bucer's two-fold concept of the Church's ministry.<sup>81</sup>

The Ordinances designated that pastors were to exercise a general surveillance over the hospital and its officers. The pastors exerted little real influence in the first years of the Hôpital-Général but did demand to be consulted about the choice of procureurs later in Calvin's lifetime.<sup>82</sup> After 1562, the pastors were consulted regularly to approve the nominations, often through Calvin as their chairman.<sup>83</sup>

Most procureurs were, by profession, merchants. They sat on many Genevan committees during their lifetime. Practical experience in business affairs enabled them to conduct the financial life of the hospital adroitly. Nevertheless, they must have been extremely busy individuals, considering that their obliga-

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tions to the hospital made exhausting demands on their time.

The procureurs met with the hospitallier twice a week, on Wednesday and on Sunday. The Sunday meetings began at 6:00 A.M., two hours before the sermon, at the hospital. The hospitallier opened each meeting with a short report, concentrating on those issues that would require action by the Councils. They discussed any special expenditures needed for the week, and then reviewed a list of the poor applying for assistance from the city. The list was regularly reviewed in order to weed out any who might be abusing the privilege of city welfare. The group recessed for the Sunday Church service and reconvened following it until all remaining business was transacted. The Wednesday meeting followed much the same format.<sup>85</sup> All of the business generated during these meetings was recorded. The minutes of these semi-weekly gatherings provide the only official hospital records available during most of its first years.<sup>86</sup>

The Ordonnances stipulated that some matters could be acted upon by only one or two of the procureurs. This was to occur only if there was good reason: generally if the matter was either urgent or trivial.<sup>87</sup>

According to the Ordinance<sup>88</sup>, one of the four procureurs acted as treasurer and managed the accounts. Another served as the receiver. He vouchsafed that the provisions necessary for the hospital were purchased and inventoried. He also certified that donations were appropriated exactly as

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their benefactor desired.

Actual practice did differ from Calvin's original plan. Over the years, one procureur was delegated the "receiver of food for meals;" a second the "receiver of grains." A third procureur held the most important post, that of assembling and weighing the grain and other commodities owed to the hospital as *dîmes*, import duties (such as the "gabelle" on salt for the Hôpital des Pestiférés), and rents.<sup>90</sup>

The receiver of *dîmes* certified the weight of these commodity payments and stored them in a granary. From there, grain and produce for which the hospital had little use were sold on the open market. In this area, the hospital required a competent businessman. A well-intentioned but inept receiver of *dîmes* could incur great financial damage to the institution through selling or buying supplies at inopportune times, or by not accurately budgeting the institution's resources.

The procureurs' other duties included supervising the properties owned by the hospital and collecting rents which fell due on them. Because the procureurs possessed judicial authority in the city through their Council membership, they often drew up contracts in the hospital's name. These ranged from probating wills and legacies left to the hospital to drafting apprenticeship, dowry, and marriage contracts for the hospital's orphans. It must be remembered that Geneva had no separate judicial system other than the legislative councils. Thus, the Petit Conseil and its members enacted the important

legal as well as the major legislative decisions.

The procureurs had yet another major duty. In a very secular sense, they were still councillors and served as a liaison between the Councils and the hospital. The Ecclesiastical Ordinances provided that the procureurs could return to the Seigneurie and seek additional funds when the need arose, either for sponsoring special projects or just for the daily upkeep of the hospital and its programs. It is undoubtedly as a result of this responsibility, and the need to explain the hospital's requirements to the Seigneurie, that a Syndic was added to the four procureurs after 1552. This certainly increased the stature of the hospital in the Council's eyes.

Procureurs also nominated new hospital staff for the Council's approval and oversaw the hospitallier's performance. They had supreme authority in disciplinary questions involving both the staff and the patients. Because the hospital housed children from unfortunate backgrounds, it is not surprising that juvenile delinquency was a problem. In October, 1542, procureurs were empowered to take appropriate action:

Ordered that the gentlemen, procureurs of the said hospital, as to when he [sic] has delinquent children, he can imprison them and punish them in the said hospital. 91

The actual number of procureurs varied over the years. In 1535, the hospital commenced with five men in that position. From 1537 until Calvin's return in 1541, the number dropped to

only two. In this six year period, ten different men were procureurs at one time or another. However, with the advent of the Ecclesiastical Ordinances, a degree of stability befell the office. The same four men elected in 1541 remained in office until 1546, when Jean Coquet died.<sup>92</sup> Incidentally, at his death, a large portion of his estate was given directly to the hospital.

Coquet's replacement as procureur was Antoine Chicand, who served from 1546 until 1550. He was hospitalier for a brief term in 1540-1541, but his wife displayed an indiscriminately petulant attitude toward the poor and the Seigneurie alike. Chicand was informed that her behavior made it impossible for him to remain in the post as hospitalier. Like Jean Coquet, Chicand was elected to the Seigneurie once (in 1547) during his term as procureur.

The three other procureurs elected under the new Ordinances remained in office until 1548, when a number of complaints of bad administration, especially from the pastors, forced their resignation. This was a matter not of corruption but of incompetence, primarily because they were extremely busy as procureurs, Council members, and businessmen. These three procureurs included Jean Chautemps (a long-standing member of the Petit Conseil), Loys du Fort,<sup>93</sup> and Michel Varro (the latter two men being from the Deux Cents). Jean Chautemps served as procureur once again from 1556 until 1559 and concurrently sat on the Seigneurie in 1556. It is interesting

to note that none of the original five procureurs (Claude Bernard in particular), who were so instrumental in setting the new Hôpital-Général on a sound footing, returned to serve again upon Calvin's return.<sup>94</sup>

Jean Chautemps, the most ardent supporter of the hospital in its first years under the Ordinances was a zealous Protestant sympathizer years before the Reformation. He, like Claude Bernard and Claude de Lâtra, was listed among the "party of the new Preacher" (Antoine Fromment) in the "Registres de Conseil" of December 31, 1532.<sup>95</sup> These three men endorsed Fromment's teachings in a dispute with a group of priests that December. Later, in January of 1534, Jean Chautemps, Claude Bernard, and Claude de Lâtra,<sup>96</sup> plus a large group of other councillors, petitioned to the Vicar-General that his earlier decision not to read or preach the Gospel in the parishes be reversed.<sup>97</sup> Chautemps is thought to have owned a press from which early evangelical propaganda flowed.<sup>98</sup> His name was of course frequently mentioned in conjunction with Bernard and Salomon, which fact might help to explain why Claude Bernard did not find it necessary to re-involve himself with the hospital after Calvin's return.

Syndic Jean Coquet's name appeared in the Registers as well. He was a Syndic during that tumultuous year of 1533, when so many of the sectarian disturbances occurred. Coquet did play a restrained role throughout, however. As a Syndic (again in 1543) and a councillor (although absent from the



Council during Calvin's exile), he participated in the votes to establish a reformed Church, a unified hospital, and a new school. Yet he did not agitate in the streets for a break with the Roman Catholic system. A Catholic partisan wounded him with a sword in the disturbances that erupted the night Canon Verly was killed, when Coquet was working in his official capacity as Syndic to keep both sides apart and at peace.<sup>99</sup> His sympathies must have been apparent at that stage, however, for the Fribourgers accused him of complicity in Verly's death.<sup>100</sup> Ironically, Verly died on the steps of Jean Chautemps' house.<sup>101</sup>

In August, 1534, Coquet directed the destruction of some of the fauxbourgs, a sensitive assignment for both political and military considerations. The job required a man of widely recognized integrity and civic loyalty.<sup>102</sup> Coquet was such a man, and a major force in the newly re-organized hospital, serving for five years as a procureur.

Michel Varro, another early procureur, can be found in the Council minutes during the trial of a canon accused in the poisoning of Pierre Viret. At that point, Varro's sympathies appeared to have been with the priests.<sup>103</sup> The Varro family originated in Montcaliari, in Piedmont; hence, they were not of native Genevan stock and very near, at least geographically, the ruling hand of Savoy. Michel's father came to Geneva late in 1521 and was ennobled later by the Duke. This would undoubtedly explain Michel's initial sympathy to the Savoyard party.<sup>104</sup>

An idea of the grueling pace endured by the procureurs

can be clearly gleaned from this anecdote about Jean Chautemps. In 1560, at the end of his career with the hospital, he groaned

that he would never take the job again, especially during a plague like that of the 1540's, even if he were paid a thousand écus. 105

The willingness of the Councillors to assume these onerous tasks with no recompense reflects their unusual sense of civic duty. Their concept of community, of maintaining a living group of souls (their town) for the benefit of one and all, may help to explain this dedication. Within the mentality of the medieval town, such self-sacrifice was willingly accepted. Similarly, as the city decided, so followed its citizens. Michel Varro may have had pro-Catholic sympathies initially, but once the decision for the Reformation was made, he whole-heartedly threw in his lot with Geneva.

The only major secular complaints against the procureurs arose in 1544. The new Council treasurer, Amblard Corne, levelled a barrage against the financial management of the city in general. The hospital did not escape his condemnation. He charged that the procureurs paid little attention to their obligations and specifically accused them of selling the hospital's produce at low prices only to require purchasing food weeks later at higher prices. Jean Chautemps denied the charge, claiming that the four procureurs had faithfully executed their duties, provided the best management possible, and had given a good account of their work. Following complaints from the pastors, the

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procureurs were all removed in 1548.

Although the obligations of the procureurs were enormous, the task of running the hospital on a day-to-day basis befell the hospitallier, his wife, and their assistants. The job was demanding on the hospitallier's time, energy, and private life, so it is not surprising that Geneva had trouble finding a man to successfully fill the vacancy occasioned by Claude Salomon's untimely death in 1536.

The hospitallier was responsible to the procureurs and the Conseil de Deux Cents on one side, and to all of the hospital staff and guests on the other. Because the Council-drafted regulations prescribed that he reside full-time on the hospital premises, albeit with free room and board, there was never any escape from his duties. He, his wife, and his family were on call twenty-four hours a day in their ministry to the sick, the poor, and the needy not just of Geneva but additionally to all the foreigners using the Hôpital des Passants.

As well as directly overseeing everything at the infirmary, the hospitallier was responsible for the cultivation and maintenance of the numerous properties acquired from the former Church holdings, or as part of the Départ de Bâle. This was a compromise negotiated by Basle in February, 1544, between Berne and Geneva for control of certain newly-captured lands. The hospitallier made journeys into Geneva's outer territories to visit orphans and to distribute charity to the rural poor. He also supervised the baking of bread for the city's indigent.

The hospitallier had several workers under his supervision. A surgeon attended the sick of the hospital; and a "magister" educated the institution's children and summoned a pastor when the need arose. From 1550, a pastor was actually resident at the hospital. A "secrétaire," or "clerc," was responsible for keeping the minutes during meetings. In the early years, this was the function of a resident pensioner, but it became, in time, a notary's job. The secretary drew up contracts and provided receipts. Other employees included gardeners and day workers for the many fields under cultivation, and a shepherd, a livery man, and some servants.

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After Claude Salomon's sudden death, the procureurs needed a month to find a suitable replacement. They persuaded Louis Bernard, a former priest, to fill the vacancy, on February 22, 1536, with the understanding that his appointment would only be temporary. Bernard was an older man, and the job definitely taxed his health.

After submitting several requests that he be allowed to resign, a replacement (Jean Leurat) took charge, but, unfortunately, proved unsatisfactory. His brief term lasted from June 14, 1537, until August 31, 1538, when Claude Magnin took over.

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Magnin was easily the most capable hospitallier in this early period. He began a register of all pensioners and patients, their ailments, and their term in the hospital. This register provides the most accurate picture available of the hospital in its first decade. That same year (1538), Magnin began the hos-

pital's long relationship with surgeon Jacques Bémier, a connection which stretched over ten years. Although the Ecclesiastical Ordinances provided for a doctor and a surgeon at the hospital,<sup>109</sup> it was not until thirty years later that the hospital had a doctor exclusively for itself. The poor residing in their own homes (for which the hospital did provide assistance as well) were also visited by the doctor whenever necessary.<sup>110</sup>

Unfortunately, Magnin was a friend of Jean Philippe (the leader of the Articulant faction); and when the Articulants lost power to the Guillermins in 1540, he was replaced by Anthoine Chicand. Chicand's activity in the Hôpital-Général as hospitalier and procureur spanned the next ten years. Unhappily, his term as hospitalier was marred by his wife's disdainful attitude toward the poor, as was mentioned earlier.<sup>111</sup> She fought with the Seigneurie, was jailed once for three days (for using intemperate language toward that august body), and was forced to recant. Eventually, Chicand was told that his wife's behavior made his continuing the post impossible.<sup>112</sup> He was accepted as a procureur later because in that position his wife would have no direct involvement with the poor, the residents of the hospital, or the Councils.

Jean Fontannez was elected to replace Anthoine Chicand as hospitalier on December 21, 1541. (Chicand, for his part, would eventually succeed Jean Coquet as procureur in 1547 and remain on until 1550. Interestingly enough, his brother Guill-

aume served in the same capacity from 1556 until 1561.<sup>113</sup> ) However, Fontannaz was one more man not really right for the job. He was reportedly rude and nasty toward the poor; and thus he was quickly superceded by Pierre des Rages in 1542.

With the accession of des Rages, the Hôpital-Général finally regained a hardworking and conscientious hospitalier. Words seem a hollow tribute when measured alongside his actual ministry to the sick: during the plague of 1543, he and his family insisted on personally nursing its victims. The plague first took two of his children and then his wife. Nevertheless, he raised his remaining offspring alone and stayed on at the hospital until his death in 1549.

Pierre des Rages led the hospital away from its unsettled beginnings and rapid turnover of staff into a new era of stability. From 1542, hospitaliers remained for reasonably long terms. The hospital registers indicate the operation of the hospital became more established and routine, in spite of the influx of religious refugees in the following decade.

Although Calvin's theoretical concept of the diaconate can be clearly traced to the ideas of Bucer and his own personal experiences in Strasbourg, he integrated the existing Geneva hospital officers as deacons into the ministry of that city's newly-reformed Church. These first deacons were the Reformation's most stalwart supporters and Calvin's closest associates on the city's Councils. Undoubtedly, they did promote Calvin's personal ideas for the care of the needy. These same men put the

hospital system on a sound footing after nearly an entire decade of instability.



## Chapter Eight Footnotes

1. Although Calvin's commentary on De Clementia attracted little interest when it was first released, twentieth century scholarship concludes that Calvin made substantial refinements on Erasmus' edition. The failure of Calvin's to attract initial interest is ascribed largely to the timing of its publication; Calvin released his edition shortly after the venerable Erasmus published his "definitive" one. What was worse, the audacious twenty-three year old challenged the old master on certain points. That act broke the tight unwritten code of etiquette by which the humanists lived. And so, the young upstart suffered the greatest insult imaginable to an aspiring academic theoretician--disinterest. See the following:  
  
Battles, F.L and A.M. Hugo (eds.). Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's "De Clementia" Leiden, 1969.  
  
Wendel, Francois. Calvin. London, 1963, pp. 27-37.
2. Bucer, Martin. "Das ym Selbs." 1523. Quoted in Courvoisier, Jacques. La notion d'église chez Bucer. Paris, 1933, p. 43.
3. Kingdon, Robert M. "Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva," AHR, vol. 76, no. 1, (January, 1971), pp. 64-69.
4. Wright, D.F. (ed.). Common Places of Martin Bucer. Abingdon, 1972, p. 90.
5. Ibid., p. 430. See also Courvoisier, La notion, p. 88.
6. Ibid., p. 239.
7. Courvoisier, La notion, pp. 100-101.
8. Wright, Common Places, p. 254.
9. Courvoisier, La notion, p. 101.
10. "Article 21 to the Ordinands," quoted in Wright, Common Places, p. 264.
11. See Chapter 7, pp 136-139.
12. Reproduced in: Richter, A.L. Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts. Nieuwkoop, 1967, pp. 20-22.  
  
I would like to express my thanks to David S. Watson of Elie, Scotland, for his help in translating these German Reformation Church Orders.
13. Ibid., pp. 104-106 (a reproduction).
14. Ibid., pp. 122-123 The entire document spans pp. 120-127.

15. Ibid., pp. 122-123.
16. Henderson, Robert W. The Teaching Office in the Reformed Tradition. Philadelphia, 1962, p. 40, footnote 21.
17. Ibid., p. 50, footnote 53.
18. Vuilleumier, Henri. Histoire de l'église réformée du Pays de Vaud, vol. 2. Lausanne, 1927-1940, p. 289.
19. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 291-292. See also Henderson, The Teaching, pp. 49-56.
20. Specifically, the demarcation line followed the relative influence of Bucer or Zwingli. In Strasbourg and Hesse, where Bucer dominated religious thought, the deacons distributed alms. In Switzerland, the Zwinglian-influenced diaconate served as assistant pastors.
21. Richter, Die evangelischen, p. 61. The document covers pp. 120-127.
22. Although Strasbourg has been nominally French for the last three centuries, it was then part of the Holy Roman Empire, and very Germanic in character. Bucer himself wrote in German (in addition to Latin), which would go well toward explaining the strength of his influence in Germany, as opposed to France.
23. Chapter 25, reproduced in Richter, Die evangelischen, p. 67.
24. Wendel, Calvin, pp. 58-64.
25. Calvin, John (trans. Henry Beveridge). Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles. Edinburgh, 1864, p. 229.
26. Ibid., pp. 229-233. Compare this with Antoine Fromment's Les Actes et Gestes merveilleux de la cité de Genève. Geneva, 1854, pp. 233-236.
27. C.O., vol. 53, col. 290. 24th sermon on I Timothy.
28. Calvin, Commentary on the Acts, p. 234.
29. Calvin, John (ed. Jean-Daniel Benoît). Institution de la Religion Chrestienne (1560 edition). Paris, 1961. Book 4, ch. 5, par. 15, p. 101. See also book 4, ch. 5, par. 5, p. 92.
30. C.O., vol. 53, col. 290. 24th sermon on I Timothy.
31. Ibid., col. 294. 25th sermon on I Timothy.
32. Kingdon, Robert M. "Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva." AHR, vol. 76, no. 1, (January, 1971), p. 58. After all, the procureurs managed considerable rents, dîmes, and provisions.

33. Ibid., p. 58.
34. See also I Timothy 3:11.
35. C.O., vol. 53, col. 304. 25th sermon on I Timothy.
36. Calvin, Institution, book 4, ch. 3, par. 9, p. 63.
37. C.O., vol. 53, col. 304. 25th sermon on I Timothy.
38. Calvin, Institution, book 4, ch. 4, par. 5, p. 77.
39. Ibid., book 4, ch. 4, par. 5, p. 76.
40. Calvin, Commentary on the Acts, p. 233.
41. Calvin, Institution, book 4, ch. 5, par. 15, p. 100.
42. Ibid., p. 100.
43. Ibid., p. 101.
44. Ibid., book 4, ch. 4, par. 5, p. 77; and book 4, ch. 4, par. 10, pp. 82-83.
45. Ibid., book 4, ch. 4, par. 6, p. 78.
46. Ibid., book 4, ch. 4, par. 15, p. 101.
47. Ibid., book 4, ch. 5, par. 18, pp. 103-104.
48. Ibid., book 4, ch. 4, par. 8, p. 79. This echoes St. Bernard's comment of 1125. See Chapter Six, pp. 128-129.
49. Ibid., book 4, ch. 3, par. 15, p. 69.
50. Ibid., p. 69.
51. Ibid., book 4, ch. 4, par. 16, p. 70.
52. Ibid., p. 71.
53. Kingdon, Robert M. "The Deacons of the Reformed Church in Calvin's Geneva," Mélanges...Henri Meylan. Geneva, 1970, pp. 81-87.

Kingdon wrote on page 82 that "In working out these specifications, however, Calvin was not creating a new institution. He was rather providing a religious warrant, drawn from the Bible, for a program of social work that already existed." And on page 87, he said "In other words, in his discussions of the deaconate, Calvin may have been describing an institution which he had seen operating in Geneva."

54. See pp. 152-155.

55. C.O., vol. 1, col. 190. Institutio, 1536.

56. Wendel, Calvin, p. 76.

A reproduction of the "Confession de Foi de 1537" can be found in: Heyer, Henri. L'église de Genève. Geneva, 1909, pp. 253-260.

57. Calvin, Institution, book 4, ch. 3, par. 9, p. 63.

58. Wendel, Calvin, pp. 59-65.

59. Ibid.

60. Calvin, John (trans. Henry Beveridge). Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. Edinburgh, 1864, p. 350.

61. Wendel, Calvin, p. 76. See especially the footnotes.

62. Calvin, Institution, book 4, ch. 3, par. 9, p. 63.

One can note the development of Calvin's understanding of this passage from 1536 to 1560 by following Benoit's editing to differentiate when each phrase was added from the original to each subsequent edition.

63. Ibid., p. 63. Again, following the editing and notes of Benoit, one can ascertain a modification of understanding.

64. Biéler, André. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959, p. 366.

65. See p. 164.

66. C.O., vol. 9, col. 891-894. See also McNeill, John T. The History and Character of Calvinism. New York, 1954, p. 191.

67. McNeill, The History, p. 153.

68. Muhlhaupt, E. (ed.). Supplementa Calviniana, vol. 1. Neukirche, 1961, p. xxxiv.

69. C.O., vol. 5, col. 291. 24th sermon on I Timothy. See also Heyer, Henri. L'église de Genève. Geneva, 1909, p. 9.

70. Bergier, Jean François, and Robert M. Kingdon. Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève au temps de Calvin, vol. 1. Geneva, 1964, p. 7.

71. Heyer, L'église, p. 9.
72. Bergier and Kingdon, Registres, p. 7.
73. Ibid.

A unique feature of the Church government Bucer and Calvin espoused was its insistence on four, not three, clerical offices. Each was distinct and equal in authority. What separated them was their function, not their rank in respect to one another, as in the Roman system (bishop, priest, deacon).

Of the four, the elders (presbyters) were charged with the overall direction and government of the Church. They were similar to the Roman bishop. The doctors, or professors of theology, maintained true doctrine and instructed the clergy. To the ministers was given the pastoral charge: announcing the Word of God in its purity, and ministering unto the spiritual needs of the congregation, on a personal basis. Finally, the deacons supervised the financial resources and material requirements of the faithful, including the poor through the hospital system.

Geneva also possessed a Consistory, which was distinct from the elders, doctors, ministers, and deacons. It was composed of twelve laity from the Councils (the criterion was later broadened to include any man of good standing) and a lesser number of clergy from the Company of Pastors, the ministers. The Consistory assumed many of the duties of the former Cathedral Chapter. They oversaw the Church discipline, controlled vice of varied sorts and degrees, enforced laws on interest-taking and censorship, and tried minor assault and battery cases. Although they could certainly find one guilty, they had no power to punish; that belonged to the Petit Conseil.

74. Ibid., p. 7.
75. Kingdon, "The Deacons," p. 88.
76. Roget, Amédée. Histoire du peuple de Genève, vol. 2. Geneva, 1870, p. 230.
77. Gautier, Léon, and Emil Joutet. L'Hôpital-Général de Genève de 1535 à 1545 et l'Hospice-Générale. Geneva, 1914, p. 26.
78. Kingdon, "The Deacons," pp. 88-89.

79. S.D., vol. 2, p. 392, fol. 799, (July 16, 1542).
80. S.D., vol. 2, pp. 434-435, fol. 807, (January 28, 1543).  
See also: S.D., vol. 2, p. 474, fol. 825, (July 13, 1545).
81. See pages 152-155.
82. Gautier, L'Hôpital, p. 26. See also Kingdon, "Social Welfare," p. 56.
83. Kingdon, "The Deacons," pp. 84-86.
84. Kingdon, "Social Welfare," p. 57.
85. Gautier, L'Hôpital, pp. 26-27. See Chapter Nine, pp. 209-212. for an example of such a meeting.
86. Odier-Cezenove, Jean-Jacques-Louis. L'Hôpital de Genève, depuis son origine jusqu'à 1842. Geneva, 1862, p. 14.
87. Bergier and Kingdon, Registres, p. 7.
88. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967, p. 139.
89. See Bergier and Kingdon, Registres, pp. 7-8.
90. Gautier, L'Hôpital, p. 27.
91. S.D., vol. 2, p. 393, fol. 801, (October 30, 1542).
92. In his will, Coquet bequeathed a large portion of his estate directly to the hospital. See pp. 179-180.
93. The name "Du Fort" was not mentioned on the roles of the Petit Conseil, nor was he mentioned often in the Council Registers.
94. A list of each year's hospitallier and procureurs can be found in Kingdon, "The Deacons," pp. 88-89. The year's Syndics, Lieutenant de Justice, and Tresorier, plus that year's Petit Conseil are appendixd to each of the six volumes of Amedee Roget's Histoire du peuple de Genève, for the time period covered in that volume.
95. RC, December 31, 1532.
96. Claude de Lêtre (delestra) served as procureur in 1554-1555 (Kingdon, "The Deacons," p. 88).



97. RC, January 8, 1534.
98. Delarue, Henri. "La première offensive évangélique à Genève, 1532-1533," BHG, vol. 9, (1948), pp. 100-101.
99. RC, May 5, 1533.
100. RC, May 23, 1533.
101. RC, May 5, 1533.
102. RC, August 22, 1534.
103. RC, April 16, 1535.
104. Dufour, Alain. "De la bourgeoisie de Genève à la noblesse de Savoie XV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, p. 237.
105. Quoted in Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 139.
106. Bergier, Jean-François. "La Démission du Trésorier Amblard Corne." MDG, vol. 60, (1961), pp. 456-457.
107. Gautier, L'Hôpital, pp. 24-25.
108. S.D., vol. 2, p. 339, fol. 733, (June 14, 1537).
109. Bergier and Kingdon, Registres, p. 8. See pages for a description of the sixteenth century medical professions. ?
110. Gautier, L'Hôpital, p. 43.
111. See pages 177-178.
112. Chicand became a leading light in "Le Change Public," the municipal bank. See Chapter Sixteen, p. 433.
113. Kingdon, "The Deacons," pp. 88-89.



## Chapter Nine

## The Structure and Operation of the Hospital after 1541

Calvin's theology and his Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 stamped the last official seal of approval on the establishment and operation of the new Hôpital-Général. In common with the Geneva councillors, Calvin conceived the hospital's mission to be religious as well as medical and social. To emphasize this connection, Calvin planned the hospital on a religious basis and incorporated the institution's procureurs and hospitalliers into the ministry of the Church through the diaconate.

The hospital entered its first decade a very unsettled institution. It suffered neglect and disorganization during the city's political instabilities of 1535-1541. However, by 1550, it had gained a stable staff and had developed a dependable method of operation. Many of its procureurs also served on the Consistory, a duty which certainly kept them in touch with the opinions of the pastors. Later in the decade, the arrival of religious refugees demanded correspondingly increased

social services, thereby encouraging new formulations for the promotion of social welfare. What follows is a survey of the actual operation of the post-Reformation hospital system.

The hospitallier's register remains the primary source for gaining an idea of the daily activity of the hospital. Claude Magnin (hospitallier from 1538-1539) began keeping a personal, detailed diary, which sadly ceased with his dismissal. In 1541, the Petit Conseil finally mandated that the hospitallier at least record all deaths in the infirmary.<sup>1</sup> This law was later broadened to include the rendering of a report of the hospital's daily activity.

Unfortunately, the hospital's log book did not actually begin until one full year later. The first entries in the register (for January 28, 1542) correspond to within sixty days of the approval of the Ecclesiastical Ordinances by the Conseil Général; and they clearly indicate that the Charter effectively revitalized the operation of and interest in the city's charity institution. This first entry described the hospital's hierarchy and functions.

The book of the Hôpital-Général of Geneva, of which are rectors the superb and very redoubtable Seigneurs, Syndics, and Conseils of her, of which at present the notable Jean Fontana is hospitallier, a citizen who entered the said hospital after noble Antoine Chorant [Chicand], citizen of the said Geneva, and are Procureurs the noble Jean Coquet, Louis Dufour, Jean Chautemps and Michel Versot, merchants, both citizens

and bourgeois of the said Geneva,

And in which book are written the things pertaining to the said hospital, for the poor infants, orphans, abandoned children, [pregnant] women, widows, old people, poor girls, and all other manner of people, as much for strangers as the deprived of all nations, coming without paying to the said Hôpital-Général. 2

That ambitious preamble indicates the range of individuals aided by the hospital and alludes to the services provided. Among other charitable offerings, the poor were to be housed, and the needy were to report to the hospital for the allocation of alms. In fact, caring for the sick occupied a relatively small percentage of time and beds. The Hôpital-Général during John Calvin's life was founded and intended to be a centralized, practical social welfare institution with a Scriptural warrant and a religious hue, directed and funded by the municipal Councils of Geneva. The Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 described its purpose thus:

as much for the sick as the older people who can no longer work, widowed women, orphaned children, and the other poor. 3

By far, the largest number of beds at the hospital building were taken by the children, approximately three-quarters of whom were orphans. The remainder were either illegitimate or abandoned. These latter were often left at the hospital's doors by parents who did not want, or could not afford, to raise them.

Records exist of hospitalliers even making periodic trips through the countryside to bring back parentless children.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the waifs were orphaned during the outbreaks of plague which impartially visited Geneva, as it did any other sixteenth century city. Still others lost their fathers fighting in the wars for liberation from Savoy, or as civilian casualties of armies' movements.

As much as possible, the hospital tried to place these parentless children in private homes and then often subsidized their expense. The actual decision to place a child with foster parents fell to the procureurs. Indeed, it is possible that the real discipline problems tended to remain at the hospital for lack of a sponsor, considering that Petit Conseil regulation empowering procureurs to imprison and administer corporal punishment to these incorrigibles.<sup>5</sup> It also appears likely that Geneva had more orphans than foster homes.<sup>6</sup>

At the hospital, children of both sexes received a basic education in reading and writing from the "magister," who was often an elderly former priest. Records show that the magister was scrutinized for theological orthodoxy, as well as academic expertise, because the children also learned the elements of religion from him. In addition, he reviewed their personal aptitude<sup>7</sup> so that children who showed promise might be given supplementary instruction. The remaining males were apprenticed to tradesmen at age thirteen or fourteen, with the hospital providing the money for these apprenticeship contracts. While still young, the boys

worked around the hospital, especially in the cultivation of  
the numerous fields owned by the hospital.<sup>8</sup>

Girls, too, helped in the hospital after finishing their day's schooling. They gave invaluable assistance to the hospitaller's wife and the "cresses" and servants at the hospital by preparing food, cleaning, and looking after the sick. By their mid-teens, most were placed as servants to respectable Genevan families, although many stayed on at the institution as regular employees. When the girls departed the hospital, they were each given a new dress and a new pair of dress shoes. And, when it came time for an orphan girl to be married, it was the hospital which put up her dowry.

The next largest group at the hospital after the children was the aged, many of whom were widows. Naturally, those who had family to stay with or enough money to afford living on their own did so. The Hôpital-Général sheltered those who had no other option but to accept its charity. The elderly who were not infirm worked around the grounds, or in the fields, or simply in making small household repairs. The widows worked in the kitchens and cared for the sick. The elderly were allowed to bring what furniture and possessions they had with them in order to create a familiar atmosphere in their rooms. Such property generally reverted to the hospital upon their death.

The third most numerous group was composed of the blind, the crippled, the weak, and the physically or mentally infirm. These individuals were the most demanding on the hospital's time

and resources, and the least able to contribute in return. Nevertheless, the servants and other employees cared for them; and the hospital surgeon remained readily at the disposal of all the residents.<sup>9</sup>

Others in Geneva made part-time use of the hospital's facilities and services. Pregnant women (including unwed mothers) used the hospital's medical department to bear their babies, for midwives were present as needed. Those who had but lately fallen into indigence or bankruptcy stayed at the hospital until they decided the course their lives were now to follow.

Still other Genevans lived at home and took advantage of the "out-patient" social services provided. Statistically, for every Genevan residing at the hospital, two others in the city received some form of assistance from it. This numerical fact indicates the extent to which the ideals, general function, and services of the hospital permeated the entire city. Bread and wine were distributed every Monday to needy families. Many of the aged and sick regularly had the white bread delivered directly from the hospital's kitchens. Some took advantage of these services for brief periods (ranging from six weeks to two months at a time) whenever unfortunate circumstances plagued their lives. Such conditions, judging from Lyons' experiences, included unemployment, personal disability, and temporary lay-offs.<sup>10</sup>

The number of people actually receiving some sort of as-

sistance through the Hôpital-Général was small in relation to the size of Geneva, amounting to only  $5\frac{1}{2}\%$  (including the orphans).<sup>11</sup> Perhaps one reason that this figure appears so low is bound up in the approval process for needy families. Requests were presented to and screened by the applicant's "dizainier," the militia supervisor in each of the twenty-eight "dizaines," or districts, into which the city was divided.<sup>12</sup> The office of this petty official was established in the fifteenth century by the Petit Conseil to ensure the city's military preparedness. The dizainier regularly inspected the weapons of each citizen in his district to certify that they were in working order. To accomplish this, the dizainier came (usually unannounced) into all the homes under his supervision. He also maintained surveillance against an enemy's surprise attack, especially at night, and supplemented the town watch.<sup>13</sup>

An average dizaine housed only 450 people. Thus, each dizainier possessed an unparalleled vantage on the inhabitants in his particular area; and the hospital willingly and cleverly utilized this knowledge. A dizainier screened all initial requests for assistance and recommended hardship cases to the hospital board.<sup>14</sup> He, better than anyone else in his community, could differentiate between the needy and the pretenders. If the dizainier truly felt that a case warranted approval he would personally present it at the regular weekly meetings of the deacons for a decision. Furthermore, each grant was frequently reviewed by the procureurs to make certain that only those truly



entitled to free food and assistance received it.<sup>15</sup>

The second branch of the hospital system served poor wayfarers passing through Geneva. In the legislation which consolidated the hospitals, the "Hôpital des Passants" was situated near the Pont du Rhône. This location sequestered visitors from the townspeople for military reasons, to avoid spreading disease, and to make begging more difficult. A guard was posted at the city walls to direct mendicants immediately to the hospital.

Nonetheless, mendicancy continued in Geneva after the Reformation as before, despite clear-cut and stringent laws. Local mendicants were forbidden to beg under penalty of three lashes, as set forth in the Ecclesiastical Ordinances.<sup>16</sup> Children were similarly forbidden to beg, and their parents admonished not to permit it.<sup>17</sup> Still, even well into the 1550's,<sup>18</sup> "Geneva was a good place to tender the hand."

Following the new set of hospital regulations passed in 1553 (which Calvin was involved in drafting), the procedure for "passants" was tightened. When a visitor arrived, a procureur gave him a ticket. He presented this to get soup for the evening, a bed for the night, and some bread the following morning. After breakfast, the guest was escorted back to the town gates to resume his journey. Those who were too sick or too tired to travel could elect to spend an additional few days. Some ill foreigners died in Geneva's "Hôpital des Passants," while some<sup>19</sup> new lives began there.

The hospital system was severely taxed when massacres

and persecutions against Protestants began in Savoy, France, and Italy. Many fled their homes only with the clothing that they were wearing. Among the first to arrive were four thousand refugees fleeing slaughter in Merindol and Cabrières during 1545.<sup>20</sup> Geneva employed these refugees in the building of fortifications.

As the years passed and more people fled France, enterprises such as the "Bourse française" were organized to provide for those immigrants who had lost all of their material possessions for the sake of the preservation of their religious beliefs. This private charity took some pressure off the hospital system during the greatest influx of refugees.

The third arm of the hospital system, the Hôpital des Pestiférés, continued nearly unaltered from its pre-Reformation days, under traditional Council control. The direction of the plague hospital had been given to two lay citizens after the Councils founded it in the late fifteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Like the Hôpital des Passants, the maintenance of the Hôpital des Pestiférés at Plainpalais was ordered by the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances. Whenever the plague struck Geneva, the hospital was re-opened. The two worst attacks, although not the only ones, ran from 1542-1546 and from 1568-1572; and in the latter, about one-tenth of the city's population perished.<sup>22</sup>

During outbreaks of plague, the city did take certain health measures. In the 1560's, these included forbidding the importation of fruit, closing the public baths, killing stray dogs and cats, forbidding cattle from grazing at Plainpalais,

quarantining the infected, and limiting entry by foreigners. Of course, none of these was terribly effective, because the cause and spread of the fatal infection were as yet unknown. When there was no plague, the hospital received little attention, largely from a fear of new infection.

In Geneva, as elsewhere in Europe, the populace were terrified by this contagion they could neither comprehend nor combat. Unfortunately, the pastors were no exception. Although the ministers had a responsibility to extend the care of souls to Plainpalais, they did so with understandable reluctance.

And to console them in their extreme need, the council advised the Ministers to send one of their members there, in order that they be held to serve also in times of plague. Some among them refused to do it, not feeling very stout-hearted. 23

In 1542, the Company of Pastors decided the most equitable solution was to invoke the name of God and draw lots. Only three allowed their names to be placed in nomination: Calvin, Sebastian Castellio (who later quarrelled with Calvin and retired to Basle<sup>24</sup>), and Pierre Blanchet. The lot fell to Castellio who then refused to serve. The Councils forbade Calvin to go, even though he had previously nursed plague victims in Strasbourg. That only left Blanchet, who did serve faithfully until he contracted the plague and died.<sup>25</sup> In the following decade, the duty at the plague hospital was rotated about the Company of Pastors with the majority serving well.<sup>26</sup>

The early example (1530) of Michel Caddo<sup>27</sup> was repeated in 1545, when large numbers of the hospital staff were again accused of spreading plague by smearing infected matter on handles, door latches, and bannisters. The ringleader was thought to have enriched himself by collecting the goods of the deceased.

While Michel Roset, in his Chronicles, never mentioned witchcraft by name in connection with this incident of supposed plague-spreading, he alluded to collusion with the devil. The extent to which the incident was blown up by fear of the deadly disease and typical medieval superstition regarding witchcraft in the minds of the local population is a matter of interpretation. Geneva was no more exempt from witch hunts than any other city in the Empire during this era. Educated men like Calvin, Roset, and Bonivard all accepted the existence of pacts made with the devil.

Without doubt, the Councils did over-react in this incident by putting to death (as a sort of retaliatory and self-protective measure) "seven men and twenty-four women," not just native Genevans, but people from "Lyons, Lozanne, Thonon & Sion in Valley [Valais]"<sup>28</sup> as well. Most were Savoyard.<sup>29</sup> It is perhaps no accident that this episode occurred in 1545,<sup>30</sup> at the end of three years of plague which may have killed nearly ten per cent of the city.

Large numbers of records from the Hôpital-Général and other social welfare projects do exist, although gaps are com-

mon. The two most complete accounts are the "Registers of the Deliberations" and the "Hospitallier's Accounts." The first commenced, following Council decree, in 1542 and begins with the noble statement of purpose already quoted.<sup>31</sup> The minutes of these meetings between the procureurs and the hospitallier extend without interruption from February 15, 1542, until December 21, 1550. They then break off, but begin again on March 23, 1552. Another two year hiatus occurs from November 15, 1560, until March 18, 1562. They again continue until October 12, 1563. Finally, they recommence February 18, 1568. Interestingly enough, these periods of record-keeping, followed by fairly lengthy breaks, correspond neither to the terms of successive hospitalliers nor of individual procureurs.

Most of the summaries are entered for both the Wednesday and Sunday meetings, although the Wednesday one is omitted more often than the one for Sunday. They provide a priceless picture of daily life in that period, probably the best one available. Whereas Bonivard and the "Chronicler" group (Froment, Roset, de Jussie) left their personal impressions for posterity, these hospital deliberations uncover far more. First, they are a factual and systematic account of daily operating procedure; this is true not just for the hospital but for the general community as well. In them, one learns of the interrelationships between various members of the community, arrangements for repairs and transportation, Geneva's interaction with its outlying districts, honesty in business dealings-- in short, a very com-

plete picture of the daily workings of the city. In fact, from the information on prices and wages, an excellent idea of the standard of living and the quality of life in Geneva can be ascertained.

Next in order of importance and completeness (following the Register of the Deliberations) is the Hospitallier's Accounts, which record money received and disbursed. They also show the numbers and types of poor who were actually served. Generally dealt with in the Accounts were cases requiring action that could not wait until the next meeting of the procurers. For example,

Item, raised to the nourishment  
of the daughter of the late Mi-  
chel Donny under good account of  
such nourishment, for the fourth  
time...1 florin 8 sols.

Item, raised from the said "Potu"  
for 36 pounds of mutton at 15  
deniers a pound...3 florins 9  
sols. 32

As often as not, however, the hospitallier's account books are elaborate records of payments for food and other necessities. For actually understanding the workings of the hospital, there is no substitute for the Register of the Deliberations.

On the whole, unfortunately, hospitalliers were poor record-keepers, probably because there was but little time in their busy day to make careful or comprehensive notes. Whatever the reason, large gaps do exist during Calvin's lifetime.

Claude Magnin kept the most accurate register, a jour-



nal composed during the Articulants' term in power (1538-1540). It was not until 1557 that the Hospitallier's Accounts were resumed, with the efforts of Jean Collendaz (from March 13, 1557, until April 7, 1560). Then Pierre Dance kept the Accounts from June 11, 1561, until he left on June 15, 1564, at which point another gap occurred.

The lack of standard accounting procedures, especially the use of double-entry bookkeeping (invented years later), make comprehension difficult. Collendaz made no note of his receipts, but gave an articulate account of his disbursements. In fact, some daily entries are so detailed that they appear to be shopping lists. Consequently, for the three years between 1557 and 1560, it can be easily ascertained what the price of two oranges or six onions was, or how much a worker was paid. The procurers totalled and signed this account book about every two weeks.

In complete variation with Collendaz, hospitallier Pierre Dance entered only his receipts. These came either from the Seigneurie, from <sup>the</sup> *dîme* revenues, or as gifts from citizens and Church collections. From Dance's records, one can learn much about public giving during the term 1561-1564 but little else.

Supplementing these primary works are a series of smaller ancillary ones, most of them dating only from Theodore Beza's time. Most important are the records of the Bourse française (*livres de comptabilité générale*), which run from its official chartering in 1550 until it was amalgamated into the hospital system in 1849. The register of the children under the hospit-



al's care and their personal situations are recorded in detail in the book entitled "Enfants de l'Hôpital, pupilles, enfants trouvées, bâtards, rapports étroles, copies des lettres." <sup>33</sup>

This chronicle began in 1563 and continued unbroken for two centuries. A list of donations (Legs) commenced about 1580, as did the "Livre des receveurs." This particular account book also produces a comprehensive picture of hospital finances during the latter half of the century.

Allied archives cover related legal and economic fields. The proceeds from the sale of Geneva's enemies' property ("Vente des biens des ennemies") are recorded from 1541-1599. Financial obligations contracted between the hospital and private citizens are enumerated in "Obligés, actes et contrats, actes de soumission," which began in 1569. "Droits féodaux," (1447-1698), ennoblings and related documents, deal with primarily the pre-independence era, but have few specific dealings with the hospital.

Increasingly, the Reformation regime was becoming conscious of the need for greater administrative organization. The generation of Genevan leaders <sup>34</sup> who ushered in independence and Reformation was passing on. Perhaps less reliance was being placed upon a few key personalities, and more on a system designed to govern effectively whatever the leadership and whoever the leader. Hence, by 1569, most of these secondary registers were underway. They coincided with the publication of the ordinances requiring minimum standards in pharmacy, surgery, and medicine.

On the ecclesiastical side, there is no doubt that Beza,

who emphasized the rotation of the Moderator's duties, had less control over the Company of Pastors than had Calvin. Certainly the great influx of religious refugees demanded greater emphasis on clerical, or perhaps bureaucratic, organization. This is typified in the marvelously detailed Livre des Habitants, which recorded all the foreign residents in Geneva, the date of their arrival, profession, and geographical origins. Often, some specific biographical data was added as well. Livre des Habitants was a surprisingly definitive document, especially considering the political and social chaos existing during the years it covered.

All together, these ordinances and various registers provide a very complete picture of the social conditions and civic welfare in Geneva, and the city's corresponding generosity in this area.

It has been noted that the Registers of the Deliberations are by far the most important records for understanding the workings of Genevan public charity. These recount the semi-weekly meetings between the procureurs and the hospitallier, where the preponderance of time was spent in the review of cases for civic assistance. Other substantive issues included private business contracted with the hospital and general financial concerns. An average of nine to fifteen matters were brought forward for action per session. A typical meeting report taken from the "Registre des deliberations" for December 16, 1562, will provide a reasonable understanding of the services that the deacons and the hospital offered to the community.

This particular session was opened with a report from

the city mortician that twenty people had died since their last meeting on the preceding Sunday.

"Le Sieur" Guillaume Chicand, procureur from 1556 until 1561, then came before the group. He said that he had just sworn to the "Chambre des Comptes" (the city's accounting office) that at the end of his term as procureur he had returned the book to the rest of the procureurs which listed the hospital's <sup>h</sup>dîme revenues. Chicand asked for a receipt clearing him of the false charge of his not having remitted the said book. The procureurs resolved first to search for the book and, based upon the result of their inquiry, then to decide if Chicand could be discharged from this accusation.

Next, a man representing George Girod de Saconnex le petit (a local landed gentry) stepped forward. He requested the procureurs' authorization to make repairs on a house that Girod was holding in trust for two children resident at the hospital. Because the hospital held the deed on the property until the children came of age, Girod needed this approval before disbursing funds to undertake the repairs. No decision was recorded, presumably because the procureurs wanted to investigate for themselves.

The succeeding point of business on the agenda is a bit more personal and touching:

Guillaume Saige of Cartignier [Cartigny] ,  
 requires [that the hospital] assist  
 him and provide alms for his sick wife  
 and his small children. Decided to give  
 him a loaf for this time. 35

The preceding week, Bernard du Beugel had been given a hospital document authorizing him to transport goods, belonging to an orphan girl under the hospital's care, in his barge to Hermance. There they were to be sold for 200 florins.

An "oblige" (promissary note) for 195 florins was prepared for du Beugel to sign in order for him to receive the girl's property. He was to receive the difference (5 florins) for his own trouble. Originally, du Beugel had been asked to take a 200 florin oblige. However, this was crossed out since he would have been left without any profit for his handling of the job.

The next item of business was a request from a daughter that alms for her sick mother be continued. A fifteen day extension was granted.

Dizainier Arnault reported a request from a woman (a neighbor of Brunnet André) that André be assisted because he was ill. The procureurs ordered that he be cared for in the ministration to the sick.

Another dizainier, M. Aubuey, relayed the appreciation of Guillaume de Guigonet, who wanted to thank "Messieurs" for having helped him and his children when he was ill. Dizainier Aubuey went on to explain that Guigonet had many children and so still needed some assistance to care for them. He was awarded  $1\frac{1}{2}$  loaves per week for the next month.

The "widow of Guyon" came before the procureurs to say that she was sick and could not work. It was ordered that she

be given some bread.

The subsequent order of business concerned a small, short-term loan. Claude Jordan paid hospitallier Pierre Dance a three florin debt that his father had owed "a man." Presumably, the hospital had paid the debt earlier for Jordan's father.

Claude Balliot requested an extension on a loan made to him by the hospital before. The deacons agreed to extend the repayment period, but only until Easter (about three months). Ten additional florins were loaned to him until the harvest.

An unnamed individual sought three months' pay for taking care of his step-daughter.

It was ordered that a corset be made and given to Matier Rouz, an orphan girl.

Dizainier Boulard then reported that a young man came to him asking that alms for his sick mother be continued. It was so ordered for another month.

The son of Jehan de la Rue asked for some clothes. The procureurs ordered that some be given him.

M. Crespin's wife asked the procureurs and hospitallier to place an orphan girl in her home as a servant. She promised to pay her three florins as salary and to provide her with clothing. The Crespin in question was, most probably, Jean Crespin, one of the most famous Huguenot refugees: wealthy, influential, and respected. Originally, Crespin practiced law before the "Parlement de Paris;" however, upon his arrival in

Geneva, he turned quickly to printing. Crespin is best known for his Book of Martyrs.

As the last order of business, hospitallier Pierre Dance officially acknowledged the receipt of 200 florins from procureur Amy Chasteauneuf for the hospital's weekly budget.<sup>36</sup>

This day's activity was most typical of entries throughout the Register of the Deliberations. The order of the meetings remained fairly consistent over the years. Although this routine was not well established until after the 1553 "Ordonnances sur l'hôpital," the issues covered were still representative of the sort of things contained even in the earlier deliberations.

The meetings customarily began with a report from the city's mortician, listing the number of deaths that had occurred since the previous meeting. The procureurs then moved into the requests for assistance<sup>37</sup> and concluded with the financial affairs contracted between the hospitallier, procureurs, and private individuals.

Most of the applicants for alms were represented by their dizainier. Relief was generally awarded for a month or two at a time, when the case would be brought up once again for review. Welfare abuse was certainly less common in a small town of 12,000 than it would be in a large, impersonal society. Nevertheless, the Council had passed a regulation mandating a penalty of imprisonment for anyone called to appear before the procureurs who either would not come or who lied.<sup>38</sup>

The range of hospital services are also clearly demonstrated from the Register. Food, especially bread, was readily available for the needy; clothing was likewise distributed with frequency. The hospital held property in trust for orphans and acted in their behalf, even to finding them employment or placing them in private homes. The procureurs made interest-free loans, generally for small amounts of cash and over short terms. All of these welfare services provided through the hospital system were offered to, and in fact accepted by, a substantial cross-section of Genevans.

The Hôpital-Général in itself was nearly self-sufficient. This fact enabled it to carry out its work on a relatively low budget. Fortunately, it had inherited considerable property holdings and rents from the former Roman Catholic Church organization on which to build its venture.

Those fields situated near the hospital were farmed; those further away from the main building (at the former Convent of Sainte-Claire) were rented out. The hospital held title to vineyards, pastures, stables, byres, pigsties, chicken coops, duck ponds, and beehives, as well.

The children and able-bodied residents at the hospital provided a labor pool of farm workers who did not require daily cash wages. Indeed, the agricultural program was so successful that all of the basic cereal foodstuffs, vegetables, wine, milk, honey, eggs, jam, and poultry were raised for the hospital's use by the hospital inhabitants. <sup>39</sup> If it had in-



sufficient use for any of these commodities, then it was sold on the open market; such was ordinarily the case with oats, for example. This procedure helped provide the hospital with some cash revenue, which in turn was used to purchase other essential items not able to be produced on hospital grounds.

When clothing and boots were required, the maker was billeted at the hospital and paid with days of food and lodging. Likewise, during planting and harvest times day workers were employed, being put up at the hospital and paid with whatever commodity was most plentiful at that time.

The ingenious methods devised by the deacons to get the maximum distance out of the human and material resources at their disposal must be admired. The hospital's pensioners became porters or repairmen, or provided other sorts of assistance around the institution. Hospitalized women and grown orphans helped in cooking, raising poultry, caring for the sick, and doing office work.<sup>40</sup> The role of the children has already been described.<sup>41</sup>

While the hospital did have its own resources (the rents and property from the episcopal days), the Seigneurie held much of the Church and hospital's property "in trust." The Syndics oversaw and approved all expenditures for the hospital, generally disbursing cash on a semi-weekly basis. Judging by the many requests for funds that the Seigneurie questioned, it could be deduced that the Syndics did not want to put much money into the hospital system. To best expedite the welfare effort and to protect itself from actual cash shortages, the hospital cared for

all its people out of the fruits of their enjoined labors, often circumventing the exchange of money by bartering both goods and lodging.<sup>42</sup>

When seen from this overview, the activities of the hospital loom large and complex. It involved the labors of scores of people. It dealt in thousands of florins' worth of rents, dimes, and agricultural produce each year. In a very real sense, it was one of the largest "corporations" in sixteenth century Geneva. Now it becomes obvious why its procureurs were merchants, businessmen<sup>43</sup> : pragmatic considerations demanded directors with the experience and skill to best manage these great sums of money, and to organize the hospital's other assets in the most effective way. It demonstrates the way in which all the talents of the medieval city were united to further the Gospel and the good of the community. Business was not inherently evil, but it was one more aspect of life that could be harnessed for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom.<sup>44</sup>

The task of running the entire hospital system demanded constant supervision and attention to detail. Produce had to be sold when it would command the best price, but neither could it be left to rot. Similarly, the hospital's bread-baking activity could not be stilled for lack of wheat. It is doubtful that a board composed of pastors or any other non-commercial profession could have shouldered the duties so effectively.

Although the hospital did unite the diverse talents of many citizens, conflict and occasional mismanagement did hamper

its work. The accusations of Council Treasurer Amblard Corne in 1544 were among the first. The pastors brought other charges of poor direction against the procureurs in 1547, which led to their replacement the following year. Perhaps as a result of these incidents, the Council drafted and approved a more comprehensive group of hospital regulations in 1552-1553.

The "Ordonnances sur l'Hôpital," approved by the Deux Cents on May 12, 1553, stand as the third and last great milestone of hospital legislation during the early post-Reformation era. They are a logical progression from the first two; that is, from the original document creating the Hôpital-Général in 1535, and from the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances. These 1553 Ordonnances are more detailed and more organized, dealing not with statements of civic theology or ethics, but with the daily, practical problems of running such a complex, demanding institution.

The "Creation of the Hôpital-Général" (produced in 1535) presented its statement of purpose: the religious and social justification for the hospital. The act united the existing hospitals into a single new one, and appropriated the Convent of Ste.-Claire to house it.<sup>45</sup> What this charter lacks, however, is striking. Little is said about how the hospital was to function. The duties of the procureurs and hospitalier, and the relation of each one to the other and to the Councils, are hinted at but never directly elucidated. A working relationship had existed historically within the Pyssis, Pestiférés,

and the other Council-dominated hospitals, so the Councillors undoubtedly expected that the single, large, comprehensive hospital would follow the pattern of the many older ones. However, the new institution was far bigger and more complex than any of its predecessors, and correspondingly more confusing and demanding to run.

The Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541<sup>46</sup> are a more highly organized document, one sensitive to the interrelationships existing between the Councils, Church officials, and the hospital officers. The primary concern of these Ordonnances, not only for the hospital but also for the city at large, was to establish an ecclesiastical constitution for the Church-related organizations in Geneva. This in turn aimed at eliminating conflicts raised by ill-defined duties and hazy boundaries, which gave rise to the disputes that had harmed the earliest efforts at founding a reformed Church.

The parts of the 1541 Ordonnances that related to the hospital opened with the mechanism for selecting procureurs and hospitalliers, who formed the diaconate. Then the functions of the hospital were laid out: care of the poor, the wayfarers ("passants"), plague victims, orphans, etc. The function of the ministers, provisions for a doctor, and the prohibition of mendicancy completed the document.

Again, little was said about the daily workings of the hospital. The hospitalier was provided with no guidelines to follow in his dealings with the hospital and staff, on the

one hand, or with the procureurs, on the other. In truth, this is a bit beyond the purpose of the Ordinances, but it does point out the need for the "Ordonnances sur l'Hôpital" twelve years hence.

Calvin naturally participated in drafting these particular regulations,<sup>47</sup> since his studies in jurisprudence at Orléans and Bourges had endowed him with the finest legal background in pre-Refuge Geneva. Throughout Europe, a renewed interest in legal studies occurred about the same time that critical examinations of the Bible and the Church Fathers began. That, added to parental pressure, led Calvin to law.<sup>48</sup> Certainly, his training taught him to be aware of using organized codification to define boundaries and duties. When comparing the 1535-1536 Council documents with Calvin's Ecclesiastical Ordinances or the 1553 Hospital Ordinances, the tremendous increase in conciseness, organization, direction, and awareness of the actual daily workings of the institution is noted immediately.

The 1553 "Ordonnances sur l'Hôpital"<sup>49</sup> deal mainly with the hospitallier, his duties, and his relationship with the procureurs. These edicts were promulgated at the close of a decade of notorious instability in that office and point up the probability that many abuses had occurred during the first years of the hospital (something which Antoine Fromment had indicated).<sup>50</sup> The Ordonnances systematically defined and refined the hospitallier's duties. They sought to remove his control over contributions, and over the purchase and sale of

hospital commodities as well. They forbade his using hospital goods or staff to advance his own estate. He was even requested not to have a family, perhaps because the Councillors remembered the problems created by Antoine Chicand's quarrelsome wife, or the grief plague brought to the family of Pierre des Rages. (In practice, this regulation was often overlooked.) The hospitallier was prohibited from keeping any servant other than a cook; neither could he use the people residing in the hospital as personal servants or to care for his personal property. These latter two points were possibly designed to correct past abuses committed by some hospitallier.

All control of money was removed from the hospitallier's jurisdiction. He could not spend more than sixty sols during the period between each meeting with the procureurs. Equally, he could not make purchases from an apothecary, receive <sup>^</sup>dîmes, or buy grain or wine without the procureurs being present. Extra pitchers were locked away in cupboards, and only the procureurs were allowed a key. The hospitallier could use no more than one coppe of oats per week per horse.

The hospitallier's duties were now rigorously detailed, something they had not been in the past. He was again required to keep a register to present to the procureurs each Sunday. Officially, he did maintain control of all the farming duties of the hospital. The Ordinances demanded that he care for the livestock and cultivate all the vegetables, fruits, and grains. All excess harvest, of course, was turned over to the receiver-



general. The hospitallier was to keep an account of these transactions and to turn the ledger over to the procureurs monthly. This was the origin of the "Comptes des hospitalliers," the Hospitalliers' Accounts.

The hospitallier also had to oversee and physically accompany the hospital miller in his duties and obtain a receipt for all of the grain turned over to him. If cloth were woven, the hospitallier needed approval from the procureurs before it could be cut and sewn.

While these regulations appear to impugne the hospitallier's honesty and diligence, they also place countervailing obligations on the procureurs. Their powers were extended and their responsibilities correspondingly augmented. These regulations came on the heels of Amblard Corne's accusations of negligent mismanagement by the procureurs in 1544<sup>51</sup> and just after the ministers' demands in 1547-1548 to dismiss all the procureurs for incompetence. Perhaps this was a subtle means of reinforcing their share of the hospital's obligations and of reminding them to heed their responsibilities as well.

Any attempt to judge the efficacy of the hospital begs comparison with the present, although that is indeed difficult for fairly obvious reasons. First, standards of medicine were so primitive in 1550 that people readily lived with and died from ailments for which one regularly seeks treatment and cures today.<sup>52</sup> Secondly, while the Hôpital-Général offered services



in many of the areas contemporary social welfare programs do, sixteenth century Genevans led far less complicated lives, and the Genevan system was far more selective. For example, it did not provide, or even consider, general old-age pensions or basic, universal medical coverage. Weekly gifts of food and wine plus a rent subsidy accomplished the same general objectives at that time that a host of government programs do today. Also, a smaller percentage of Genevans required some form of assistance to maintain their life through the hard times than individuals do today. Finally, the welfare system's support came from investments and sporadic individual and seigneurial contributions, not from regular, public taxation.

It is known that the hospital at Sainte-Claire housed about seventy patients in 1542,<sup>53</sup> of whom 50 were children. These seventy slept on only thirty beds, most of them two to a bed, which was not an uncommon practice in this era. Children often slept on straw-filled sacks. Here, the children ordinarily served as guides to the blind adults of the hospital; in fact, blindness was the most common disability among older patients.

In the community, ninety-two families living at home received weekly bread and wine; thirty-two other aged and sick just took rations of white bread. According to Claude Magnin's register, 120 families used the hospital on a fairly regular basis while still residing in their own dwellings. Medical fa-

cilities, in accordance with the 1541 Ordinances, were provided for them through the main hospital. No precise count exists for those who needed only part-time or short-term assistance.<sup>54</sup>

For a city of approximately 11,000,<sup>55</sup> these figures for regular welfare recipients seem low; but, again, it must be remembered that the hospital existed to give succor only to those who had no other recourse. Genevans who could afford to pay for their own care did so and thus fail to appear in hospital statistics. Nevertheless, assuming that the average family numbered  $4\frac{1}{2}$  members,<sup>56</sup> just under six hundred people annually received relief on a more or less permanent basis. These figures do not, of course, include those who were given part-time or temporary assistance, nor do they include the "passants" or refugees.

This figure of  $5\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the total population of the city corresponds with research done for the Aumône-Générale at Lyons during the same period.<sup>57</sup> The fifty children resident in the hospital compares closely with Lyons' 300 children for 50,000 inhabitants, especially if the Genevan orphans placed in private homes are taken into consideration. Both Genevan percentages are slightly lower than those for Lyons, which can easily be explained: Lyons served as the center to a far greater metropolitan area than did Geneva. The needy tended to flock to large cities where they could get the charity that was unavailable in small towns. Rootless people and other groups who tended to require more social services than the established citizenry were drawn

like flies to a lightbulb. Lyons then had the double burden of coping with these outside individuals as well as with her own indigent. Normally, these vagabonds and beggars would have gone to Geneva, at least until Lyons' usurpation of the four traditional trade fairs once held in Geneva. These fairs held the promise of large amounts of seasonal work and quick money, although they could not accomodate the material needs of every one of these wanderers.

When all the visitors to the Hôpital des Passants were tallied, Claude Magnin's register from October 13, 1538, until October 4, 1539, noted 10, 653 calls.<sup>58</sup> Obviously, one man remaining for three nights in succession would register three visits. Nevertheless, an average of thirty people a night found temporary refuge in Geneva. Understandably, more visitors crowded into the hospital during the winter months, when the roads were frequently blocked by snow and when travel was more difficult and wearisome.<sup>59</sup>

Standards of medicine, as has been noted earlier,<sup>60</sup> were incredibly primitive and trained doctors were rare. An inventory from 1538 or 1539 listed

a chair to carry the sick, two toilet chairs, cauterizing irons, two or three syringes, two stretchers, some surgical tools. 61

Most medicines were purveyed from some local apothecary, who was considered a very prominent and wealthy individual dur-

ing this late medieval age. He prescribed home cures, sold toiletries and paper, and imported exotic foreign produce. On the other hand, doctors were not regarded very highly until late in the century when the universities began making substantial improvements in medical knowledge and training.<sup>62</sup> Geneva had only three qualified doctors within its walls in 1535, and one of these died soon after the founding of the hospital.<sup>63</sup>

The medical situation also improved dramatically with the arrival of religious refugees in the 1550's. Thirty-four doctors visited the city during 1545-1569. Fifteen "regularly practiced medicine in Geneva during the second third of the sixteenth century."<sup>64</sup> The majority of these were, naturally, French Huguenots, bringing with them new knowledge and experience gained at some of the finest universities in Europe. Thus, over night, standards of medicine altered for the better.

The Genevan Councils, for their part, can take some credit for the rapid amelioration of medical services. In 1559, the Académie (which the Councils had agreed to fund) began teaching medicine. In 1560, the Councils began trying to regulate surgeons, doctors, and apothecaries, having been primed in part by the urgings of Calvin and the pastors.

The culmination of these consumer protection acts was the "Ordonnances sur la Médecine, Pharmacie, et Chirurgie," passed May 11, 1569. These laws came as a result of Council pressure on the various medical fields to regulate themselves; and they demonstrate a tremendously heightened sense of social and scientific

awareness developed over a very brief period of time.<sup>65</sup>

Social welfare in general, of course, benefitted from the new codes. Doctors were required to make free visits to the poor who lived in the same quarter of the city as they did. They had to record the names of their patients and the dates on which they dispensed prescriptions. Apothecaries were controlled in the manufacture of medicines.

Surveying the hospital's operating costs proves, in many respects, as difficult to quantify as it was to judge the institution's effectiveness. Certainly, it was far more economical to run than the Roman Catholic charity system it had replaced. Again, employing a centralized administration and only one building saved considerable sums of money. Circumventing the largely disinterested Roman clergy and its benefice system delivered better social care without the former high overheads and operating expenses.

Because the hospital grew much of the produce it used, internal transactions are difficult to price and thus do not accurately fit into a strict recall of expenses. It is known that in 1544, the Seigneurie spent 1,500 florins on the hospital and another 4,000 on the Reformed clergy. To cover this, the Seigneurie took in 12,000 florins from the rural parishes alone.<sup>66</sup> Another estimate placed early hospital expenditures at an annual rate of 2,000 florins,<sup>67</sup> with disbursements increasing over the years with inflation. In 1577, the hospital used 9,000 florins to carry out its work.<sup>68</sup> By 1586 (after the high water mark of the refugee in-

flux), Geneva spent 13,000 florins and bought 2,680 coppes (212, 698.2 liters) of flour in order to maintain 980 people in the city and another 180 at the hospital.<sup>69</sup> The goods of the hospital were then valued at 90,000 florins.<sup>70</sup> In fifty years, the city's population had edged up to 15,000-16,000 (an approximate increase of 35%), but the number of "assistés" had doubled.<sup>71</sup> From 1535 until 1586, the price of most food trebled.<sup>71</sup> Considering the price increases of foodstuffs during this fifty-one year period, the increase in hospital expenses correspondingly is hardly so staggering. By 1586, the hospital was maintaining approximately twice as many individuals, and money for purchasing the essentials had been inflated to twice its 1535 level. Hence, the hospital was really disbursing nearly the same amount per person,<sup>72</sup> although this statement does assume that the number of visitors to the Hôpital des Passants remained nearly constant. In fact, the amount disbursed per individual varied most directly with the price of wheat, as might be expected with bread as the daily staple. Also, during plague years, the amounts spent were considerably higher than in normal years.<sup>73</sup>

Only after fifteen or twenty years did the hospital begin to systematically use its rural holdings, many of which had come originally from the Roman Catholic Church. A large number of these holdings were sold during the plague epidemic of 1555.<sup>74</sup> The only other independent source of revenue for the hospital was personal donations. In the first twenty years, these were fairly



small in total revenue, but unexpectedly large in number. Many Genevans (such as Jean Coquet<sup>75</sup>) did donate small amounts to the hospital, often as legacies. Jean Kléberger, a wealthy Lyons merchant, donated fifty florins a year. In fact, in 1542, he gave Geneva enough cloth to make a new outfit for every hospital patient.<sup>76</sup> Kléberger was born in Germany and had strong Protestant sympathies but preferred to live peaceably in Roman Catholic Lyons. There, he rendered invaluable assistance to the new Aumône-Générale.<sup>77</sup>

The close relationship between the Councils and the Hôpital-Général has been examined. The Councils established, funded, and maintained the hospital. The procureurs were all members of the three elected councils who ruled Geneva. A Syndic later came to preside over the procureurs, so that the hospital administration assumed a form similar to the city's own government.

The connection between the Compagnie des Pasteurs, in particular John Calvin, and the Hôpital-Général is neither so direct nor so routinized. That is not to say that the pastors were absent from or disinterested in the hospital, for they certainly were involved. However, they were never intended to meet twice a week like the procureurs, or deacons, to help work out the hospital's daily problems. Thus, the actual intervention of Calvin and the pastors was sporadic. Their lack of regular meetings designed to deal exclusively with the hospital has



led some historians to conclude that Calvin was not very interested in that institution and preferred to leave its management to the laity. Admittedly, there is great truth in the second half of that proposition.<sup>78</sup> However, Calvin did personally involve himself in the affairs of the hospital in times of distress. To know when these trials were occurring, he must have been paying some attention to the hospital's performance on a regular basis.

To understand the relation that developed between the Church and the hospital, it would be wise to observe the relationship that was intended to exist between them. The original formula was written down, as might be expected, in the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances.

That the ministers and the "commis" or elders with one of the senior syndics for their part take care to enquire if there be any fault or indigence of life [with the hospitallier], in order to ask and admonish the Seigneurie to put it right. And in order to do this, every three months some of their company with the procureurs make a visitation to the hospital to know if everything is well run. 79

Hence, the pastors were intended to be general overseers, acting strictly in an advisory capacity, just as they were to be consulted by the councillors in the nomination of the procureurs. The pastors were to help make certain that the hospital was run properly and that no abuses were occurring. They could

advise the Seigneurie but had no real authority to command or make decisions regarding the hospital or to directly effect any changes themselves.

In describing this relation between the Church and the hospital, Calvin was simply codifying existing Genevan practice. The Compagnie des Pasteurs in Geneva was as involved in the hospital as the Protestant clergy were in other parts of Europe, where secular control of poor relief had become an accepted situation by this time (1541).

Without doubt, Farel and Calvin did evince personal interest in the hospital during their first term in Geneva. Indeed, "Farel probably had his part in the nomination of Claude Salomon."<sup>80</sup> Later, Farel came forward with the procureurs to announce to the Councils that Salomon had died and to ask for a new hospitallier.<sup>81</sup>

In the allied field of education, Farel and Calvin together aided in 1535-1537 in "the creation of a new school and the institution, for the first time in Europe, of obligatory primary instruction"<sup>82</sup> regardless of sex. The founding of the Académie (the university) was instigated mainly by Calvin, with Beza becoming its first rector.

In the pre-Ordinance days, it is recorded that Calvin pleaded there was not enough furniture for the needy and "of the prejudice that this state of things was bringing to the poor."<sup>83</sup> In the same year (1537), at Calvin's personal suggestion, addi-

tional cloth and coverings were brought to the hospital. He also urged the suppression of mendicancy.<sup>84</sup> As one additional example, Calvin insisted that the first dentist to reside in Geneva prove his qualifications by practicing on him before being issued a license.<sup>85</sup> That Farel and Calvin could find time to support the hospital's work during the turbulent and time-consuming controversies that led to their own dismissal certainly demonstrates a genuine interest in the poor.

As further evidence, the very use of the diaconate, a part of the Church's ministry, to accomplish welfare goals shows a concern on Calvin's part for the administration of public charity. After all, he could have remained content to delegate poor relief to the secular authority, as was being done elsewhere in Europe.

By the creation of this last ministry [the deacons], organ of the financial life of the community of believers, one sees that the Calvinist ecclesiastical order was concerned with Christian existence in its totality, envisaged under spiritual and material aspects, as well as social and individual ones. 86

However, Calvin's goal of using the deacons as a symbol and influence of Christianity throughout Geneva in every social institution and situation fell slightly askew. The deacons did not consider themselves as clergymen, but rather as laymen, councillors, and procureurs. In fact, in official records, they only refer to themselves as "procureurs." This

was even true of Calvin's most stalwart supporters, such as Chautemps, Coquet, and Chicand.<sup>87</sup> The Reformation-era Geneva diaconate has thus been regarded by most historians as a lay institution, although this was not Calvin's original intention.<sup>88</sup> During the 1554-1555 sermons on I Timothy, Calvin expounded to his congregation that procureurs and hospitalliers

are not at all an earthly office, but they have a spiritual charge from God. 89

they are not only in a public estate, but they belong to the spiritual regime of the Church, and they are there as God's officers. 90

the deacons are chosen to be like the hands of God, and they are there in a sacred office. 91

Clearly, Calvin's desire to integrate them into the Church's ministry was a strong and Biblically-based one. Perhaps in Calvin's mind the traditional lines between clergy and laity were not as deviously drawn as the magistrates intended. While Calvin always referred to the procureurs as deacons and ministers, it must be noted that they received no special theological training to assume the Reformed Church's fourth office.

Whenever the pastors were at odds with the civil government, or whenever they criticized the procureurs' running of the hospital, the clergy-laity conflict in the procureurs' own

lives must have been heightened. It can easily be imagined that these magistrates, serving also as "deacons," felt more closely allied with their friends on the Councils (who provided no disapproval for their efforts) than they did to the critical pastors.

In 1550, a full-time minister joined the hospital staff and probably became the Company's actual representative at the infirmary. Nevertheless, as far as the Genevans were concerned, the hospital was an institution fulfilling a Christian duty to the community, which was the same objective sought by the pastors. It further illustrates Calvin's political wisdom and flexibility by bending his recommendations about the four-fold ministry to fit the local situation.

One can see from Calvin's inclusion of seemingly "secular" figures in the Church structure that he was very much a Churchman. In spite of his reputation as the reformer who moved much farther from the traditional Roman Catholic view of clerical organization than did Luther, or even the Anglicans, his emphasis on the importance of the organized Church was much closer to Rome's than was Luther's. For instance, Calvin opposed the sale of the Roman Church property, which he wanted turned directly over to the new, reformed Church.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, he sought to give the new Church greater autonomy from the civil government than Luther or Zwingli did. The civil conflicts in 1537-1538 over the authority to excommunicate are but another

er example of this.

Calvin's clergy regarded themselves as partners with the civil government in the maintenance of a Christian state, but by no means its vassals, as the Zwinglians contended. They supported and encouraged the government and did try to provide stability during the early days of Protestantism. Then, in the latter years of Calvin's life and during Theodore Beza's tenure, the clergy served as guardians of the interests of the common people.

They were required to play the role of the loyal opposition, to criticize the secular arm, and to remind Geneva's rulers to heed their responsibilities more carefully than they sometimes did. 93

In this context, the Compagnie des Pasteurs could easily be regarded in the same capacity as the Old Testament prophets. Their relationship with the hospital and civil government reflected this role: the pastors intervened whenever they saw an abuse in the hospital system that needed correction rather than remaining aloof. The pastors instigated the drafting of regulations for the specific supervision of doctors and pharmacists.<sup>94</sup> The change of procureurs in 1548 came largely as a result of pressure from the pastors:

Repeated complaints from Calvin and the other pastors about the opera-

tions of the Hospital in 1547 led to a general review by the small [Petit] council and the selection of new procureurs for 1548. 95

When the hospital was again running desperately short of money (in the mid-1540's), Calvin personally supervised a general collection for the hospital.

We have seen that Calvin participated in the second collection and remitted the product to the Council (June 15, 1545). The amount raised was only 76 florins. It is true that everybody was broke that year. 96

The Company of Pastors aided in the frequent hospital collections during the entire sixteenth century. The Council members, "following the advice of the ministers,"<sup>97</sup> decided to begin personally collecting money for the poor at the exits from sermon. Three days later, on September 14, 1568,

the Council, reflecting anew on this affair, found it proper, after having taken the sentiment of the ministers, to use collection boxes [trons] . 98

At this point, outbreaks of plague had sorely depleted the treasury, and public giving had not yet taken up the slack.

Although the Ordinances specified that the Company of Pastors needed to approve nominations of anciens (elders), and, by extrapolation, the deacons, this practice was not strictly



followed at first in connection with the approbation of the deacons/procureurs. From 1546 until 1560, the pastors were consulted only seven times in the selection of procureurs. At first (in 1560), Calvin and Pierre Viret convinced the Council to consult the pastors as a group, not just through Calvin as their spokesman.<sup>99</sup> Then (in 1562), Calvin and Viret protested that the Ecclesiastical Ordinances were not being adhered to respecting the number of procureurs elected and so demanded a return to the original number of four. This practice the Petit Conseil duly followed in the 1562 nominations. From that date onward, the pastors were regularly consulted in the selection of procureurs;<sup>100</sup> their number was fixed at four; and the number of elders from the Consistory serving concurrently as procureurs was three (of the total of four) during the last three years of Calvin's life.<sup>101</sup>

An even more significant change in the selection of procureurs had come a bit earlier (in 1560) also at the demand of Calvin and Viret. These two successfully persuaded the Petit Conseil to nominate some immigrants to the Genevan diaconate. This integration of the foreigners directly into the city life and management became the major conflict between the Calvinist and Perrinist factions in 1555,<sup>102</sup> having met with opposition from many of the magistrates throughout the period of 1547 until 1555. Admittedly, the inclusion of the refugees on the Councils would have increased Calvin's influence in the city, but such a self-serving motive would actually have been superfluous for him.

Following the 1555 defeat of the Perrinists, no real opposition to the foreign refugees and ministers existed anyway. To include the immigrants in the one religious office chosen by the civil government (that of deacon/procureur) merely confirmed a long-standing practice elsewhere in the Genevan Church. After all, nearly every one of the city's pastors were foreign-born. Calvin simply opened the decision-making processes for, and the position at, the hospital to the eminently qualified immigrants who were making Geneva their permanent home. It is interesting to note that the presence of so many foreigners in general and the related overcrowding<sup>103</sup> doubtlessly must have been an additional impetus for the civil government to rapidly enact much of its social legislation. The increase in such legislation after the Reformation, and especially after 1550, is too remarkable to be simply coincidental. It advanced along too many diverse fronts to indicate anything less than a general rise in the awareness of ways to better the human situation and to suggest at least one definite source. Although protecting the rights of the consumer economically was a long-standing Genevan concern, this great interest in social welfare and public health might well be attributed to the immigrant presence.<sup>104</sup>

Part of this impetus and awareness in the area of social concern was undoubtedly encouraged by the pastors and resulted from their own station in life. Most were well-born; all were well-educated. Furthermore, all were exposed to humanist ideal-

ism and mirrored the Renaissance concern for man and the dignity of the human condition. In their native France, they were surely accustomed to higher standards of cleanliness than existed in Geneva at that time and, of course, were far more aware of the civilities of life.

On the other side of the coin, an overcrowded city, hiding behind its walls, had no escape from its own garbage, noxious odors, and social problems. The influential and the powerful were forced to confront the community's social needs and difficulties. Because of the continuing war with Savoy, they could not build country homes to escape the city at the end of the day. Fortunately, this unique blend of need and talent produced some very positive and enlightened changes for Geneva.

Clearly, Calvin and the pastors personally made contributions to the social well-being of the community outside of the hospital system. At Calvin's suggestion, the Councils ordered railings to be installed on exposed stairways and balconies for the safety of Geneva's children. Likewise, he was instrumental in having fires (both for heating and cooking) prohibited in rooms without chimneys or adequate ventilation. Chimneys were to be cleaned regularly to reduce the danger of fire as well. Calvin also demanded and got strict enforcement of a law forbidding the recruitment of Genevan residents as mercenaries, a project which was, incidentally, a pet concern for Zwingli in Zürich. Calvin and the pastors recommended greater

efforts in cleaning the town, repairing the streets, eliminating refuse heaps, and improving sanitation.<sup>105</sup> Although many of these problems had been covered in very old regulations, they had been unenergetically enforced through the years.<sup>106</sup>

The Franchises (enacted in 1387) had prohibited leaving manure heaps on public streets for more than three days from Easter until All Saints Day, and for no more than eight days in the winter. Burning down fat and cow horns for tallow, plus curing leather, were outlawed; and pigsties had likewise been forbidden within the city walls. These measures at least met the most basic standards against "air pollution" and in behalf of public health. Unfortunately, the people of Geneva considered the Franchises to be more like proclamations than actual laws. Hence, these pronouncements were quickly forgotten or overlooked, and the situation fell back to "normal" until the next issuance of similar proclamations.

By the early fifteenth century, some attempts had been made to prohibit smoky fires. Pigs were then forbidden to run wild; and ordinances were passed attempting to keep the streets clean. However, little else was done in a systematic way until the following century.

In 1523, some public fountains were plumbed in for people living in the Haut-Ville, the area around the Cathedral. In this same era, three public toilets (literally latrines) were dug around the city. In 1526, torches were used for city lights.

Beyond these measures, however, no truly substantial improvements were made until the second half of the century.

In 1550, an edict was issued that each man was responsible for repairing the road in front of his property: it was to be patched if torn or in disrepair within ten days, under penalty of a sixty sols fine.<sup>107</sup> More importantly, the streets were to be cleared of refuse; and the further throwing of slops and waste into them was now prohibited. Action was finally taken to systematically remove the most offensive garbage from the city streets and lots. Compost heaps were to be removed, or the offender fined. The planting of trees and shrubs, on the other hand, was encouraged. Even more importantly for the general health and welfare of the community, private latrines were made mandatory. In 1558, each householder was required to supplement the public toilets with an in-house facility and was given six months in which to build the privy. The final improvement worth noting (introduced in 1564) was that dogs had to be kept leashed, when within the city's confines. Any found loose, running through the streets, were to be exterminated.<sup>108</sup>

The sixteenth century councils, for their part, sought Calvin's advice on a great variety of issues. He was asked to judge a new home heating stove, of which he did approve. Similarly, he was asked to comment on a new painting commemorating the *combourgeoisie* with Berne.

During Beza's tenure, the pastors continued to keep a

watchful eye over all of Geneva, including its hospital. In 1584, they "uncovered some serious abuses in the administration."<sup>109</sup> The Company of Pastors was not content to just demand a new set of procureurs, as it had in 1547. This time, they sought sweeping reforms to alter the entire structure of the selection of hospital administrators. First, they wanted the diaconate opened up to all of the bourgeois, not just the Councils' members. Then, the pastors asked for the authority to "inspect the almshouses at regular intervals"<sup>110</sup> and to be present when the hospitallier's reports were verified. The Petit Conseil ultimately refused all of these demands, but it did allow the pastors to inspect the almshouses four times a year. Unfortunately, a certain rigidity was setting in among the members of the civil government.<sup>111</sup>

Ancillary works that benefitted public charity included research into conditions within Geneva's households in the 1590's. The pastors brought forth examples of child neglect, excessive punishment of children, and even a death from malnutrition,<sup>112</sup> and asked that the Councils punish the offenders.

The ministers served an especially important role as a buffer between the Councils and the city's workers. Throughout Europe, particularly in Paris and Lyons, strikes and civic unrest marred the latter half of the sixteenth century. In Geneva, these disputes simmered but never boiled over. The ministers mediated the conflicts and brought the concerns of



the common people before the magistrates. They guarded against excessive interest and profit-taking by Geneva's merchants and sought to find accommodation during the "disorders in the sale of wine"<sup>113</sup> in 1577.

In summary, although the Hôpital-Général was founded under religious as well as practical auspices, its governors were magistrates. The pastors (among them John Calvin) made recommendations whenever things seemed to be amiss. In order for the ministers to make criticisms of its operation, they obviously had to be paying regular attention to the hospital system. Farel and Calvin's support in the early collections of furniture, cloth, and money showed their commitment to the poor, as did Calvin's later work in the community at large.

The procureurs were Calvin's devoted supporters. For this and other reasons, he rarely needed to intervene in the running and management of the hospital system, particularly during his later years. Even the rapid turnover of hospital-liers, a great problem in the 1540's, had stabilized by 1550. Finally, changes in the nomination and voting procedures gave the pastors more control over who became a procureur. As the 1560's began, there emerged a sort of dedicated lay ministry of men who sat on both the Consistory and the hospital board and were loyal to the pastors. With such men running the Hôpital-Général, recommendations from the ministers could be made less formally. Also, they would prove less necessary because



these men shared Calvin's own outlook and therefore required less criticism and correction.

## Chapter Nine Footnotes

1. S.D., vol. 2, p. 363, fol. 785, (January 20, 1541).
2. Quoted in Odier-Cazenove, Jean-Jacques-Louis. L'Hôpital de Genève, depuis son origine jusqu'à 1842. Geneva, 1862, pp. 13-14.
3. Bergier, Jean François, and Robert M. Kingdon. Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève au temps de Calvin, vol. 1. Geneva, 1964, p. 8.
4. Gautier, Léon, and Emil Joutet. L'Hôpital-Général de Genève de 1535 à 1545 et L'Hospice-Général. Geneva, 1914, p. 45.
5. S.D., vol. 2, p. 393, fol. 801 (October 30, 1542). See p. 177.
6. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, pp. 27-28.
7. Ibid., p. 24.
8. Ibid., pp. 27-28.
9. Ibid., pp. 32-48.
10. See Davis, Natalie Z. "Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy: The Case of Lyon." Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, vol. 5, (1968), pp. 217-275.
11. The calculation is based on a population of 11,000, an average household of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  members, and Claude Magnin's register, which is compiled in Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 50. See also pp. 222-224 and their relevant footnotes.
12. Roget, Amédée. Histoire du peuple de Genève, vol. 1. Geneva, 1870, p. 42.
13. Micheli, Léopold. "Les institutions municipales de Genève au XV<sup>me</sup> siècle." MDG, vol. 32, (1912), pp. 110-111.
14. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 26.
15. Kingdon, Robert M. "Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva." AHR, vol. 76, no. 1, (January, 1971), p. 57.
16. Bergier, Registres, p. 8.
17. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, pp. 49-50.
18. Ibid., p. 50.
19. Ibid., pp. 47-48.
20. Odier-Cazenove, L'Hôpital, p. 17.

21. Micheli, "Les institutions municipales," p. 105.
22. Gautier, Léon. "La médecine à Genève jusqu'à la fin du 18<sup>me</sup> siècle." MDG, vol. 30, (1906), pp. 122-126.
23. Roset, Michel (pub. by Henri Fazy). Les Chroniques de Genève. Geneva, 1894, book 4, chapter 60, pp. 297-298.
24. Castallio is best known for his book demanding an end to the punishment of heretics. He argued that burning a heretic only killed a man, not his ideas. Castallio's position prevails today, but in the sixteenth century Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans and Calvinists alike were united in using capital punishment to root out heresy. Castallio's departure from Geneva, however, centered on doctrinal differences with Calvin and the Company of Pastors, and had nothing to do with his later feelings about punishing heresy.
25. McNeill, John T. The History and Character of Calvinism. New York, 1954, p. 173.
26. Gautier, "La médecine," p. 161. See also pp. 122-162.
27. See Chapter 1, pp. 11-12.
28. Roset, Les Chroniques, book 4, chapter 71, pp. 306-308.
29. Ibid.
30. McNeill, History, pp. 172-173.

Many books have been written surveying the superstition of communication with the devil. Two recent publications include:

Roper, Hugh R. Trevor-. "The European Witch-craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." Religion, Reformation, and Social Change. London, 1956, pp. 90-192.

Trevor-Roper surveys the period and tries to put it into perspective.

Monter, E. William (ed.). European Witchcraft. New York, 1967.

Monter has collected past and present contributions to the understanding (or misunderstanding) of the phenomenon.

31. See pages 195-196.
32. AEG, "Archives Hospitalières," Fe<sub>3</sub>, fol. 140.
33. All of these records are part of the "Archives Hospitalières" in the Archives d'Etat de Genève (AEG).
34. Taken together, these registers and accounting books provide a very complete picture of the social conditions, civic welfare, and corresponding municipal and personal generosity in Geneva during these years.

35. This session for December 16, 1562 is taken from: AEG, "Archives Hospitallières," Aa<sub>3</sub>, fol. 63-64.
36. The recent publication of the Livre des Habitants provides an indispensable guide for learning the background of the foreign-born applicants, as in the case of Crespin.
37. It is interesting to note that those seen by the procureurs were received in order of their social rank and position.
38. S.D., vol. 3, p. 30, fol. 929 (April 7, 1556).
39. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, pp. 34-36.
40. Ibid., p. 25.
41. See pages 196-198.
42. The "Compte des Hospitalliers" from the term of Pierre Dance listed only cash receipts from the Seigneurie, usually at semi-weekly intervals. It gives a very good idea of just how much money was pumped into the hospital.
43. Many of the leading figures in the subsequent "change public," a municipal lending bank, first gained experience in public financial administration at the Hôpital-Général. See: Monter, E. William. "Le change public à Genève, 1568-1581." Mélanges ...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, pp. 265-290.
44. See Chapter 15, pages 416-418.
45. S.D., vol. 2, pp. 303-304, fol. 683, (November 11, 1535).
46. Bergier, Registres, pp. 7-8.
47. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 30.
48. Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972, p. 13.  
Wendel, Francois. Calvin. London, 1963, pp. 20-26.
49. S.D., vol. 3, pp. 13-16, fol. 905 (May 12, 1553).
50. Fromment, Antoine. Les Actes et Gestes merveilleux de la cité de Geneve. Geneva, 1854, pp. 233-236.
51. See Chapter 8, page 181.
52. See page 224 ff.
53. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 50.
54. Ibid., pp. 46-50.

55. The population of Geneva actually decreased during the decade 1530-1540, from about 12,300 to 10,300. See Appendix, p. 530.
56. Braudel, Fernand. The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. 1. London, 1972, p. 403.  
Braudel used the figure of  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -5 persons per household for his estimates.
57. Davis, "Poor Relief," p. 254.
58. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, pp. 46-50.
59. Ibid., p. 48.
60. See page 221.
61. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 36.
62. Biéler, André. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959, p. 151.
63. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 26.
64. Ibid., p. 27. Also, Gautier, "La médecine," pp. 26-27.
65. Biéler, La pensée, pp. 150-152.
66. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967, p. 156.
67. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, pp. 50-54.
68. Odier-Cazenove, L'Hôpital, p. 39.
69. Ibid., p. 40.
70. Ibid.
71. See Appendix, pp. 546-554.
72. See Appendix, p. 548.
73. Obviously, during outbreaks of plague, more people were in need of medical assistance, and more breadwinners were incapacitated.
74. Odier-Cazenove, L'Hôpital, p. 80.
75. See Chapter 8, page 178.
76. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 54.
77. Davis, "Poor Relief," pp. 238-239, 265.

78. Kingdon, "Social Welfare," pp. 59-61.
79. Bergier, Registres, P. 8.
80. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 54.
81. RC, January 28, 1536.
82. Biéler, La pensée, p. 153.
83. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 30.
84. Ibid.
85. McNeill, History, p. 190.
86. Bieler, La pensée, p. 100.
87. See: Kingdon, "Social Welfare," pp. 52-66. See also: Kingdon, Robert M. "The Deacons of the Reformed Church in Calvin's Geneva." Mélanges...Henri Meylan. Geneva, 1970, pp. 86-87.
88. See: Heyer, Henri. L'Eglise de Genève. Geneva, 1909, p. 10. See also: Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 220.
89. C.O., vol. 53, col. 291. 24th sermon on I Timothy.
90. Ibid., col. 292.
91. Ibid., col. 290.
92. Jullien, Alexandre (ed.). Histoire de Genève. Geneva, 1951, p. 239.
93. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 144.
94. See Appendix, pp. 538-540.
95. Kingdon, "Social Welfare," p. 65, footnote 52.
96. Gautier, L'Hôpital-Général, p. 54.
97. Odier-Cazenove, L'Hôpital, p. 31.
98. Ibid., p. 32.
99. Kingdon, "Social Welfare," p. 63.
100. Ibid., p. 62.
101. Ibid., and: Kingdon, "The Deacons," p. 89.
102. Kingdon, "Social Welfare," p. 62.



103. The overcrowded living conditions particularly forced some concessions to more advanced modes of sanitation. See: S.D., vol. 3, p. 86, fol. 976 (December 28, 1558).
104. However, without a close examination of who actually proposed each piece of legislation, it would be difficult to verify this observation. A discussion of the French backgrounds of some of Geneva's pastors can be found in the following:

Kingdon, Robert M. "The Economic Behaviour of Ministers in Geneva in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century." ARG, vol. 50, (1959), pp. 33-39.

A closer examination of the refugee influence in general may be found in Chapter 13, pages 346-374. Also, see pages 237-243.

105. McNeill, History, p. 190.
106. Some of these regulations were even found in the Franchises, especially those regulating manure heaps (Item 44), house-building codes (Item 50), pigsties, curing hides, and melting horns and tallow (Item 71).

Much of the need to reissue similar ordonnances stemmed from the sixteenth century Genevan's conception of "The Law." Unlike in the twentieth century, where laws are codified, put on books and enforced by a professional police and court system, the sixteenth was not so rigorous. Edicts were proclaimed, but the lack of coherent codification, and of an enforcement agency separate from the busy councils, permitted men to behave as if the law had never been passed. If enough Genevans ignored the decree, it became necessary to proclaim it at regular intervals. On the other hand, if the edict outlived its usefulness, it was not enforced or observed. Naturally, unpopular ordonnances, especially those requiring personal effort or sacrifice, were often reissued. The legal reforms being made at Bourges, Orléans, and the other centers of Renaissance jurisprudence, where many of Geneva's "habitants" studied, ensured that this situation improved in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

107. Naef, Henri. Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936, pp. 220-222.
- Jullien, Histoire, p. 226.
- S.D., vol. 2, p. 534, fol. 867 (March 10, 1550), Items 31 & 32.
108. S.D., vol. 3, p. 40, fol. 943 (April 3, 1557).
- S.D., vol. 3, p. 86, fol. 976 (December 28, 1558).
- S.D., vol. 3, p. 158, fol. 1053 (July 29, 1564).
109. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 220.



110. Ibid.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., pp. 219-220.

113. Biéler, La pensée, p. 153.

## Chapter Ten

## The Prison System

None of Geneva's sixteenth century civic institutions has received less historical attention than its prison.<sup>1</sup> Yet the penal system existed through an era of change every bit as radical as the hospitals and schools.

Traditionally, Geneva had three competing civil codes (Vidomne, Bishop, and Seigneurie) plus an ecclesiastical one (the Cathedral Chapter), each nominally under the authority of the Bishop. For each code there was a separate court and a separate holding place for prisoners. The areas of authority for each were distinct but often overlapped. During the Reformation years, the vidomne and bishop were stripped of their authority; and the new republic created a wholly different judicial system.

Although the 1387 Franchises devote many of their 79 articles to the administration of justice, they say little about the actual means for holding prisoners. In this area, the Franchises merely assumed the continuity of existing prac-

tices.

Article 22 of the Franchises assured that guarding and policing the city at night were the domain of the citizens and their elected representatives, the Syndics. The Seigneurie had the authority to carry out arrests from sunset until sunrise, just as the vidomne held similar rights during the daylight hours. However, the citizenry were forbidden to prosecute and punish, or to confiscate goods. On the day following an arrest, the Syndics were to turn over the prisoner to either the bishop or vidomne (according to the particular crime) for arraignment. Interestingly, the prisoner was charged a fee by the Syndics for his night's lodging.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of this seigneurial authority to arrest, fourteenth and fifteenth century Geneva did not possess a specific municipal prison. Individuals apprehended at night were incarcerated in one of the rooms of the town hall, and were then led by day to the bishop or vidomne's cells in the Château d'Ile (a fortress in the city). By the sixteenth century, however, the Château d'Ile had fallen into disrepair and disuse; and the bishops had taken to using their own Château de Gaillard, set outside the city limits on episcopal land. To hold prisoners there was technically a violation of the Franchises, yet no one ever complained of it.<sup>3</sup>

In this era, the authority of the vidomne was increasingly emasculated by the Dukes of Savoy. They had gained some power over his, and later even over the bishop's, actual appointment. For all practical purposes, the vidomne became merely a

figurehead representing the Duke and his interests. He was "jailer in title,"<sup>4</sup> and by the sixteenth century remanded his prisoners directly to the bishop's Château de Gaillard. The Châtellain at Gaillard would then bring the vidomne's prisoner into town for the trial.

The Cathedral Chapter also had the powers to arrest, especially in moral matters. They held prisoners in their own distinct jail, "in the principal tower 'under the great bell.' " This was the town bell tower and "tocsin," or alarm bell, which figured so prominently in calling together citizens for the partisan religious riots of 1532-1535.<sup>5</sup>

This profusion of areas of imprisonment and separate judicial systems led to a great confusion of overlapping jurisdiction, great even in those days when clear-cut separation of power was an idea whose time had not yet come. As early as 1291, the reigning Geneven bishop complained to the Duke of Savoy that the vidomne was infringing upon his penal authority.<sup>6</sup>

As was true with the Church's involvement with the hospital system, the Seigneurie actually began to erode the bishop's judicial authority decades before the Reformation. They initiated a competing civil court in the opening years of the sixteenth century, and then claimed the right to hear cases which involved neither "effusion of blood nor confiscation of goods [homicide or robbery] ." Their authority was based upon a proclamation from the Episcopal Council in 1509 declaring that the bishop's right to hear these cases should devolve to

the Seigneurie. Into the middle of this confusion was thrown the unfortunate fact that Champel, the execution ground, was on episcopal land. For a time, that left the bishop secure to try those capital offenses.<sup>7</sup>

The Syndics and Councils declared the vidomnate vacant in 1528 and ended the bishop's judicial authority in 1534. Then, and after the Reformation edicts of May, 1536, the need to alter the judicial and penal systems was imperative. The Councils abolished the four competing court systems. From that time only the Seigneurie and the Petit Conseil could try and punish criminals.<sup>8</sup>

Obviously, after 1535, Gaillard could no longer be used as a municipal prison. With perhaps an intended touch of irony, the Petit Conseil decided to convert the bishop's Genevan residence, "l'Evechée,"<sup>9</sup> into the new civic jail on November 23, 1535.

Because it is expensive to have two prisons and two jailers when one will suffice, it is ordered that these places be visited, and it shall be seen if the episcopal house behind St. Pierre will be proper for that use, and if it will do for all the prisons. 10

L'Evechée still stands directly behind the Cathedral. In its time, this structure was probably the most expensive piece of private real estate in the entire city. It was undoubtedly worth more than any Genevan could possibly afford

11  
had it been auctioned.

Before the renovations were completed, a temporary prison was set up in the "Boucheries de Longmalle," a market area.<sup>12</sup> How the new prison cells compared with the old is difficult to judge, for Gaillard and Château d'Ile were both destroyed in the sixteenth century. If existing fifteenth century castle keeps are a reliable guide, the fortress cells were undoubtedly darker and damper than the new prison. In fact, a bishop's townhouse must have been quite an agreeable jail by sixteenth century standards. In this new prison, there was even a separate women's area.

L'Eveché was probably dedicated in early 1536, for the Council Registers mention that the new prison was definitely in use by March, 1536. They tell that Guy Furbity, the Dominican monk who insulted the Bernese from the pulpit and placed Geneva in an awkward position with its ally,<sup>13</sup> was held there.

The Councils, rather than just the Seigneurie, appointed a jailer as early as 1530 to oversee the prisoners. Additional job instructions were vague, except to admonish him to execute his duties faithfully. Like many other official positions, the office of jailer paid its own way through imposing minor fines and collecting overnight "rents" from the prisoners. The accused did pay for his own incarceration until his trial at the regular rate of ten sols per night or, if he were a citizen or bourgeois, the reduced rate of five sols per night.<sup>14</sup>

The jailer also assisted in the examination of prisoners and administered torture (at least until 1551<sup>15</sup>). The enlightened

Franchises forbade arbitrary torture by anyone in Article 12. The Petit Conseil was required to vote to inflict torture and then to give public notice of such an intention. What was more, while pain could be imposed, the body could not be wounded or mutilated.<sup>16</sup> The official method of torture was with the "strap-pado":

a devise by which the prisoner's hands are tied behind his back and a cord tied to his arms, after which he is raised to a height of about four feet and suddenly dropped, only to be caught short a foot above the ground. 17

Four documents in addition to the Council writ of 1530 guided the sixteenth century jailer in the execution of his duties. The first was passed in November, 1537<sup>18</sup>; and the second in May, 1541.<sup>19</sup> These two differ little in content but tremendously in form, a reflection of the political climate in which each was written. The first, which came at the time of Calvin's ousting, is an imprecise and rambling document that speaks to the immediate situation. The 1541 document is tightly organized, even in format, and seeks to lay down a procedure for all time.

In both, the jailer was to be elected by the Petit Conseil and approved by the Deux Cents. He and his family were permitted to live in the upper rooms of l'Eveché without charge. He earned fifty florins per year and was elected for a three year term. In addition, he was entitled to whatever he collected according to a fixed fee schedule elaborated in both documents.



Along with the lodging charge, the Councils awarded him sums for prisoners' meals and other daily expenses, plus money to stand guard. Hence, the more "clients" that the jailer had the better he was paid. Still, he would have been hard pressed to earn enough from the jailer's position to support a family.

The 1543 "Edits," the new legal code, formally codified previous practices and added a few more duties. The jailer was asked to control the more personal aspects of the prisoners' lives. Those punished by a rule of enforced silence were not to be spoken to; and prisoners were forbidden to make "inso-<sup>20</sup>lences, dissolute games, banquets, or similar things." In the jailer's oath, he swore to faithfully execute all these duties and not to take "other than that which is due me according<sup>21</sup> to the rates."

A highly detailed code dealing exclusively with the prisons was passed the following year. The jailer's duties were spelled out for a fourth time, but with no significant changes. However, the appropriate treatment given to each type of prisoner was delineated. The jailer's obligations toward the prisoner and the community varied with the crime for which the man had been incarcerated. The town agreed to pay the bill for poor persons, which had previously been the jailer's responsibility. The jailer's oath from the 1543 Edits was repeated at the term-<sup>22</sup>ination of the 1544 ordinance.

This 1544 law is three times longer than either of its

immediate predecessors. One senses a change common to the other institutions of post-Reformation Geneva. In the past, existing practices were part of the customs of the city. That is, they evolved over the years from trial and error to become part of a communally understood tradition. At first, the Genevan magistrates were content to leave things at that. In the process of rewriting the civil law in 1543, a greater emphasis emerged for codifying typical practices. This was a great legal reform, a product of l'Estoile, Alciat, and the other French legal scholars whom Calvin studied under at Orléans and Bourges.<sup>23</sup> This codification allowed both parties to the contract (jailer and magistrates) to know exactly what was expected of them in order to avoid disputes over city custom. The ordinances on the jail were part of that greater process whereby Genevan law was brought closer to the new French codes, and away from a reliance simply on community tradition.<sup>24</sup>

Historically, Geneva developed slowly in this field because the city lacked lawyers. Legalists in Savoyard days naturally gravitated to its capital city, Turin. After independence, ironically, Calvin was the best trained jurist in the city until the arrival years later of the distinguished refugee Parisian lawyers, especially Colladon and Hotman. Calvin was put on numerous committees because of his legal training, not his position in the Church.<sup>25</sup>

Geneva managed to survive with its small and almost amateur prison system because of the nature of punishment the city's judges meted out.<sup>26</sup> Long prison sentences were uncommon

and counter-productive for a small republic continually strapped for funds, because a prisoner could no longer be charged for his lodging after conviction. Common equivalents to modern-day extended prison sentences were banishments. To be banished for a year and a day was common fare for many medium-scale offenses. A perpetual ban with the mark of the city branded on the convict's forehead stood out as perhaps the most serious corporal punishment. Prison sentences were generally for only a few days at bread and water, although incarceration was also used to extract confessions. For example, Guy Furbity was thrown into prison until he retracted his statements about the Bernese. In cases of a more criminal nature, a regimen of prison and the strappado was employed to force a man to divulge information.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, capital punishment did exist and Geneva applied it at an average rate of six executions a year. Geneva's criminal code reflected sentences delivered in the other Imperial Cities. Geneva lived by the Imperial Code, an adaptation of the Justinian Code, like every other city in the Empire. In other words, there was no crime punishable by death in Geneva which was not similarly a capital offense in these other Swiss and German cities.<sup>28</sup>

Anything like the modern-day police who rigorously enforce codified laws on a full-time basis just did not exist in sixteenth century Geneva.<sup>29</sup> "Guets" and "dizainiers" guarded the city by night and had authority to apprehend. The Seigneurie had

authority to arrest at any time of day. The Petit Conseil and the Deux Cents could summon any citizen to appear in front of them. Four "Auditeurs" and a "Lieutenant de Justice" also had power to subpoena, and together they ran an inferior court. "Admodiateurs" and the Lieutenant collected fines and taxes for a percentage of the takings. The "Procureur-Générale" acted as a public prosecutor, an ombudsman, and a watchdog for the interests of the common man.

The humaneness of the prison system seems extremely difficult to judge. Nothing like a jailer's log book, similar to the hospitallier's record books, exists to provide any insight. Contemporary chroniclers give few clues. The newly renovated bishop's house was no doubt a drier and warmer collection of cells than the former Chateaux keeps of episcopal days. Treatment under the new regime was noted, on the whole, for its fairness. Perhaps one indication of these changes can be noted in the official attitude toward the prisoner. During the unsettled years of political and religious strife, it was not uncommon for supporters of the incarcerated to hold banquets, amusements, and rallies in his cell. Or, in another situation, wealthy prisoners paid for better cells or for entertainment to be brought to their cells. But the ordinances of 1543 and 1544 expressly forbade such things, including bawdy singing, and even imposed a rule of silence on some prisoners. The new regulations were undoubtedly harsher, but they treated everyone as an equal under the law.<sup>30</sup>

An analysis of the judicial system and the sentences it

handed down is beyond the scope of this study; however, some statements can be made about the Genevan prison system. Like hospital care, the control of the judicial system, of which the prisons were a part, showed a gradual trend during the two centuries before the 1544 ordinances toward centralized control by the secular authority. The prisons and the judiciary were both totally reorganized after the removal of the bishop; and the series of four often competing legal systems were amalgamated into a single organized code requiring only one jail. And, like the hospital system, the prison was designed to be self-supporting.

The rules laid down for the prison show an unmistakable trend toward greater organization during the years 1530-1544. As was also the case with the hospital and school, a founding charter established the jail and its mode of operation immediately before the official Reformation proclamations. Upon Calvin's return to power in 1541, certain points were tidied or clarified, but the essentials were left unchanged. Later codes grew in detail and comprehensiveness only, not in substance. The Councils' decisions regarding the prison were indicative of the way in which Geneva founded, funded, and managed its other social institutions, and reflect a similar tendency toward more involved ordinances and bureaucracy that only proliferated as the century progressed.

## Chapter Ten Footnotes

1. Compare the the number of entries for the school system or hospital system against those covering the jail in: Geisendorf, Paul-Frédéric. Bibliographie raisonnée de l'histoire de Genève des origines à 1798. Geneva, 1966.
2. Mallet, Edouard. "Libertés, franchises, immunités, us et coutumes de la cité de Genève." MDG, vol. 2, (1844), pp. 328-329.
3. Micheli, Léopold. "Les institutions municipales de Genève au XV<sup>me</sup> siècle." MDG, vol. 32, (1912), p. 119.
4. Næef, Henri. Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936, pp. 36-37.
5. Ibid., pp. 40-41.
6. Ibid., p. 35.
7. Ibid., p. 36. Some forms of robbery were capital offenses.
8. Foster, Herbert D. "Geneva Before Calvin (1387-1536). The Antecedents of a Puritan State." AHR, vol. 8, no. 2, (January, 1903), pp. 221-222.
9. The French word "l'évêché" is properly masculine and deserves a single terminal "e." However, sixteenth-century Genevans usually referred to it in its feminine form. I have decided to maintain the second "e." Of course, in these days before the introduction of the circumflex, "l'éveschée" was the most common rendering. For its history, see: Lullin, Paul. "Premier rapport sur l'évêché." MDG, vol. 1, (1841), pp. 1-14.
10. RC, November 23, 1535. See also: Roget, Amédée. Les Suisses et Genève, vol. 2, Geneva, 1864, pp. 191-192.
11. Ecclesiastical property and the property of Savoyard sympathizers who left the city to fight for the Duke (the "Peneysans") was confiscated and auctioned, except for that property which was of use to the city in its present form. Many of the wealthy, confiscated houses on the fashionable "rue des Chanoines" remained vacant until the arrival of wealthy French refugees two decades later.
12. Roset, Michel (pub. by Henri Fazy). Les Chroniques de Geneve. Geneva, 1894, book 6, chapter 29, p. 407.
13. RC, March 14, 1536.
14. S.D., vol. 2, p. 286, fol. 647, (March 29, 1530).



15. S.D., vol. 3, p. 2, fol. 882, (March 23, 1551).
16. Mallet, "Libertés," pp. 322-323.
17. Monter, E. William. Studies in Genevan Government (1536-1605). Geneva, 1964, p. 70.
18. S.D., vol. 2, p. 341, fol. 739, (November 27, 1537).  
See Appendix p. 541.
19. S.D., vol. 2, p. 374, fol. 790, (May, 1541). See  
Appendix p. 541.
20. S.D., vol. 2, p. 416, fol. 807, (January 28, 1543).
21. Ibid.
22. S.D., vol. 2, p. 435, fol. 813, (January 14, 1544). See p. 542.
23. Wendel, François. Calvin. London, 1963, pp. 20-26.  
While Calvin admired l'Estoile, he did not share the same enthusiasm for Alciat, whom he regarded as merely a rhetorician.
24. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967, p. 152.
25. These included the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordonnances, the 1543 Edits, and the 1553 Hospital Ordonnances.
26. See Monter, E. William. "Crimes and Punishments in Calvin's Geneva." ARG, vol. 64, (1973), pp. 281-287.

Monter gives a brief summary. More complete information could be gathered by selectively consulting the following:

Geisendorf, Paul-Frederic. Bibliographie raisonnée de l'histoire de Genève des origines à 1798. Geneva, 1966.

27. An instructive case is described in: Monter, Studies, pp. 69-75. It is important to note that torture was used only to help get specific information to criminal cases, and not to punish heresy.
28. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 152-155.

Some perfectly absurd claims have been made about the number of executions in Geneva, claiming that a religious "Reign of Terror" took shape under Calvin's direction. For example, Richard H. Tawney, in his Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (London, 1937, p. 126) claims the following of Geneva: "involved the systematic use of torture, the beheading of a child for striking his parents, and the burning of a hundred and fifty heretics in sixty years." The source is John Quick's Synodicon in Gallia Reformata, vol. 1, 1682, p. 99.



Michael Servetus was the only person executed for heresy in Geneva during Calvin's lifetime. Servetus was condemned under the Justinian Code. After the sentence was made, Geneva asked for opinions from her allies in German-speaking Switzerland. Basle, Berne, Zürich and Schaffhausen all concurred.

More importantly, Servetus had already been condemned to death by the Roman Catholic authorities in Vienne, France. However, a negligent jailer allowed him to escape before the sentence could be carried out. Having read the proceedings of the trial, and the wild and erratic claims of Servetus, his mental stability must be in doubt. Those who find in Servetus a voice crying out for tolerance misunderstand the man, and would do well to look at the court transcript.

See: Bergier, Jean-François, and Robert M. Kingdon. Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève au temps de Calvin, vol. 2, pp. 2-47.

Bainton, Roland H. Hunted Heretic: the Life and Death of Michael Servetus 1511-1553. Boston, 1953.

29. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 152-155.
30. In spite of this regulation, banquets were held in prisoners' cells during the 1547-48 battle between Ami Perrin and Laurent Meigret (dit le magnifique). Ibid., p. 79.

Section Three

The Social and Economic Life in Geneva

## Chapter Eleven

## The Pre-Reformation Socio-Economic System

John Calvin and the Reformation in Geneva clearly stimulated significant changes in the hospital, prison, and educational systems of that city and encouraged desperately needed social improvements. Similarly, they could not help but influence the city and its inhabitants' economic life and their general welfare. The measures and success promulgated in these spheres will be dealt with in the next several chapters, through the study of agriculture and rural life, manufacturing and the rise of guilds, monetary transactions, laws, and interest rates, the economical and social effects of immigrants and of the Company of Pastors, and the sumptuary laws. This particular section will be devoted to an historical overview of Geneva's economic situation from the time of the Franchises until the Reformation and a brief summary of the overall monetary, legislative, and social picture of the city until the close of the sixteenth century.

Geneva was the center of a large, although not notably

wealthy, diocese. This diocese was nearly co-extensive with the northern limits of Savoy. It contained only a narrow sliver of land in present-day Switzerland, which ran between the Jura and Lac Léman, about one-half the distance to Lausanne. The remainder extended southwards from the Lake as far below Annecy as Mont Blanc, which corresponds roughly with the modern department of Haute-Savoie.<sup>1</sup> Topographically, the diocese harbored mountains rather than any fertile plains, whose agricultural produce might have brought Geneva a potential source of wealth.

Geographically, Geneva sat at the junction of three economically varied regions. Of greatest importance, it guarded the western approach to the fecund Swiss plateau, which produced great amounts of grain and wine ultimately sold to and through Geneva. Such trade, plus a popular and readily traversed route, brought Geneva into contact with the cities of Fribourg, Berne, Lausanne, and Basle. Within these cities, various industries had already developed, especially textiles and hides at Fribourg and trading at Basle. These cities then sold their products in Italy, France, and Germany, often via Geneva.

Secondly, the Alpine regions of Valais, Piedmont, and Upper Savoy enjoyed commerce with Geneva. On the whole, however, these were impoverished areas, cursed with poor and rocky soil which allowed them to produce barely enough to feed themselves. They did supply Geneva with wood, cheese, and some cat-

tle. The economic mainstay of these sections was the seasonal transportation industry. The major north-south European trade routes crossed them; and, through these territories, the salt, rice, spices, and other exotic produce of Italy and the East passed to the hungry, and wealthier, north.

Finally, the Jura looked to Geneva as a natural outlet. Bresse, Neuchâtel, and Besançon were the major cities of this similarly poor agricultural region. Hemp and dietary staples were the principal produce from this area.

Looking at the combined production of these three diverse regions only indicates that Geneva's backland could supply no manufactured or agricultural goods demanded by the world at large. Geneva's rural neighbors did manage to provide a steady commerce for the town, but it was not based upon cloth or any luxury items. The countryside and mountain areas supplied merely the essential products of daily life. They brought wood for heating; stone, lime, and other construction materials for building. They also provided basic food such as meat, poultry, fish, wheat, vegetables, wine, fruit, cheese, butter, and eggs. Naturally, many of these items ebbed and flowed with the growing seasons, but they did meet the city's provisioning requirements on a regular basis. On the other hand, they were not sufficient in number or kind to make Geneva a major export or manufacturing center. Nevertheless, as long as the three regions met in Geneva to sell their wares to the Genevans and to one another, a reasonable living was assured for all.

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Another important cash "crop" of the time in these sections around Geneva was the mercenary trade. Although the city never contributed its own sons, these troops often passed through Geneva on their way to France and Savoy,<sup>3</sup> sometimes menacing the population and demanding food and supplies. While mercenary work did provide money for the potentially poor mountain cantons, war deprived these societies of their most vigorous participants.

Geneva ultimately proved to be one of the last city-states in Europe. Most of the German Imperial Cities were earlier casualties of history, either absorbed by principalities or broken by emperors. The same was true of Florence and the other Italian city-states.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the fifteenth century, Geneva held a privileged position as locus for one of Europe's great trade fairs. So it was from these fairs, and not from the diocese, that Geneva traditionally derived its economic importance and a good portion of its revenue. The fairs were sponsored by the Dukes of Savoy and held four times a year, for twelve days at each session. Owing to Geneva's geographical situation as a distinctive "crossroads," these fairs served as a meeting place for merchants, goods, and ideas from Italy and southern and central France on the one hand, and from Upper Germany and the Swiss League (travelling from the east and north) on the other. By the mid-fifteenth century, all the major banking houses of Italy and southern Germany had their representatives in Geneva, beginning with the Lombards and then includ-

ing the Medici and Fuggers. Indeed, the Genevan trade fairs were largely "the creation of Italian capitalism."<sup>5</sup>

In the days of the fairs of Champagne it was already the bankers from Siena, Lucca, Florence, or Genoa who held the moneychanger's seals; it was they who made the fortune of Geneva in the 15th century and later those of Antwerp, Lyons, and Medina del Campo. <sup>6</sup>

Sadly, this prosperous situation did not last. In the last half of the fifteenth century, the French kings began attempts to stimulate the economy of their own country, which had been racked by the Hundred Years War. Charles VII first conferred special trading privileges on Lyons in the decade of 1450 to 1460. Lyons' superior location (in relation to that of Geneva), proximity to the French and Italian countrysides, and navigable rivers immediately rendered its fairs more popular.<sup>7</sup> In October, 1462, Louis XI delivered the ultimate, crushing blow. By royal decree, he forbade his subjects and the Fuggers to attend Geneva's fairs any longer. Furthermore, the dates of Lyons' fairs were set to correspond exactly with the Genevan ones. Savoy was occupied elsewhere, disorganized politically and economically, and totally unable to counter the French decree and resultant usurpation of trading position. Within fifteen years, all but one of even the Italian bankers had departed for Lyons; and Lyons embarked upon a period of spectacular growth at Geneva's expense.<sup>8</sup>



Lyons, smaller than Geneva in 1450, exploded to 50,000 residents by the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Most of this growth resulted from immigration, primarily from Savoy and Bresse. In fact, in 1586, it was estimated that one-third of Lyons' residents were of Savoyard origins, and totally two-thirds were immigrants.<sup>10</sup>

European politics in general further decimated Geneva's economic position. During the 1470's, Burgundy sought to expand its territory and influence by conquering the Swiss League. Seeing an opportunity for easy gain, Savoy unfortunately allied itself with Burgundy during Charles the Bold's disastrous campaigns against the Swiss. Following his defeats at Grandson and Morat, the German-speaking Swiss held Savoyard Geneva at 28,000 écus ransom in 1475.<sup>11</sup> Equally catastrophic was the alteration of boundaries, as a result of this war, which caused much trade with Burgundy to now follow a route avoiding Geneva. The discovery of New World silver and the Cape route to India also changed trade and transportation patterns across the European continent. These delivered the final blow to the international commercial life of Geneva.<sup>12</sup>

Trade fairs did continue on a regional basis between Savoy, the Swiss, the south Germans, and, to a lesser extent, Burgundy, but the overall economic damage was irreparable. Geneva's population<sup>13</sup> actually declined over the following sixty years. Many of the city's large and expensive homes fell vacant<sup>14</sup> with

the departure of wealthy merchants and bankers and for lack of new buyers with sufficient funds. They were not occupied again until the arrival of rich religious refugees during Calvin's lifetime.

Some of Geneva's poverty was due to the times, not just to its peculiarly unfortunate circumstances. Recent evidence of municipal spending, trade figures, and population curves suggests that the late fifteenth century was a time of economic contraction throughout all of Europe. After 1350, the amount of land actually cultivated decreased. In many cities, standards of living in 1420 were not again attained until the late sixteenth century. Because comprehensive and accurate figures are non-existent, judgments must be made upon fairly convincing extrapolations. The general declining trend throughout Europe in municipal populations and public building projects in the fifteenth century (which forms part of the supportive data) approximates Geneva's. However, after the decline of the trade fairs, Geneva's economic situation deteriorated even more rapidly, far out of relation with the rest of Europe.<sup>15</sup>

In spite of wealth and clientele attracted by the trade fairs, they seemed in some ways to have had little impact on the internal progress of Genevan economic life. Indeed, it is as though Geneva never seriously understood or sought to safeguard its tenuous fiscal existence, dependent as it was on the industry, money, manufacture, trade, and food of others. For example, no

native banking houses sprang up in fifteenth century Geneva. More surprisingly, Geneva appears not to have had any guilds such as were common to other trading centers throughout Europe, from Antwerp to Florence. Guilds in these cities had developed as associations of allied craftsmen protecting mutual interests and fighting foreign interference in their trade. But within Geneva, only the prototype of the guild, the confraternity, existed. Because of the absence of widespread manufacturing, these confraternities failed to evolve apace with the rest of similar associations across Europe. Although thirty-eight confraternities did exist in the city by 1487, most were just religious and social assemblies of allied tradesmen.<sup>16</sup> Compared with the other Imperial Cities, Geneva could have been easily subject to unscrupulous practices in business, due simply to the lack of enforcement of regulations elsewhere provided by guilds, had it not been for the Councils.

Textile production, a medieval staple, was well established in Fribourg and Lyons, but absent from Geneva. In fact, virtually nothing was produced for export, even though Geneva and its surrounding countryside could not grow enough grain to feed its own citizens.<sup>17</sup>

The trades which were to win Geneva international renown in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as goldworking, jewellery, watchmaking, and even textiles eventually, were totally absent in this early period. In that respect, the socio-economic influence of the Refuge on the growth of trades was as obvious

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as it was far-reaching.

If Geneva and its environs had any "industry," it was transportation, primarily because of the city's location on two major trade routes.<sup>19</sup> Transport carriers were often peasants "moonlighting" during slack agricultural seasons. Geneva was by no means unique on its economic reliance on the haulage trade.

The transport trade cannot easily be separated from the rural community that provided its labor and even from that of the little towns that often derived a great deal of their income from it.<sup>20</sup>

The natural companion of transportation, inn-keeping, provided another economic mainstay for the area around Geneva. Hotels catered to travelers from specific geographical and occupational backgrounds.<sup>21</sup>

However, of itself, transportation was not a creative industry and flagged with the city's loss of trading significance. Then, employment was limited largely to regional fairs and special animal husbandry<sup>22</sup> and to serving Geneva and the area with food and manual services.

Earlier, ideas had been carried along the trade routes. Meeting with people engaged in trade and manufacture elsewhere gave local Genevans the chance to learn and discuss the latest news and ideas from all over Europe. Interestingly enough, proof of just how great a backwater Geneva became after the demise of

its trade fairs can be measured by this fact: no support for or spread of Reformation ideology began until 1532, a full decade later than in Paris, Nürnberg, Zürich, and Basle (other cities with whom Geneva had had trade relations).

The extent to which the city's wealth had relied upon its trade fairs was mirrored in the 1387 Franchises. Large sections therein were devoted to trading regulations, especially those governing foreigners' economic activity in the city. On the other hand, no mention of manufacturing regulations can be found; and no guild laws exist to supplant this absence.

One of the most interesting inclusions in the Franchises is a series of Items permitting usury. In an era when the Roman Catholic Church stood unequivocally opposed to interest-taking and when many lands permitted usurers few legal rights,<sup>23</sup> Geneva decreed that they be treated like bourgeois or citizens.<sup>24</sup> Exactly why Geneva chose to protect usurers is not known. Certainly, regulations against usury were not often enforced elsewhere. Well after the Reformation, devoutly Roman Catholic Spain and Portugal tolerated interest rates even as high as twelve per cent. Interest rates in Geneva during the heyday of the trade fairs often reached five per cent from fair to fair (in other words, twenty per cent per annum); but this was a rate ultimately intolerable to Calvinist Geneva.<sup>25</sup>

As has been noted before,<sup>26</sup> the Franchises provide more than mere historical context for the direction that economic pro-

tection (just like social care) would eventually take, even as they emphasize a peculiarly independent Genevan tradition in economic and social welfare dealings. The sixteenth century particularly was an era that abhorred revolution; so in order to legitimize their actions, it was important for Geneva's Councils to ground their policies on past tradition. This tendency became especially strong in the first decade after independence. The Franchises gave these sixteenth century Councils a *modus operandi* for regulating the economic life of the city. First, they opposed foreign interference in Genevan fiscal dealings. They made the purchase of the right of bourgeoisie essential for doing business in the city. Specific markets were set aside for the sale of each product. Most importantly, standards were set for merchandise and many prices were fixed. Those merchants found in violation suffered fines and confiscation of merchandise. A part of each confiscation was often turned over to the hospital system. Clearly, looking back to the Franchises became as marked a trend in economic policy in the sixteenth century as it was to be in political and judicial areas.<sup>27</sup>

Earlier discussion has already indicated that the Franchises accorded Geneva very little territory.<sup>28</sup> It is indeed possible that Bishop Fabri's intention in having such little land external to the city actually included within the boundaries of the Franchises was a tactic to maintain his independence from Savoy.<sup>29</sup> Over the centuries, the Duke of Savoy had been gaining



direct control over the lands immediately surrounding Geneva, with his sights obviously set upon the city itself. In fact, Savoy gained suzerain powers only from the early fifteenth century, mainly at the expense of Geneva's later bishops/princes.

Although Geneva was not regularly taxed by the Duke or by its Bishop, Savoy occasionally did demand "donations." Such a request was made in 1457 for 2,000 écus.<sup>30</sup> Actually, this was more of a ransom, paid to the Duke in return for his promise to continue to abide by the Franchises and to respect the rights of Geneva's citizens. In 1464, he extorted 9,376 florins more (about 782 écus) from Geneva;<sup>31</sup> and, in 1484, another 4,000 florins.<sup>32</sup>

Because meeting these particular debts required special taxes and a loan from resident Florentine bankers, the shattering effects on Geneva's financial stability of the 28,000 écus ransom levied by the Swiss League after Burgundy's defeat immediately fall into perspective. In actuality, revenues from wine, salt, etc., provided annually only about 5,000 florins or (as of 1535 monetary standards) about 1,250 écus. The large number of "droits de bourgeoisie" and fees from their annual renewals provided another sizable income, relatively; but the city could never face such a major expenditure as these ransoms from the Duke and the Swiss League without having to undergo special borrowing.<sup>33</sup>

Although Geneva was the principal city and marketplace of northern Savoy, it was never truly integrated into Savoyard court



custom. Statistics of the ennoblings granted by the Savoyard Dukes substantiate further Geneva's penchant for non-conformity with its Duke and the continuing power struggle and disagreements between the Dukes, their respective Genevan Bishops, and the citizens of the city. These numbers indicate that of the 263 families raised in status in fifteenth and sixteenth century Savoy, only thirteen were Genevan. This fact begs an explanation, for even the small town of Chambéry produced more nobles than Geneva.

As nobility was essentially a feature of the countryside (not the city), the attainment of rank was not so important to the burghers as it was to people in smaller towns with external territory or in the countryside.<sup>34</sup> Still, some noble families did reside in Geneva.

A Savoyard was ennobled by one of three means. First, he might receive it as an office given for service to the Duke, such as "Secretary to the Duke." He might also receive certain ennobling letters from the Duke as a reward for performing some meritorious act for him.<sup>35</sup> But most likely, his title was conferred in recognition for years of faithful service to the Duke. Usually the awarding of the title followed the making of a good marriage by a bourgeois and, not incidentally, a large amount of money.

In practical terms, a wealthy bourgeois merchant might desire some economic stability and prestige in his waning years. A perfect answer to all of his needs could be found in this third

route to the "petite noblesse." Economically, living in the countryside as a noble was a sound idea. Land was, after all, the only secure investment, never losing its value.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, in the country, the ennobled paid no taxes, no "censes annuelles." Thus, by soliciting a letter of patent, one was secure socially and economically. As these men moved to the countryside, they were outside the jurisdiction of the Franchises and no longer took an active part in Geneva's life.<sup>37</sup>

As the trade fairs declined, many sons of wealthy merchants took the family fortune and scoured the countryside for a seat for their titled holdings. Naturally, this trend produced economic and social change within Geneva. By 1510, the older breed of merchants (the families who had built their careers on the trade fairs) had declined in wealth, solicited nobility, moved away, or just simply died. This landed nobility had little in common with the new bourgeois city merchants, who were emerging in the years between 1510 and 1530 and who were guiding Geneva's fight for independence.

Independent Geneva's destiny in and progress through the sixteenth century was very much related to its landlessness and to its departing nobility. Indeed, it had become famous as a "city without a countryside."<sup>38</sup> Those ennobled who lived in the countryside had little interest in, or positive influence upon, Geneva, its problems, its development during the period after 1528. They owed their position and loyalty to the Duke of Savoy

and concentrated their time and wealth on their country estates. This is not to say that the city and country had not retained strong cultural and trading links earlier (before 1528), for these were essential to the survival of both. Over the years, a symbiosis had developed between Geneva and the Savoyard countryside, in spite of frequent political differences. Michel Roset's Chronicles (which were culled from Council Registers rather than from memory and hearsay, like Bonivard's<sup>39</sup>) reported that in 1525 the Duke requested economic support from the city. However, Geneva's fiscal situation was so precarious that the civic government, which then included many of the Duke's supporters, had to plead poverty and deny the request.<sup>40</sup>

In disagreements with the Dukes before the issue of independence arose, commerce between Geneva and Savoy was allowed to continue undisturbed, for it benefitted Savoy as much as it did Geneva. But from 1528, the Duke forbade all trade between his subjects and Geneva, seriously endangering civic liquidity. The town was also deprived of income from commerce that normally passed through Geneva between Upper German and Swiss merchants travelling to Italy via Savoy.

At this same time, the Duke similarly prevented French grain from crossing his realm to reach the beleaguered city. As has been explained, Geneva and its mandemants were unequal to the task of feeding the city. They produced sufficient wine, but only about one-sixth the requisite grain and not enough meat.<sup>41</sup>

Traditionally, Geneva had served as the marketing center (but not producer) for all foodstuffs in the Jura and the Savoyard pre-Alps. By 1535, grain shortages became extremely serious. Geneva was forced to search for wheat in Nyon and the Vaud, in Berne, and at the great Rhine markets in Basle. This embargo served to thrust Geneva economically and politically closer to the Swiss,<sup>42</sup> a move ultimately judicious in virtually every area.

The role played by Basle during the Genevan war for independence and the Reformation has consistently gone unmentioned, doing a great disservice not only to the city but also to a proper understanding of the epoch. Unfortunately, the tendency exists in history to measure influence by military might, and the Baslers never distinguished themselves on the battlefield. Nevertheless, they did make significant contributions to the acquisition and maintenance of Genevan freedom and to the Reformation.

As the northern entry point for goods flowing into the Swiss Confederation, Basle was the financial capital of Switzerland. From the very inception of the Genevan fight for freedom and its Reformation, Basle never refused loans to its political and confessional ally. The Baslers bankrolled the new, impoverished Genevan Republic and provided loans to the city consistently over its first fifty years. As importantly, Basle was the major grain market where Genevan negotiants were free

to purchase foodstuffs to supply the isolated, often under-stocked city.

In addition to its financial supremacy, Basle was the principal intellectual center in Switzerland; from it a great quantity of Reformation learning and printed material flowed. Its university attracted Erasmus, who spent the last years of his life there. Calvin and Farel both lived in Basle's religious and humanist community during the decade of 1525 to 1535. Especially in the encouragement of Farel and his proselytizing around Neuchâtel, Basle promoted the extension of the Reformation into its French-speaking territories.

Politically within the Swiss Confederation, Basle served to bridle the Bernese whenever they sought to reduce Geneva to a mere dependency. The "Départ de Bâle," a treaty designed to preserve peace between the two erstwhile allies (Geneva and Berne), was mediated by Basle in 1544. Later in the century, when the Bernese conspired with Savoy not to come to Geneva's aid should Savoy attack, Basle led the outcry which prompted Berne to reverse such a policy. Without Basle to provide a counterbalance to Berne, Geneva would indeed have been isolated from friendly powers and might well have been reduced to suzerain status, a fate which befell the Vaud.

During Geneva's war for independence, the city did find certain aspects of its alliances with Basle and the Swiss Con-

federation painful nevertheless, for Fribourg and Berne replaced the Duke of Savoy as the great "unbalancer" of the civic budget. The Swiss offered military assistance on a "cash only" basis. To pay Fribourg in 1519 and both Berne and Fribourg in 1526, Geneva had to look far beyond its own frontier for a financial life-line. It could no longer rely on the Florentine bankers, now departed for Lyons, who had traditionally supplied the necessary funds. Hence, in 1519, Geneva borrowed 1,500 écus from Luzerne. While this debt was still outstanding, Geneva turned east again (in 1527) to some wealthy Bernese in order to secure an additional 1,500 écus. This alteration in borrowing habits coincided exactly with Geneva's switch in political interests and alliances, of course, away from Italy and Turin-based Savoy and toward the Swiss League.<sup>43</sup>

At first glance it might seem odd that Geneva would borrow from its creditors in order to repay them. On the other hand, the policy would seem the perfect way in which to secure the safety of the city. From 1526, Geneva was relying heavily upon Bernese protection, and even more so after the terms of the "Arrêt de St.-Julien" in 1530. The 1527 loan was made by some wealthy Bernese who, by virtue of their financial power, would certainly have had influence on Berne's Great and Small Councils. These lenders would not have wanted to see their substantial investments completely wiped out by Geneva's

being captured. The same reasoning could be applied for all borrowing within and across the Swiss cantons: the lending canton would do its best to insure the security of its investment by inducing neighboring cantons to fulfill their military treaty obligations or their peaceful alliances.

The accuracy of the Reverend Sister Jeanne de Jussie (head of a cloistered order in Geneva) in describing the Genevan-Savoyard clash must be as suspect as Bonivard's; nevertheless, she was at least correct in principle when she reported that fifty-two wealthy nobles quit Geneva after the combourgeoisie with Berne and Fribourg in 1526. The story for independence, told from her perspective on the established Catholic and Savoyard side, decries the upstart merchants who "rebelled against the illustrious Prince [sic] of Savoy<sup>44</sup> ...and scorned the whole of the nobility."

Thus, as a consequence of the revolt and the achievement of independence,<sup>45</sup> Geneva was blockaded from Savoyard markets; the wealthy nobility dispersed; the trade fairs virtually finished; and a closer association with and influence from the Swiss League begun. The old established merchant order of Geneva's grander days had disappeared for good. The city of Geneva and the Savoyard countryside had separated political pathways, and ultimately their fate, from one another.



Against this backdrop, the alliances of the wars for independence can be appreciated. Those ennobled by the Duke generally sided with him during the 1519 and the 1526 rebellions. They helped to form the "Mammelues," Savoyard sympathizers who were chased from Geneva by the "Eidguenots"<sup>46</sup> in 1527. Many then joined the "Gentils de la Cuilleur," who continued to wage war on Geneva until 1536. Still other nobles left Geneva with the Bishop and the Cathedral Canons from 1534 through 1536. Many of this group occupied the castle at Peney, from which came the appellation "Peneysans." When their fortress was taken in 1536, some were executed for treason.

In postscript, the few remnants of the established aristocracy in Geneva tended to side with the "Articulants" in 1540 and with Ami Perrin in 1555.<sup>47</sup> Following the Articulants' political defeat and Perrin's banishment, any remaining aristocratic influence virtually disappeared from Geneva's social and political spheres.

Although commerce between 1470 and 1520 had dropped by nearly fifty percent,<sup>48</sup> a new breed of smaller merchants arose to take the place of the earlier, more prosperous ones. Many Piedmontese and some Germans came either to establish business connections in Geneva or to set up their own shops. Letters of bourgeoisie were sold to them, thereby providing<sup>49</sup> a significant source of revenue for the impoverished town.

Many of these new bourgeois made Geneva their permanent home and raised their families there.

The majority of these "droits de bourgeoisie" were sold to citizens of contiguous states. For example, of the seventy-two Italians who attained the bourgeoisie from 1480 until 1540, fifty-eight were from Piedmont.<sup>50</sup> A clever man often bought rights of bourgeoisie in a foreign city for business privileges or as insurance against potential political troubles at home. In fact, many Genevans (headed by Bonivard) had purchased the bourgeoisie of Fribourg and then scrambled there to safety during the "Conseil des Hallebardes" in 1526.

To document the precise origins of these merchants is rather difficult, but could be done through the Council Registers and related records; for the magistrates who ran Geneva were also its economic chiefs. The majority were shopkeepers, notaries, and apothecaries;<sup>51</sup> a handful were artisans. They founded their businesses, and then they began appearing as members of the Petit Conseil and the Deux Cents. The nobility had been displaced by clearly a more democratic and economically progressive group. Records name them as members of the Eidgenot party;<sup>52</sup> and many later joined the "Guillermins," Farel's partisans. Amy Levet, Jacques des Arts, Jean Chautemps, Claude Savoye, Baudichon de la Maison neuve, Claude Bernard, and Jean

Ami Curtet (many of whom were discussed in connection with the Reformation-era Hôpital-Général<sup>53</sup>) were members of both groups.<sup>54</sup>

In this early period, no real entrepreneurs emerged to dominate the economic life of the city. Each man was reasonably content with his livelihood; the desire to expand one's business or to branch into allied fields for greater profits was absent. This is simply and clearly a shopkeeper's, and not an adventurous entrepreneur's, mentality.

Perhaps the political revolution and iconoclasm in the 1520's made the Reformation more digestible in the 1530's to these merchants in particular and to Geneva's populace in general. But from a purely social and economic standpoint, the ascendance of the bourgeoisie determined the future composition and direction of the Councils, and thus the new Genevan government. These Council members looked not toward Savoy any longer but rather toward the Swiss League for their political alliances and sense of government, as has been discussed. Together, they ushered in the great political and religious changes of the 1530's and ultimately the social improvements of later decades.

The efficacy of public administration rested on the abilities and energies of the merchants who had assumed control of the town. Certainly, they were more intensive and conscientious in their duties than were their ecclesiastical and/or noble predecessors.<sup>55</sup> Although Geneva's magistrates were skillful and practical in devising solutions for the city's problems, a curi-

ous dalliance surrounded a number of their dealings.

In some respects, such behavior might be interpreted as the councillors' having too much to do in the course of a day. They ran shops or notarial offices, served on standing committees, and met on their respective councils. Some belonged to the Consistory; some to the hospital. In short, their days were overwhelmingly crowded. Until the waning years of the century, all government positions were filled by such amateur politicians.

The accusations made by Treasurer Amblard Corne against the government's financial management in 1544 challenged this sort of part-time administration. He accused the hospital procureurs of selling the hospital's wheat at low prices (harvest-time), only to require purchasing additional supplies a few months later.<sup>56</sup> Calvin was forced in 1545 to come back to the council months later to ask why the committee investigating his proposal to teach weaving in the hospital had not yet filed a report. Admodiations remained uncollected and their accounts confused.<sup>57</sup> Public debts were paid slowly. Clearing these backlogs was energetically attempted only after the overthrow<sup>58</sup> of Ami Perrin and his "nationalist" faction in 1555.

In the pre-Refuge era, government moved at a fumbling pace. A certain directed energy, efficiency, and comprehensive programming were lacking. After the ascendancy of the Huguenot families in business and public esteem, civil government did

trim its sails but lost the quirks and idiosyncrasies that had given it color. Government became more efficient but faceless and characterless. For Geneva, the end of the century marked the emergence of a modern government bureaucracy.

Any survey of Geneva's pre-Reformation economic and political life must also attempt to analyze the influence and duties of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church was the wealthiest institution and largest landholder in the city.<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps Geneva's Reformation attitude toward its Bishop and toward Church property can be partially understood by considering once again the men who were the city's sixteenth century episcopal princes.<sup>60</sup> Of these four bishops, only Charles de Seyssel was a competent ruler, and his term lasted a scant three years. The other three were puppets of the Duke of Savoy<sup>61</sup> and more interested in Savoyard court life than in ruling a mediocre, provincial town. They, especially Pierre de la Baume, were absent from Geneva for long periods of time.

These bishops were aristocrats by birth. Thus, they had little in common with the merchants who sat on the town's Councils; yet they were the head of the secular government and the dispenser of most civil justice. They owned a large proportion of the city's wealth, minted the city's coins, and collected revenue from legal fines; but they could not be taxed. They and the Roman Church did not help with the defense efforts, nor would they contribute to alleviate the city's indebtedness.

In short, by background and temperament, they could not appreciate Geneva's desire for self-government and ecclesiastical reform; and they did all in their power to frustrate both efforts.<sup>62</sup>

Directly under the Bishop of Geneva in wealth and authority were the ten to fifteen resident Cathedral Canons. They dispensed Canon law and some of the civil justice. They, with the Bishop, maintained prisons. Their jurisdiction tended to overlap the Bishop's in many instances since the concept of separation of powers was not yet very highly developed. The Canons also administered the sumptuary laws<sup>63</sup> and regulated the weights and measures used in the city. In conjunction with the Seigneurie, they fixed the price of wine. They possessed the keys to the bell towers and took responsibility for ringing the alarm bell ("tocsin"). Finally, they kept possession of some of the town seals; hence, of necessity, they must approve various charters and regulations initiated by the Councils that had to be issued with the town seal upon them.

Each Canon had a house on the expensive Rue des Chanoinés (near the Cathedral), where each home, in its own way, constituted a private prebend. The majority of the Canons were well-bred, middle-echelon aristocrats from upper Savoy or the Romande-speaking sections of Switzerland. It is interesting to note that this "Venerable Chapter," as it was commonly known in the town, had its name expropriated to title the new Reformed

clergy the "Venerable Company."<sup>64</sup>

It is not surprising that the chief of Geneva's secular and sacred governments was also its pre-eminent financial baron. The Church owned wealthy property in the city and had extensive land holdings outside the reaches of the Franchises. The Bishop of Geneva collected rents and taxes from all over his diocese; and many bishops, like Baume, held benefices elsewhere. The property owned by the Roman Catholic Church and its allies was disproportionately high, as a 1537 survey indicated.<sup>65</sup> It has been estimated that about one-third of the total wealth of the city of Geneva was in the hands of the Roman Church. In addition, ecclesiastics collected about two-thirds of all the municipal tolls and duties, as well as all the judicial penalties from their courts. The Church raised far more revenue than the few paltry Seignorial levies on salt, wine, and rights of bourgeoisie. However, when Baume compared his diocese with others in France and Savoy, his see was not truly a wealthy one.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, when measured against the financial strength of the civil government, the Roman Church and its clergy were exceedingly well off. High Church officials often diverted much of the Church's revenue from the institution itself and its supposed social care programs to their own use.

The total economic power and influence of the Roman Catholic Church pervading Geneva was nearly overwhelming, which makes its removal in 1535-1536 all the more surprising and difficult.



In addition to being the wealthiest institution in Geneva, it was also the largest employer. Not even counting the numbers of religious mendicants passing through the city, about 400 to 500 ordained clergy resided in Geneva.

If one adds to these four or five hundred persons the lay functionaries, notaries, judicial scribes, officers of justice, rent collectors, and administrators, one can state that about a tenth of the population was from the Church. 67

Even though ecclesiastical revenues dwarfed civil ones, the Syndics and the Petit Conseil assumed responsibility for the financial life of the government. Their major sources of income came from admissions to the bourgeoisie and from taxes and import duties on wine, salt, foreign meat, and marketing rights. They collected tolls on the Rhône and Arve bridges. The Seigneurie also collected rent on property owned by the town, including six houses, three or four granges, and two "plais" (commons). In times of extreme exigency, special rates could be imposed. One example was the tax levied on the total assessed value of the city which was then used to pay the Swiss ransom of 1475. In Geneva, the clergy were always exempt from paying these taxes. 68

A percentage of civic fines and penalties reached the town coffers. This trickle increased substantially after the Syndics began encroaching upon the Bishop's judicial authority, which started during Baume's long absences from Geneva commenc-

ing in 1527. The take-over was completed by 1534. Collection of these revenues, like the import duties and land taxes, were farmed out to a civil collector. He kept a part of the tax as his wage and turned the rest over to the Seigneurie. Judgeships, on the other hand, were never sold.<sup>69</sup>

Special collections and privately concluded loans from wealthy citizens completed the sources of government income available to Geneva. During exceedingly difficult times, the Syndics and Councils went beyond the limits of the Franchises to contract with wealthy individuals and even with other cities for municipal assistance. It was during that revolutionary war era that a long history of borrowing in the Swiss cities had begun, primarily at the Basle public exchange.<sup>70</sup>

Out of these revenues, Geneva had to pay for its earlier occasional "gifts" to Savoy, the price of Swiss military assistance,<sup>71</sup> the costs of maintaining embassies and entertaining foreign ambassadors, its justice system, and its public works, including the razing of suburbs, the erection of new defense fortifications, and the city's general self-protection.

By 1536, the Reformation had been proclaimed and the Duke's armies chased away from the city walls, but Geneva was a financial shambles. In fact, its reputation for poverty was so widespread that later in the century, loans and gifts from allied Protestant states as far away as England and Scotland arrived.<sup>72</sup> Certainly the Bishop, the Canons, the Cathedral Chapter and the Episcopal Council had

not functioned properly for years. But with the disappearance of these men, and their private and ecclesiastical sources of wealth, Geneva was deprived of individuals who provided some much-needed purchasing power. Their homes, like those of the nobles, were to remain empty and unsold until the well-to-do religious refugees arrived twenty years later.

In common with all the Swiss Reformed cities, Geneva secularized the extensive ecclesiastical holdings. Virtually all Roman Church property was confiscated and inventoried in August, 1535; and the priests were forbidden to depart the city with any of the property in their possession. Furniture and cloth were diverted to the hospital, while precious stones and metal reverted to the city mint. All land belonging to the Roman Church, plus the usual rents and <sup>73</sup> dîmes due on it, became possessions of the Seigneurie. While Geneva could collect rents and censes from this former Church property in its own territories, former revenues from throughout the diocese (which at least had been spent in Geneva) ceased. The belongings of the families who had allied themselves with the Bishop were also confiscated, inventoried, and either used through the hospital system or sold to pay for its running. Thus, a clever sixteenth century civic policy began: making Geneva's enemies pay for the city's military survival and for the fulfillment of the lapsed civil functions and obligations of the Bishop, <sup>74</sup> Canons, Cathedral Chapter, and social care system.

The war for independence and the Reformation brought food shortages, the disruption of trade, and the disestablishment of the Roman Catholic Church. They also necessitated costly defense expenditures. The most drastic of these was the aforementioned demolition of the "fauxbourgs" (suburbs) that had grown up outside of the city walls to the south and to the west.<sup>75</sup> It was feared that these would provide cover for an approaching enemy army, so the Councils ordered them pulled down. The project occupied many years and necessitated rehousing about 1,500 individuals, more than one-tenth of the city's entire population.<sup>76</sup> So, for the next two centuries, Geneva lived behind its walls. This forced overcrowding and all of the problems implicit in Bonivard's oft-quoted remark that the city had diminished its beauty in order to augment its strength.<sup>77</sup>

On the other hand, living in such close quarters had some less obvious, although more positive, effects. The necessity of housing so many disparate people so close together, people whose very survival depended upon concerted action in times of stress, forced measures to ameliorate social conditions in order to improve that unity. For example, legislation was passed which served as a protection from economic and personal exploitation for Genevan residents: in purchasing commodities, borrowing money, and finding jobs. Forbidding dung heaps and privies on streets, caring for the poor, assur-

ing adequate supplies and equal distribution of grain, ensuring public health, and even prohibiting unnecessary, jealousy-provoking displays of conspicuous consumption had their origins in a uniquely medieval concern for the promotion of civic unity. This outlook was just beginning to die out in most other European cities; but Geneva's unique sixteenth century situation, heightened by that city's isolation and precarious military situation, clearly needed and emphasized such a mentality.<sup>78</sup>

Geneva had been and continued at war against an enemy dedicated to eradicating heresy as well as disobedience. So, in a physical sense as well as a spiritual one, each resident's personal survival was quite literally dependent on the collective unit, for "the city stood as a unit before God."<sup>79</sup> In fact, the need to keep order grew as the small city became crammed with thousands of religious refugees from dissimilar backgrounds. Without a highly developed sense of order and unity, the municipal republic simply could not have survived.<sup>80</sup>

The need to regulate personal behavior arose not from Calvinist theology, then, but from this unique outlook of the medieval city-dweller. The burgher tended to collectivize salvation and punishment over the entire population of the city. To secure God's blessing for the municipality, and to assure concord, the burghers believed it essential to make their town into a "city on a hill," where there might be no activity displeasing to God.

Those things which engender a lack of harmony, which fail to bring God's blessing on to a community, are bad and should be avoided. Just from a social and economic standpoint, Calvin believed that great inequalities of wealth violated the Lord's law of love, insulted the poor, caused envy and dissension, and thus threatened civic unity. The improper ordering of church and city to the plight of the poor brought about the sort of disaster demonstrated by the Lyons' food riots during the 1529 famine. It was the Christian's responsibility to care for the unfortunate. When the city fulfilled that duty, God rewarded it with tranquillity. To feed the poor just to keep order, to buy them off without asking God's blessing, would not bring that concord. The piety of the purpose was equal in importance to the deed in order to assure its efficacy. This was the legacy of the theology of the cities, that is of Bucer and Zwingli, "not passed on to a loyal or thoughtful generation on German soil, but rather to Calvin in Geneva."<sup>81</sup>

From this philosophical heritage, Calvin wrote that in the true Christian community the needs of all men were to be freely communicated to one another, as were gifts and subventions in response to those needs. A true Christian community could be judged by its harmony; and this concord could come only from properly observing this and other Christian obligations. It is essential for Christian love to decide questions, legislation, and controversy in an equitable manner.

It is important for the understanding of the sumptuary laws to keep uppermost this concept of community and unity, so at odds with contemporary political and social pluralism.

The sumptuary laws were also partially motivated by the desire for a life modeled on the same evangelical simplicity that Calvin recommended for the Genevan pastors.<sup>82</sup> This idea grew out of the early Protestant movement's idealistic, or perhaps utopian, quest to re-create the New Testament Church on earth. It saw the Early Church as a model for its own time and local situation. The Apostolic Church emphasized cutting away the unessential things of life, while encouraging spontaneous sharing and caring. The idealists of the sixteenth century believed that if less attention were paid to worldly trappings, man could direct a greater portion of his wealth, time, and efforts to the service of his brother.

In part, this drive for simplicity was a reaction against the Renaissance clergy. The expensive building projects and elaborate lifestyles of ecclesiastics had long been objects of derision for humanists and reformers alike. The manners of high-living popes and bishops were contrasted with the poverty and humility of Christ.

Geneva's own noble-born Bishop Pierre de la Baume fit this clerical caricature perfectly. No doubt, part of the Councils' desire to enforce a rule of simplicity came from memories



of him and his more immediate episcopal predecessors.

The religious, political, social, and economic institutions that had developed around episcopal Geneva from the time of the Franchises altered dramatically in the years following the important decisions for political independence and religious Reformation. Having examined the hospital and prison systems in the earlier sections, it is also of paramount importance to analyze in the next several chapters other Genevan measures and systems initiated after 1536 to protect the individual and to improve economic and social conditions within the city. Thus far, this chapter has been devoted to background in Geneva's geographical situation, its trade fairs and lack of industry, its relation to Savoy and movement toward the Swiss League, the demise of the nobility and the Roman Catholic Church, and the rise of the merchant class and its concepts and handling of civic government. In conclusion, a brief historical sketch of the last 65 years of the century will provide a broad view against which to understand the specific social and economic developments of the city enumerated in the chapters to come.

The decade of the 1540's continued with many of the same problems that had created Geneva's impoverishment in the previous ten years. Independence had been achieved, but the political climate was unsettled. The Guillermins, supporters of the preachers, lost power in 1538; and Calvin and Farel were asked to leave. The Articulants, who were next voted in, favored the supremacy

of the State over the Church, the Bernese formula. Within two years, this group lost support because of negotiating a treaty with Berne which surrendered most of the contended issues. In retrospect, the "sell-out" was due less to their pro-Bernese sympathies than to their incompetence in spoken German.<sup>83</sup> The supporters of the preachers were returned to the Councils in 1540.

The rapid turnover in hospital staff during the Reformation's first decade attests again to the administrative uncertainty of the period.<sup>84</sup> Economically, the 1540's were very hard indeed. Drought, and subsequently plague, affected the commodity prices during these years. Nevertheless, Geneva was surrounded and buffered by Bernese territory, through which Geneva's negotiants and allies kept the city well supplied with necessary foodstuffs, particularly grain. In these years, little in the way of manufacturing industries or export existed; and the impoverished city remained heavily indebted to Swiss creditors, mainly at Basle.

The 1540's saw the beginning of religious refugees from the Duke's purges in the Piedmont region. They were well received, fed, and put to work in the hospital system. This established a method for aiding immigrants that was maintained over the next generation. Socially, the merchant families who had settled in the decades before the war and Reformation became more conservative and oligarchic.

By the mid-1540's, however, workable administrative procedures emerged in most organizations. The Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 and the Edits of 1543 codified the inter-relation of the civil and ecclesiastical governments. Thus, there began a period of relative stability. Indeed, by the decade of the 1550's, the city's fortunes were actually improving. Good weather insured ample foodstuffs. The energies of the pastors and civic leaders promoted more highly organized institutions, culminating in a new series of edits for the hospital, public health, and consumer protection.

In this same era, the first of the Italian and French religious refugees began arriving. These people were, on the whole, wealthy, well-educated, and skilled. Entrepreneurs among the immigrants gave rise to the origins of capitalist enterprise. They offered new trades, capital, and a knowledge of international markets to a city that no longer knew any of these. Many industries now flourished in Geneva for the first time. By Calvin's death in 1564, the first guilds were being incorporated by Council charter. Watchmaking, printing, textiles, and goldworking prospered, providing employment and foreign revenue. Just as importantly, apprenticeship programs were developed to pass these skills along.

Refugees who were less fortunate were aided by the national bourses established from 1550 onwards. These provided food, clothing, and loans to foreigners who had lost their pos-

sessions in flight for religious principles. The defeat of the last bit of opposition to the immigrant pastors and refugee inhabitants was witnessed in 1555.

Unfortunately, soon after Calvin's death, and for the remainder of the sixteenth century, the economic tables turned. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre overcrowded Geneva with thousands of poorer refugees than had heretofore arrived. Then, the implementation of the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1567 stripped Berne of the girdle of territories which surrounded Geneva and which had protected the city from Savoy. Renewed war with the Duke in the last decades of the century strained the treasury; and the prices of commodities rose more sharply than in the first half of the century. By 1600, Geneva was far poorer a city than it had been in 1564.

## Chapter Eleven Footnotes

1. Naef, Henri. Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936, p. 4.
2. Bergier, Jean-François. Genève et l'économie européenne de la Renaissance. Paris, 1963, pp. 50-87.
3. The Kings of France were especially dependent on Swiss mercenaries to fight for them. This was especially true during the wars in Italy against Spain, which opened the sixteenth century.
4. For amplification, see the following:  
 Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972.  
 Ozment, Stephen E. The Reformation in the Cities. New Haven, 1975.
5. Braudel, Fernand. The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. 1. London, 1972, p. 218.
6. Ibid., p. 321.
7. Bergier, Genève et l'économie, pp. 361-431.
8. Ibid., pp. 405-410.
9. As opposed to Geneva's 12,000. See Appendix p. 530.
10. Davis, Natalie Z. "Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy: The Case of Lyon." Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, vol. 5, (1968), pp. 221-222.
11. To place this ransom into perspective, it should be considered that 28,000 écus constituted one-tenth the total property value of the entire city!
12. Jullien, Alexandre (ed.). Histoire de Genève. Geneva, 1951, p. 160.
13. The population fell from 11-12,000 in 1475 to 10,300 by 1535. For a chart of the city's population, see Appendix p. 530. See also: Naef, Les origines, p. 22.
14. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967, p. 2.

15. Lopez, R.S., and H.A. Miskimin. "The Economic Depression of the Renaissance." The Economic History Review, Second Series, vol. 14, (1962), pp. 408-426.
16. Babel, Antony. "Histoire corporative de l'horlogerie, de l'orfèvrerie, et des industries annexes." MDG, vol. 33, (1916), pp. 10-11.
17. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 30.

Two superbly detailed works exist to provide an understanding of Geneva in the twelfth to sixteenth centuries:

Babel, Antony. Histoire économique de Genève des origines au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, 2 vol. Geneva, 1963.

Binz, Louis. Genève et les Suisses du M<sup>o</sup>yen Age à la Restauration. Geneva, 1964.

18. See: Babel, Antony. La fabrique genevoise. Neuchâtel-Paris, 1938.
19. Geneva was on two major trade routes. The first connected Berne, Basle, and southern Germany with Lyons and southern France. The other joined France with Italy through Martigny and the Valais passes. See a map for amplification, Appendix p. 543.  
  
Braudel, The Mediterranean, vol. 1, pp. 206-209.
20. Babel, Histoire, vol. 1, p. 449.
21. Guerdan, René. La vie quotidienne à Genève au temps de Calvin. Paris, 1973.
22. Bergier, Genève et l'économie, pp. 75-81.
23. Martin, Paul-Etienne. "Calvin et le prêt à l'intérêt à Genève." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, pp. 252-255.
24. Mallet, Edouard. "Libertés, Franchises, Immunités, Us et Coutômes de la Cité de Genève." MDG, vol. 2, (1844), Item 34 (pp. 334-335); Item 35 (pp. 334-335); Item 39 (pp. 336-337); Item 77 (pp. 352-353).

See also: Chapter Sixteen, and Appendix p. 544.

25. Biéler, André. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959, p. 167.

Also: Martin, "Calvin," pp. 251-253.

26. See also: Chapter 2, pp. 28-33.
27. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 56-59.
28. See Introduction, and Appendix p. 523.
29. Dufour, Alain. "De la bourgeoisie de Genève à la noblesse de Savoie XV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, pp. 228-238.
30. Jullien, Histoire, p. 146.
31. Monter, E. William. Studies in Genevan Government (1536-1605). Geneva, 1964.
32. Jullien, Histoire, pp. 147-155.
33. See p. 432 for further amplification.
34. Dufour, "De la bourgeoisie," pp. 228-238.
35. These awards were given mainly in the fifteenth century.
36. Braudel, The Mediterranean, vol. 1, p. 424.
37. Dufour, "De la bourgeoisie," pp. 228-238.
38. The term is commonly used by many writers throughout the last centuries.
39. See Chapter 6, pp. 125, 131, 132.
40. Roset, Michel (pub. by Henri Fazy). Les Chroniques de Genève. Geneva, 1894, book 2, chapter 5, p. 109.
41. Monter, Studies, p. 76.
42. Bergier, Jean-François. "Commerce et politique du blé à Genève aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles." RSH, vol. 14, no. 4, (1964), pp. 536-537.
43. Koerner, Martin. "Les modalités des emprunts genevois en Suisse au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle." Bulletin du Département d'Histoire Economique de l'Université de Genève, no. 4, (1973-1974), pp. 29-40.
44. Jussie, Jeanne de (A.-C. Grivel, ed.). Le levain de Calvinisme, où commencement de l'hérésie de Genève, fait par Reverende Soeur Jeanne de Jussie. Geneva, 1865, p. 1.

See also: Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 44; Biéler, La pensée, pp. 138-144.



45. Monter, Studies, p. 15.
46. See Chapter 4, p. 68.
47. See Chapter Thirteen, pp. 359-362.
48. Bergier, Genève et l'économie, p. 50.
49. Bergier, Jean-François. "Genève et la Suisse dans la vie économique de Lyon aux XV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles." Cahiers d'histoire, vol. 5, no. 1, (1960), pp. 3-44.
50. Bergier, Jean-François. "Marchands italiens à Genève au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, 1480-1540." Studi in onore di Armando Sappori, vol. 2. Milan, 1957, pp. 883-896.
51. The apothecary was regarded almost as highly as a medical doctor, because he made examinations and dispensed cures.
52. "Eidguenot" is the French translation of the German "Eidgenossen," the Swiss League's term for union, or confederation.
53. See Chapter 5, and Chapter 8, pp. 175-186.
54. Fromment, Antoine. Les Actes et Gestes merveilleux de la cité de Genève. Geneva, 1854, p. 4.
- The process is described in detail by:
- Bergier, Jean-François. "Taux de l'intérêt et crédit à court terme à Genève dans la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle." Studi...Amintore Fanfani, vol. 4. Milan, 1962, pp. 92-94.
55. See Chapter Three, pp. 40-47.
56. See Bergier, Jean-François. "La démission du Trésorier Amblard Corne." MDG, vol. 60, (1961), pp. 447-467.
57. A discussion of admodiations can be found in Chapter Twelve, pp. 324-330.
58. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 158.
59. Monter, Studies, p. 15.
60. See Chapter 3 for expanded coverage.
61. Two were actually members of the House of Savoy.
62. Naef, Les origines, pp. 59-83.

63. Ibid., pp. 220-222. The policing of public and private morality in Geneva began about 1450. However, it is impossible to know how much enforcement occurred, because only civil records survive from that period.
64. Ibid., pp. 31-59.
65. Monter, Studies, p. 12.
66. Ibid., pp. 10-16; Naef, Les origines, pp. 29-84.
67. Naef, Les origines, p. 25.
68. For a description of the income, expenses, and duties of the civil government in pre-Reformation Geneva, see:  
 Micheli, Léopold. "Les institutions municipales de Genève au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle." MDG, vol. 32, (1912), pp. 144-149.
69. An excellent overview of the workings of Genevan civil government in this era can be found in the following:  
 Monter, E. William. Studies in Genevan Government (1536-1605). Geneva, 1964.
70. Monter, E. William. "L'amortissement de la dette publique genevoise au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle." BHG, vol. 13, no. 3, (1966), pp. 267-282.
71. Micheli, "Les institutions," pp. 144-160; Jullien, Histoire, p. 142.
72. Monter, Studies, pp. 42-49.
73. It has been noted earlier that the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church in Geneva was disproportionately greater than that of the Seigneurie (pp. 280-283).
74. See Chapter Sixteen, pp. 431-432; Chapter Five, pp. 96-98.
75. See map, Appendix p. 528.
76. Guerdan, La vie, p. 11.
77. Bonivard, François. (pub. by Gustave Revilliod). Chroniques de Genève, vol. 1. Geneva, 1867, p. 35.
78. See Chapter Eighteen, pp. 468-482.
79. Moeller, Imperial, pp. 66-67.

80. Sayous, André-Etienne. "Calvinisme et capitalisme, l'expérience genevoise." Annales d'histoire économique et sociale, vol. 7, (1935), p. 231
81. Moeller, Imperial, p. 144.
82. See Chapter Eighteen, pp. 459-487.
83. Thus their name "Articulants."
84. See Chapter 8, pp. 150-188.

## Chapter Twelve

## Agricultural Production and Civic Food Supply Policy

Any discussion of sixteenth century economic life begins logically with agriculture. The necessity of adequately feeding the population precedes in importance any developments in or emphasis upon manufacturing or trade. Not only does a basic supply of foodstuffs ensure the nourishment and health of the city; it promotes civic harmony and public order as well.<sup>1</sup>

The tremendous problems of feeding Geneva have already been enumerated.<sup>2</sup> The area legally encompassed by the Franchises produced some wine and harbored private vegetable gardens, but grew no wheat at all. Thus, with so relatively little essential produce available around Geneva to feed its inhabitants, regulations regarding foodstuffs in any way appeared early in the city's history.

In the fourteenth century, special measures were undertaken first to protect the Genevan market, both buyer and seller. The Franchises of 1387 provided, as usual, a careful delineation of the regulations considered essential to ensure honesty and e-

quity in the marketing and purchase of food.

For example, Item 16 forbade anyone to sell wine who was not a "canon or curé of the said city or sworn citizen or bourgeois." The offender was fined five Genevan gros, and the wine was applied to some public use. In this case, it was given, in lieu of money, as payment for the men building churches or fortifications.<sup>3</sup>

Item 29 forbade foreign merchants from selling wares except on the market days and during "each fair for three days and not more." Again, a fine (sixty gros) and confiscation of merchandise were imposed.<sup>4</sup> Specifications regarding price, weight, misrepresentation, etc., existed for beasts brought for sale (Item 30); and foreign butchers were forbidden from selling their meat except on the accepted market days or "the first market day of each fair."<sup>5</sup>

Numerous statutes safeguarded the quality of meat (Item 43), fish (45 and 46), wine (33), and other commodities. Laws for proper weights and measures (42 and 70) assured the buying public of some means of consumer protection. Even the price of wheat and of wine was to be set by a committee of two canons and four citizens (Item 17). Regulations existed for foreigners avoiding the tax placed on wheat and wine or, in any way, not holding to the rather particular Genevan merchandising codes. These early Genevans did not feel that "caveat emptor" absolved a merchant from responsibility to the public, nor did they believe in laissez-faire economics.

The emphasis of trade over manufacturing is clearly indicated in the Franchises as are Geneva's protectionist tendencies. On market days, for example, neither foodstuffs nor merchandise could be sold outside the city gates, thereby avoiding coverage under city regulations. These and the previously listed articles (permitting foreigners to sell in Geneva only on specific days) obviously restricted their share of the market and ensured local merchants that once the fairs were over, their business would be secure.

These various stipulations in the Franchises ultimately provided, once again and as usual, the historical basis to which the sixteenth century Councils referred and on which they built. The economic regulations enacted by the Councils in the 1530's and 1540's exhibited remarkable similarity in content, specificity, and an essential protectionist attitude. However, as shall be evidenced by later discussion,<sup>6</sup> the Reformation did have its own effect on civil economic policy.

Beside the marketing of foodstuffs in fourteenth and fifteenth century Geneva, special preparations often had been necessary to provide for travelling mercenaries, and to feed the visitors who swelled the town's population during the trade fairs. In 1417, the first official committee was appointed to find supplies when the occasion arose. At those times, private merchants provided the city with grain, mostly from across the lake, from the then-Savoyard Vaud. Naturally, such transportation of grain

was difficult, slow, expensive, and risky. Lengthy storage and unavoidable spoilage added to the inevitable losses. These early efforts were only short-term solutions, however, that did not involve political dimensions which proved so hard to overcome in the sixteenth century.

In the late fifteenth century, the rise of Lyons' trade fairs in popularity and attendance and the related increase in population, plus the internal strengthening of the French realm, had already siphoned off the Jurassic traffic. Then, in 1528, the most serious difficulty stemming from political dissension came when the Duke of Savoy cut Geneva off from the Valais and the produce of his own territory. In the face of the ducal blockade from 1528 to 1536, grain had to be imported from new sources and transported a considerable distance, driving up its price and rendering it vulnerable to the enemies of the city. The financial and military rescue provided by Basle and Berne at that point completed a century-long process of drawing Geneva ever closer to the Swiss League at the expense of its traditional sources of commerce.

Immediately after the Bernese military rescue in 1536, the Council passed ordinances prohibiting people from leaving Geneva to forage for food.<sup>7</sup> Later prohibitions also included foraging for wood and the hoarding of food. These decrees are an excellent indication of how successful the Savoyard blockade had become and of how underfed the residents of Geneva were. Roset's Chronicles actually mention widespread famine. Boats from the Vaud had to



supply the city from the lakefront.

A new grain policy clearly became essential to prevent any repetitions of the debilitating food circumstances plaguing Geneva since 1528.<sup>8</sup> The city had to face up to the continuation of its precarious position where feeding its inhabitants was concerned. Thus, the Syndics who were voted into office in 1540, after the defeat of the Articulants, undertook a systematic approach to grain supply.

Although Geneva properly had no countryside of its own to farm, the defeat of Savoy and the proclamation of the Reformation did provide the city with authority over a number of rural mandemants and land originally belonging to the Cathedral Chapter. The Seigneurie and the hospital system either worked these inherited, grain-producing holdings themselves, sold them, and/or collected annual rents and taxes from their owners, often in the form of produce.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, many of these newly-captured lands were later to be lost. The mandemant of Thiez was seized by the King of France in Calvin's lifetime. After Câteau-Cambrésis, Geneva lost most of its rural holdings back to Savoy and could only be supplied again by boat across the lake from Lausanne. But during Calvin's tenure, virtually all of these areas were supervised by and subject to the agricultural decisions taken by the Seigneurie.

To better regulate agricultural supplies in the city, the Syndics created the office of "receiver of grains." This post

was delegated to an influential businessman, for grain was the most important item on the city's shopping list and the most difficult to provide. It was the responsibility of this individual to constantly maintain adequate stocks in the municipal granaries.

The receiver, either personally or through "négotiants," was authorized to deal in the name of the Seigneurie and to sign contracts for wheat purchases with foreign governments or private individuals. City money was paid for the grain, which was then transported to Geneva and stored either in municipal granaries or in private ones leased to the city. Grain was sold at a price only slightly above cost, except in especially bad years when the Seigneurie usually subsidized the price. The possibilities for abuse were many, and charges of bad management did occur.<sup>10</sup>

It is perhaps not at all surprising that the most important hospital procureur of this era doubled as the chief receiver of grains. The largest Genevan grain supply agent<sup>11</sup> was Jean Chautemps, early supporter of the preachers, hospital procureur from 1541-1547 and 1556-1559, and Syndic many times. The ubiquitous Baudichon de la Maison neuve (the man who solicited the Bernese letters allowing Farel open preaching privileges) was Geneva's prime negotiator in foreign territories, for he was a man "whose ability in business affairs was well-known."<sup>12</sup> Hence, the major merchants who controlled the Councils were usually the most involved in grain negotiations, from which they stood to gain a commission on the grain sold (3 sols per coppe), interest

from advancing money to the city to buy the grain initially, and another commission from the use of their personal granaries for its storage.

The price of grain, and indeed of almost every other commodity, was set by the Seigneurie at the end of June or in the beginning of July according to the relation between the previous season's supply of and price for a particular item. The price fixed for an item was the best indicator of its relative abundance or scarcity, although based upon the prior harvest. Unfortunately, the Council could not possibly foresee with great accuracy what the next harvest would bring, so their computations were often in error and had to be changed as the growing season continued or renegotiated after the harvest. Such was the case with wheat in 1543 and 1544.<sup>13</sup>

The Seigneurie likewise controlled the weights and measures used to sell grain and other commodities. To facilitate supervision, grain could only be sold at certain markets,<sup>14</sup> as again was the case with other foodstuffs.

Bakers were admitted to the bourgeoisie from 1536 to enable the Council to even control bread production more effectively.<sup>15</sup> This decision greatly aided the development of the grain policy, because then the Council could prohibit non-bourgeois bakers from working in Geneva. More importantly, all bourgeois were subject to the authority of the Councils and their stipulations,<sup>16</sup> as the Franchises had stated. Thus, the Councils were legally

able to supervise the baking profession, its actual production, and further regulate the use of Geneva's precious grain.

Laws were promulgated fixing the price of bread. Interestingly, it was deemed better to change the weight of the loaf sold at a given price, rather than to keep the weight (and thereby the amount of grain used in its production) constant and vary the price of the loaf with the market price of wheat. On the poster which the Council issued for this purpose, along the vertical scale was shown the current selling price of a cope of flour, and across the top the weight of a three, six, and nine sols loaf of bread. As the price of flour rose, the weight of these loaves correspondingly decreased. The potential variation posted in the bread prices (i.e., weight differences for the same price) was a tremendous 400%.<sup>17</sup>

Supervision of weights and measures by the government had been guaranteed in the Franchises. Item 15 required the town to provide a " 'quarteron' of copper" positioned in front of the Cathedral for measuring flour. The town officers were to examine all weights and measures used for the trade fairs to certify their accuracy. Measures were limited to ones understood and ordinarily used by the town's residents. Any person found guilty of using false measures was to be fined ten Genevan "gros" (sols).

Similarly, millers were required by Item 42 of the Franchises to procure a license from the Seigneurie before they

could pour flour into sacks. This flour could only be dispensed in the accustomed measures of the "mine" and "octayne," or coppe. Again, anyone found guilty of cheating had to pay a fine, which in this case was set at 3 sols.

As another means of protecting the public, bakers had to place a mark on each of their loaves and to register this trademark with the Seigneurie. Selling bread of improper or incorrectly specified weight garnered a fine and generally resulted in confiscation of the merchandise. <sup>18</sup> One of the "Cries" (February 22, 1539) illustrates the point:

Item, that no pastry-maker, baker or bakery ought to sell bread which has not been approved and marked, weighing his selling price according to the price wheat is sold for every Saturday, under penalty of loss of merchandise and five sols for each one made to the contrary. 19

These price and weight regulations for bakeries and the municipal control of the granaries removed most of the potential for grain speculation, an endemic problem to which even Calvin addressed himself. <sup>20</sup> The Council members undoubtedly remembered that such speculation in grain prices had caused unnecessarily high prices in the preceding century. <sup>21</sup>

Finally, during harsh times, when flour was in short supply, the production of certain expensive confectionaries ("gatel<sup>22</sup>etz" and "gorgelins") was prohibited. In this case, as with

most items in Geneva's sumptuary laws, the origin was not in John Calvin's theology but in the Cathedral Chapter regulations of the late fifteenth century.<sup>23</sup> In 1481, a serious grain shortage led the Seigneurie to introduce the measures mentioned earlier controlling the time and place of bread sales, prohibitions against speculation in grain prices, and an interdict "to the pastry-makers, when the situation became serious, from baking any white bread or from making numerous sorts of cakes and biscuits."<sup>24</sup>

The purpose behind this legislation was clear-cut. Wealthy individuals could afford to buy pastries which provided a greater profit margin than the essential bread purchased by the poor. The bakers would then have used their wheat for pastries rather than for bread. In a free market situation, the demand for such would have resulted in over-weight, well-to-do merchants and ill-supplied, starving day-workers. In the interests of the "economic health of the State and the moral health of society,"<sup>25</sup> this sort of potential situation had to be outlawed. The Councils reserved the right to control the social and economic climate of the city and develop it according to the common weal. Thus, social cohesion and civic unity were strengthened; the city, that cellular unit whose healthy functioning was essential for the survival of all its inhabitants, was preserved. Whatever moral and theological considerations entered into the

decision taken first by the Cathedral Chapter and later by Calvin, it was equally clear that the councillors, for their part, felt personally responsible for preserving civic concord and making the continued unity of the city paramount.<sup>26</sup>

Fortunately, most of these important regulations concerning grain had been enacted by the early 1540's, which were particularly difficult years for Geneva's grain supply. Plague ravaged the countryside and city from 1542 until 1545, as did a bad drought. In fact, the plague might actually have come as a result of the drought.<sup>27</sup> Grain prices rose extraordinarily from 1543 until 1545; the official price of wheat had to be revalued seven times in 1544 alone.<sup>28</sup> The phenomenal increases these prices made over a period of weeks must have posed grave survival concerns for the less affluent Genevans. A coppe of flour (79.365 litres) sold for 30 sols in January, 1544; 96 sols in April; 75 sols in September; and 102 sols in December, 1544.<sup>29</sup> Four weeks later, the price dropped to only 36 sols. To make matters worse, the Bernese had interrupted grain deliveries in August, 1543, and did so again in the following, highly unstable year. (This was a clear violation of the "Départ de Bâle," the settlement mediated by Basle between the two quarrelsome allies.) Hence, Genevan negotiants, especially Baudichon de la Maison neuve, had to travel as far as Rheims and Alsace to supply the city with basic amounts during this desperate period.

Climatologists claim that the century 1450-1550 was a



dry one for Europe by any account. Coupled with the drought was a warming trend over the first two-thirds of the sixteenth century. The hottest era was from 1510 to 1560, peaking in the early 1540's. So, Geneva's grave food problems<sup>30</sup> were part of a general situation over all of Europe.<sup>31</sup>

Not until 1547 did grain return to its "normal" price; but, a decade later, the same cycle produced yet another critical phase. In 1557 and 1559, local harvests were once more bad, and the Duke was once more prohibiting grain from reaching Geneva. In response, Geneva had to purchase grain from Alsace and southern Germany (much of it through the Basle market) to alleviate the crisis. Very poor harvests in 1561 and in 1562 forced the same course of action yet again.

During these periods of low supply and correspondingly high prices, some people could simply not afford to buy bread, so they were put on the food allotment at the Hôpital-Général.<sup>32</sup> Those slightly better off borrowed the money necessary to buy a coppe of wheat. Often, this loan came from the hospital system as well. Private money was sometimes loaned for the purchase of food, with the anti-usury laws protecting the borrower:

Here it is proposed that there are many poor people who have borrowed money on interest and some for 10 florins rent a coppe of grain per year, some others less, some others more, which appears a great rate inasmuch that sometimes flour is dear and these poor debtors are highly charged. Upon this, it is

resolved that from now such rate be reduced to five per cent, and from such a rate ought not to exist for any reason a rate not at five florins per hundred. 33

Thus, a state policy to avoid starvation had been formulated by Geneva's Councils through foresight and careful planning. The municipal granaries were kept well-stocked at all times so that the city had an immediate reserve in the event of supply problems. A thoughtful policy of grain conservation was promulgated through the use of price controls and rationing, although these were often implemented in a rather indirect manner. As explained, the Seigneurie would oversee the amount of wheat that a baker was receiving; and, in times of scarcity, the Syndics would even decide how the wheat should most wisely and productively be employed.

Also, Geneva cultivated good mercantile relations with its Protestant allies to assure a steady source of wheat and safe passage for it, for religious affinities encouraged political and economic cooperation. Theological ties with Strasbourg gave access to the Alsatian grain market during the drought of 1543 through 1547.

Even with Roman Catholic territories, diplomacy joined forces with business interests. In France and Savoy, the Genevans used their *combourgeoisie* with the Swiss League to advantage and requested equal trading rights. This is exemplified in the 1547 treaty with Dauphiné and Savoy which allowed Geneva's travelling

merchants free trade access to these lands.<sup>34</sup>

This concerted policy to stock the city with grain was not exclusive to Geneva. Other European cities, especially the Italian ones, had to develop a strategy to maintain dependable supplies. As with the external sources for the Genevan hospital system, excellent models existed elsewhere on the Continent for the city to consider and upon which to build its own grain-supply policy and procedures. Nevertheless, in each situation the final product reflected the local heritage and current circumstances peculiar to Geneva.

After the wars for independence, the Syndics assumed the responsibility for governing and caring for the newly-acquired territories outside of Geneva. The edicts discussed earlier regarding marketing procedures were enforced in the rural mandemants and "châtellenies," so that a unified policy for city and countryside was maintained. Also, the outlying districts were now assured of being supplied with foodstuffs like Geneva's own inhabitants.<sup>35</sup>

This attitude and aid for Geneva's external territories marked a radical change. Before the Reformation, grain purchased for Geneva's residents was not permitted to be sold or fed to the rural districts near the city, especially during years of drought. From 1539, however, such sales were allowed, although strictly limited and supervised, and with a duty imposed on each coppe. The hospital system even began to accept people from the rural dependencies. A list was prepared of the needy, who were then en-

titled to the same loans and food that the city impoverished were.<sup>36</sup>

During most years, the countryside grew at least enough grain to feed itself. However, during one particularly bad year, 1557, the Seigneurie had to sell grain in the rural districts at a subsidized price to stave off impending starvation. Michel Roset recalls in his Chronicles:

Being in this time that flour was quite dear, the Syndics of Geneva opened their granaries both for those of the city and the neighboring [districts] and sold for five florins the coppe that which one sold in the market for seven florins and seven florins six sols and because of the good price sold it quickly, they then raised the price to six florins the coppe. Thus the countryside received some relief, which again provided them the occasion to speak well of us. 37

Some of the laws passed by the Seigneurie and Councils, on the other hand, were designated just for the rural mandemants and châtellenies. It now appears inequitable that, through its dimes and rents, the countryside contributed a greater proportion of Geneva's budget than did the city itself and, at the same time, received far fewer services. It is ironical that this city, whose Franchises limited it to no real countryside at all, derived such a great percentage of its post-1536 income from rural rents.<sup>38</sup>

A glance at a sample Genevan budget<sup>39</sup> indicates exactly how dependent Geneva was on rural dîme revenues, commodity taxes (gabelles), and rents from expropriated properties, most of which

were "farmed" to private citizens for collection.<sup>40</sup>

The greatest source of rural income, and the most reliable, came from the  $\hat{d}\hat{i}m\hat{e}$ , the rent paid by a farmer for the use of a piece of land. The process of determining the  $\hat{d}\hat{i}m\hat{e}$  was fixed in 1540, following the return of the preachers' supporters to power, and remained unchanged for more than two centuries. The amount of the  $\hat{d}\hat{i}m\hat{e}$  was set annually by the Seigneurie, originally with the aid of certain ecclesiastical officials. The amount collected varied greatly with the selling price at the preceding year's harvest of the commodity grown on the land and its yield from that particular parcel of land during that particular season. In other words, the amount of tax generated by the  $\hat{d}\hat{i}m\hat{e}$ s depended directly upon the supplies of local produce and the previous year's price locally for each individual commodity. For example, when the selling price (as fixed by the government) on wheat rose from one year to the next, the  $\hat{d}\hat{i}m\hat{e}$  had a tendency to likewise increase. However, even when the grain price from the prior year was high, a small harvest would fail to generate much  $\hat{d}\hat{i}m\hat{e}$  revenue. The potentially wild fluctuations in total  $\hat{d}\hat{i}m\hat{e}$  revenue from one year to the next<sup>41</sup> were amplified by the inaccurate method of setting the selling price of commodities for the  $\hat{d}\hat{i}m\hat{e}$  and predicting that year's local supply.

The mechanism for collecting these annual land rents was similar to the system used to supply the city's grain. Both

demonstrate the unique situation of private entrepreneurs working under strict government supervision that marked sixteenth century Genevan economic life. Once a starting commodity price had been agreed to by the Petit Conseil, the <sup>42</sup>dîmes on each property were auctioned off to private individuals who would then collect them.

These "admodiataires," as they were known, were placed in a position of considerable trust. They were always Genevans, at least bourgeois and preferably citizens, who could furnish "a good and solvent bond"<sup>43</sup> to the city. When an agent won a bid to collect the <sup>43</sup>dîme from a given field, he assumed the responsibility of procuring the <sup>43</sup>dîme and transporting it to the Council, or, in later years, to the "Chambre des Comptes" (the city's accounting office). His profit was the difference between his bid and the value of the produce from the <sup>43</sup>dîme, less his expenses.

Many of the other tax collections were sub-contracted in a similar manner. They included the annual tax on wine, which traditionally had been set (according to the Franchises) by a committee consisting of "two canon and four citizens" (the latter being Syndics) and approved through the Conseil Général during the autumn meeting (St. Martin's Day)<sup>44</sup>.

With all of its latitude for price-fixing in the auction of admodiations, few accusations of improper conduct seem to have occurred. This is probably due in large part to the vigilance of the Petit Conseil and the Seigneurie in assuring the



solvency and reputation of the tax collector. Also, the Petit Conseil's members undoubtedly knew the citizens involved, since bourgeoisie or citizenship was so important in order to gain the right to bid for admodiations. The one complaint that was often raised was that the tax farmers were habitually late in paying the admodiations to the city, and many had reached a stage where they remained perpetually years behind. In 1545, the treasurer for the Petit Conseil, Amblard Corne, blasted the financial management of the city. The admodiation system did not escape his wrath. He claimed that a general laxity pervaded the entire city's fiscal organization, especially in the management of tax collections. First, he said, the record-keeping of the admodiaires was confused. Worse, the collection of rents on municipal property and the sale of collected produce were behind. In fact, since the produce was not being sold quickly enough, it was losing its value for the city by simply rotting in storage. Tin

Amblard Corne's charges went largely unanswered, for they were a challenge to other magistrates' abilities. Yet his complaint that collections from admodiations were always late and disorganized received some recognition years afterward. 45

In 1557, uncollected admodiations reached such a scandalous proportion that the Petit Conseil finally took action. It demanded that all admodiations be paid within three years of "collection." Those more than three years outstanding were to be charged  $6\frac{2}{3}\%$  interest annually and pressed continuously for



collection. <sup>46</sup> It was an imperfect system at best, which was de-  
bated and amended late in Calvin's lifetime. <sup>47</sup>

The <sup>^</sup>dîme was generally paid to the admodiataire in pro-  
duce, and the admodiation to the city either in produce or cash.  
The month that the payment was made varied with the harvest time  
of the particular item planted on the particular parcel of land.  
Just like the process for determining the <sup>^</sup>dîme, the percentage  
taken for the <sup>^</sup>dîme remained constant for two centuries. The Coun-  
cil differentiated between those allied or friendly areas and  
those who were not so closely tied to Geneva. The former paid  
 $6\frac{2}{3}\%$  and the latter  $9\frac{1}{11}\%$ . These rates were notably higher than  
the interest originally paid by those buying agricultural commod-  
ities essential for their survival and sometimes even higher than  
those borrowing for investment purposes. Of course, the total  
amount paid corresponded most directly to the market price of the  
produce as set by the Petit Conseil and to the yield from a piece  
of property.

In especially bad years, the farmers often paid in some  
commodity other than food, frequently straw. A farmer might re-  
quest the Seigneurie to waive his <sup>^</sup>dîme or to allow its payment a  
year late. This occurred only in times of extremely poor harvests  
when the entire community was feeling the effects of a drought,  
the plague, or possibly hail or high winds.

Generally, renegotiations of <sup>^</sup>dîmes were more symbolic  
than real, for the amount the original <sup>^</sup>dîme was decreased was

fairly often insignificant. Seigneurial land lying under the control of foreign powers (notably Savoy) frequently raised quite a different problem. There, disputed <sup>^</sup>dîmes were commonly soft-peddled, because enforcement could bring more diplomatic headaches than the amount of difference on the <sup>^</sup>dîme was worth.

The farmer's financial situation by harvest time was often rather bleak. A small farmer never did succeed in doing much more than merely surviving from year to year. There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that his predicament actually worsened during the sixteenth century. More short-term borrowing, often through the Hôpital-Général, was necessary to see him through the final months before harvest simply to buy the essentials. Most of these cash loans were for under one hundred florins, for a length of only a few weeks or months, and were repayable in produce.

In this era, prices swung unpredictably from planting time until harvest. It was Calvin's recommendation in 1544 that loans of produce be reduced numerically to their cash value and be repaid at five percent interest. By the middle of the century, an analagous regulation stipulated that cash advances designed to be paid in produce should be calculated on the official base price of the commodity current at the end of the autumn. <sup>48</sup> This law was especially helpful to the farmer if the harvest were scarce, and

it at least assured him of paying the smallest portion of his harvest possible. Borrowing money and repaying the debt in crops benefitted the farmer least, but he generally sold his produce through intermediaries and often did not understand cash transactions.<sup>49</sup>

As the sixteenth century progressed, less money circulated in the countryside, and the farmer's reserves decreased. In hard years, he had to sell some of his crop before it was actually harvested (like the contemporary "futures" market),<sup>50</sup> taking less profit than if he had sold it after the harvest.<sup>51</sup> Occasionally, loans were repaid with labor.

It was the countryside that suffered the most during wars and period of poor production. The peasants and the farmers had to endure armies trampling their crops, pillaging their food, and causing damage to person and personal property. Geneva was not above such behavior itself. During the 1589-1593 campaign against Savoy, Geneva financed a large portion of its military expenses by systematically holding Savoyard farming villages for ransom.<sup>52</sup> Then, admittedly, it has been a much-noted feature of sixteenth century Genevan finance that the city made its enemies (domestic and external) pay the bills for military actions against it.

In spite of its inabilities to produce adequate grain, metropolitan Geneva did produce an adequate wine supply. Viticulture had two advantages over wheat. First, vines were com-

mercially feasible in extremely confined spaces, such as city backyards. In fact, a large amount of table wine was grown within the confines of Geneva's city walls.<sup>53</sup> Also, farmers would often grow vegetables between the vines in their fields. This procedure not only increased production, but also proved an effective way to cheat on the <sup>54</sup>dime, which was paid only on the vegetables. Even tax-dodging has a long and interesting history.

The second major reason for sufficient wine supply was that the grape production did not vary so dramatically with the weather conditions. A sunny, dry spell (if not too severe) still meant reasonably plump grapes. The swing in wine prices was not nearly so extreme as the 400% difference seen at times in flour prices. Interestingly enough, the debilitating effects of plague on the labor force (such as in the 1542-1547 era) did noticeably raise the price of wine.

Wine prices, as well as the measures used, were regulated even more strictly than wheat tariffs. The Franchises had provided for a committee of "two canon and four citizens"<sup>55</sup> to determine its selling price. In time, the Petit Conseil absorbed that function, and the Conseil Général voted annually to approve the price of wine during its November gathering. Thus, the community had more direct control over its cost to the consumer than over that of wheat.

The price of wine was once left free to market forces for a while, but regulations were affixed seven months later as-

sureing that watered down or misrepresented wine did not appear for sale.

To supplement the local production of basic table wines, a sophisticated trade in exotic wines developed throughout the Middle Ages. Mediterranean wines (mainly of Greek origin), sweeter and more costly than the local variety, made their appearance in Geneva and were dispensed by the apothecaries. Because of its trade fairs, Geneva had once had a commerce in many other types of European wine, but the regional ones sufficed for the needs of the indigenous population. Even in dry years, Geneva did not have to look far to meet the demand.

Wine was distributed to each Genevan tavern so that every one would have some to sell to customers. Cooperation, not competition, was the watchword.

It is here said and decided that one ought to put a reasonable price on wine, and only one price, and any higher not be permitted; and that each and every one of the taverns be able to have some wine for his money. 56

The hotel-keepers were ordered to sell bread and wine at the specified price and under specific regulations, assuring their customers that their food and drink were of good quality. Like all other merchants, inn-keepers were required by law to protect the public from being bilked. In the legal article entitled "Police des hôtelleries," all food and drink sold in inns were sub-

ject to Council consumer stipulations.

Item, no one sell bread nor wine  
if not at the price ordered by law:  
good [quality] , of reasonable  
weight and correct measure, meas-  
uring each, with no deception. 57

Meat was regulated as strictly as wine and bread, although, in general, it was not quite the staple bread and wine were for medieval man. Nevertheless, Geneva might have been a bit of an exception, for regional fairs brought great numbers of cattle to the city after 1520. By 1530, animal husbandry represented the largest source of trade revenue for Geneva, and its volume only increased once the Reformation began.

The Franchises forbade misrepresentation of the beast being sold and assigned their sale to specific market areas. These concerns were reiterated both before and after the Reformation. Confiscated meat was taken to the hospital, while a fine was levied against the offending butcher. Import duties on foreign animals had to be paid, or else the beast was subject to confiscation. Finally, no butcher could refuse a person trying to purchase meat if the customer were willing to pay the price.

Item, that no butcher should refuse  
any person no matter who he be, be  
he rich or poor, to buy whatever meat  
they have, be it in small or large  
quantity, for his money. 58

Salt (another essential of life, especially because of its applicability in curing and preserving foods) was taxed by the town both before and after the Reformation, although originally for the support of the plague hospital. The collection of this gabelle was made through an admodiataire. Any salt found sold without the city tax imposed was confiscated and fined, with one half going to the admodiataire and the other "applicable to the hospital of the poor of this city."<sup>59</sup>

On a less regular basis, the Councils did turn their attentions to other commodities. Those selling heating wood or charcoal were to observe rules guarding its quality, place of sale, and price. Violators suffered the usual fine and confiscation, with the hospital receiving the benefits again. Although no specific authority had been given by the Franchises to regulate the sale of wood and charcoal, the Councils continued to safeguard the interests of the common man with the same methods employed in other marketing situations.

It is clear, then, that many foods and products affecting the daily life of the average Genevan received at least some attention from the Councils. This was especially true during the 1550's when refugees crowded the city and increased demands for foodstuffs and other necessary items. Cloth was regulated by price and quality, as were candles.<sup>60</sup> Spices were similarly subject to marketing standards; for example, Brazilian pepper was prohibited, presumably to favor traditional supply routes a-



round the Mediterranean. Soft steel was outlawed. This sort of extensive and specific price regulation even applied to notarial fees, which were defined and charged according to an elaborate schedule.

Another series of statutes were directed toward the general merchant's business ethics, not just the prices he charged and the measures he used. First, all merchants (foreign and native) were required to purchase rights of bourgeoisie, which then gave the Councils the authority to regulate their economic activities. The purchase and renewal fee was five florins, collected on an annual basis. The Franchises had stipulated that foreigners opening shops in Geneva needed to purchase burgher's rights, and the Councils reiterated this concern in 1532 and in 1550.

Laws prohibiting economic exploitation were not limited to any one decade or even century, although they became more prevalent following the Reformation, when the Councils assumed the economic authority of the Bishop and the Cathedral Chapter. In fact, they became nearly all-encompassing after 1550, when merchants were specifically reminded that "the poor be respected and well treated according to their poverty."<sup>61</sup> Butchers, bakers, and other food merchants were particularly warned against dishonesty in their dealings, for their products and procedures most directly affected the common man.

It might well be that during the hardest times the

Councils paid attention to abuses, or at least to the potential for such. Certainly, the Councils assumed an impressive degree of responsibility for bettering the lot of Geneva's residents. It is unquestionably true that "the poor man is the one who suffers, in his daily life, from the instability of food, of primary necessities."<sup>62</sup>

The variation in the supply of foodstuffs (especially wheat) and other essentials, relative to the needs of the population, leads directly to the matter of land use. The most methodical enquiry dates, unfortunately, from 1602, and even then it only includes lands subject to a <sup>^</sup>dîme. Nevertheless, it is probably fairly representative of that period, if not the prior century to some degree as well. By far, the greatest percentage (57%) of the land was under the plow, mainly for cereal production (rye, oats, and wheat), which is not surprising in view of the needs of Geneva.

Next in line of use were the meadows, either lying fallow for a time (19%) or as grazing area for cattle. Equal amounts of land were either planted as vines or left as woodlands (11%). Finally, a scant 2% was devoted to "hutins," which were vines strung between wood supports with vegetables planted between the supports.<sup>63</sup> Whether wine was grown at the expense of cereal grains is difficult to ascertain. However, judging by production proportionate to the needs of the population, wine does appear to have been the favored produce.<sup>64</sup>

Land use did change slowly over the years. Meadows and woodlands were gradually cleared and transformed into productive areas of cultivation, which then showed up on the <sup>dîme</sup> records.<sup>65</sup> Over the decades, the intensity of agricultural production increased with the population of the region.<sup>66</sup>

Much of the ground was owned by large landlords and farmed by rural peasants, who often lived in tiny villages and actually commuted to their fields, sometimes up to a few kilometers daily. Many of the landowners were nobles whose holdings predated the Genevan revolution and who had not worked too overtly against it. Unfortunately, the military actions of that period did substantially depopulate the countryside. By 1537, the rural territories were trampled over; and many farmers left during the enforcement of the Reformation decrees. Later, during the Refuge, city officials supplanted this loss by placing in the countryside the least desirable French immigrants, the poorest and "least respectable."<sup>67</sup>

Following the Reformation, the Seigneurie, the inheritor of ecclesiastical lands, became the region's greatest landholder. It tried to systematically farm as much of the acreage under its control as it could to help the food supply situation and to increase tax revenue.<sup>68</sup>

Long before the Reformation, wealthy Genevans had sought the social and financial security of rural estates.<sup>69</sup> After 1536, this trend continued. Because of the glut of prop-

erty on the market and the general poverty of the times, these mandemants were for sale at relatively low prices.<sup>70</sup> An added inducement to purchase was, of course, the production of profitable grain to help feed the city. The magistrates who had confiscated ecclesiastical farms ruled that available properties could be purchased by Genevan citizens and bourgeois, thus enabling town burghers to buy country lands and forcing many of the rural nobility into financial difficulty. Small, independent farmers were given the opportunity to buy former Roman Church acreage which they had worked for a specified proportion of the land's "taille" (the property tax assessment).<sup>71</sup>

It was, of course, the magistrates themselves who were most able to afford the farms, and they generally purchased them for far less than their real value. Rather than collusion, the more realistic explanation would be the property market glut, caused by so much land immediately available just after independence, and at a time when few people had the money to pay very much for it. Parallel developments occurred in France and Italy during this same era.<sup>72</sup> In Switzerland, the mountain cantons were eclipsed economically and politically (although not militarily) by the urban centers and their rural holdings.<sup>73</sup>

The Genevan bourgeois who bought rural lands were ordinarily of merchant background and brought their business acumen to farming. This factor generally made them more successful than the peasants, nobles, or ecclesiastics who had previously

managed their cultivation. Such private ownership increased the intensity of agriculture and improved land use, as well as managed the estates more efficiently.<sup>74</sup> By virtue of their familiarity with fluctuation of prices in town, the new merchant-landlords bought supplies and sold produce at more opportune times than the land-locked, disinterested, and inexperienced nobility. Clearly, the bourgeois farmers ran their lands in the same productive, profitable manner in which they would have or did run a shop or business in the city.

Very little is known about the actual character and quality of life in the countryside in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, not only in Geneva but throughout most of Europe. The few Genevan records that do exist describe the country primarily as it related to the city;<sup>75</sup> in other words, rural life is glimpsed only through city eyes. No chronicler of rural life appeared to provide a personal account. In large part this is due to the absence of any middle class in the countryside, just illiterate peasants and courtly landowners with but few merchants or people educated in any way.

Much of the commerce between town and country was carried out by itinerant merchants. Farmers often did come to Geneva on market days, but the journey was cumbersome and doubtless a bit time-wasting. To meet the farmer's daily needs, a number of peddlers supplied the countryside with household articles, often bartering for produce which they in turn sold in Geneva.

The numbers of these peddlers varied with the season and the harvest. During winter, years of bad harvest, and military crisis, they swelled the ranks of the unemployed and caused some concern among the town councillors. To hawk their goods, the magistrates assigned them a particular place in Geneva away from the main shopping precincts. The peddlers were so stationed in order to provide little competition for the established shopowners.

Above the peddler commercially and socially were the rural merchants. At the upper end of this group, members purchased rights of bourgeoisie and acted as *négotiants* between farmer and shopkeeper. The smaller ones were scarcely above the peddler, although some did own shops in town. These rural merchants filled contracts to supply urban merchants with wood and produce from the hinterlands. Some were also responsible for exporting Genevan farm produce to other local cities and beyond (even into France, Germany, and Savoy). They were more systematic than the peddlers, operated on a larger scale, and maintained long-standing relations between their suppliers and customers. <sup>76</sup>

The farmer and the poor of the city and countryside suffered more from injustices than did Genevan bourgeois. Yet, the Seigneurie did eventually conduct a rather enlightened administration over the new rural possessions.

Rural justice was administered through the district "châtelain" appointed by the city. Although chatelains generally

resided in the country, the Seigneurie forbade their owning any property there in order to diminish the chances for judicial corruption.<sup>77</sup>

Justice was dispensed with greater fairness and speed than during Savoyard days and more impartially than for contemporary, neighboring Savoyard peasants.<sup>78</sup> As importantly, some accountability of judges existed when they were shown breaking their vow to uphold justice impartially. Bribery was outlawed, and this law was strictly enforced.

Church ordinances were standardized for both the city and countryside. A list of civil codes and sumptuary regulations similar to those used in Geneva were likewise passed for the rural territories.<sup>79</sup> Thus, the same anti-usury laws were enforced for the rural subjects of the Seigneurie. Consistorial and civil records indicate that even prominent town-dwellers were punished for cheating peasants on loans, a major reform for the sixteenth century.<sup>80</sup>

The Seigneurie, in theory, had the right to levy a taille, or special land tax, whenever it chose.<sup>81</sup> This actually occurred quite rarely.<sup>82</sup> In general, taxes on the peasants were relatively light and few.<sup>83</sup> Geneva's over-all administration of its 2,000 rural subjects was benign, indeed even progressive, especially for that era. The Genevan government actually had little use for the trappings of wealth and power, a burdensome expense which did fall upon the peasants of Savoy and France.<sup>84</sup>



## Chapter Twelve Footnotes

1. References to Lyons' food riots ("Rabeine") have already been made. See Chapter 7, pp. 134-136.
2. See Chapter Eleven, pp. 267-269.
3. Mallet, Edouard. "Libertés, Franchises, Immunités, Us et Coutômes de la Cité de Genève." MDG, vol. 2, (1844), pp. 324-325.
4. Ibid., pp. 330-331.
5. Ibid., pp. 332-333.
6. See Chapter Sixteen, pp. 426-444.
7. Nevertheless, the indomitable Baudichon de la Maison neuve tried and was arrested for foraging. See: Chapter 4, p. 85; RC, February 25-26, 1536.
8. For confirmation of this crisis as seen through the Councils' eyes, see: RC, February 1, 2, and 6, 1536.
9. Bergier, Jean-François. "Commerce et politique du blé à Genève aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles." RSH, vol. 14, (1964), p. 531.
10. See pages 326-327.
11. Bergier, "Commerce," pp. 542-545.
12. Ibid., p. 543.
13. S.D., vol. 2, p. 467, fol. 818, (March 25, 1544).
14. They can be gleaned from various passages in the following:  
 Roset, Michel (pub. by Henri Fazy). Les Chroniques de Genève. Geneva, 1894.  
 As part of the physical description of the city, they are mentioned in:  
 Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967, p.1.
15. S.D., vol. 2, p. 311, fol. 698, (April 5, 1536).
16. S.D., vol. 2, p. 313, fol. 703, (May 21, 1536).
17. S.D., vol. 2, pp. 468-469, fol. 820, (?, ?, 1545).
18. S.D., vol. 2, p. 525, fol. 858, (February 21, 1549).
19. S.D., vol. 2, p. 349, fol. 756, (February 22, 1539).

20. Biéler, André. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959, pp. 338-343.
21. Bergier, "Commerce," p. 529.
22. S.D., vol. 3, p. 18, fol. 912, (February 20, 1554).
23. Naef, Henri. Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936, pp. 220-222. See also Chapter Eighteen, pp. 459-487.
24. Bergier, "Commerce," p. 535.
25. Ibid., p. 527.
26. Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972, pp. 61-62.
27. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 72.
28. Bergier, Jean-François. Genève et l'économie européenne de la Renaissance. Paris, 1963, p. 112.
29. Ibid., p. 441. See: Appendix, pp. 546, 550.
30. Brooks, C.E.P. Climate Through the Ages. London, 1950, pp. 301-311.
31. Dry weather was not conducive to the prolific production of grain.
32. See Chapter 9, pp. 199, 200, 206, 210-214.
33. S.D., vol. 2, pp. 343-344, fol. 743, (January 17, 1538).
34. S.D., vol. 2, p. 513, fol. 847, (October 31, 1547).
35. See Chapter Eleven, pp. 267-269.
36. Monter, E. William. Studies in Genevan Government (1536-1605). Geneva, 1964, p. 83.
37. Roset, Chroniques, book 6, chapter 21, p. 399.
38. Monter, Studies, p. 19.
39. See Appendix, pp. 557-560.
40. Monter, Studies, pp. 17-18.
41. Appendix p. 555.
42. Head-König, Anne-Lise, and Béatrice Veyrassat-Herren. "Les revenus décimaux à Genève de 1540 à 1783." Les fluctuations du produit de la dîme. Paris, 1972, p. 169.

43. Ibid., p. 171.
44. Mallet, "Libertés," pp. 326-327.
45. Bergier, Jean-François. "La démission du Trésorier Amblard Corne." MDG, vol. 60, (1961), pp. 456-457.
46. S.D., vol. 3, p. 53, fol. 957, (December 13, 1557).
47. Monter, Studies, p. 21.
48. Bergier, Jean-François. "Taux de l'intérêt et crédit à court terme à Genève dans la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle." Studi ...Amintore Fanfani, vol. 4. Milan, 1962, pp. 99, 118.
- Martin, Paul-Etienne. "Calvin et le prêt à l'intérêt à Genève." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1.. Geneva, 1963, pp. 259-260.
- The law for repaying cash with commodities was frequently reissued, leading one to believe it was often ignored.
49. Bergier, Genève et l'économie, pp. 84-85.
50. Some of the small loans were issued through the Hôpital-Général. See Chapter 9, p. 212.
51. Bergier, "Taux," pp. 99-100.
52. Monter, Studies, p. 16.
53. Bergier, Genève et l'économie, p. 212.
54. Head-König, "Les revenus," p. 190.
55. Mallet, "Libertés," pp. 326-327.
56. S.D., vol. 2, p. 333, fol. 717, (November 21, 1536).
57. S.D., vol. 2, p. 309, fol. 694, (February 29, 1536).
58. S.D., vol. 2, p. 350, fol. 758, (April 28, 1539). See also:  
Mallet, "Libertés," pp. 332-333, 338-339.
59. S.D., vol. 3, p. 21, fol. 915, (June 28, 1554).
60. S.D., vol. 2, pp. 375-376, fol. 793, (August 22, 1541).  
S.D., vol. 3, p. 8, fol. 894, (July 4, 1551).  
S.D., vol. 3, p. 11, fol. 902, (May 26, 1553).  
S.D., vol. 3, p. 16, fol. 907, (May 26, 1553).  
S.D., vol. 3, p. 17, fol. 909, (October 13, 1553).  
S.D., vol. 3, p. 132, fol. 1021, (October 7, 1562).

61. S.D., vol. 3, p. 7, fol. 892, (? , 1551).
62. Piuz, Anne-Marie. "Pauvres et pauvreté dans les sociétés pré-industrielles." RSH, vol. 23, (1973), p. 546.
63. These generally produced a red wine. Head-König, "Les revenus," p. 168.
64. Ibid., p. 170; Bergier, Genève et l'économie, p. 114.
65. On the other hand, tilled land did not revert to meadowland.
66. Head-König, "Les revenus," p. 174.
67. Galiffe, J.-B.-G. Genève historique et archéologique, vol. 1. Geneva, 1869, p. 40.
68. Monter, Studies, p. 77.
69. See Chapter Eleven, pp. 278-280.
70. Bergier, "Taux," pp. 111-112; Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 156-159.
71. S.D., vol. 3, p. 3, fol. 884, (May 20, 1551).
72. Braudel, Fernand. The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. 1. London, 1972, pp. 525-528.
73. Bergier, Jean-Francois. Naissance et croissance de la Suisse industrielle. Berne, 1974, pp. 37-38.
74. Bergier, Genève et l'économie, pp. 98-100. See also: Chapter Sixteen, pp. 426-444.
75. Monter, Studies, pp. 76-83; Head-König, "Les revenus," p. 167.
76. Bergier, Genève et l'économie, pp. 85-89.
77. Bergier, "Taux," pp. 107-108.
78. Monter, Studies, p. 77.
79. S.D., vol. 2, pp. 500-505, fol. 841, (May 16, 1547).
80. Bergier, "Taux," pp. 107-112, 117.
81. S.D., vol. 3, p. 3, fol. 884, (May 20, 1551).
82. One of these instances occurred in 1567, when the Duke of Alva and his Spanish army passed dangerously close to Geneva on their way to crush the first Netherlands' revolt. The "taille" was used to reinforce the Genevan garrison with mercenaries and war material. Ironically, Alva did not realize how close he was to "heretical" Geneva until they were well past the city.

83. Bergier, "Taux," pp. 107-113.

84. One major difference between Genevan and French care of the poor was the attitude that ruling officials took toward them. Calvin, and the city Councils even before his arrival, insisted that the poor be treated with dignity. They ordered that people be in no way prejudiced against them. King Francis I, on the other hand, chained French poor together and forced them to labor on public works under penalty of jail or whip. In Paris, the poor were forced to wear a distinguishing mark on their clothing to easily identify them. Whereas Geneva tried to integrate them into society, the French, in common with many other European societies, treated the poor as outcasts.

Bieler, La pensée, pp. 157-158.

## Chapter Thirteen

### The Religious Refugees

The social and economic history of Geneva from 1535 until 1565 became, in very large part, a series of civic responses and adjustments to the approximately 7,000 religious refugees who made Geneva their new home for varying lengths of time. Before reviewing the birth and development of the manufacturing industries in the next chapter, it is essential to consider here the people who brought them to Geneva.

One way to understand the immigrant influence in Geneva is to analyze its members and composition, although any such attempt suffers from incomplete information. Nevertheless, at least for the period of 1549 to 1560, a reasonable survey is possible now that the refugees' entry register, the Livre des Habitants,<sup>1</sup> has been published.

During the 1520's and 1530's, the French persecutions had been confined to the intellectual communities in Paris and Meaux and to certain strongly Roman Catholic regions, such as Lorraine. Most of the early religious refugees fled to Stras-

bourg, a city more conveniently situated than Geneva. Calvin was among this early group, personally shepherding the French congregation in Strasbourg.

The later persecutions indicated greater geographical "equality," as the Protestant message spread faster in the Midi and in the south of France than it did in the far north and east of the country. People from the southern areas naturally congregated at Geneva instead of Strasbourg. As widespread persecutions in France intensified, Geneva in fact became the only safe exit. France was ringed by Inquisitions in the Spanish Netherlands, Lorraine, Savoy, and other Roman Catholic states.<sup>2</sup>

Substantial numbers of Italians supplemented the French religious refugees in Geneva.<sup>3</sup> In general, Italian Protestants were spread widely and thinly around their country. However, their greatest concentration and following were among the Waldensian communities in the Piedmont, the humanist circle in Naples, and certain republican cities<sup>4</sup> of the north and Tuscany, especially Cremona and the free city of Lucca. The latter had heard the preaching of the early Italian reformer Vermigli, and most of its leading citizens had converted.

The period of Italian persecutions roughly paralleled the French ones. Harsh repressions began in 1546, and by 1560 all elements of "heresy" had been obliterated by the Inquisition's



systematic methods of eliminating Protestantism. Whereas France harbored a sufficiently large Protestant minority to make their total eradication impossible, their Italian counterparts were small in number and geographically dispersed, allowing them to be easily killed, reconverted, or forced into exile.

An interesting addition to the French and Italian immigrants was a relatively large group<sup>5</sup> from Great Britain. They were the English-speaking Marian exiles whose pastor was Scotland's John Knox.

The choice of Geneva as a new home was influenced by two factors. The first was, of course, the presence of John Calvin, who had earned an international reputation by 1550, especially because of the Institutes. In addition to his many publications, he carried on voluminous correspondence with churches and influential people in both France and Italy, writing an average of twenty letters each day. The second reason was Geneva's geographical location, which made it the natural destination for people escaping from Italy and from the central and southern sections of France.

Upon arrival, the city gave an immigrant the status of "habitant," which meant that he lived in the city but did not have the economic or voting rights of the bourgeois. However, an habitant could ultimately purchase rights of bourgeoisie, and many did. The bourgeoisie was open to anyone who pledged to obey the Councils and the Franchises and who paid the required

<sup>6</sup> fee. In most cities, admission to the bourgeoisie carried only economic advantages; Geneva also accorded its bourgeois political rights.<sup>7</sup> The son of a bourgeois who made Geneva his permanent home then acquired the status of a citizen ("citoyen"), which was handed down from one generation to the next. The fourth form of civic membership in Geneva was that of the "natif." He was born in the city but never gained the economic mobility or the inclination to join the bourgeoisie. A natif or an habitant did not suffer under the law from judicial prejudice, but neither had certain economic rights, such as the opening of a shop, for example. Neither could vote as part of the citizens' assembly (the Conseil Général), which had nearly 2,000 members. Assuming that half of the city was female (hence having no voting rights) and that a hefty proportion of the males were too young to hold any civic status, a very large percentage of eligible Genevans were bourgeois or citizens.<sup>8</sup>

To try and somehow organize the new arrivals (especially after 1546 when great numbers did start pouring in), the Councils finally established a register for all newcomers in March, 1549. In the Livre des Habitants,<sup>9</sup> each immigrant was asked to pledge himself to the "Holy evangelical Religion here proclaimed in its purity and according to the Reformation of it," and to "be obedient and subject to us and to observe our laws."<sup>10</sup> The Councils required each refugee to sign the book and to list his name, occupation, and the town he had lived in before fleeing to Geneva. Hotel-

keepers had to report their guests to the Seigneurie; the ministers and Syndics for their part had to check the entrants for sincerity. Many of the refugees came in poverty, strictly by the strength of their convictions. Even the great entrepreneurs could have made much more money had they conformed and remained in their native lands. The immigrants brought their skills and fortunes to Geneva led by their sense of religious calling. In general, they seemed to disregard the material comfort and security they had sacrificed for their religious principles. In 1551, those coming to Geneva just for work, on the other hand, and not for "the Gospel," were turned away from the city.<sup>11</sup>

During the eleven years that the register was opened (1549-1560), about 5,000 newcomers signed it. The majority were bachelors; it is estimated that only about 5% were women. Of the total registered number, 2,247 listed their occupations: 1,536 were artisans; 275 declared themselves trained in the "liberal professions;" 180 were merchants; 20 were nobles; and 77 said they were "peasants." Of those who failed to indicate their background or occupation, it is assumed that they did not hold very distinctive positions or jobs (in fact, probably lower grades of artisans), for in the sixteenth century a man was proud of his "métier" and generally noted it along with his place of origin.<sup>12</sup>

To what extent these figures represent the composition of the indigenous French Protestant population is difficult to ascertain. At its peak (most likely around 1562), the French Protest-

ants may have numbered 3,000,000 of France's total population of 20,000,000; but both figures must be regarded as upper estimates.<sup>13</sup> A comparison of professions with a 1560 Protestant Church register for the region around Montpellier corresponds very closely with percentages in the Livre des Habitants.<sup>14</sup> If anything, Geneva attracted proportionately fewer nobles than were found in the Protestant movement in France, but that is the only significant difference. Thus, Huguenot refugees did not come in numbers comparatively representative of French society.

In the early 1550's (the beginning of the Refuge), a number of the more distinguished Huguenots inscribed their names in the Livre des Habitants: for example, Léon and Germaine Coladon, who revised Geneva's civil code; Jean Crespin, author of the Book of Martyrs; Robert Estienne, French royal printer and publisher of many of Calvin's works. It seems that the early immigrants were the people of renown and utmost qualifications, establishing themselves quickly and well and undoubtedly making a favorable impression on the native Genevans. Later in the decade when the influx actually peaked, the less distinguished aliens followed and in great numbers.<sup>15</sup> Two-thirds of all the refugees entered Geneva from 1557 to 1559, and these newcomers were heavily weighted with artisans.

Without question, the Reformers' appeals, carried primarily by tracts, touched the literate artisans and the professional

classes (society's most economically productive elements), and some of the nobility, but left the illiterate peasants largely ignorant of their message. In France, unlike in Luther's Germany, farmworkers and peasants were not attracted to the Reformation in significant numbers.<sup>16</sup> Like most of the nobility, their livelihood and way of life were rooted directly to the land on which they lived; both classes found it difficult to support themselves when cut off from their estates, either as owners or as workers.<sup>17</sup> The few peasants who came (mainly from Provence and the south of France) did add new developments in agricultural production from their home area to local techniques.

The mobility of the city-dweller enabled him to follow his convictions and begin a new life in a way that the land-locked noble, farmer, or peasant could not. Hence, the émigré<sup>18</sup> generally carried the mentality of the city-dweller to Geneva.

The vast majority of Geneva's religious immigrants came from French-speaking areas. Of the approximately 5,000 people registered in the Livre des Habitants, only 350 came from regions where French was not the native tongue, and 200 of these were Italian. Within the Netherlands contingent, for example, half came from the French-speaking province of Hainault and only 20% from populous Flanders. This is not to say that persecutions were less intense in Flanders or produced fewer refugees; rather, the exiles' geographical location and linguistic affinity played the determining factor in the choice of a city of refuge.

Geneva was not the only city which witnessed a large-scale influx of refugees in the sixteenth century, although no other harbored a greater number of immigrants relative to its original size. All of the various ethnic groups developed congregations of their own, around which their lives were principally centered.

Even the 5,000 names in the Livre des Habitants do not tell the full story of the Refuge. The registrant often had a wife and family, and the very wealthy brought entire households on occasion. In view of these added dependents, the total number of immigrants in Geneva could easily have reached 7,000. Yet relatively few stayed permanently. The Marian exiles returned with the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Many of the French nobility invested most of their creativity and time in concocting schemes to overthrow the French crown.<sup>19</sup> In the early years, and especially at the outbreak of hostilities, the French expected that they would eventually be able to return home. There is evidence that these people caused Calvin considerable embarrassment and concern for the scandal they could bring the Genevan Church. His fears were justified after the ill-fated "Conjuration d'Amboise" in 1560 implicated many émigré nobles living in Geneva.<sup>20</sup> However, Calvin and Beza continued to labor through negotiations with the French royalty to create a religiously tolerant climate enabling the immigrants to return to France. Many of the group did just that in 1562 following the Colloquy of Poissy and the



Edict of January, which gave them the equality and freedom from persecution that they had long sought. The opening of the wars of religion in France provided cause for yet more to leave Geneva. With the outbreak of civil war, effective repression and policing against Protestants disappeared in many regions as the country slipped into chaos.

It is an interesting phenomenon, however, that very few of the highly influential French ever did return to their native land. Instead, they permanently established new lives and sometimes even new occupations for themselves in Geneva. Men like Laurent de Normandie and Jean Crespin, who had been engaged in government service in France, were unable to exercise their former professional expertise and authority in Geneva. They were highly motivated and skilled, having the talents to succeed in many different fields. They no doubt would have made a significant contribution wherever they might have lived or in almost any vocational area to which they might have devoted their energies. They chose commerce as their career and became wealthy entrepreneurs. Traditional merchants like de Trie, Trembley, and Jonvilliers had been able to preserve much of their French fortune and begin again in the same profession but in a smaller, poorer, but perhaps more receptive, marketplace.

For the 200 Italians residing in Geneva, thoughts of returning home were out of the question. A Reformed state would never be created on their peninsula, nor did it seem that the



Inquisition would never end. These Italians did direct a propaganda campaign back to their native land (as did the French); yet, for the most part, they re-established themselves in their former professions and poured their energies into permanently settling in Geneva. Unlike the French, most left Italy with only a portion of their wealth. They maintained their own Church (which for a time did become a hot-bed of anti-Trinitarian controversy) but gradually mixed into the general community.<sup>21</sup>

Theological orthodoxy posed a stumbling block for some of Geneva's refugee population. Many anti-Trinitarians and Anabaptists had mingled with the Italian Reformed congregations before coming to Geneva. Upon their arrival, the pastors and Councils demanded conformity with the official town doctrine. Rather than adapt, many of the anomalous moved on to other areas.

In addition, it seems that many were disillusioned by what they found in the city itself. Geneva, which held only 10,300 souls before the immigrants arrived, became dreadfully overcrowded. Prices were continually being pushed up; essential commodities and adequate housing were scarce. Economic opportunities also became limited, as the city unquestionably had more cobblers (181 immigrants listed that as their occupation), other leatherworkers (83), and builders (249) than could ever find employment. Many, especially the peasants, left Geneva for the Pays de Vaud, Lausanne, and other less crowded communi-

ties where they could find use for their farming skills. Undoubtedly, Protestant propaganda had oversold the virtues of this "city on a hill."<sup>22</sup> In fact, Bernese visitors in 1561 complained that Geneva was an expensive and dangerous place to live.

Perhaps many of the refugees never actually intended to remain permanently in Geneva. This would explain the surprisingly small number who purchased rights of bourgeoisie: only 664 did so from 1555-1564.

The religious refugees who did stay on after 1562 were disproportionately weighted toward those who had arrived first: the professionals and the highly skilled. The reasons for this fact were primarily economic. First, many wealthy Frenchmen were able to preserve their sources of income well into the mid-1560's. Even as outspoken a Protestant as the country nobleman Theodore Beza received income from a family property through much of that tumultuous decade. Many more were able to dispose of their expensive belongings as necessary, often through the trade fairs at Frankfurt. In sum, the majority of habitants in the first wave were the elite of the French nation and able to bring along a good deal of their former riches to begin new enterprises in Geneva.<sup>23</sup> Catherine de Medici, mother and Regent to King Charles IX, confessed that three-quarters of the best educated Frenchmen of this period were Huguenots.<sup>24</sup> Protestants

also accounted for nearly half of the nobility. However, it must be remembered that numerically, these professionals and merchants comprised only about one-tenth of the total Refuge influx.

It is similarly true that those who arrived first had the pick of housing and other necessities. The later arrivals had to make do with what they could find, which was undoubtedly that which others had not considered adequate.

The third factor which might explain why the first wave of skilled, well-to-do refugees stayed on is involved with the growth of the printing industry, especially once the French religious wars began. Of the 24 master printers in Geneva, all but two were French refugees. The three largest printing houses accounted for 12 of the 34 presses licensed by the Petit Conseil in 1563; and all three were French owned.<sup>25</sup> The owners and their master printers, who were among Calvin's inner circle of friends, beamed their ideas back to France via the books and tracts they published so profusely. As has already been mentioned, Crespin (one of the three major printers) had not even entered this field until he reached Geneva. Because most of the intellectual and influential French believed they would one day be able to return to their native land, they used Geneva almost as a "base camp" from which to direct "revolutionary" activities and to spread religious propaganda.<sup>26</sup>

A final reason for the permanent settlement of these wealthy and famous French refugees in Geneva could very well have been that their outstanding personal history and characteristics did not permit them the necessary anonymity, given official persecutions, to survive in their native land. Artisans and people in the lower classes would not be recognized for their religious association and "revolutionary" background if they returned to France. Thus, they could enjoy greater freedom of movement and development once they did return home. On the other hand, what was a famous lawyer who had practiced before the Parlement de Paris (such as Jean Crespin) to do upon his return? Perhaps the more intelligent and influential refugees also possessed the foresight to recognize the futility of ever altering the attitudes of the Guises or Catherine de Medici by reason or by force.<sup>27</sup>

As the émigrés began seeking asylum in Geneva (particularly from 1542), the authorities of the town became concerned about how to handle them. In the early days, their numbers were small, their arrivals sporadic, and their backgrounds, skills, and wealth significantly greater than the majority of Genevans. In spite of some local opposition to Calvin, many of the foreign-born pastors, and the immigrants, they were all ultimately accepted into the community. Traditionally, there has been a tendency to see this as proof of

Calvin's dictatorial power in the city's Councils and among the influential. In the early years of the Refuge, this was highly unlikely for two reasons. First, Calvin actually had to walk a political tightrope from 1547 until 1555. During the refugee era, he did not even hold the right of bourgeoisie. This status was not acquired, in fact, until 1559 when the Councils awarded it unsolicited. His brother Antoine had received the bourgeoisie thirteen years earlier, but Calvin had always refused to seek it for fear of being accused of having political ambitions. Thus, until 1559, Calvin did not even have the right to hold any political, judicial, or military post, nor did he. Had they wished, the Councils could have expelled him at any time during this period, as they had done in 1538.<sup>28</sup>

Secondly, this era was the culmination of the series of great controversies in which Calvin had become embroiled with the town's political figures. The Articulants had returned to the city in 1544, re-entered politics, and mustered support. The Perrin/Meigret trial had split the Genevan and French communities into separate camps in 1547, leaving the Perrin faction with distinct control of the Petit Conseil from that year on. The debates over predestination with Bolsec and Troillet followed in 1551 and 1552. Servetus<sup>29</sup> was executed in 1553, with Castellio's De Haereticis (a criticism of Serve-

tus' execution) published the following year. By 1555,

not only Calvin's authority but also his security of tenure had fallen low. The elections had consistently gone to his opponents. He appears to have believed that Servetus came to complete his overthrow. 30

Just how low Calvin's position in Geneva had fallen is evident in this taciturn report by Michel Roset:

That year many insolences were made by young people, against which the ministers cried incessantly, and Calvin was called to the Council because of it and advised because of his anger. The foreigners were hated openly and marked out by them [the young people], such that they were beaten at night in the streets.... Hearing of these things, the former ministers in Geneva, Farel and Viret, came recommending to the Council the [Reformed] religion, the foreigners, and the preachers. 31

Magistrate Ami Perrin rose to prominence through his opposition to the French immigrants. The tale is tinged with irony, since a large number of Perrin's followers were themselves only second or third generation Genevans, having primarily come from the Italian Piedmont region. Thanks to the hateful fervor stirred up by Perrin and his followers, gangs took to roving the streets and attacking the French by night. Some anti-French Genevans were hauled before the Consistory

and magistrates for abusive behavior, or for claiming that all Frenchmen were devils (which, by extension, included the city's Company of Pastors). Michel Roset related one such experience in his chronicles:

But having dined this same Thursday, 16th of May [1554?] ...the Captain [de l'Abbaye, which was a private para-military and social club] and his friends, their wine mixed with ire and worked to embolden their actions....The time came when it was necessary to depart and there were two brothers, bakers, came back from dining with the group and with swords bared cried under the eyes of a councillor, "At the traitor." The other threw a rock at a passerby. The Syndic apprehended one of the brothers while all around his accomplices cried, "At the French traitors; kill them, kill them!"...The words then resounded in the air, "The Frenchmen are ruining this city." ...The sedition degenerated into cries to run out to pillage, to kill, and to hang the foreigners and their supporters. 32

It has been suggested that Ami Perrin never wanted to expel Calvin, only to subdue him. Similarly, the Perrinist faction tried to use the Servetus case to embarrass Calvin. They promised Servetus eventual freedom, which only served to encourage the outlandishness of his theological claims. But the xenophobic Perrinist forces were thoroughly discredited after their attempted sedition of May, 1555. From that date



pro-Calvinist and pro-refugee men held power in the Councils, and the refugees received unqualified support from the town during the remainder of Calvin's life. Statistically, the majority of habitants did appear after that date,<sup>33</sup> and they did receive greater support from their adopted city. Nevertheless, Geneva did not welcome refugees in 1582 with the same enthusiasm that it had in 1556.

In spite of hardship, overcrowding, and some residual dissension, the period after the Perrinist defeat was a time of growing optimism, harmony, and a sense of mission undimmed by cynicism or defeat. The English Bishop of Ossory, John Bale, wrote during Queen Mary's reign that

Geneva seemeth to me to be the wonderful miracle of the whole world: so many from all the countries come thither, as it were unto a sanctuary, not to gather riches but to live in poverty. 34

Even when balanced against the political problems with which Calvin was involved and the local opposition to these foreigners, their ultimate, over-all acceptance must have depended to some degree on a sense of confessional brotherhood. This more idealistic reason cannot be ruled out, for ten years of Calvin's preaching, instruction, and influence must have had some effect on the public's mentality. Balanced against

the hostilities of Perrin and his faction are the greater percentage of Genevans who accepted and helped these homeless immigrants.

The native Genevans must have felt a good deal of pride as well that their pastor and their city were attracting famous people and positive comments from throughout Europe. Perhaps it reinforced their own opinions on the correctness of the doctrines preached by Calvin and the other pastors. Then again it may be one more area in which Calvin's steadfast resolve wore down any serious opposition over time.

More pragmatically, however, the city was underpopulated after the Reformation and the wars for independence; and the initial wave of immigrants brought fame and money to an otherwise provincial town accustomed to neither. Bonivard recalled the following:

The city was so depopulated by the departure of so many people, because of the civil disturbances, that it was with great difficulty that anyone was found who wished to inhabit the vacant homes without paying any other charge but to keep them up; and since the arrival of the foreigners there was not sufficient money to loan to them except at a very high price, but in buying and redecorating these fine homes they left the whole city much more attractive. 35

In the long run, Geneva's ultimate economic rescue came from its wealthy French and Italian immigrants. These people

brought their capital and their trades to a poor and largely unskilled populace. The state and the Church encouraged these men to reinvest their money in the city. In truth, there were few other places left in which to do so, with the religious wars in France and the Inquisition elsewhere. Between 1560 and 1580, some major entrepreneurs used Geneva as their international headquarters. The Councils and Calvin had been trying desperately to relieve Geneva's horrible unemployment situation and poverty since 1540, so in fact the entry of these wealthy individuals fit directly into their own aspirations for the future of Geneva. There became less need for the pastors to continue inventing programs to improve economic conditions within the city. Employment and income became available to native and refugee Genevans alike. Printing, textiles, goldworking, and watchmaking developed and provided Geneva with items for export for virtually the first time in its history.<sup>36</sup>

The foreigners also made the greatest contributions to the city's budget, for they amassed the largest fortunes in sixteenth century Geneva. Their purchases of the right of bourgeoisie put money annually into the city's treasury. Later in the century, they made the largest private loans to the city and paid more personal revenue to the Councils via a new, graduated income tax.

The economic improvement in Geneva was not immediate nor did it reach all men. Similarly, the city's new wealth did not last until the end of the century; however, as of 1575, Geneva was wealthy. Although it was the principal city of refuge in Europe, it was not the only one and its corresponding benefits were not unique. "For if Geneva benefited from it, the phenomenon was not peculiar only to Geneva."<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the Refuge joined together men with industrial techniques, craftman's skills, and investment capital from all over western Europe. They were bound spiritually by a common desire to live in harmony under the aegis of Calvin's doctrines, and they accepted rather humbly (especially considering their backgrounds) the authority of their host government. Those who were most influential in their native states proved also to be Geneva's most productive and patriotic residents. Without question, this mixing of different backgrounds, cultures, and ideas, plus the usual desire of an immigrant to make good in his new surroundings, created a stimulating, invigorated climate in which to develop.

Specifically measuring the quantitative financial impact that the refugees had on Geneva is not actually possible, for figures on the economic life of the sixteenth century are not extant. The immigrants' leavening effect on the intellectual life of Geneva is better documented. In the midst of

all the confusion caused by the refugee influx, the Councils were pressed in 1559 to fulfill the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordonnances and establish the Académie de Genève, the forerunner of the university.<sup>38</sup> They did so and staffed the institution almost exclusively with foreigners. A large percentage of the students were likewise aliens. Geneva finally shed its proud provincialism and became an international city.

Lastly, the refugees inadvertantly made Geneva a more democratic society. The wealth and influence of many of the immigrants, and the persuasion of Calvin himself, convinced the Petit Conseil in 1560 to open the selection of elders for the Consistory to all qualified citizens of good character, not just to the Councillors, as was the method prescribed in the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordonnances. Similarly, in 1584 Theodore Beza tried to open the diaconate to all laity, with each deacon to be elected by the Conseil de Deux Cents and subject to consultation with the pastors. The Petit Conseil did not accede to that request, possibly because of the sums of Seignorial money which the hospital procureurs handled. Unfortunately, the civil government became more oligarchic during Beza's time. However, in Calvin's day, the refugees encouraged a more democratic and representative government; and, by their own example, they helped the city magistrates to assume a more efficient air and method for running the town.

While many refugees did bring tremendous influence, admirable intellects, and large sums of international money to Geneva, this was not unilaterally the case, as has been noted before.<sup>39</sup> Many came with nothing but the clothes they wore. When such newcomers first arrived during the early period, they were fed and cared for through the hospital system and were employed in the strengthening or building of Geneva's fortifications. However, by the 1550's the resources of the Hôpital-Général had been stretched to the limit.

The new influx of refugees in the 1550's produced some of the social reaction inherent in the Perrinist movement. Undoubtedly many townspeople were rankled that their resources were being spent in order to aid foreigners already living in Geneva. To specifically meet the demands of the newcomers, the "Bourse des pauvres étrangers françaises" was established. Its exact date and founder are unknown, although the most popular speculation is David de Busanton, an Hainault refugee who settled first at Strasbourg and later in Geneva. It also seems that de Busanton was a member of Calvin's French congregation at Strasbourg, since Calvin was asked to faithfully execute his testament. De Busanton died in Geneva in 1545, leaving 1,000<sup>40</sup> écus to the poor of both cities.

Although this gift was probably its first large donation, it seems most likely that the concept of the Bourse began as a

series of small, individual donations to people in need. By October of 1550, it had become a unified, record-keeping organization; as such it is only possible to trace its activities from that date. Of course, 1550 marked the beginning of the largest wave of French refugees.

A register for the Bourse from December, 1550 listed twenty-nine donors, including John Calvin. It is indeed likely that he had something to do with the promotion of the original decision to unify alms-giving into a single institution. The Bourse was the one charity in which he did take an active interest throughout his life in Geneva. He attended its meetings on a regular basis; routine donations from him appear on the registers during his entire career in the city. Yet in addition to helping his fellow-countrymen, these meetings at the Bourse probably gave Calvin the opportunity to mingle with his French friends and the well-known refugees as well. Although he did receive the rights of bourgeoisie late in his life (1559), Calvin always considered himself an exiled Frenchman.

The organization of the Bourse paralleled that of the Hôpital-Général. By a vote of the contributors to the Bourse and the city's ministers, five deacons were elected for terms of one year and were eligible for re-election. The only selection requirements stipulated that the deacons be twenty-



five years of age and Genevan citizens or bourgeois. To reduce the temptation to embezzle, the accounts and money were rotated among the deacons for six-month terms. In addition to the deacons, a minister sat on the board which decided to whom to award the grants and what nature they should take.

The services of the Bourse française roughly corresponded with those of the Hôpital-Général as well. It provided outright grants of money, gifts of food and shelter, medical care for the sick, dowries for poor daughters, apprenticeship contracts for poor sons, and regular aid for orphans and the elderly. In addition to these functions, the Bourse ran a sort of rescue shelter for the infirm and the impoverished where they could sleep and be taken care of until their condition improved.<sup>41</sup>

Because the Bourse was an entirely private agency, it received no Seigneurial funds nor could it draw on confiscated Church property as the hospital did. To pay for its charitable deeds, the Bourse collected donations throughout Switzerland and wherever else Frenchmen had taken refuge from royal persecution. By the advent of the seventeenth century, its revenues from loans, mortgages, and property in Geneva alone were considerable. However, in Calvin's day the resources of the Bourse were overburdened by the first waves of refugees.

An examination of the proceedings of the Hôpital-Général-

al procureurs' meetings during this era shows that it provided assistance to many of the French immigrants. Not until 1616 was a rule established to determine a demarcation for recipients between the Bourse française and the Hôpital-Général.

From that date, the Hôpital-Général provided aid for native Genevans and bourgeois, plus the poor of greater Geneva, Savoy, and the Vaud. The Bourse cared for the native French and all their children who were born in France. On the other hand, children born in Geneva of French parents were the responsibility of the city hospital system once they came of age or were married.

During the Refuge, the Italians established their own social welfare foundation along lines similar to the Bourse; however, few records from that now survive. Although certain Italians did gain prominence in Geneva, Italian refugees did not come in numbers as great as the French, and they never developed a large, segregated community within Geneva. They tended to be more readily and inconspicuously assimilated into Genevan life, for (unlike the French) they realistically understood that they would never be able to return home.

## Chapter Thirteen Footnotes

1. Geisendorf, Paul-Frédéric. Livre des habitants de Genève, vol. 1, (1549-1560). Geneva, 1957.

His conclusions are summarized in the Introduction, pp. vii-xxiii.

2. Ibid., pp. vii-xxiii. See also: Kingdon, Robert M. Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France 1559-1563. Geneva, 1956, passim.

No volume has yet been dedicated to all the many aspects of the first Refuge, including its effects on Geneva. Later immigrations are better documented, such as those that followed the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

3. Geisendorf, Livre, pp. vii-xxiii.
4. Ibid. Ironically, little interest was aroused in the large and traditionally republican cities of Florence and Venice.
5. They formed the largest block of the remaining 150, and thereby the most sizeable linguistic group after the French and Italians.
6. Rights of bourgeoisie and their renewals provided about 25% of Geneva's 1555 civic revenues. See: Monter, E. William. Studies in Genevan Government (1536-1605). Geneva, 1964, p. 25. See also: Appendix, p. 559.
7. See the following sources:
 

Bergier, Jean-François. "La démission du Trésorier Amblard Corne." MDG, vol. 60, (1961), pp. 447-467.

Karmin, Otto. L'apprentissage à Genève, 1539-1603. Geneva, 1910, p. 18, footnote 1.
8. Geisendorf, Livre, p. x. See also: S.D., vol. 3, pp. 30-31, fol. 930, (May 15, 1556).
9. Geisendorf, Paul-Frédéric. "Métiers et conditions sociales du premier Refuge à Genève." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, pp. 240-241.
10. The Livre now permits great insight into the composition and arrival date of the refugee influx.
11. S.D., vol. 3, p. 9, fol. 896, (August 21, 1551).
12. See: Geisendorf, "Métiers," pp. 239-249.

13. Those figures are taken from the following volume:

Doumergue, Emile. Jean Calvin: les hommes et les choses de son temps, vol. 7. Lausanne, Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1927, pp. 346-348.

These large figures could be a reflection of Doumergue's customary enthusiasm for the Protestant cause. Perhaps a more realistic estimate may be found in the following:

Elliott, John H. Europe Divided, 1559-1598. Glasgow, 1968, p. 64.

Elliott ranges Huguenot adherence at 10-20% of France's 16,000,000; most likely, the figure was about 2,500,000. Either way, this represents an extraordinary growth from only a few thousand in the late 1530's.

After the first wars of religion, a substantial contraction quickly followed. In 1598, Henry IV counted the Protestants at 1,250,000. They probably expanded in the early seventeenth century with the advent of government-enforced religious toleration.

This growth is particularly surprising when it is considered that in France, unlike in Germany or England, the existing Roman Catholic clergy gave the Reformation no support. In time, though, renewed persecutions separated the interested from the devoted, and numbers again fell.

See also: Kingdon, Geneva and the Coming, p. 90, footnote 2.

14. See Appendix, p. 534.

15. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva, New York, 1967, pp. 165-174.

16. Elliott, Europe, pp. 33-36.

17. See Appendix, p. 534.

18. The attitudes indigenous to the Imperial Cities were not as strongly represented in French towns; nonetheless, the French city-dwellers shared a mentality more common to the Genevans than did the French nobility or peasants.

19. See pages 356-357.

20. See Kingdon, Geneva and the Coming, passim.

21. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 176-178; and Geisendorf, Livre, p. xiii.

22. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 180; and Geisendorf, "Métiers," pp. 239-249.

23. Meylan, Henri. "En dépit des édits royaux." Mélanges... Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, pp. 291-302.
- Meylan traces the stories of three families who escaped from France in this era, and how they managed to preserve their fortunes in the process.
24. Roper, Hugh R. Trevor-. "Religious Origins of the Enlightenment." The European Witch-Craze and Other Essays. New York, 1967, p. 209.
25. Kingdon, Geneva and the Coming, pp. 93-94.
26. Ibid., pp. 76, 127-129. Kingdon concluded that Geneva served as the nerve center for mobilizing French opinion, and as an organizational center in the first war of religion.
27. Ibid., passim.
28. Geisendorf, Livre, p. x. Geisendorf wrote: "to compare him with the dictators of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as modern historians have believed him to be, is nothing but a gross error."
29. See Chapter 10, pp. 263-264, footnote 28.
30. McNeill, John T. The History and Character of Calvinism. New York, 1954, p. 175.
31. Roset, Michel (pub. by Henri Fazy). Les Chroniques de Genève. Geneva, 1894, book 5, chapter 44, p. 346. This passage was probably recounted from 1551.
32. Ibid., book 5, chapter 69, pp. 372-373. François Bonivard reported a similar incident in the following book:

Bonivard, François (pub. by J.-J. Chaponnière). De l'ancienne et nouvelle police de Genève (1560). MDG, vol. 5, (1847), pp. 440-441. Later, Bonivard's title was prefixed with "Avis et dévis sur l'ancienne et..." in an 1865 edition published by Gustave Revilliod.

Geneva was undoubtedly a much rougher and more physically violent town than is generally realized. Calvin, never given to hyperbole, recalled the following attacks on his person during his deathbed address to the Company of Pastors:

Here I have lived through wondrous battles. I have been saluted outside my door by fifty or sixty arquebus shots. You may well imagine how this would astonish a poor, timid scholar such as I am and always have been, I confess.

[After retreating to Strasbourg] I had no less trouble than before in trying to do my duty. Crying "Wretch!, wretch!", they set dogs at my heels and they caught at my robes and legs. Once I was going to the Council of Two Hundred during a fight...

C.O., vol. 9, col. 891-894. Translation borrowed from Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 95-96.

Roset recounted what may have been the same incident during an appearance of Calvin before the Deux Cents in his Chronicles, book 5, chapter 44, p. 346.

33. McNeill, History, pp. 170-177.
34. Ibid., p. 178.
35. Bonivard, De l'ancienne, pp. 440-441.
36. The Refuge influence in industrial development is discussed in Chapter Fourteen, pp. 375-400.
37. Bergier, Jean-Francois. Genève et l'économie européenne de la Renaissance. Paris, 1963, p. 83.
38. For an excellent history of the University of Geneva, see:  
Borgeaud, Charles. Histoire de l'Université de Genève, 2 vol. Geneva, 1900.
39. See Chapter Nine, p. 202.
40. The only work solely devoted to the Bourse française follows:  
Grandjean, Henri. "La Bourse française de Genève." Etrennes genevoises. (1927), pp. 46-60.
41. Ibid., and Kingdon, Robert M. "Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva." AHR, vol. 76, (1971), pp. 63-65.

## Chapter Fourteen

### The Rise of Guilds and Industry

The immigrants for whom Geneva became a permanent home made outstanding contributions to their adopted city in the sixteenth century, as has already been noted. French refugee Germaine Colladon rewrote Geneva's Civil Code. All of the city's pastors were foreign-born, as were the instructors at the Académie. In spite of such influence and acclaim in the fields of law, theology, and education, the immigrants' best-known and perhaps most effective legacy to Geneva was in business and industry. Within a single generation, Italian and French exiles propelled the city from its status as a poor, provincial marketplace into the front rank of international industrial and financial centers.

By studying Geneva's industrial development after the beginning of the Refuge, particularly in the areas of printing, weaving, and jewellery- and watch-making, the rapid and thorough transformation of the city economically will become clear. Also, the parallel growth of guilds and new professions, plus their ac-



companying charters and regulations, will provide evidence of the Councils continued legislated care for Geneva's future and its people.

In the late fourteenth century, Geneva had 38 flourishing confraternities, which were loose associations of men joined together by their trade. Each "club" chose a secular leader, a chaplain, and a patron saint, in whose honor masses and processions were sponsored. The confraternity was also designed to promote donations to charitable projects.<sup>1</sup> These confraternities were the forerunners of the guild or corporation.

Any official organizing of workers by profession was particularly retarded in Geneva, although elsewhere in Europe the guild had become a standard feature by the fifteenth century. Because the city's economic mainstay had been trading rather than manufacturing and because the prime employer was the seasonal, changeable transportation "industry," workers saw little need to organize and regulate their professional activities and rights. The post-Refuge economic picture in this respect was to be very different.

In step with the general disintegration of the medieval Roman Catholic Church in Geneva, the confraternity soon became little more than a social club; it provided members with an excuse for a night out together. Confraternity banquets became increasingly bawdy and dissolute; meetings combined superstitious ceremony with a vague religiosity. For those reasons and

the "severity of the times," the confraternity was outlawed after the Reformation decrees were passed, although the number of such associations had grown to 48 by 1536.<sup>2</sup>

Before the arrival of the "foreigners" (as contemporary Genevan writings called them), the city's economic life had been in a long, slow decline after the peak of the trade fairs during the decades 1460-1470. With the Reformation, the disappearance of the episcopal court and the revenues of the Roman Catholic Church from all over the diocese further impoverished Geneva. The city's population dropped from 11,500-12,000 in 1532 to 10,300 in 1537.<sup>3</sup> The economic situation of the city and its inhabitants in virtually every way could not have been more desperate.

Printing became Geneva's first successful industry; certainly it was the first to bring the city international prominence. It was also the first to be chartered by the Petit Conseil, although the second (after weaving) to be officially organized. It contained and was stimulated by the greatest number of foreign luminaries and probably earned the greatest amount of foreign revenue for the city. In fact, it might well have made the greatest contribution to the encouragement of the local economy.

The origins of the Genevan printing industry were traceable to 1478, when Adam Steyenschawer of Schweinfurt opened a shop. Although Geneva once shared with Lausanne the honor of

printing missals and official publications for the northern part of Savoy, the Duke shifted his contracts to Lyons after the 1519 revolt for independence. Within a year, the industry had collapsed.<sup>4</sup>

With the birth of the Protestant cause, the press reclaimed a bit of its former importance in Geneva by becoming the favored offensive weapon of the Reformers. In 1532-1533, it appears likely that Jean Chautemps partially financed Pierre Vingle's printing of Robert Olivétan's French Bible. For a brief period, a press in Chautemps' basement churned out Protestant polemics and propaganda, none of which unfortunately now survives.<sup>5</sup> After the Reformation was achieved, the trade fell dormant once again.

Printing was not revived until the 1550's, when the religious refugees played the decisive factor in establishing the industry anew in Geneva. First, they brought the skills necessary to open print shops. About 200 refugees had inscribed themselves in the Livre des Habitants as either booksellers or printers. By 1563, 35 men had set up shop as master printers, including some of the most influential men in Genevan business: Chautemps, de Normandie, Vincent, Crespin, Estienne, and Fugger. That half of these men were unfamiliar with printing before they came to Geneva indicates the prominence the industry gained. It also shows that, deprived of their former careers in politics, men like de Normandie and Crespin had to

seek new pursuits (here, as capitalist entrepreneurs) in order to support themselves.

Secondly, the refugees provided the capital necessary to fund such impressive enterprises. Laurent de Normandie, a close friend of Calvin from their young days in Noyon, pumped a good amount of his own resources into printing. After the 1563 edict,<sup>6</sup> he personally joined the profession and teamed up with some smaller printers to subcontract. The other major printers were all wealthy men in their own right through business activities in France. No less a European notable than Huldreich Fugger even invested in a printing firm in Geneva. Conrad Badius initially ran a publishing house as large as the big three, but gave it up, joined the ministry, and left for France.<sup>7</sup>

In 1563, an ordinance was passed which actually limited production in the industry to just 24 master printers on 34 presses. Four presses each were awarded to the owners of the largest three firms: Jean Crespin, Robert Estienne, and Antoine Vincent. According to the edict, only those who had purchased rights of bourgeoisie were allowed to publish; however, a list of habitants was given permission as well, although presumably they were expected to seek bourgeois status within the near future.<sup>8</sup> Only one native Genevan attempted to print; and, one year after investing in supplies to establish himself, Jacques Dupan failed to make the list of twenty-four. On the oth-

er hand, the printing industry did employ many local Genevans as workmen, especially in the ancillary industries of paper and transport. Of the actual owners of print shops, all but two were French, and both of these were Italian.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, their two presses and few published titles mattered little alongside the overwhelming French contribution.

Geneva's print shops produced Bibles, Psalters, polemics, and a variety of other works, primarily for export to France. The spread of Reformed theology remained heavily dependent not on preaching but on book and tract production and distribution, so the connection between the printers and the clergy was close indeed.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the peak of printing corresponded exactly with the peak in missionary activity in France: 1557 to 1562. Geneva clearly promoted evangelical operations in France through the export of its own pastors and religious literature.<sup>11</sup>

The amount of production off the Genevan presses was considerable even by today's standards. Beza's Psalter, the mainstay of Huguenot worship, was produced by a consortium of all the registered printers in Geneva who wished to join. Although disputes over the number of copies each was to print and the price each was to charge caused dissension, the group did produce Psalters in fantastic quantities, especially considering that the presses were turned by hand. From the end of 1561 until the opening months of 1562, 27,400 copies of Beza's Psalms

issued from Genevan printing houses. Indeed, the production of the Huguenot Psalter could well claim to be the greatest capitalist enterprise of the sixteenth century. The Psalters and Bibles combined to account for about 20% of the titles (although a greater percentage of the total books published), unquestionably enjoying the highest runs and the greatest popularity. In fact, in the years 1560-1562, the number of editions of the Bible alone garnered 20% of the total titles published. The best estimates available have determined that the total annual book output in the years of peak demand was approximately 300,000 volumes. This is especially amazing from an industry that had not even existed fifteen years earlier.<sup>12</sup>

As already mentioned, the output from the presses<sup>13</sup> was oriented largely to the foreign market. Theological works by Calvin and the other Reformers accounted for half of the city's production. Worth noting was the inclusion of Juan Valdes and Juan-Luis Vives (best known for his 1526 book De Subventionem Pauperum<sup>14</sup>), two Spanish Roman Catholic reformers. Obviously, confessional lines were not so rigorously circumscribed in 1560 as might have been supposed.

As noted, polemic tracts peaked from 1558-1565, the years of sectarian tension in France. Over a fifteen year period surrounding those dates, such tracts averaged 11% of the titles released. The fine arts were reciprocally weak from 1559-1565, having been popular during the relative peace of 1555-1558.

Nevertheless, they amounted to only 2.3% of the published titles during the entire ten year stretch (1555-1565). It may well indicate that as animosity with the Roman Catholic powers increased, attention to artistic renderings decreased. Similarly, fewer strictly literary books were published in favor of the more immediate and pragmatic demands for the presses. The Reformation emphasis on education was reflected in the published numbers of lexicons, grammars, catechetical tomes, histories, and Greek and Latin classics, which included works by Homer, Aristotle, Cicero, and the other major thinkers of the ancient world.<sup>15</sup>

Publications produced for the home market were obviously local town ordinances and academic and theological works for use by both private individuals and the new Académie, which opened in 1559. The physical appearance of the books was even aimed at specific markets. Small volumes were designed to be spirited past investigators by making them pocket-size. For the nobility, beautiful calf-skin bound volumes were produced. Yet, it is apparent that without the refugees and the works exported to France,<sup>16</sup> Geneva could not have used 5% of the publications off its own presses.

After 1562, the publishing of books (especially polemics) did in fact shift away from Geneva and to France.<sup>17</sup> Production in the city fell off once the "Edict of January" was proclaimed; and the opening of the Wars of Religion late in 1562 scattered



effective repression.<sup>18</sup> For the rest of the century, book printings failed to maintain the impressive level attained in the early 1560's. An examination of the number of titles printed annually suggests this; however, since it fails to consider the number in each edition, it is in no way a statistically exact comparison with the number of books produced in any earlier given year.<sup>19</sup>

At times, the books were transported in small quantities to avoid detection; yet most were carried by means of large-scale operations. Even for a town that had traditionally served as a transportation center, the necessity of moving 200,000 to 300,000 books a year provided a great many new jobs. Owing to the slow, primitive, and limited method of transportation by wagon, a large number of manual workers found ready employment in this field in Geneva. Also, as already noted, they were used in allied service industries, such as ink and paper manufacture. Jean Chautemps, the earliest entrepreneur in printing, retained an interest (even though not a hand) in the industry, for by 1562 he is mentioned in the Council Registers in connection with the noise caused by his paper mill.<sup>20</sup>

The bewildering array of publications and the disparity in printing quality ultimately prompted Beza and "maistre Loys Henoc [Louis Enoch], ministre" to request Council super-

vision of the trade.<sup>21</sup> The first efforts at censorship had been passed by the city in 1539, one year after Calvin's expulsion from Geneva.<sup>22</sup> Thus, a need for censorship was recognized and acted upon by the secular authorities to prevent heretical material from bearing the trademark of the city at any early point. The Consistory had been specifically delegated the task of censorship in 1556.<sup>23</sup> However, Beza criticized this procedure and asked that two or three ministers review each work before letting it pass through the city gates.

In this era, when a city was held responsible for all its literary output, censorship prevented politically, theologically, or morally embarrassing works from reaching the market. A tract or book declared heretical became a blot against the city, and a string of such tomes might prompt others to regard Geneva as a center of heresy and to take appropriate measures. Censorship along doctrinal lines was an expected, accepted procedure in sixteenth century life, yet even more necessary in this epoch when Geneva's pastors were trying desperately to convince the French that Calvin's supporters were good, loyal Churchmen, faithful to the traditional Christian teachings as expounded in the Gospels, Paul, and Augustine. The mentality that demanded theological orthodoxy in a city's publications arose from the same source as that which collectivized God's favor or punishment over an entire city.

In 1559, Beza also sought some means of self-regulation

(1) to prevent printers from pirating editions from one to another or engaging in other illicit practices and (2) to maintain at least adequate standards of printing quality. By 1560, a commission consisting of a minister, a magistrate, and a printer was established to oversee the trade and to inspect workshops. Until Beza's 1559 request for this basic governmental supervision, the actual printing processes and results had gone unregulated, even if the content of the publications had not. Both Calvin and the Councils individually complained about the quality of the print and the prevalence of typesetting mistakes and smudges. One volume became a favorite for students because of its humorous "broken sentences." It was not until 1563, however, that the Councils passed an ordinance (Geneva's first corporation charter) designed to regulate the quality of paper and type.<sup>24</sup>

The close connection maintained between the pastors and the printers throughout the sixteenth century caused the former to intervene in a labor dispute between journeymen, printers, and shop owners in 1561. The ministers successfully arbitrated their disagreement and thereby enabled Calvin's French edition of the Institutes to get off the presses on schedule.<sup>25</sup>

A certain amount of idealism and typical Genevan social concern prevailed on the matter of the author's royalties. Beza turned over all the proceeds from his works directly to the "charitable works of the Genevan Church as administered by the

deacons,"<sup>26</sup> which would have included the hospital and, presumably, the Bourse. An order subcontracted to a Church in Metz allowed for profits in that particular case to benefit the poor of both Geneva and Metz.<sup>27</sup>

In summary, then, the printing industry was conceived by the wealthy French refugees and raised under the close cooperation of the Councils, clergy, and printers. Entry to the circle of printers was limited, but organized in a thorough and rational manner. An early arrangement permitted all printers to share in the publishing of the more popular theological works, thereby allowing an equitable opportunity for profit. The quality of paper and print were ultimately controlled, as had been the contents of each book for quite a while. The primary authors were Geneva's own pastors; Beza, for one, used his personal proceeds from book sales to meet his obligations to the needy. During the sixteenth century, the Genevan printing industry had a noble and impressive history indeed.

Weaving (Geneva's second industry) was introduced through the Hôpital-Général in the 1540's, largely because of Calvin's effort to reduce unemployment. The early developments in the industry grew sophisticated, prospered, and expanded substantially because of the background and skills brought to Geneva by religious refugees from France and Italy. The simple cloth of the 1540's hospital project blossomed into beautiful and exotic textiles gaining prominence in the international marketplace.

The Italians, especially proportional to their number of immigrants, were the most heavily involved with the cloth trade. A large group of the refugees came from the north (particularly Cremona and Lucca), where they had worked in textile manufacturing. Upon their arrival in Geneva, these people married their native skills to the existing conditions. Also helping to establish the weaving industry was a collection of French immigrants, chief among whom were the Trembley family from Lyons. In spite of their compatible aims, there did not appear to have been much intermingling between French and Italian cloth entrepreneurs, even to fund joint projects.

Silk-making began in 1544. As the art developed, the products grew in sophistication, and fine quality Genevan silks began appearing. In fact, Lyons, Paris, and Northern Italy monopolized Europe's silk trade until the 1550's when Genevan products began to offer serious competition in markets previously reserved only to the French and Italians. The crowning achievement, indeed the climax, of the silk and textile trade was the Italian "Gran Bottegha" (literally, the "Great Store"), a tremendously profitable and highly successful silk enterprise late in the century.

Second to the silk industry in importance in Geneva was lace-making ("passementerie"), followed by the velvet and the taffeta trades.<sup>29</sup> Lace work and taffeta, plus ribbon and cotton weaving and printing ("Indienne"<sup>30</sup>) were all begun by French

refugees in the same era.<sup>31</sup> Wool and serge were also woven.<sup>32</sup>  
 After printing, it might well have been that more Genevans were  
 employed in textiles than in any other trade.<sup>33</sup>

In 1547 (by which date velour was being produced), a  
 Council decree required textiles to be marked with the arms of  
 of the town and a legend specifying "Faict à Genève."<sup>34</sup>

The weavers did not organize until 1580, with allied  
 trades following soon after: the tailors in 1581; lace-makers  
 in 1584; and pin-makers in 1584.<sup>35</sup> These "corporations" ac-  
 knowledged and maintained quality standards for their various  
 products and regulated production and business practices.  
 They may also have served to organize and coordinate attempts  
 to break into foreign markets. In this time period, the un-  
 ion of various craftsmen into guilds helped them to work to-  
 gether with the city for the good of the municipal export ef-  
 fort. The Councils tried to mediate disputes between individ-  
 ual firms as well, for competition within the city was not the  
 rule of the day.

Tin- and pewter-smiths began production in the same era  
 as the weavers. The manufacture of pewter pots, vases, ves-  
 sels, etc., may not have been introduced by the French, but  
 the quality and artistry that gained fame for the city in the  
 following centuries developed from the French craftsmanship.<sup>36</sup>

Tin-smiths, for their part, requested the Councils in  
 1557 to forbid certain foreigners in the same industry from  
 practicing their trade or selling their products in town.

They complained that the quality of tin used and the standards for workmanship were inferior to local manufacture because "they [the alien tin-smiths] are not subject to our ordinances."<sup>37</sup> This, in turn, kept foreign prices lower and prejudiced people against native products despite their higher quality. Such a request to the city Council indicates that a series of regulations had already been internally established by the tin and pewter industry in order to control and protect their trade, products, and workers.

The origins of gold-working in Geneva are much better known than those of the tin and pewter trade and are directly traceable to the Huguenot refugees; the Livre des Habitants listed 228 metalworkers, of which one-third were gold-smiths. In 1557, the gold-smiths and jewellers tried to organize in front of the Petit Conseil, seeking perhaps to establish a uniform set of standards for the new refugees (who were arriving almost daily in this period) desiring to enter the trade. Perhaps they wanted the Council's help to better enable them to compete in foreign markets. The record is unclear regarding whether one of the two reasons or both brought these artisans before the secular authorities.<sup>38</sup>

By 1560, the Council, on its own initiative, called the gold-smiths together in order to enact rules to better regulate business practices. And once again nothing conclusive came out of the meetings. However, six years later an agreement was fin-



ally reached which satisfied craftsmen and councillors alike. The civil government felt that it must keep careful watch over the gold-smiths' activities, since they closely related to coinage and to the financial situation of the city. The Councils were justifiably worried that gold jewellery was debasing the currency of the city, a shrewd economic observation. Some Spanish intellectuals had connected over-all price rises with the flood of New World silver; but, on the whole, people were largely unaware that great amounts of precious metal in free circulation within a town, coupled with the need for money, stiffly drove up prices. Money of account (the Genevan florin) devalued against precious metal.

The Consistory kept an eye out for violations of the sumptuary laws. In fact, part of the aim of the sumptuary laws' restrictions on the amount of gold used in a piece of jewellery was to render local currency strong in a time of high inflation. In the sumptuary laws, morality and the pragmatic resolution of problems for the common good (the "Common Weal") were inseparable. <sup>39</sup>

In the 1566 agreement devised with the Councils, the gold-smiths gained a new group of quality standards that revamped the hodgepodge of seldom-used ordinances accumulated over the previous two centuries. One of the major results of the charter was the Councils' encouragement of export, which helped the gold-smiths enter profitable foreign markets. <sup>40</sup> Geneva began selling goods abroad, save "crosses, chalices, or other 'instrumens'...serving

the papacy or idolatry."<sup>41</sup> Ironically, by the end of the century, Genevan jewellers had developed the Savoyard nobility into one of their best customers.<sup>42</sup>

In many respects, watchmaking and the jewellery trade grew up together. Clocks had been popular all over Europe for a long time; the watch began enjoying eminence and sophistication of workmanship in France and Flanders after the fifteenth century. Like shoemaking, the watch industry began as a localized cottage industry. Several watchmakers settled in Geneva during the Refuge, most notably Charles Cusin of Burgundy.<sup>43</sup> After the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572), even larger numbers arrived, especially from Paris. They installed themselves in Geneva and began producing watches finely decorated with gold engraving and detailed enamel painting. Geneva and, to a lesser extent, Neuchâtel were the first cities to group a large number of clockmakers together and to actively export their products, even as far as Istanbul and the Levantine Coast.<sup>44</sup> Such encouragement of and assistance in export were, of course, the town's necessary response to the sumptuary laws and to Geneva's generally poor populace unable to afford the frivolity of gold and jewellery. In the next three centuries, the gold and watchmaking industries gained the highest prominence in Geneva.<sup>45</sup>

Watchmaking and, to a lesser extent, jewellery-making grew in popularity because the industry's requirements fit the local situation. First, Geneva was inconveniently located for

the importation of heavy or large amounts of raw materials. Second, the city had a highly skilled population in need of employment. The latter was an especially important factor, because in both products a very high percentage of the value was the amount and quality of workmanship.

In the sixteenth century, the Councils took the initiative in creating an industrial base in Geneva and in regulating the activities of the corporations. In seizing this responsibility, the Councils joined powers given them in the Franchises with their new duties as princes of the city and as inheritors of the Cathedral Chapter's obligations. They also built upon the precedents established in the first fifteen years of independence when they regulated an economic life in Geneva which was far less complex than it became during the Refuge.

During the years 1550 through 1590, the tremendous influx of foreign artisans, coupled with the non-existence of confraternities or guilds, forced radical changes. As had been true in the past and in most other areas of social need, the Councils stepped forward to fill the gap by encouraging and backing first the creation of corporations and later the development of export.

The corporation was formed, specifically defined, and precisely regulated in close collaboration between the civil government and the artisans. In other cities, the guilds or

corporations had developed their roles gradually, over the centuries, and then published their internal regulations later, as a sort of documentation of already accepted custom. In Geneva, however, these statutes were ordained and decreed by the civil authorities and then imposed on the artisans, although generally with their cooperation. Just as the civil government tried to intensify industrial growth in the 1540's, it began to unite its craftsmen and regulate their production after 1560. There seems little doubt that the refugees played a large part in this procedure, for they were already accustomed to the guild system and provided the bulk of the skilled labor that was being organized.<sup>46</sup>

Other than the industries already mentioned,<sup>47</sup> most of Geneva's trades organized about 1620. Their charters were, nonetheless, similar in content to the earlier ones. Those who wanted to work in the city had to register with the corporation or with the Councils; and their standards of workmanship were regulated. Merchandise was to be properly weighed or quantified and visibly marked, as the Councils had always required. Products being sold in the town, especially foodstuffs and other essentials, were limited to specific places, prices, and times. Foreign imports required an import tax to be levied before they could be legally sold. Those found violating the ordinances faced confiscation of merchandise and the payment of a fine, which was often directed (at least in part) to the hospital system.

As well as being accountable to the city Councils and their

ordinances, each company of guildsmen was meant to be self-regulating. It elected officers, charged an entrance fee to newcomers, and had annual inspections by the city government. The corporation also provided social benefits for its members. For example, the widows and orphans of members were often given pensions.

To ensure that the new expertise gained in the various trades was passed along to the next generation of Genevans, apprenticeship programs were established by virtually every corporation in a formal way with specific rules. Each master was generally limited to only a single apprentice at a time. The corporation imposed the terms of apprenticeship and the price; although, in practice, these two were often variable.

Ordinarily, the apprentice was housed, fed, dressed, and cared for by the family of the master worker. The term varied from a few months to as many as ten years (the length of time necessary under the tutelage of some watchmakers and jewellers), although the majority of contracts were undertaken for two to four year periods. The amount paid the master varied greatly as well, depending upon the term and the material being worked. The majority in this case cost between two and fifteen écus per year, with an additional 10% occasionally provided for the wife of the master to help with housekeeping expenses. For orphans and hospital wards, the price of apprenticeship was paid by the Bourse française or by the Hôpital-Général.<sup>48</sup>

Apprenticeship contracts often did carry withdrawal clauses should the student change his mind about the occupation. Then, a penalty was charged and the remainder pro-rated. In the case of the death of either of the parties, provisions were similarly made.<sup>49</sup>

Sadly, women were barely tolerated in any of the trades; in fact, most corporations forbade women from joining outright. A woman could rarely even work alongside her husband. It was hard for a female weaver to be employed outside of the hospital system in order to support herself, although some did manage to become apprenticed in their father's cloth shops. Later in the century, some did at least manage to break into watchmaking.<sup>50</sup>

All of the aforementioned improvements in the organization of Geneva's trades did greatly benefit the population. In spite of increases in the price of most commodities, it is clear that the growth of these new industries provided jobs for the unemployed and new sources of prosperity for native and newcomer alike.

More importantly, even if self-sufficiency and prosperity were far off in 1550, foundations were being laid for the industries that brought Geneva wealth and renown in the seventeenth century. Thanks almost entirely to the Refuge, the relatively backward sixteenth century town developed the highly skilled industries of silk and lacework, gold-smithing and jewellery, printing and watchmaking. The story is succinctly summarized:

From the status of a poor city, without any economic prospects, whence it had fallen toward 1540, Geneva became, less than one half century later, a wealthy city, wealthier doubtlessly than it had been even at the time of the fairs, a city where money and men worked: a 'capitalist' city where the division between capital and labor, between entrepreneurs and salaried employees, was starkly affirmed. 51

Not until the close of the century was the independent craftsman forced out of business and into the employ of another because of a worsening economic picture throughout Europe. This was the end of the small, self-employed businessman and the beginning of the large manufacturer and the assembly-line technique. Then, rising prices, increased numbers of refugees, open warfare with Savoy, and the general disruption of European trade patterns forced a return to poverty that was not alleviated until the mid-seventeenth century. The number of young men who could not afford apprenticeships grew and created an urban proletariat for the first time in Geneva.<sup>52</sup> Control of the admission to guilds, like the civil government, became more exclusive.<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, for a time, Geneva was once again plunged into economic despair.



1. Maire, Marguerite. "L'organisation corporative à Genève, de la Réforme à l'annexion française." Etrennes genevoises, (1930), pp. 3-69.

Babel, Antony. "Les métiers dans l'ancienne Genève: histoire corporative de l'horlogerie, de l'orfèvrerie, et des industries annexes." MDG, vol. 33, (1916), pp. 1-8.

A good summary of the medieval economy can be found in:

Babel, Antony. Histoire économique de Genève des origines au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, 2 vol. Geneva, 1963.

2. Regulations against confraternities and their initiation rites continued into the mid-1550's. A Council interdict against them can be found from 1557:

S.D., vol. 2, p. 43, fol. 949-950, (August 9-10, 1557).

3. See Appendix, p. 530.

4. The history of Genevan printing, book production, and book importation before the Reformation may be found in the following:

Naef, Henri. Les origines de la Réforme à Genève. Geneva, 1936, pp. 405-468.

5. Delarue, Henri. "La première offensive évangélique à Genève, 1532-1533." BHG, vol. 9, (1948), pp. 100-101.

Researchers have noted of Chautemps: "he is counted among the premier capitalist entrepreneurs of Geneva, investing his money in the industrial activities which were new to the city." (Bergier, Jean-François, and Robert M. Kingdon. Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève, vol. 1. Geneva, 1964, p. 49, footnote 7.).

6. Heyer, Théophile. "Notice sur Laurent de Normandie." MDG, vol. 16, (1867), pp. 399-422.

7. Kingdon, Robert M. Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France 1559-63. Geneva, 1956, pp. 93-103.

8. S.D., vol. 3, p. 148, fol. 1036, (June 25, 1563). Also reproduced in the following:

Heyer, "Notice," pp. 410-412, footnote 4.

9. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967, p. 181.
10. Kingdon, Geneva, pp. 93-103; Chaix, Paul. Recherches sur l'imprimerie à Genève de 1550 à 1564. Geneva, 1954.
11. See the comparison chart in Appendix, pp. 530, 568.
12. Kingdon, Geneva, pp. 92-103; Chaix, Paul, Alain Dufour and Gustave Mœckli. "Les livres imprimés à Genève de 1550 à 1600." Genava, vol. 7, (1959), pp. 235-394.
13. See charts, Appendix pp. 530, 568.
14. See Chapter 7, p. 134.
15. The source for these figures is: Chaix, Dufour, and Moeckli, "Les livres." The totals they recorded are consistently higher than those arrived at by Kingdon in Geneva. Kingdon only counted those titles listed in the "Bibliothèque publique et universitaire" in Geneva, whereas Chaix used additional resources to prepare their compilation. Chaix, Dufour, and Moeckli completed their research three years after Kingdon. They do not contradict him; rather, they offer completion to his studies.
16. Chaix, Recherches, p. 2.
17. Kingdon, Geneva, pp. 93-103.
18. During the French wars of religion, some sections of the country came under Protestant control, and others degenerated into anarchy. Thus, it was only in strongly Roman Catholic areas that authorities were able to repress books and not be swept up by the more pressing issues of fighting a war.
19. See Appendix, p. 568.
20. Kingdon, Geneva, pp. 122-123. Chautemps also ran a gunpowder mill (or perhaps it was the same mill), whose noise prevented the guard from hearing the approach of an enemy.  
  
See also: Delarue, "La première," pp. 100-101.
21. S.D., vol. 3, p. 87, fol. 977, (January 16, 1559).
22. S.D., vol. 2, p. 352, fol. 760, (May 9, 1539).

23. S.D., vol. 3, p. 37, fol. 907, (November 26, 1556).
24. S.D., vol. 3, p. 148, fol. 1036, (June 25, 1563).  
S.D., vol. 3, p. 125, fol. 1003, (May 5, 1561).
- Allied documents are reproduced in the following compendium:
- Cartier, Alfred. "Arrêts du Conseil de Genève sur le fait de l'imprimerie et de la librairie, de 1541 à 1550." MDG, vol. 23, (1893), pp. 361-566.
25. See Chapter Nineteen, pp. 507-508.
26. Kingdon, Geneva, p. 99.
27. Ibid.
28. A good summary of the influence of the religious refugees on the economic development of Switzerland may be found in the following volume:
- Bodmer, M. Walter. "Der Einfluss der Refugianteneinwanderung von 1550-1700 auf der schweizerische Wirtschaft." RSH, vol. 3, (1946), pp. 1-152.
29. Babel, "Les métiers," p. 29.
30. Fazy, Georges. "Notes sur l'industrie des indiennes à Genève." Nos Anciens, vol. 6, (1905), pp. 104-118.
31. Babel, "Les métiers," pp. 28-30.
32. Bergier, Jean-François. Naissance et croissance de la Suisse industrielle. Berne, 1974, pp. 38-39.
33. There were probably more weavers than printers. However, if the people employed in the ancillary industries to printing are considered (such as in paper-making and transportation), it would register as the largest employer.
34. S.D., vol. 2, p. 511, fol. 844, (September 13, 1547).
35. These corporation charters are reproduced in the Sources du Droit. See Appendix, p. 569.
36. Grande, Julien, and Constance Grande. Geneva: Its Place in the World. Geneva, 1920, p. 36.

37. S.D., vol. 3, p. 43, fol. 948, (July 26, 1557).
38. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 180; Babel, "Les métiers," pp. 20-22.
39. See Chapter Eighteen, pp. 459-487.
40. Maire, "L'organisation," pp. 20-21.
41. Babel, "Les métiers," p. 21.
42. Ibid.
43. Cusin was probably the most famous watchmaker of his day.
44. Babel, Antony. "L'horloge genevoise à Constantinople et dans le Levant XVI-XVIII<sup>es</sup> siècles." Etrennes genevoises, (1927), pp. 61-75.
45. See Chapter Eleven, p. 301; Appendix, p. 534.
46. Babel, "Les métiers," pp. 17-19; Maire, "L'organisation," pp. 3-20.
47. That is: printing, textiles, pewter-, tin-, and gold-working, watchmaking, and jewellery.
48. See Chapter 9, pp. 197-198.
49. Karmin, Otto. L'apprentissage à Genève de 1539-1603. Geneva, 1910, pp. 1-18.
50. Maire, "L'organisation," pp. 15-22.
51. Bergier, Naissance, p. 37.
52. Babel, "Les métiers," p. 45; Piuz, Anne-Marie. "Pauvres et pauvreté dans les sociétés pré-industrielles." RSH, vol. 23, (1973), pp. 544-546.
53. In 1536, anyone who wished to follow a trade was permitted to do so by Council decree (S.D., vol. 2, p. 336, fol. 729, [January 16, 1536]). This situation changed after Calvin's death, when economic opportunities tightened (Babel, "Les métiers," pp. 44-47).

## Chapter Fifteen

### Calvin's Economic Theology

John Calvin's personal theology exerted a powerful influence in Geneva both upon private attitudes and civic legislation in the realm of economics. He accomplished this by preaching at the city's well-attended sermons and by personal appearances before the Councils. In these public forums, both Calvin and the Company of Pastors freely expressed their interpretation of God's commandments in the areas of personal ethics and responsibility, social obligations of the community to its members, and even business practices. The leader and the clergy of the Reformed Church felt that virtually every social and economic decision made by Geneva's citizens and Councils affected the physical well-being of the city's residents, which thus touched the moral welfare and spiritual development of the community as a whole. This chapter will provide a basic over-view of Calvin's theology with specific reference to, and interpretation of, those points reflecting

his economic philosophy.<sup>1</sup> In order to avoid studying and considering his doctrine in an historical and philosophical vacuum, it will first be necessary to establish the intellectual background of the era and of some of Calvin's scholarly contemporaries.

Many of Calvin's theological ideas on social welfare and economic activity admittedly reflect the concerns and outlook, the morality and piety, found throughout the Imperial Cities of the late Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> Calvin's attitudes toward commerce and economics did parallel those of Bucer and Zwingli, while remaining divergent at some specific points from those of Martin Luther;<sup>3</sup> but in one respect Calvin was unique and especially discerning. He was essentially the first thinker of this era to grasp the actual mechanism of economic processes and to grapple with the interrelation of secular economic development and the material and moral welfare of the common individual.

This point is significant, for large-scale capitalist activity occurred throughout the Middle Ages, generally under the aegis of Italian bankers. The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the institution itself, relied on these men, their financial activities, and the flourishing economies and industries they helped to develop across Europe. Nevertheless, Church doctrine and the Scholastics automatically condemned their very existence, deeming all monetary matters evil.<sup>4</sup>

Poverty was considered a sought-after blessing rather than a social evil to be averted.

As in other matters, Calvin's keen, penetrating intellect would not allow simple, unanalyzed acceptance of such tenets. If theories or doctrines on social or economic issues failed to conform realistically to actual practice, Calvin demanded that they be critically re-examined in the light of consistency and of present behavior, as well as by the spiritual values implicit in Christianity. Whereas the Scholastics tried to pronounce on economic matters based upon the results of detached philosophical speculation, Calvin instead wanted to understand how economic processes actually functioned in the material world. Once he understood that, he sought to judge their effects on man and on the common good of the community according to Christ's commandments of love and concern.

Thus, Calvin believed all secular aspects of life to be the concern of the Church as well as of the State. The separation of the sacred and the profane was an artificial, detrimental boundary. The detachment of the Church and its ministers from the economic activity of the community would be nothing less than irresponsible. Christian principles (primarily that of love) were necessarily applied to the development and interpretation of secular policy by civil authorities with the encouragement and spiritual guidance of the ecclesiastical estab-



lishment. Calvin felt that the Church had not only a right but also an obligation to involve itself in the social and economic aspects of its members' lives. Because Calvin conceived of money as just one more agent in the divine plan of salvation, he deeply believed that the Church must speak out on economic issues and be a positive Christian influence for the spiritual and material well-being of society.

The clergy were called, like the Old Testament prophets, to encourage the magistrates to pass and to enforce legislation protecting the poor and guarding the public welfare.

We are taught that rich men have  
greater abundance given them up-  
on that condition, that they be  
the ministers of the poor in the  
dispensation committed to them  
by God. 5

From this philosophical basis, Calvin readily immersed himself in social reform and fiscal policy in Geneva; and the social and economic doctrines he espoused resulted from a unique blend of scholarly study, Christian idealism, and necessary pragmatism.

Calvin's Reformed Church successfully pressed the Councils to stimulate employment, pass regulations for honesty in business dealings, fight for just wages, and provide social services to the poor, most notably through the Hôpital-Général.<sup>6</sup> It would not be accurate, however, to say that Calvin acted a-

lone as Geneva's social and business conscience.<sup>7</sup> The civil authorities, for their part, held as a maxim the medieval city-dweller's concern for the total welfare of the community.<sup>8</sup> For example, decisions made by the Councils on interest-taking before Calvin's arrival and during his expulsion advanced the same concerns as Calvin did himself later on. While Church-State relations were sometimes strained by specific issues, both parties accepted the premise that they shared a joint responsibility to control the economic life of their city for the betterment of the entire community, as defined by Christian ethics. Both groups promulgated and promoted an active and aggressive economic program to further their ideals.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Calvin's all-pervading influence in Geneva and his departure from Luther and the Scholastics<sup>10</sup> in "economic" theology did determine a unique fiscal and social welfare policy for the city.

Calvin's route to Christianity, as well as to the reform movement, traversed roads quite different from the other great Reformers. As a young man, Calvin came to Paris and studied at a conservative faculty, but was soon caught up in the excitement of the classical Renaissance and other intellectual pursuits. The young Frenchman was very much a part of the academic world. For Calvin, Reformed Christianity proved ultimately to be the spiritual completion to his class-

ical studies.

On the other hand, Luther, Zwingli, Bucer, and Melancthon were all members of the organized Church, and began their odyssey from that starting point. For them, the traditional teachings of the Medieval Church no longer provided answers to their spiritual questions. An examination of the Bible in its original languages pointed up doctrinal contradictions between the Early and the Medieval Church and so led these men to a renewed, "pristine" Christian understanding, hopefully untainted by centuries of institutional Church dogma. Whereas the four Reformers had made a commitment to the actual movement by the early 1520's, Calvin was still a humanist with unquestioned Roman beliefs as late as 1532. Of course, Calvin was much younger than they.

In truth, as of that date, Calvin had taken little personal interest in theology. He had become acquainted with the writings of Luther, Le Fevre, and Melancthon in the preceding decade, but they seem not to have made any real impact on him. He gravitated toward Guillaume Budé and other Catholic humanists "for whom the re-establishment of good literature was infinitely more important than any attack upon Roman dogmatics."<sup>11</sup> Calvin was quite content to pursue his classical studies and remain outside the maelstrom of religious change sweeping through Paris. In later years he would write:

And at first, whilst I remained thus  
so obstinately addicted to the super-

stitutions of the Papacy that it would have been hard indeed to have pulled me out of so deep a quagmire but sudden conversion, [God] subdued a heart which, for my age, was far too hardened in such matters. 12

An aspiring young academician could only hope to make a name for himself by writing, publishing, and then awaiting the older humanists' response. So, at the age of 23, Calvin embarked on the ambitious project of writing a commentary on Seneca's De Clementia. The endeavor mingled youthful enthusiasm with a bit of brashness, for only a few years earlier had the venerable Erasmus published his own "definitive" edition; however, Erasmus had (perhaps facetiously) prefaced the work with the request that others should try to improve upon his efforts.

Calvin set to analyzing De Clementia by using the Renaissance method of textual criticism that he was later to apply to Biblical study. This procedure required the scholar to ground himself thoroughly in the classical languages, with special emphasis on ascertaining the exact meanings of the words in the period when they were written. Differing editions of the same text were compared and analyzed to find the most ancient, and thereby most accurate, available. By properly and systematically interpreting the original words, the

true meaning of the text could be discerned.

Calvin's commentary on De Clementia agreed with Seneca's emphasis on charity in the administration of justice and also recommended maintaining high standards of personal ethics. This latter point was deduced, however, through a classical, not a Christian, rationale. In his commentary, Calvin quoted the ancient writers and Augustine frequently, but seldom referred to the Bible. Unfortunately, Calvin's edition never received much attention, even though it did make substantial refinements on Erasmus' earlier effort.<sup>13</sup>

Calvin originally favored the philosophical stance and conclusions of the Stoics, but over time he began to see certain deficiencies in their position. Through further study and debate with friends, he came to believe that Augustine's Christian viewpoint corrected these inadequacies. In this manner, Calvin ultimately saw Christianity as the spiritual fulfillment for the ethical matrix constructed by the best minds of the classical world.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike Luther, who wrote voluminously on the subject, Calvin disclosed little about his actual conversion experience. It is known, however, that sometime in 1533 or 1534, Calvin wholeheartedly embraced the Reformers' viewpoint and cause. Even before that date, he had counted among his closest friends many members of the reforming circle, including his cousin Rob-

ert Olivétan, who later translated the Bible into French at Neuchâtel, and the famed German scholar Melchior Wolmar, who was an outspoken<sup>15</sup> Lutheran teaching in France. These men *Advocate of* must have had a profound effect on Calvin which supplemented<sup>16</sup> or perhaps even guided his academic studies.

After making his committment to the Reformed movement, Calvin applied Renaissance exegetical techniques to Biblical study in order to develop a clear, consistent, historically accurate theology. He believed of course that the Bible was divinely inspired, the ultimate source of authority in all matters of faith and doctrine. He then extrapolated from his classical studies that correctly understanding the Holy Scrip-<sup>17</sup> tures in their original languages and knowing the precise meaning of the original words would lay bare the pure Gospel, unadulterated by a Church and a Papacy long gone astray. From such study, a comprehension of God's plan could be ascertained, and all dogmatic questions could be answered. This was Calvin's creation of the modern science of Biblical exegesis.

It is important to remember that neither Calvin nor the humanists initially sought to create a new institution or credo. Rather, they felt that they were reforming the Medieval Church to its apostolic message and purity through careful, justifiable, rational criticism. Medieval Scholasticism, they believed, had lost sight of the greater issues of Christianity,

and its theology had degenerated into arid haggling over obscure and trivial details. Personal salvation, viewed in the Augustinian conversion experience, had been overlooked by the Roman Catholic Church as time went on. Its restoration to importance in doctrine and ministry was imperative.

Just as proper Biblical exegesis revealed God's Word accurately, comprehending the "sitz in leben" of the New Testament would further elucidate the pure, original meaning of the Gospel, claimed the Reformers. The whole of their Christian theology, then, was based upon the Holy Bible which, in turn, was further refined by the expositions of the Early Church Fathers. The Patristic writings illuminated the Early Church; the Roman hierarchy of the Middle Ages had added unnecessary encumbrances to the Church while, at the same time, removing that original, authentic picture further and further from view. Eliminating these institutional obstructions would facilitate a speedy return to the apostolically-ordained Church.

Although economics certainly played a minor part in Calvin's personal, over-all theology, it is not surprising that he did try to deal with the subject in a Christian context using Biblical exegetical techniques. For Calvin, the Creation, the Fall of Adam, and the redemption of mankind through Christ all had their economic consequences and in-



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 terpretations. Moreover, they made clear the proper theological position a city and its magistrates should assume in dealing with economic issues and questions.

God created a good and perfect world, and then made Adam master over it. In Eden, material bounty was assured to man and to all of God's creatures. In Adam's original state, pure and perfect communication existed for man with God, enabling man's material requirements to be readily conveyed to his Creator. Hence, man's needs were directly and immediately satisfied by God.

With Adam's disobedience, however, came the destruction of this perfect state. Man was expelled from bounteous Eden and forced to work for his survival "by toil, all the days of...his life."<sup>19</sup> Disinterested nature outside of the Garden did not always yield up its fruit abundantly, easily, and immediately, so scarcity and even famine occurred. That perfect communion between man and God had been ruptured as well. After the Fall, man became "totally alienated from [God] ,"<sup>20</sup> cut off from understanding the divine will.

In recording Israel's history, the Old Testament demonstrates again and again the consequences of man's imperfect nature. Greed, material envy, the exploitation of neighbor, and the worship of a golden idol are all examples in the monetary aspects of man's fallen character. It was to cure these

ills that the prophets were sent, to call the Hebrew nation back to a perfect communion with their God and a clear understanding of His laws. As they were unable to bring about man's redemption, so they could not destroy his social sins and economic iniquities.

Only through the death, resurrection, and grace of Jesus Christ can mankind bridge the chasm that resulted from Adam's disobedience. In turning wholeheartedly to the Lord, man's nature is changed from greed to charity, from selfishness to concern, from the worship of money to its use for others. Through Christ and within the framework of His apostolic Church, the perfect communion can once again be established between man and his God.

Calvin notes that the phrase "communion of saints" admirably expresses the reality of the Church, since in it the members mutually communicate all the benefits God confers upon them. The thought of communion and communication is strongly emphasized. Calvin has no tolerance for any solitary piety that detaches itself from this active interchange of spiritual values. The Church is an indispensable agent in the divine plan of salvation. 21

All of Calvin's economic theories flow from this interpretation of the Bible. Upon conceiving of history and the divine plan in this way, Calvin feels that no man is the "owner"

or can be the exploiter of this world's bounty. Because all things on this earth are God's and rightly belong only to Him, we can be considered as no more than stewards or custodians for His creation. It is imperative, then, that man understand how God wants His creation to be handled.

For it is important to note that what each man possesses did not come to him by chance, but by the distribution of Him who is the sovereign master and Lord of all, and it is for this reason that one never defraud another of his wealth, because then the administration of God would be violated. 22

To know how to apply that wealth, the law of charity, given to man through Christ, must be the gauge. When the Christian's heart is filled with the love of God, he will make correct decisions in economic matters. What made Calvin's teachings in this realm so different from his predecessors and contemporaries was his rigorous insistence that before any financial activity be permitted or condemned it be examined for its practical implications and judged by Christ's law of compassion. To illustrate this point, Calvin quoted the noted French humanist-jurist Guillaume Budé: "for while law demands complete and unwavering rectitude, equity remits something of the law."<sup>23</sup> All worldly endeavors and decisions should be subjected to and measured by the ultimate yardstick of God's Word.

And God has engraven in men's nature a law of equity, so that whoever declines from that rule, through an immoderate desire for personal advantage, is left utterly without excuse ....but as soon as they descend to their own affairs, perverse self-love blinds them, or at least envelopes them in such clouds that they are carried in an opposite course. Wherefore, let us learn to restrain ourselves, that a desire of our own advantage may not prevail to a sacrifice of justice. 24

Calvin's theological studies led him to conclude that poverty existed because of the "collective sinfulness of man." 25 Although the world provided sufficient for all men to live adequately, greed, selfishness, and exploitation caused severe financial disparity. This situation was an unfortunate testimony to man's sinfulness, to his choice of power, material acquisition, transient pleasure, and, even worse, to his rejection of Christ and His teachings. The Lord assumed a simple life of little money and virtually no possessions, yet he was never destitute. His condition was to be an illustration both of the little needed for a spiritually rich life and of the obligation to share whatever possible with those in want.

In fact, the poor still act as ministers to the world by their example and by their reminder and urging of charity and brotherly love. If men are to live in communion with God and with one another, communication of need and assistance must be maintained. The Christian community should work to elimin-

ate debasing poverty.<sup>26</sup> Abject privation is not a state to be encouraged or voluntarily entered into as some artificial means to salvation.<sup>27</sup> Ecclesiastical poverty in particular had essentially degenerated into the hypocrisy and legalized sloth and "stealing" of the mendicants and some monastics.<sup>28</sup> Total, unmasked-for penury in common men can incur its own temptations, sins, and evil.

He [Amos] speaks here again of the greed for riches, which in times of scarcity is held like a foot on the throat of the poor, and makes them slaves to it.

For we know what makes want and extreme need. When men are pressed by famine, they would sooner sell their life a hundred times that they may save themselves from hunger, no matter what the price. 29

Remembering Christ's teachings, then, it was the duty of wealthy Christians to provide for the less fortunate. No longer was it the prerogative of the pious rich to give to the needy at whim just to help earn their soul's salvation. Since man was justified by the gift of faith alone, self-seeking charity would not save the sinner. For Calvin, giving alms was to be expected, an obligation. Its only spiritual reward lay in helping the donor to live in closer communion with God and with his fellow man. Likewise, it ensured that wealth and self-indulgence would not block or hamper man's relation with God.

In the accomplishment of Calvin's goal of caring for the poor, more than simple charity was called for. Some redistribution of wealth through ready employment and fair wages was necessary. It was equally important for the Christian community to seek out and eliminate those economic practices which threatened the well-being of the badly impoverished. Specifically, Calvin condemned speculation, hoarding, and profiteering on essential commodities, especially food. Speculation raised prices unnecessarily for all while providing easy gain for a few. Indeed, the very existence of the poor was threatened when the cost of flour was artificially pushed beyond an affordable amount. Such a practice directly stole from the poor, forced the hungry to borrow to purchase their daily bread, and even caused starvation,<sup>30</sup> if not crime. Calvin rightly accused such unscrupulous merchants and opportunists of being thieves and murderers.

In yet another significant area, Calvin broke with medieval economic teaching. Like Luther years earlier, Calvin disagreed with the Scholastic interpretation of the concept of "vocation." In the Middle Ages, a calling to the Church was considered more holy (and of course more socially respectable) than an entry into any other profession. The Reformers, on the other hand, raised all professions to an equal level before God. This doctrinal change perhaps was an assessment of

the pious actions of the city merchants and artisans who sought the ministers' Scriptural preaching, but more especially it was an indication of their Christian faith in God's providence and guidance.

If a Christian prayed that God lead him to his life's work, then the vocation that He disclosed should be respected and valued equally with any other by both the Church and the community. The particular decision had not been made by seeking the greatest monetary reward or highest position; rather, it had been made by listening to the will of God and confidently following His call. There was no relation between one's income and social position and God's approval of his labor.

And this word "vocation" also means "call," and this call carries with it this, that God points His finger at one and says, "I want you to live thus or thus." 31

Only those professions which were immoral or illicit should  
32  
be outlawed.

However, Luther did glorify the farmer and the artisan to the detriment of the merchant, because both of the former physically produced essential items through their own toil and abilities. Merchants earned their living only through buying and selling the work of others. Calvin refused to ac-



knowledge even this distinction, considering all vocations that benefitted the common good to be inherently equal, a precept which no doubt appealed to the rising middle class of the cities. Surely an administrator or a teacher did not grow or manufacture a tangible product, but the activities and the communal benefit and contributions of each were still to be honored.

For the French humanist, a better understanding of Old Testament Hebrew opened still deeper levels of meaning to the matter of vocation. The Scholastics believed that man's having to work for his livelihood was mankind's punishment for the sins of Adam, based upon the Genesis pronouncement to him: "You shall eat from the soil in toil all the days of your life."<sup>33</sup> Calvin, however, noted that the Scholastics were philologically in error on this point. The curse put on Adam was not work itself, but the boredom and the frustration often found in toil.

"You shall eat from the soil in toil all the days of your life." By "eat from the soil" Moses means to live from the fruits which proceed from it. The Hebrew word for which we have used "toil" signifies also displeasure and boredom. It is the opposite of the pleasurable labor to which Adam had dedicated himself before, such that it seemed for him a game or a pass-time. <sup>34</sup>

Calvin examined the Genesis passage further and discern-

ed that God actually had commanded man to work for his livelihood. In fact, it was immoral for a man to live off the toil and dedication of others, as did the mendicants and those who were supported by benefices. Likewise did Calvin condemn those humanists who sought to dissociate themselves from the world yet still existed through the worldly revenues of ecclesiastical or civil sinecures.

Moses now adds that the earth was given to man with this condition—that he should occupy himself in its cultivation. Whence it follows, that men were created to employ themselves in some work, and not to lie down in inactivity and idleness. When God ordained that men should be exercised in the culture of the ground, he condemned, in his person, all indolent repose. Wherefore, nothing is more contrary to the order of nature, than to consume life in eating, drinking, and sleeping, while in the meantime we propose nothing to ourselves to do. 35

By observing that God had chosen an appropriate vocation for each man, Calvin saw employment as somewhat "sacralized." In that case, all actions which deprived a man from exercising his vocation were contrary to the will of God. Unemployment was a social scourge and an anathema. Those who through their avaricious nature deprived others of a job were likewise not to be tolerated. The Church and the State, together, should create employment and protect jobs. 36

While all professions were placed on an equal footing, Calvin counterbalanced that with stringent demands for honesty and integrity. The merchant's livelihood per se was free from rebuke but not the fraud and deception often associated with it. Dishonesty was not only a reflection of man's imperfect and fallen nature; worse, it was a betrayal of the stewardship over God's creation which He had entrusted to man. Calvin, even the social ethicist, did feel that every occupation should in some way serve the common weal.

It is also observed that there are different ways of laboring. Whoever aids and brings advantage to the society of man by his industry, either by ruling his family, or by administering public or private affairs, or by counselling, or by teaching, or in any other way, is not to be reckoned among the idle. 37

Profiteering and speculation might be forbidden, but certainly not the investment of money to open a factory which benefitted the community by providing jobs and a new source of income. Imploring God's blessing on such enterprises was not at all contradictory to Christian premises either. The entrepreneur devoting his energy and resources to a "moral" enterprise was right in praying for its success, although not on the basis that he stood to gain.<sup>38</sup> The Christian should ask that his labor and resources be not spent in vain, recognizing

that God alone gives the completion and success to his labors.

Whatever I attempt, or whatever work  
I apply my hands to, it is my duty  
to desire God to bless my labor, that  
it may not be in vain and fruitless.  
Then, if I have obtained anything, my  
second duty is to ascribe the praise  
to God. 39

As God gives the completion and meaning to man's labors,  
the absence of His blessing renders human toil useless.

It is in vain that men toil to culti-  
vate the fields if God does not send  
down rain to them from the heavens.  
It is necessary that our labors be  
watered by Him, and that He give them  
their growth; otherwise, they shall  
be useless...And that we have poverty  
and indigence, that derives from our  
own fault [if] we have rejected the  
blessing of God by our sinfulness. 40

The Christian should entrust his material well-being to God,  
41  
"not worrying for the morrow."

Although possessing the material necessities of life is  
a blessing from God, it must be remembered that there is no  
quantitative relationship between wealth and divine approval.  
If such were the case, both Calvin's Geneva and the Hebrew na-  
tion would have been considered withering under divine rebuke.

John Calvin's economic credo remained consistent with  
his entire theological system both in method and content. Al-

though he broke with the medieval teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the Scholastics, as well as with some of his contemporaries, Calvin nonetheless tempered these liberalized tenets with an insistence that Christian charity and an ethical concern for the good of the community be the determining factors in all economic decisions. His influence and doctrines encouraged and furthered Geneva's already-existent concern for thorough and dignified care for the poor.

## Chapter Fifteen Footnotes

1. No systematic evaluation of Calvin's economic and social writings would be possible without the fine work of Andre Bieler. Most of Calvin's works which have been quoted herein were pulled from his book:

Biéler, Andre. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959.

Biéler appears to have stood on the very capable shoulders of two earlier historians:

Doumergue, Emile. Jean Calvin: les hommes et les choses de son temps, vol. 5. Lausanne, 1927.

Hauser, Henri. Les débuts du capitalisme. Paris, 1931. See especially Chapter 2: "Les idées économiques de Calvin."

Also, see: Sayous, André-Etienne. "Calvinisme et capitalisme, l'expérience genevoise." Annales d'histoire économique et sociale, vol. 7, (1935).

2. See Introduction, and Chapter Four, pp. 76-78.
3. This difference is noted by Bernd Moeller (Imperial Cities and the Reformation, Philadelphia, 1972, pp. 102-103):

The theology of these two founders [Bucer and Zwingli] of the "Reformed" tradition was decisively influenced at important points by the very existence and peculiar mentality of the urban community where they worked.

4. Hauser, Les débuts, pp. 54-60.
5. Calvin, John. Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 11, verse 29 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 323).
6. See Chapter Nineteen, pp. 488-520.
7. See Chapter Two, pp. 23-39
8. See Chapter 4, pp. 76-78.

9. In sixteenth century Geneva, one does not find a fatalistic surrender of economic destiny to "immutable market laws." These Genevans believed they could and should control their municipal economic environment. This notes a marked difference from eighteenth and nineteenth century views of economics.
10. See pp. 416-425.
11. Wendel, François. Calvin. London, 1963, pp. 20-21.
12. Quoted in: Wendel, Calvin, p. 37.
13. See: Battles, F.L., and A.M. Hugo (eds.). Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's 'De Clementia.' Leiden, 1969.
14. Wendel, Calvin, pp. 37-45.
15. Ibid., p. 38.
16. Calvin and nearly all his friends left Paris in 1533 after a religious university address by the king's physician (Guillaume Cop) provoked a series of inquisitions by King Francis I.
17. Erasmus' Greek New Testament (1516) made the original text available to all.
18. Richardson, Alan (ed.). A Dictionary of Christian Theology. London, 1969, p. 307.
19. Genesis 3:17.
20. Calvin, John. Commentary on the First Five Books of Moses, Genesis, chapter 1, verse 17 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 407).
21. Mc Neill, John T. The History and Character of Calvinism. New York, 1954, p. 214.
22. Calvin, John. Institution de la Religion Chrestienne, book 2, chapter 7, paragraph 45 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 323).
23. Battles, Calvin's Commentary, p. 271.
24. Calvin, Commentary on the First, Genesis, chapter 29, verse 14 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 422).
25. Biéler, La pensée, p. 27.
26. This change from the medieval attitude reflected the Renaissance concern for the dignity of man.



27. Voluntary poverty arose from the "salvation by works" activities of the Medieval Church.
28. Biéler, La pensée, pp. 327-333. See also: Calvin, John. Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter 19, verse 24.
29. Calvin, John. Lessons and Well-known Expositions on the Twelve Lesser Prophets, Amos, chapter 8, verse 6 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 342).
30. Biéler, La pensée, pp. 339-342. Genevan efforts to care for the poor are recounted in Chapter Nine, pp. 194-250.
31. Calvin, Commentary...Matthew, chapter 20, verse 1 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 404).
32. Calvin proved this by citing both Cicero and St. Paul.  
Calvin, John. Commentary on the New Testament, Ephesians, chapter 4, verse 28 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 407).
33. Genesis 3:17.
34. Calvin, Commentary on the First, Leviticus, chapter 19, verse 45 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, pp. 410-412).
35. Calvin, Commentary on the First, Genesis, chapter 2, verse 15 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 407).
36. See Chapter Nineteen, p. 506.  
  
In good part, Calvin seemed to prefer a Christianized version of the social welfare states currently operating in Scandinavia. There, employment and investment are in private hands, but the material needs of all must be assured as a prerequisite to profit.
37. Calvin, John. Commentary on the New Testament, II Thesalonians, chapter 3, verse 10 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 406).
38. It would be an abomination to ask God to make us rich.
39. Calvin, Commentary on the First, Genesis, chapter 30, verse 29 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, pp. 416-417).
40. Calvin, John. Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 17, verse 11 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 417).
41. Matthew 6:34.

## Chapter Sixteen

### Money Supply, Public Borrowing, and Interest Rates

Agricultural and industrial production are intrinsically bound up with the problems of money supply and credit. Fluctuations in these economic phenomena reflect the transition of the Genevan economy from Savoyard days until the city's independence and on through the century. This chapter will be devoted to this transition and the standards by which it is most easily understood and judged: Genevan currency and its minting; inflation and devaluation; loans and interest rates; the inception of a public bank and the economic effect of the influx of religious refugees.

While studying each of these purely fiscal issues, it will be essential to remember that the Reformed Church was not removed from concern regarding them. Indeed, it used its moral influence for the economic well-being of the community. As with assuring food supply and promoting employment, the pastors and the councilors worked to protect the poor and improve the life of every re-

sident, especially when religious immigrants created serious strains on the town's meager economic resources. Yet again, Geneva's authorities engineered new solutions to meet those, and any, challenges.

Even while the international trade fairs of the fifteenth century provided Geneva with a certain economic importance, they had little effect on indigenous money patterns. No native banking houses ever sprang up; people seeking loans looked no further than wealthy private individuals, for needs and amounts were small. As has been noted,<sup>1</sup> the fairs were not sponsored financially by Genevan tradesmen or shopkeepers but by foreign bankers and travelling merchants. Geneva was a trade center by geographical location and a sort of international unspoken agreement, not by its own fiscal strength, industrial prominence, cultural influence, or military superiority. It was a backward, back-water town graced by the presence of these externally introduced trade fairs; but it was unchanged in its internal procedures and development by that same presence.<sup>2</sup> It was a town of small shopkeepers, notaries, and artisans, where very few could claim to be wealthy.

Thus, after the decline of the trade fairs, Geneva was an economically stagnant town, once more without bright prospects.<sup>3</sup> Little manufacturing took place within the city, other than the production of household and farming articles to serve

the immediate region of which Geneva remained the principal marketplace. Agricultural production was so limited that metropolitan Geneva could not even feed itself and had to import grain from France and Savoy. Yet because of its lack of manufacturing skills and production, the city was hard pressed to earn the revenue to pay for that food.

In episcopal, Savoyard Geneva, the Seigneurie and the Councils had but little authority over the municipality's economic direction; the Duke and Bishop controlled virtually all of the decisions affecting the city's financial situation. During these years, Geneva remained a satellite city, a provincial center in the northern extremity of Savoy, used by its suzerains while its needs were overlooked. Considering this ducal and episcopal neglect, it is curious that the primary mint for all of Savoy was situated in the Cornavin district of Geneva.<sup>4</sup>

By 1527, the Petit Conseil had begun to emerge as the locus of political power in the city. In that year, the official interest rate was fixed at 5% per annum to conform to the figure current in Berne and Basle, as opposed to the rate operable during the era of trade fairs (5% from fair to fair, or 20% per annum). That lower figure was reaffirmed in 1538 because of municipal concern to safeguard the poor from excessive interest, to provide additional funds for their personal needs, and to prosecute those exceeding the legal rate. In fact, the allowable in-

terest chargeable remained at 5% until 1557.<sup>5</sup>

When the young republic finally gained its independence from the Duke of Savoy (who was typically disinterested in Geneva's financial ill-health) and when it had achieved its religious Reformation, it was forced to squarely face its many serious economic problems,<sup>6</sup> amongst which was the circulation of money. What money there was had circulated earlier around the trade fairs and old merchant families and then around the ducal and episcopal courts. By 1536, these four sources of wealth had disappeared.

In the past, the coining of money had been the prerogative of the Duke; now Geneva was responsible for its own coinage. In fact, the Syndics had seized this authority from Savoy in 1535 and placed it under the jurisdiction of the Petit Conseil. To begin with, the Petit Conseil instituted different proceedings for Geneva's mint and hired new employees. The mint was to be directed by the "Maistre de Monnaie," a man named by the Petit Conseil and confirmed by the Deux Cents. He oversaw the entire coining operation and selected the engravers, assayers, and general workers. In addition, the city Councils paid a "Garde de Monnaie" 40 florins per year to check the mint's work and to track down counterfeiters.<sup>7</sup>

Council proclamations announced the new money and declared that everyone must accept the coins,<sup>8</sup> something the residents of

the town were at first reluctant to do. Those travelling did refuse to accept or use the new coinage, because it could not be exchanged elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> However, in 1537, Genevan currency was approved for exchange throughout Bernese territory.<sup>10</sup> The coins passed an assay to receive an official exchange rate even in Lyons in 1542. Unfortunately, a scant two years later, the King of France (at loggerheads with Emperor Charles V) prohibited all currency originating in the Imperial Cities from free circulation in France.<sup>11</sup> In 1550, the Parlement de Dôle<sup>12</sup> outrightly forbade the acceptance of Genevan currency, although in this instance because of its feebleness rather than because of a personal, political dispute.<sup>13</sup>

Any approval of locally minted currency by neighboring powers helped to legitimize the new regime. Indeed, the Maître de Monnaie received orders from the Petit Conseil to take great care in the minting, for "the money carries the honor of the city."<sup>14</sup>

In this era, a twin system of money was common. Geneva used the écu of Savoy as its hard (precious metal) currency, which in turn provided the standard for its local currency or medium of exchange (the Genevan florin).<sup>15</sup> This second currency (also known as the "money of account") was employed in local transactions, Council budgets, debts notarized in the city, etc. After the arrival of the Huguenots, the French "livre tournois"

became the customary money of account,<sup>16</sup> although legally it was unacceptable for monetary transactions. In fact, in 1562, the Councils were forced to order that only the Genevan florin could serve as the medium of exchange. In this way, the town could maintain tighter control over its economic situation through its own indigenous currency. Also, it could turn a bit of a profit by allowing currency exchange at governmentally sanctioned offices, at governmentally set rates. Doubtless, this regulation regarding sole acceptance of the Genevan florin was not universally observed.<sup>17</sup>

For the actual minting procedure of coins, Geneva followed the lead of other Protestant States and melted down the silver in confiscated Roman Catholic jewellery, chalices, offeratories, crosses, and candlesticks. In fact, this policy was begun in November, 1535, six months before the Roman Catholic Church was officially disestablished.<sup>18</sup> Such appropriation of ecclesiastical property<sup>19</sup> provided the civil government with its major source of income. As the revenue of the Roman Church was now in the hands of the secular authorities, so too were the purse strings of the new Reformed Church. The Councils paid for the upkeep of Church property, the hospital and public charity system, the salaries of the hospital staff and the Reformed clergy, plus the latters' homes. Even after such disbursements, a substantial surplus remained for further government disposal. This additional revenue was used toward paying off the city debt, Bernese military rescue,<sup>20</sup> and the general expenses involved in transferring other municipal functions to lay control.



In addition to the income derived from the secularization of Roman Church property, Geneva still required several large loans from wealthy individuals in Berne and from the city of Basle. These came in three major transactions during Calvin's lifetime: from 1530 to 1533, 19,000 florins were borrowed; during the years 1538 to 1546, another 26,000; and, finally, from 1563 to 1571, an additional 86,000 florins were secured. Thus, by 1571, Geneva was indebted by 103,000 florins,<sup>21</sup> primarily at the Basle public exchange.

For the most part, the Basle loans were put into a special treasury and held in reserve for emergency expenditures, such as military defense or the purchase of grain. This account ("l'Arche") was used to repay other foreign loans and, after Calvin's death, to make a great many secret disbursements, such as in the sending of emissaries or the bribery of foreign officials.

Unfortunately, however, much of the capital from the Arche simply sat in government coffers, costing the municipality interest.<sup>22</sup> Such a wasteful situation bothered a number of the magistrates, who, in 1568, endeavored to use part of the final loan in the creation of a public bank. After inception, it was designed to pay its way by charging borrowers 10% interest, an amount the ministers complained to be too high. Ultimately, the bank collapsed through gross mismanagement.<sup>23</sup> Like similar attempts in other European cities, the Genevan "change publique" proved an ex-

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pensive failure.

In the early years of independence, loans were, for the most part, modest in scale (often involving as little as a few florins) and of short duration (frequently less than a month). The greatest number by far were directed to the countryside either for the purchase of property there by town merchants or for the needs of previously established farmers who wished to increase their holdings, purchase new equipment, or pay town taxes or rents. Loans to the farmers were most often repaid in produce at harvest time.

25

As has already been discussed, land purchases in the past had been made in order to secure a country seat for town gentry eager to gain entrance to the petty nobility. Sadly for those who attained such, falling land revenues made it increasingly difficult for them to maintain their expensive, expansive life style. Many became indebted to town creditors and were forced to sell part or all of their holdings.

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In the 1530's and 1540's, property purchases from impoverished nobility were seen by townspeople as a source of revenue and power, often in addition to their shops or professional employment in the city. Their business expertise and economic insight allowed them success in the rural territories that the inexperienced, indolent, profligate nobility could never hope to achieve. Hence, the economic decline of the landed gentry coin-

cided with the rise of the bourgeois farmer.

Second in number to the farmers, the heaviest borrowing was done by young men seeking to pay for apprenticeships or to open shops. These loans were generally greater in amount, although fewer in number, than those to farmers.

All Genevan loans were to be made before and witnessed by a notary. Often, wealthy Genevans used agents or *négotiants* as intermediaries for their loan transactions with the less prosperous. The Seigneurie assumed a particular concern in protecting farmers from the newly-acquired rural territories against usurious practices.  
28

In the fifteen years following the Reformation, borrowing and trade (like politics and religious thought) came primarily from Basle and Berne. However, in the decade of 1550-1560, the arrival of religious refugees (who swelled the city by approximately 7,000) had the greatest influence on Geneva's economic situation and monetary policies. Some of the immigrants were wealthy; but all produced a tremendous demand for money, employment, food, housing, and social services with which to start their lives over again. After 1550, the city's great foreign-born entrepreneurs endowed Geneva with an international outlook in business affairs, culminating in the rise of an international banking community during the following century. All in all, through immigrant instigation, money patterns in Geneva embarked

on a new, international course which has served the city down to the present.

The professional composition of these refugees and their effect on the development of commerce and industry has been discussed elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> Their specific effect on interest rates and money policy is the immediate concern. Initially, the entry of thousands of French and Italian refugees and their demands for food, housing, and, most importantly, capital accentuated the city's financial problems. Like currency everywhere, Genevan coinage was weak during periods of economic, social, and military instability. While the Genevan florin embarked on a relatively long period of strength against silver from 1536 until 1550, it was enfeebled by a series of rapid devaluations during the earlier years of war against Savoy and again after 1550.<sup>30</sup> In this latter era, increased wheat prices (whose average yearly cost rose most quickly after 1551<sup>31</sup>), the influx of refugees (whose presence and needs accelerated commodity prices and interest rates<sup>32</sup>), and municipal budget expenditures (which remained nearly constant between 1541 and 1548, yet climbed rapidly after 1553<sup>33</sup>) created an inflationary, unstable economic situation in Geneva.

Besides inflation, all of these factors conspired to drive up interest rates even more speedily after 1557.<sup>34</sup> Such an increase in interest belatedly signified the transition in Geneva

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from the pre- to the post-Refuge economy.

Of course, this increase in rates also resulted in complaints that usury laws were often being broken. In October, 1557, a committee was established to consider the allegations by Calvin and the pastors of growing usury discovered by the Consistory. The report issued by the committee caused the Petit Conseil to raise the official rate to  $6\frac{2}{3}\%$  in November, 1557, and to admit that demand had left them no choice.

Having had communications and advice from many..., and in order to avoid in future all frauds which are committed through excessive interest usury to the ruin and destruction of many, and also to give the means and rescue to those who for their businesses need to find and borrow money on interest.... 36

Calvin was forced to agree to this edict as an unfortunate necessity. After his death, another crisis of credit (in 1568) led to a further increase up to  $8\frac{1}{3}\%$ . In this decision, the import of Calvin's theological teaching on interest taking was most influential and caused the creation of a two-tiered system. The rate for private borrowing was restricted to  $6\frac{2}{3}\%$ , while commercial transactions were permitted at  $8\frac{1}{3}\%$ .<sup>37</sup> By means of this arrangement, businessmen would no longer take their money elsewhere in Europe where the rates were higher. Also, the ministers would not have to fear their and Geneva's being "condemned in Germany [German-speaking Switzerland] where

the rate is 5%." <sup>38</sup> To keep all parties content and to serve  
the poor, the two-tiered system was readily adopted. <sup>39</sup>

For a number of years, wealthy Huguenot merchants had been advantageously using their own version of the two-tiered system. They had contracted international business during trade fairs and while travelling at the higher interest rate. Back in Geneva, they borrowed at the lower rate and spent their profits to live comfortably.

It is impressive to note how hard Geneva's magistrates and pastors labored to find the just price of money and to safeguard the borrower against usury. The Councils and the Consistory sought an equilibrium which provided the optimum benefit to the merchants and to local economic growth while serving the welfare of the small householder and farmer. An ethical balance was to be achieved in a selected interest rate which allowed the poor to afford necessities, and the wealthy to accrue investment return. For all of these people, the interest rate was just one more part of the municipal environment controlled for the common good.

For Calvin, and equally for the Councils which had preceded him, the choice of rates was a moral as well as a practical one. This procedure was a long way from simply letting certain economic laws take their own course. It was also a decision quite different from choosing the rate with the great-

est profit for the greatest number of people.<sup>40</sup>

During the latter part of the sixteenth century, the rise of interest rates hurt the farmer worse than the shopkeeper. Payments of produce were fixed at the autumn-based price to diminish the adverse effects of rapidly fluctuating food prices. However, notarial records indicate that the farmers' profit margin fell slightly every year. Those who needed summer loans to tide them over until the harvest borrowed sums a few weeks earlier with each succeeding year.<sup>41</sup>

No doubt violations of Geneva's economic statutes occurred in both the city and the rural territories. Although such improprieties were prosecuted through normal channels, widespread usury and other practices to defraud the borrower persisted. One would have to assume, however, that this opportunism was far less common in Geneva than in France or Savoy because of the concern and conscientiousness of the city's lay and clerical leaders.

Geneva's fiscal instability was also caused in part by its continuing uneasy political situation. In the face of a renewed and hostile Savoy, many international bankers (including some Huguenots) were afraid to invest in the city for fear of its capture.<sup>42</sup> Only Basle financiers appear to have had any confidence in Geneva's ability to survive.

Two additional causes of Geneva's economic difficulties



from 1550, completely beyond the city's control, were the arrival of New World silver and the alterations in traditional supply and trade routes in Europe. A tremendous economic instability occurred all over the Continent, especially with the outrageous inflation of food prices relative to wages. The devaluation of the French livre tournois closely paralleled the fall of the Genevan florin.<sup>43</sup> All money of account throughout Europe declined rapidly in the late sixteenth century against hard currency (precious metal). Such overwhelming increases in the cost of living actually frightened the uncomprehending populace. However, Geneva was more fortunate than most cities, for, by the end of the century, refugee skills and money counter-balanced inflationary prices and interest rates with improved jobs, salaries, and economic prospects for the city.

In its own way, public borrowing managed to provide the civil government with a cash cushion to use in emergency for grain purchases or military defense. Indirectly, these aided the social welfare and stability of the city, inasmuch as the poor were at least assured of the necessities and never had occasion to create civil disturbances to gain the attention of the magistrates. In any case, the hospital system always stood ready to furnish direct assistance to those in peril during economically difficult times.

In closing, it is essential to emphasize the pastors'

diligent attempts to protect the common people from economic exploitation. The exercised a surprising degree of influence over secular economic decisions, both through Calvin's doctrines on money and the use of deacons in overseeing the material welfare of Geneva's residents. For Calvin, the Platonic demarcation between the spiritual and material realms was largely artificial:<sup>44</sup> "the totality of human experience is fashioned and led by God."<sup>45</sup> Therefore, each theological, social, or economic decision should conform to a Christian precept or understanding of the world. By caring about and protecting all aspects of man's life, the pastors continued and magnified the ethical and social concern traditional in Geneva and implicit in the Councils' 1538 proclamation to forbid high interest rates against the poor, thereby stimulating an environment in which the concerns of the poor were emphasized and respected.

## Chapter Sixteen Footnotes

1. See Chapter Eleven, pp. 269-270.
2. While the trade fairs failed to encourage manufacture and banking, they did influence the enactment of numerous statutes in the Franchises for the protection of both buyer and seller. For more information, see Chapter Two, pp. 24-28.
3. Jean Chautemps and Amblard Corne, both politically influential figures, were among the few exceptions to the shopkeeper mentality and economic stagnation. Both branched out into many fields of commerce.  
  
Bergier, Jean-François. "La démission du Trésorier Amblard Corne." MDG, vol. 60, (1961), p. 457.
4. Bergier, Jean-François. Genève et l'économie européenne de la Renaissance. Paris, 1963, p. 82, footnote 1.  
  
A good summary of the Genevan economy in the sixteenth century can be found in the following:  
  
Babel, Antony. Histoire économique de Genève des origines au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, 2 vol. Geneva, 1963.
5. See Appendix, p. 566.
6. The economic problems included those already or to be discussed: insufficient agricultural production, lack of industry, large loans owed to the Swiss Confederation, etc.
7. RC, November 24, 1535; RC, December 24, 1535. Also: S.D., vol. 2, pp. 304-306, fol. 684-686, (November 24, 1535; December 5, 1535; December 24, 1535).  
  
Demole, Eugène. "Histoire monétaire de Genève de 1535 à 1792." MDG (quarto), vol. 1, (1887), pp. 39-49.
8. RC, December 28, 1535.
9. RC, January 19, 1536.
10. Demole, "Histoire monétaire," p. 150.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. See later in this chapter, pp. 435-436.

14. RC, December 24, 1535.
15. The local currency contained only a stipulated percentage of the precious metal, much like modern coinage.
16. Bergier, Genève et l'économie, p. 439.
17. S.D., vol. 3, pp. 137-139, fol. 1035, (June 24, 1563).
18. RC, November 24, 1535: "silver cross, offeratory, etc";  
RC, December 10, 1535: "silver baton...silver chalice";  
RC, December 17, 1535: "silver cross...from La Madelaine"
19. Including taxes and admodiations from former Roman Church territorial holdings.
20. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967, p. 156.
21. Koerner, Martin. "Les modalités des emprunts genevois en Suisse au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle." Bulletin du Département d'Histoire Economique de l'Université de Genève, no. 4, (1973-1974), pp. 29-30.
- See also: chart, Appendix p. 558.
22. Bergier, Jean-François. "Taux de l'intérêt et crédit à court terme à Genève dans la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle." Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani, vol. 4. Milan, 1962, pp. 111-112.
- Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 156-159.
- Attempts to rid the city of the debt are recorded in the following:
- Monter, E. William. "L'amortissement de la dette publique genevoise au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle." BHG, vol. 13, no. 3, (1966), pp. 267-282.
23. For a description of the rise and fall of the public bank, see:
- Monter, E. William. "Le change public à Genève, 1568-1581." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, pp. 165-290.
24. Braudel, Fernand. The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. 1. London, 1972, pp. 530-531.
25. Bergier, "Taux," pp. 97-99.
26. See Chapter Eleven, pp. 278-281.
27. Dufour, Alain. "De la bourgeoisie de Genève à la noblesse de Savoie XV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, pp. 228-238.
- Also: Bergier, Genève et l'économie, pp. 82-83.

28. See Chapter 12, pp. 539-540, for a discussion of life in the rural mandements.
29. See Chapter 13, pp. 346-374.
30. See Appendix, p. 561.
31. See Appendix, pp. 546, 550.
32. See Appendix, p. 548.
33. See Appendix, p. 558.
34. Bergier concludes that this period of expensive short term credit remained on the rise until about 1610. (Genève et l'économie, p. 84.
35. "Refuge" is the French name given to the Huguenot immigrations, and I shall use the word in that context. The first great influx began about 1550, the second about 1572 after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. For purposes of this research, Refuge will refer to the first period.

Detailed and correlated information on the economic history of the sixteenth century has not yet been published. Only a thorough examination of the Council Registers, notarial records, Consistorial and criminal proceedings, and a mass of other data (including the yet-unpublished hospital records), which would take many years, could deliver this. It is not within the scope of this work to describe the whole of sixteenth century economic life; rather, the purpose is to outline it, show how it related to living conditions, and describe the development of related social concern on the part of the Councils, clergy, and private citizens.

36. S.D., vol. 3, pp. 48-50, fol. 953, (November 11, 1557).
37. Bergier, "Taux," pp. 107-108.
38. Quoted in: Martin, Paul-Etienne. "Calvin et le prêt à l'intérêt à Genève." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, p. 261.
39. Bergier, "Taux," pp. 107-112.
40. Ibid., p. 118. See also Calvin's theology, Chapter 15, pp. 401-422.
41. Bergier, Genève et l'économie, pp. 84-86.
42. Bergier, "Taux," p. 117.
43. Braudel, The Mediterranean, Chapter Two: "Economies: Precious Metals, Money, and Prices," pp. 462-542.

Elliott, John H. Europe Divided (1559-1598). Glasgow, 1968, pp. 50-70.

All money of account throughout Europe declined rapidly against precious metal in the late sixteenth century. See: Appendix, p. 564.

44. See Chapter 15, 403-405.

45. Biéler, André. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959, p. 307.

## Chapter Seventeen

## Calvin and the Concept of Interest

As has already been discussed, John Calvin's theological views on economics and business activity often constituted significant changes from medieval Roman Church dogma. Yet of all Calvin's economic theories, none has inspired such controversy as that on interest-taking. Calvin's qualified acceptance of the practice has been seen not only as a radical break with Scholastic tradition; some scholars have also conceived of it as the primary impetus to large-scale capitalist development in other Protestant states from the sixteenth century forward. Unfortunately, many critics have tended to separate this issue from the whole of his economic theology.<sup>1</sup>

Calvin's teachings on the taking of interest, however, flow naturally from his sense of Christian economic propriety, conditioned upon caring for one's neighbor and promoting the welfare of the community. Without doubt, this particular concept and its ramifications in Geneva's financial life are worth a



separate and detailed examination, to which this chapter will be devoted.

When Calvin arrived in Geneva, the Franchises had already been legally sanctioning the loaning of money at interest for 150 years. Besides making interest-taking lawful, the Franchises carefully and clearly protected the lender. A usurer could not be molested or attacked, nor could his goods be seized, even after his death (Item 77). Then, a usurer's property would pass on naturally to his rightful heir, even if he had failed to prepare a testament. Furthermore, if an heir could not be found immediately, the Syndics were required to hold his property (like that of any other citizen) for a year and a day. Should an heir appear during that specified period, he would receive the departed's goods and money (Item 39).<sup>2</sup>

Such a candid stance in a civic document is rather surprising considering the Roman Catholic Church's official condemnation of all interest as "usury." Nonetheless, the practice had been tacitly accepted by bankers, bishops, and popes throughout the Middle Ages, with the covert approval and even the support of the Medieval Church understood in financial circles. The Franchises, which included articles protecting the rights, property, and inheritance of usurers, had even been approved by Pope Felix V (the former Amedée VII of Savoy), al-

though he did express specific reservations about Items <sup>34</sup>,  
35, 39, and 77 (the sections on inheritance and wills).<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the greatest testimonies to the uniform leniency in the enforcement of usury laws throughout medieval Western Europe were these: no banking community developed in Geneva nor did moneychangers suddenly flock to this unique city which had established such generous rights for usurers. The key to understanding this seeming paradox of Church condemnation and State approval may lie in remembering that the Franchises codified existing "use and custom;" they were not original legislation passed by a civic assembly. If usury was permitted "de jure" in Geneva, it was surely tolerated "de facto" in Augsburg, Genoa, and Florence.

The Scholastics, and particularly Aquinas, opposed interest first on the basis of an Aristotelian argument which claimed that money was an inert substance. Therefore, to create money from money was a perversion of a law of nature. Secondly, interest-taking was regarded as a sin against man, because it constituted gain at another's expense without labor. It was, in fact, a form of stealing, heightened by crass opportunism. Finally, the Scholastics pointed to several Old Testament verses which specifically prohibited loaning money at interest. On the surface, all three of these  
<sup>4</sup>  
arguments seemed compelling.

Nevertheless, interest-taking continued unabated. To circumvent Canon Law, bankers and ecclesiastics alike invented ingenious casuistical arguments to avoid calling interest-taking what it really was. One of the most popular terms was to refer to ~~interest~~ as a "rent" paid for money.<sup>5</sup>

By the sixteenth century, borrowing and lending at interest had become a part of civic policy in Switzerland. Berne and Basle fixed their borrowing rate at 5%. In 1527, after the triumph of the Eidguenot party, Geneva's rate was similarly put at 5%, no doubt in imitation of its Swiss allies.<sup>6</sup> This 5% figure was substantially lower than the contemporary percentage in force throughout Italy and Spain. In the latter country, the devoutly Catholic Philip II even permitted rates to reach 16-18%,<sup>7</sup> an amount intolerable in Geneva.

After the Reformation and just before Calvin's expulsion to Strasbourg in 1538, the Petit Conseil again decreed the official rate in Geneva to be 5%. Realizing that this edict was likely to be overlooked or circumvented by the business community,<sup>8</sup> the magistrates did strictly and outrightly forbid, at the same time, the charging of higher rates to the poor buying essentials, especially flour. Since Calvin's opponents were sitting on the Councils in 1538, at the time of this proclamation, it seems highly unlikely that he had any

effect on this decision. Rather, such a desire to protect the city's poor in particular reflected the personal piety and social concern of Geneva's civil authorities in that era, whatever their disagreements with Calvin.

When the great Reformer returned to Geneva, his 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordonnances put usury on the list of those "vices which are intolerable in a minister."<sup>9</sup> The 1543 Edits (which Calvin drafted in part as well) again expressly forbade all forms of usury. Yet, in December of 1543, the preachers went before the Petit Conseil to protest widespread usury throughout the city. In other words, even in Protestant Geneva, public policy remained a contradiction of ecclesiastical ideals.

Calvin well understood that sixteenth century cities demanded some sort of credit and interest in order to function with success economically.

It would be desirable that usury  
was erased from the face of this  
earth and its name unknown. But  
because this is impossible, one  
must give way to the common good. 10

Thus, Calvin took on the task of finding a harmonization of policy and practice, the ideal and the acceptable, on the matter of interest. As with other economic dilemma, and in fact with all theological questions, Calvin's approach was

to analyze the actual process and to seek understanding from an exegetical research of relevant Biblical passages.

A thorough, realistic comprehension of interest-taking for Calvin actually dashed the Aristotelian concept of the nature of money. The only inert form of money was that locked up in a chest; money wisely invested gave birth in fact to more money. Calvin used the examples of a merchant investing in stock for resale or a man purchasing an agriculturally productive field, where both expenditures brought forth more money over time. Certainly nothing could be illegal or immoral in charging interest on money designed to bring its borrower new wealth.

11

If a rich and well-off man wants to buy a good small farm, borrows some of the money from his neighbor, why should not the lender get some of the profit from the revenues, until he receives his money back? It happens every day in many similar ways, so that, as long as equity is followed, usury is no worse than an "achat" [the rent system]. 12

Even more important than the secular Aristotelian argument were those specific Old Testament prohibitions. However, Calvin's understanding of the Hebrew language and of the context of those interdictions helped provide new meaning to the passages and enlighten the Biblical intentions on the matter

of interest. Calvin prefaced the issue by first saying that the best investment possible was money loaned at no hope of return to someone in need; this God had ordained. None ought to make money off the unfortunate circumstances of the poor. Indeed, the true Christian response was to give readily to a needy brother, not seeking anything more than his material and spiritual well-being. Loaning money with the hope of profit alone and without first rescuing the poor was an affront to God.

[Jesus] wishes to correct this vicious custom of the world, of loaning money, and he commands us to loan it principally to those from whom there is little chance of recovering it. 13

Calvin noted that the Old Testament prohibitions against usury were political ones relevant to the nomadic desert society in which the ancient Hebrews had lived. Because they were not sedentary shop-keepers, they generated an economy largely based on bartering and so had little need for a long-standing or complex credit policy. The Old Testament therefore mentioned interest-taking only sporadically; and, claimed Calvin, the Scholastics were philologically in error when they stated that the Old Testament forbade all forms of interest.<sup>14</sup> The Hebrew word for usury (found in Psalms 15: 5, for

example) included the idea of biting, of exacting the life-substance of another. Deuteronomy 23:19 prohibited interest-taking not per se but because of its abuse. Thus, the Biblical prohibitions were enjoining men against deceitful lending at abusive rates.<sup>15</sup> All in all, nothing was inherently wrong with loaning money at interest if equitable, honorable public rates were observed. Usury was thereby redefined as charging interest in excess of the legal limit.

Within the Institutes, Calvin had spoken of the differentiation in concerns dealt with by civil administrations and by religious authorities. The first kept watch over secular morality and administered earthly justice; the second guarded the soul and sought eternal life. In this world, man was to follow the civil law only as long as it did not contradict divine law.<sup>16</sup> In other words, regulations concerning usury were properly political ones insofar as they did not countermand, pervert, or break divine ordinances.

The decision to fix an appropriate lending rate had to be undertaken by observing what was in the best interests of the community. The actual amount was to be determined

not only for the personal convenience of those involved in business [market laws alone], but also by what is best for the public. 17

• Therefore, what decided interest rates were the divine laws of



love and equity in the context of current social and economic conditions.

By February 18, 1544, the ministers and the Councils together had hammered out a compromise that incorporated the practical implications of these discoveries by Calvin. In actuality, he wrote definitively about the matter over the course of the next few years, with only the essentials first appearing in 1544. Perhaps his most noted statement regarding the subject was his letter in November, 1545, to Claude Sachins, a merchant who asked for Calvin's advice on the matter.<sup>18</sup>

The first practical move by the ministers and Councils was to establish an adequate source of credit for the poor to buy necessities. The law of charity was the divine flower flourishing in a Christian community.

We know it is not the rich whom they devour with their usury, but poor men, who ought to be relieved. We see that the end for which the law was framed was, that men should not cruelly oppress the poor, who ought rather to receive sympathy and compassion. 19

It was for the explicit protection of those in need that a two-tiered interest system was engineered.<sup>20</sup>

Once the needy were legally protected, the Councils

proceeded to determine an equitable interest rate for the remainder of Genevan society. In February, 1544, it was proclaimed

concerning usury. On which many have lamented the usury and many frauds which are done in lending, on which it is decided cries ought to be made that no one dare from this time forward, to take at interest "usure" or otherwise, if not at five per cent per annum and he be advised of the passing of the ordonnances on the subject before the Petit Conseil. 21

Usury was likewise prohibited in the sumptuary laws of 1547, with language exceedingly similar to that in the 1544 edict. The legal rate was again stipulated to be 5%; and the penalty decreed for the usurer (anyone who exceeded the rate) was automatic confiscation of the principal and any additional punishment deemed necessary "according to the exigency of the case."<sup>22</sup> The same ordinances were repeated in 1557.<sup>23</sup>

Hearkening to Calvin's suggestions, the Councils' decision as to lending and the honorable rate did not follow any immutable, objective formula;<sup>24</sup> rather, it exhibited the law of love that Christ had planted in the heart of the true believer.

I thus conclude that it is essential to judge usury not according to any one particular sentence from God, but only according to the law of equity. 25

The Company of Pastors and the Councils went beyond legitimizing interest-taking, determining a chargeable rate on loans, and defining and punishing actual usurious practices. Calvin declared that no man should make his livelihood from loaning money on a full-time basis: "I do not approve if someone proposes to make a profession of making gain through usury."<sup>26</sup> He believed that those who lived solely from the proceeds of loaning money, without directly working, were existing in contravention of God's commandment to Adam after his expulsion from Eden.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Calvin and his ministers earnestly sought prohibitions against Geneva's future economic mainstay, the banking industry.

An additional refinement in loan practices which Calvin initiated was of specific and necessary assistance to the farmer and the rural peasant. All loans designed to be eventually repaid in produce were to be converted on paper to a numerical amount according to the produce's price current at harvest and then charged at 5%. In an era when commodity prices swung wildly from one season to another, this ensured that the farmer or peasant paid the cash value of<sup>28</sup> the commodity at its lowest cost during the entire year.

In many respects, Calvin gave theological approbation to existing Genevan practices, for laws on interest-taking had been first enacted without his presence or direct influ-

29  
ence. Although his thinking bore the marks of the humanist theologian, the conclusions he reached did approximate the piety of the medieval Genevan burgher. The law of Christian love and the general welfare of the community ultimately were to dictate all policy decisions on interest-taking. As ever, the ministers were to act as the conscience of the community and the spokesmen of the poor, a role they fulfilled in the entire socio-economic life of Geneva.

## Chapter Seventeen Footnotes

1. This is especially true of Max Weber (The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. London, 1930). See Chapter Two, pp. 111-139.
2. Mallet, Edouard. "Libertés, Franchises, Immunités, Us et Coutumes de la Cité de Genève." MDG, vol. 2, (1844), pp. 334-337, 352-353.
3. Ibid., pp. 271-311.
4. Hauser, Henri. Les débuts du capitalisme. Paris, 1931, pp. 49-67.
5. See Chapter One, pp. 4-5.
6. Biéler, André. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959, pp. 167-168.
7. Hauser, Les débuts, p. 63; Biéler, La pensée, p. 167.
8. Martin, Paul-Etienne. "Calvin et le prêt à l'intérêt à Genève." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, p. 254.
9. Bergier, Jean-François, and Robert M. Kingdon. Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève au temps de Calvin, vol. 1. Geneva, 1964, p. 4.
10. Calvin, John. Commentary on the First Five Books of Moses, Deuteronomy, chapter 23, verse 29.
11. Hauser, Les débuts, pp. 55-57.
12. Quoted in: Biéler, La pensée, p. 464.
13. C.O., vol. 10, col. 245. Letter to Claude Sachins, November 7, 1545.
14. Martin Bucer had recognized this philological error as early as 1529. Unlike Calvin, he was unwilling to draw any conclusions from it. In Strasbourg as well as Geneva, pious merchants ushered in the Reformation and supported the preachers.
15. Biéler, La pensée, pp. 457-467.
16. Calvin, John. Institution de la Religion Chrestienne, book 5, chapter 22.

17. Calvin, John. Commentary on the Psalms, Psalm 15, verse 5 (quoted in Hauser, Les débuts, p. 72).
18. C.O., vol. 10, col. 245 ff.
19. Calvin, Commentary on the Psalms, Psalm 15 verse 5.
20. For a better understanding of civic monetary policy, see Chapter Sixteen, pp. 426-444.
21. RC, February 18, 1544 (quoted in Martin, "Calvin et," p. 257).
22. S.D., vol. 2, p. 504, fol. 841, (May 16, 1547).
23. S.D., vol. 3, p. 53, fol. 957, (December 13, 1557).
24. The same was true to determine equitable wages, prices, and profits.
25. C.O., vol. 10, col. 245 (quoted in Biéler, La pensée, p. 459).
26. Ibid.
27. See an expansion of this theme in Calvin's theology in Chapter Fifteen, pp. 418-420.
28. S.D., vol. 2, p. 435, fol. 812, (December 24, 1543).
29. Calvin did help develop the two-tiered interest system, and made sure that money was available for the poor at low interest rates, often administered through the Hôpital-Général. A good summary of Calvin and Genevan interest-taking may be found in: Martin, "Calvin et," pp. 253-263.

## Chapter Eighteen

### The Sumptuary Laws

No part of Calvin's theology or practical endeavors in Geneva has been such a subject of controversy as the sumptuary laws. Evaluations of Geneva's moral strictures and strictness will no doubt go on forever. The actual facts surrounding the city's sumptuary laws are far less interesting than the legends which have grown up about them. Sadly, these spurious stories and interpretations will surely remain, especially for those who have never studied the Consistory's workings. Centuries of useless denominational polemics have emphasized the sensational and downplayed the constructive aspects of the sumptuaries.

Calvin's detractors tend to believe that the sumptuary laws turned Geneva into a drab police-state forbidding any form of amusement but tea-drinking and Psalmody. His admirers usually argue not so much with that appraisal as with the merits of a restricted, sober life. Only a handful of scholars have ever touched upon the social and economic implications of the sumptu-



aries, and these men tend to see in them a new asceticism that laid the root for modern capitalism. They claim that this was inadvertently achieved, in so much as the laws forced merchants to reinvest their wealth because they were forbidden to display it.<sup>1</sup> The fact seemingly overlooked by these learned individuals is that the sumptuary laws did not begin with Calvin or even in Geneva. They arose in fourteenth century Italian cities. Indeed, Savonarola's fifteenth century Florentine code was stricter than anything Calvin or his successors ever designed for Geneva.<sup>2</sup>

Philosophically, the sumptuary laws were a remnant of the Middle Ages' belief that a city and its inhabitants must exist in a godly manner in order to gain divine approval and the ensuing protection. The medieval burgher collectivized salvation and punishment over his entire city; the cry of "one for all and all for one" tritely but accurately expressed this attitude. To secure God's blessing over the municipality, the burgher considered it necessary to create a "city on a hill" in which no activity displeasing to God was tolerated. Also, permitting exploitation endangered the pragmatic feelings of community, the essential, concerted promotion of the common good among inhabitants. Thus, the spiritual, social, and economic health of the city was protected through a code of explicit regulations,<sup>3</sup> enacted by the townspeople themselves and accepted almost universally as both reasonable and necessary.

Moral regulations did appear in early Protestant propaganda. German Reformer Eberlin von G<sup>ü</sup>nzburg outlined his view of an utopian kingdom in a series of fifteen tracts published in Basle during 1521.<sup>4</sup> "Wolfaria," the perfect Christian state, enacted a great many ethical ordinances which were later in fact adopted by Geneva. For example, adults were limited to a certain amount of gaming, while children were forbidden to gamble at all. Mixed dancing was permitted, but immodest or suggestive cavorting was outlawed. Bathhouses were segregated according to sex. Adultery, drunkenness, blasphemy, and gossip were all distinctly punishable, both in von G<sup>ü</sup>nzburg's "Wolfaria" and in Calvin's Geneva.

Other Protestant propagandists wrote more specifically against widespread clerical and secular immorality, which they of course found inconsistent with the Christian Gospel. Their remedy was to attempt to impose standards of evangelical simplicity, piety, and purity upon the population.<sup>5</sup> Hence, codes of policed morality sprang up across Reformed Switzerland. In Zürich, Zwingli had a city ordinance passed in 1525 regulating sexual behavior. By 1530, that city proscribed drunkenness and gluttony; soon after, church attendance was made compulsory. Berne decreed a similar set of regulations for public conduct in 1528, just after its Reformation edicts were adopted. An

equivalent charter was enacted for the Vaud in 1536.<sup>6</sup> So precise and thorough were some of these codes that Zürich, Basle, and Berne even had statutes against overblown pastoral rhetoric.<sup>7</sup>

Particularly in newly Protestant cities, sixteenth century sumptuary regulations simply mirrored a municipality's response to its Christian obligations. As Jesus deemed the care of the poor to be a Christian duty, the city must then be responsible for the total welfare of its needy. Because Jesus taught honesty, no merchant should be allowed to cheat in the marketplace. Since Jesus urged fidelity, respect, and physical as well as spiritual purity, adultery, fornication, and lascivious conduct should be outlawed. Throughout the Imperial Cities (according to historian Stephen Ozment), a strong selling point for the Reformation was that "Protestants would make the best citizens."<sup>8</sup> Years earlier, Calvin's mentor, Martin Bucer, had expressed that same spirit:

No one could fill public office more skillfully than a true Christian, since he would not act selfishly but for the common welfare. 9

An additional reason for the codification, promulgation, and "strictness" of the various sumptuary laws throughout the Imperial Cities was derived from the need to legitimize and

to prove the new Protestant Church. Some of the early supporters of the Reformation, in Geneva and elsewhere, had actually sought to eliminate all spiritual authority; still others, untrained in theology, used the occasion to promote some arcane heresies and frequently unchristian lifestyles. It was necessary to control or even stamp out these outlandish individuals and groups so that the entire movement and Church would not be discredited.

Within Geneva, Calvin was not the founder or the initiator of a regulated morality; the statutes regarding such were first promulgated by the Cathedral Chapter in the late fourteenth century. During an outbreak of plague in 1490, measures were taken forbidding residents

to gamble [jouer à la paume],  
and any other game likely to  
arouse tempers, to open the  
hot baths [a favorite spot for  
prostitutes to contract busi-  
ness], and to play any musical  
instruments in public or in  
private. 10

Because the surviving records are civil rather than ecclesiastical, it is difficult to know just how much policing was done. Considering the general laxity of the Genevan Roman Catholic Church during its last fifty years and the absence of any mention of such in Council registers or personal journals,

enforcement must have been negligible.<sup>11</sup> This would have been especially true in its final period, when open concubinage both at St.-Victor and among the Cathedral Canons was publicly acknowledged.<sup>12</sup> Despite this example of moral hypocrisy,<sup>13</sup> a list of sumptuary prohibitions had been passed in 1528.

Once again, in Geneva as elsewhere, pious magistrates attempting to win God's approval for their municipality reformed the mores of their city when it became apparent that the established Roman Church was unwilling to do so. The Roman Church's authority was not brutally abrogated by arrogant burghers; rather the Church allowed it to lapse by not meeting its traditional and basic responsibilities. The Conseil Général had to assume the long-standing but long-overlooked functions of the Cathedral Chapter.<sup>14</sup>

Immediately before the Reformation edicts were accepted by the Conseil Général, the councillors tried to enforce a more stringent morality;<sup>15</sup> they, not the pastors or any ecclesiastical body, drafted the sumptuary laws. Prostitutes were evicted from the city. Public baths were properly segregated. Gambling was limited. Blasphemy had already been outlawed in February, 1534 by Aymon de Gingins, vicar general; and infractors had been ordered to three days at bread and water.<sup>16</sup> In fact, all the major Genevan moral prohibitions were already in effect when

Calvin first visited the city late in 1536.

The following 1536 regulations for hotelkeepers are a fine example of the sumptuary decrees enacted by the magistrates before Calvin's arrival. They contain all the aspects of controlled behavior for which Calvin has been held responsible; yet they preceded his initial visit to Geneva by six months and the Reformation edicts by three months.

Taverniers-

Item, that none dare sell wine if not at the price ordinarily established.

Item, that he ought not sell bread if it is not charged according to the price of wheat.

Item, that he not permit any to blaspheme the name of God, nor play at cards or dice.

Item, that he give no drink to anyone during the sermon and especially on Sunday; if it be to passing strangers, not after 9:00 at night. 17

During Calvin's exile to Strasbourg (1538-1539), the same sort of moral rectitude and regulation was maintained; indeed, more were enacted. The first attempts at censorship were made during this period. <sup>18</sup> Additional sumptuaries were drawn up, passed, and enforced by the civil authorities when Calvin's foremost "enemies" were in power as well (from 1547

through 1555).

The decision to police public morality was taken by the Conseil Général "without a single contradicting vote."<sup>19</sup> The prosecution for misbehavior came through the Consistory,<sup>20</sup> a board composed of the city's pastors<sup>21</sup> and twelve elders, who were councillors elected by their colleagues. A syndic generally<sup>22</sup> presided over the group.

The Consistory dealt with excommunication and with ecclesiastical issues in need of interpretation or implementation in Geneva, as well as with the sumptuary laws in particular. The Consistory (the majority of whom were laymen) received reports of misdoings largely from the dizainiers. It had the right to hear cases, prosecute offenders, chide the culpable, and suggest appropriate punishment or sentence. At most, it would deliver verbal "admonitions" which increased in ferocity with the recalcitrance and/or recidivism of the offender. On the other hand, the Consistory had no authority to administer the punishment it prescribed; that was the exclusive domain of the Petit Conseil.

In the same way, the Consistory could and did offer legislative advice in the ecclesiastical area to the Petit Conseil and the Conseil Général, but actual enactment and enforcement were beyond its legal jurisdiction. And, as



mentioned above, the Genevan Consistory believed it had the power of excommunication guaranteed it rather than the civil government. Calvin himself had specifically demanded that guarantee as a pre-condition for his return from Strasbourg, hoping to preserve the Genevan Church greater independence than its counterparts enjoyed in Berne or the Vaud. While Calvin believed the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances legalized that arrangement, both sides continued to fight for that authority over the next few decades, to the eventual detriment of the Church.

The Genevan Consistory seldom demanded excommunication as a punishment, and even then, only in extreme cases. In conjunction with this point, it is interesting to note that during Calvin's first term in Geneva, the townspeople did not object to enforced morality (which the Councils had instituted long before his arrival), but rather to individually signing a public statement of religious belief.<sup>23</sup>

Little opposition to the sumptuary laws per se ever did develop in Geneva during the sixteenth century. However, because of the city's unique position and Calvin's stature, Beza could comment quite correctly later in the century that "in Geneva, small scandals become as mountains."<sup>24</sup>

The only major challenge to Calvin's concepts or "authority" in this area came from Ami Perrin and his small anti-French faction. They indignantly claimed that having thrown off the Duke they were not about to subject themselves to a group of foreign pastors and their regulations. However, as this was patently untrue in the historical assessment of the

laws, and as Perrin fell into public disgrace in 1555, virtually all opposition to the sumptuaries disappeared. In addition, the Genevans could not help but realize the necessity of these regulations in a city threatened by warfare with Savoy over the entire sixteenth century and swollen to 150% of its normal population by refugees during the last half of the century. Very simply, the sumptuaries helped to maintain order. Even in the present century, many of the world's "democracies" have suspended the democratic process when gripped by similarly difficult and threatening circumstances; sixteenth century Geneva never did.

The Councils and the Company of Pastors, for their part, each utilized the "grabeau," a system of "fraternal correction," within their respective ranks. Thus, both Geneva's residents and leaders considered the subjection of their decisions and actions to peer or community appraisal and, hopefully, approval an essential practice. In yet another instance, the philosophical concept of the medieval city and the role of its inhabitants determined an actual, accepted custom in sixteenth century Geneva. François Bonivard said of his contemporary Genevans' willing acceptance of the sumptuary laws that

for the most part they used to be carefree and were mainly interested in their diversions; however war, of necessity, and the reform-

ation of religion, voluntarily, have made them a good deal more withdrawn. 25

It must be remembered that the nobility, who tended to devote more income to conspicuous consumption than the bourgeoisie, had left the city by 1536. Still, there is no reason to doubt Bonivard's assessment that the city was far more somber by 1550.

The sumptuary laws sought to regulate personal actions and legislate private ethics and responsibility in a number of different areas. Some prescribed specific steps or prohibitions to be followed to spiritually and mentally improve both the town and its residents, such as encouraging church attendance and outlawing blasphemy. Others were specific directives regarding personal morality. Many more, however, were practical economic devices to protect the poor from the rich and the powerful. Because the sumptuaries are so fascinating in their content and intent, as well as in the justification for their enactment, the remainder of this chapter will be primarily devoted to looking at them individually along with their prescribed punishments.

Regarding the individual's spiritual obligations and development, the 1549 ordinances required all adults to attend sermon. Women were ordered to wear hats, not flowers, on their

heads while at church. Taverns were to be shut during sermon, which decree unfortunately indicates that church was not universally attended (in spite of the law) by city residents and more especially by travellers. Blasphemy was punished by kissing the ground, a traditional Genevan chastisement. Speaking calumnies about the Word of God, the pastors, and the magistrates was distinctly outlawed,<sup>26</sup> as were starting rumors and provoking people, in order to discourage feuding and to promote civic unity, especially in time of war.

Item, that no one invent nor spread rumor, uncertainty, or quarrels, nor anger one another, under penalty of being thrown into prison and punished according to the law.

Item, that none speak libelously of princes or magistrates, nor also of the word of God, under the said penalty just written. 27

"Dishonest" songs were similarly prohibited.

The practical consequences of this group of ordinances is readily understood: the need to preserve civic unity and concord. As early as December, 1535 (when the city was under siege from Savoy, food stocks were running low, and deliverance by Berne was by no means assured), many people reported to the Councils their anger at the display of gaiety and irresponsibility by some thoughtless individuals in the midst of such hardship. Confraternity banquets were suppressed because

of the "severity of the time."<sup>28</sup> Money won at gaming that year (1535) was confiscated and applied to repairing the walls fortifying the city.<sup>29</sup>

Not all of these early sumptuary codes were prohibitions. Just as adults were required to be present at sermon, all children were obligated to attend free primary schools by the 1549 ordinances. A civic desire to educate residents was an outgrowth of the Renaissance reverence for learning, because education was, after all, essential to the development of the individual and the community. Because the theological basis of the Reformation was the Bible, the "written word," reading and interpretation were deep concerns for even the average burgher. From a secular standpoint, literacy was essential for carrying out civic policy, concluding political agreements, writing Council Registers, proclamations, and treaties, and even the daily business recordings of an artisan or merchant.<sup>30</sup>

Geneva's educational decrees came after those of Zürich and Strasbourg but were implemented sooner and were more comprehensive.<sup>31</sup> In fact, Geneva hired a schoolmaster at the same time that it published its 1536 Reformation edicts.

Calvin personally took a firm stand in favor of expanded educational activities and facilities in Geneva. He was single-handedly responsible for including the foundation of

a university (the Académie) in the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances; and, in the following decade, he personally had to force the Councils to finally found, fund, and staff the promised academic institution. The new instructors included many humanist associates from his earlier years in Paris. Calvin stood soundly himself on his humanist background in favoring "liberalized" education, where motivation came from love of learning and not from fear of the strap.<sup>32</sup>

The sumptuary ordinances regarding personal conduct and habits were more than simple edicts; most have specific bases and, at the same time, fulfill practical purposes. Personal spiritual purity, God's law on earth, and pragmatism are all inextricably entwined in that group of sumptuaries which seem to be strictly "ethical." In the sixteenth century, it would have been considered a crass and inaccurate attempt at a causal relationship to say that many of these edicts (such as care for the poor) were just practical precautions for the good of the entire community. Instead, medieval man saw these sumptuaries as responses to God's command to follow and to live by His laws. When man did so, God would bless him. When a community did so, God would render concord, material sufficiency, and political freedom as signs of His approval. The Old Testament is filled with the stories of nations and cities whose in-

habitants were punished as a group, not as individuals, for the sins of a few. In this case, the city (Geneva) was responsible to oversee and improve the moral habits and character of each of its inhabitants.

The adultery and fornication laws were more than an attempt to legislate propriety and purity and to restrain lust and debauchery in an individual's soul. Adultery was against all of God's most holy ordinances, from the Ten Com-  
mandments to Christ's exhortations to St. Paul's injunctions.<sup>33</sup> In an emotional/psychological sense, these two sins increased animosity between individuals, harmed the essential family unit, and brought a degree of unrest and ugliness into the community. Finally, as a pragmatic result, fornication and adultery (in this pre-contraceptive era) often meant the advent of unexpected and unwanted children, thus incurring serious personal and social problems for the following generation. Sin is rarely a solitary occasion of wrong-doing or of giving in to temptation. Rather, it makes the next instance of evil yet more enticing and more readily accepted, leading eventually to moral turpitude; its implications in the lives of others can be indeed painful if not disastrous.

The common penalty for fornication was six days in prison at bread and water for each of the couple; in the case of



adultery, the sentence was lengthened to nine days.<sup>34</sup> If the woman became pregnant, she was ordinarily incarcerated until the child's delivery. However, on September 16, 1547, the Deux Cents amended this procedure through an ordinance reform, inspired by the pastors, where the customary law was tempered with Christian charity, "liberal" understanding (at least for that age), and practical considerations. The councillors determined that the health of the mother and the child would be far better served if the mother were released from prison immediately prior to the birth. Indeed, the well-being of both was seen as more important than the ongoing punishment of the sin. The woman could have the baby at home or in the hospital. Following the delivery, she was set free but still legally required to meet with the city's ministers to discuss ways in which to amend her life for the future. Thus, even in the face of this public crime, a good deal of humanity and forethought was shown by Geneva's civil authorities.<sup>35</sup> In the cases of concubines and prostitutes, on the other hand, their behavior and their very presence were strictly outlawed in the city.

It is interesting to note that the 1549 laws do more than outline punishments for immoral conduct. They even propose "remedies" or means for avoiding illicit sexual intercourse as well as other, less immoral social crimes.

Item, that none give themselves to  
fornication, drunkenness, vagrancy,

nor waste time in folly, nor be debauched in one way or another, but each ought to work according to his amount [the time and effort the job required], under penalty of being punished by the law, according to the seriousness of the case. 36

In Geneva, work virtually became a commandment and was definitely seen as part of the properly regulated Christian life.

In spite of the sumptuaries and moral policing, Genevans were permitted to participate in some diversions, although not to excess. Some forms of gambling,<sup>37</sup> which were first prohibited in the fifteenth century, were outlawed again in 1536, on December 17, 1549,<sup>38</sup> and in 1564.<sup>39</sup> However, limited gambling was permitted for adults while forbidden to schoolchildren and to those "unable to conduct themselves."<sup>40</sup> Drinking was allowed in the taverns, but, again, immoderation (drunkenness) was outlawed. "Honest" dances were acceptable entertainment, but not the "dishonest" variety like the "violet."<sup>41</sup> This dance was condemned not only because it was immodest but also because of the "tumulte" it caused and the ensuing difficulty the guards had in hearing the approach of an enemy.<sup>42</sup>

These various amusements were then specifically regulated during Calvin's lifetime but not forbidden outright. Unlike the early reformers (Fromment, Farel, Calvin, and Viret), Geneva's second group of pastors (all wealthy French refugees) maintained

a much higher standard of living and personal economic display.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, they were morally and legally allowed to do so within the confines of the sumptuary code during the sixteenth century. This fact indicates that the code was not so stringent or obsessive as it became later or as historians have thought it in retrospect.<sup>44</sup>

The third and final group of sumptuary laws concerned themselves not with personal behavior, development, or mores but rather with public welfare in the area of economic protection.<sup>45</sup> As has already been noted on numerous occasions, the Councils considered it their duty to shield Geneva's residents from financial exploitation, especially where basic commodities were involved. What at first glance appear to be prohibitions against the wealthy and the enjoyment of material goods were in reality the civil authorities' most direct means of maintaining concord in the city and of protecting the less fortunate from the perilous effects of "supply and demand" economics.

Studying this era, it becomes quickly apparent that Geneva's burghers understood quite well the basic economic laws of supply and demand and developed their legislation and the sumptuaries accordingly. In the English-speaking world there is a tendency to believe that this rather simple economic precept was unknown before the publication of Adam Smith's Wealth

of Nations in 1776. Quite the contrary, for in Geneva the economy was considered to be just one more aspect of the municipal environment which could be controlled to conform to God's ordinances. The surrender of wage and price decisions to "immutable market laws," common in the early years of the Industrial Revolution, was not present nor even thinkable for Geneva's burghers. In a sense, they were more modern than their eighteenth century counterparts and infinitely more responsive to the needs of their brothers and community.

If Geneva's Councils had permitted a legalized, or even an over-looked, differentiation to exist between the legal, personal, and/or economic privileges of a wealthy merchant and a poor artisan, community spirit would have been seriously damaged. Pragmatically, a nation or a very large principality, with its greater geographical size and population, could take the strain created by social and economic perquisites and exploitation. Within Geneva's confines, that was impossible.

By treating the poor with dignity and fairness,<sup>46</sup> envy and class hatred were eliminated while civic harmony was promoted. The poor were not insulted, shamed, or frustrated, thanks to the rich not being permitted to wear expensive clothing or ostentatious jewellery<sup>47</sup> which the less fortunate could

never hope to afford. Both of these points are implicit in the Petit Conseil proclamations of June 8, 1564, which also state that useless and frivolous displays (in dress, jewelry, and banqueting) lead directly toward

the impoverishment of those who do not have the proper faculties [to buy them since they cannot truly afford them]; scarcity of materials and work; foolish employment of many workers, of no value or harmful to society, who could be employed in better work or profession; obstructing and hindering from furnishing subvention to the poor; with infinite other scandals bringing great dishonor on this church and its reformation. 48

Similarly, the opening to the 1574 Ecclesiastical Ordinances noted that the poor can only be taken care of "if<sup>49</sup> there be established a certain rule and order of living." In fact, the Genevan sumptuary documents of 1564 already had tried ostensibly to limit spending on luxury items so that the well-to-do might have more to give the poor through the civic<sup>50</sup> and religious charity institutions. In this era, concerned people were motivated by a belief that excessive conspicuous<sup>51</sup> consumption (as economist Thorstein Veblen wrote) was immoral, especially when so many were in such serious need.

Sumptuary laws regarding jewellery restrictions were also born out of concern for Geneva's own financial stability.

The Councils worried that gold jewellery produced in the city by approximately one hundred smiths would debase the local currency and increase inflation. Putting large amounts of precious metal on the market of such a small, relatively poor town would have had such adverse effects, as in fact did New World silver on Spain. Thus, the civil government directly forced gold-workers to export their products.<sup>52</sup>

A sumptuary law against selling fancy pastries in time of grain shortage was not introduced because councillors considered it immoral to enjoy eating them; instead, it was a straight-forward means of protecting the poor and hungry. This prohibition prevented bakers from using scarce flour supplies on luxury items, which netted a higher profit, rather than on basic loaves of bread which were the staple of the common man's diet.<sup>53</sup>

The final economic sumptuary to be discussed is that overseeing usury, defined by Calvinist Geneva as loaning money at interest in excess of the legal rate. Such regulation of the legal interest rates helped to distribute available money more evenly through the community and to lighten the already heavy burden of those borrowing to buy even the necessities of life. Needless to say, it also prevented "loan sharking," where the outrageous interest incurred never allows the borrower free of his indebtedness to the lender. The Consis-

tory, pastors, and Councils strictly forbade this practice as part of the town's "enforced morality" program.<sup>54</sup>

There exists the danger of viewing the economic sumptuaries from the twentieth century perspective of freedom to spend money precisely as one wants. By unconsciously ignoring the tremendous increase in wealth, luxury items, and free time over the past four centuries, the modern individual tends to forget that present-day taxes on jewellery, entertainment, and other self-indulgences are likewise designed to penalize or perhaps discourage frivolous spending. In many modern societies, a portion of tax revenues in general is used to provide housing, food, and other forms of relief for the poor. In Calvin's era, much the same thing was done but without today's comprehensive income and sales tax systems. The sumptuary laws tried, however imperfectly, to accomplish some of these same goals.<sup>55</sup>

Also judging by today's standards, the punishments inflicted for seemingly trivial offenses like blasphemy, fornication, drunkenness, etc., seem severe. It must be noted here that these sentences were pronounced upon the chronic offender who refused to mend his ways. The majority of cases were trifling, with punishment left merely at an admonition or verbal exhortation, especially for first offenders. Moreover, nothing suggests that Geneva was any harsher than other sixteenth cent-



ury cities such as Strasbourg, Zürich, Basle, and Berne. In addition, although the exotic cases have gained attention, the Consistory did assume the necessary moral and legal responsibility of prosecuting usurers, swindlers, and extortionists, wife-beaters and child-abusers, people piling compost on city streets, and all other violators of the public weal.

The degree to which the first sumptuaries were actually enforced may have been limited or lax. Complaints of non-compliance, especially from the ministers, appear regularly in the Consistorial records. In fact, in 1577, the pastors asked for more enforcement, noting that only five offenders had been punished during the previous year. Until this date, the Conseil Général had regularly repeated ordinances that were seemingly being disregarded by the town's residents as a part of its annual proclamations or cries.<sup>56</sup> During Calvin's lifetime, the sumptuaries were never actually codified; it was not until after 1577 that the laws became a long, involved legal code much like that in Leviticus. As time passed, they grew in rigidity and complexity to such an astonishing degree that a delegation of tailors complained in 1599 that there was no way in which its craftsmen could obey the regulations and still make a living.<sup>57</sup>

As time went on, the sumptuaries also came to be obeyed

more in letter than in spirit, although their original design had been to protect and sensitize the moral, Christian conscience of society. The situation in ecclesiastical art serves as a good example of this transition. At the beginning of the Reformation, under Farel's direction, Geneva endured image-breaking and the dismemberment of statuary in churches previously Roman Catholic. Upon his arrival, Calvin<sup>58</sup> did recommend more realistic artwork, as opposed to the regally attired madonnas and Christs of which Renaissance Italy and the Roman Church were fond.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless,

Calvin...preached under the decorated canopies of St. Pierre; he did not deem it necessary to mutilate the frescoes in the Chapel of Notre Dame. 60

However, by 1643, an ordinance was produced to conceal those very same frescoes, and they were promptly whitewashed. In other situations as well, the later generations of Genevans observed the external, mechanical letter of religious "reform" (such as in this case with the destruction of physical property), but they had lost the pure, internal spirit so idealistically and admirably lighted by Geneva's earliest Protestants.

## Chapter Eighteen Footnotes

1. Specifically, the well-known Tawney-Weber thesis, which claims that capitalism arose as a practical by-product of Calvinist theology and life-style.

Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, New York, 1930.

Tawney, Richard H. Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. London, 1937.

An excellent précis and analysis of these and other theories connecting Calvinism and capitalism may be found in:

Biéler, André. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959, pp. 477-520.

2. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967, p. 217.
3. Geneva's regulations incorporated an important legal reform: rich and poor, clergy and laity, aristocrat and burgher were all to be treated equally under the law. Invariably, this impartiality was observed.
4. See Chapter 6, pp. 126-128. "Wolfaria" meant "where all fares well."
5. Ozment, Stephen E. The Reformation in the Cities. New Haven, 1975, pp. 104-105.
6. Roget, Amédée. Histoire du peuple de Genève, vol. 1. Geneva, 1870, pp. 11-12.
7. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 79.
8. Ozment, The Reformation, p. 66.
9. Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972, p.79.
10. The baths were also closed because of the highly contagious nature of the plague.

Chaponnière, Jean-Jacques, and Louis Sordet. "Des hôpitaux de Genève avant la Réformation." MDG, vol. 3, (1844), p. 293.

11. Naef, Henri. Les origines de la Réforme a Genève. Geneva, 1936, pp. 219-264.
12. Fromment, Antoine. Les Actes et Gestes merveilleux de la cité de Genève. Geneva, 1854, pp. 154-159.  
  
Foster, Herbert D. "Geneva before Calvin (1387-1536). The Antecedents of a Puritan State." AHR, vol. 8, no. 2, (January, 1903), pp. 217-240.  
  
Foster concludes the same, and uses records from the Bishop of Annecy to prove the case. See also: RC, vol. 12, p. 186, n. 3.
13. S.D., vol. 2, p. 257, fol. 610, (February 29, 1528).
14. Naef, Les origines, pp. 229-230; RC, April 30, 1534; RC March 7, 1536.
15. The new laws were more evenhandedly applied. Petit Conseiller, later Syndic, Jean Ami Curtet was convicted by his fellow magistrates of keeping a concubine. (RC, August 8, 1536).
16. S.D., vol. 2, p. 301, fol. 677, (February 28, 1534).
17. S.D., vol. 2, p. 308, fol. 692, (February 28, 1536).
18. Roget, Histoire, vol. 1, pp. 120-146.
19. Roset, Michel (pub. by Henri Fazy). Les Chroniques de Genève. Geneva, 1894, book 4, chapter 5, p. 291.
20. This body was established in the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances.
21. The pastors averaged about eight in number.
22. Bergier, Jean-François, and Robert M. Kingdon. Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève, vol. 1. Geneva, 1964, pp. 6-7, 11.
23. Roget, Histoire, vol. 1, pp. 44-50.
24. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 218.
25. Bonivard, François (pub. by Gustave Revilliod). Chroniques de Genève. Geneva, 1867, p. 35.
26. S.D., vol. 2, p. 526, fol. 859, (March 1, 1549); fol. 865, (December 17, 1549); fol. 866, (December 17, 1549).

27. S.D., vol. 2, p. 526, fol. 859, (March 1, 1549).
28. Babel, Antony. "Les métiers dans l'ancienne Genève; histoire corporative de l'horlogerie, de l'orfèvrerie, et des industries annexes." MDG, vol. 33, (1916), p. 11.
29. Roget, Histoire, vol. 1, pp. 26-30.
30. The invention of the movable-type press in the early 1450's created the technology to make Renaissance works available to the mass market. This outpouring of printed material, coupled with a strong interest in literacy, provided an author with the means to reach a large audience very quickly.

The spread of Protestant polemical tracts (witnessed by Geneva's own impressive output) attests to the appetite of the European audience for such material.

31. Even to extending primary instruction to girls.
32. Battles, F.L., and A.M. Hugo (eds.). Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's "De Clementia." Leiden, 1969, p. 261.
33. Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-28; Romans 2:22; Romans 13:9; and many other references as well.
34. S.D., vol. 2, p. 505, fol. 841, (May 16, 1547).
35. S.D., vol. 2, p. 512, fol. 845, (Septmeber 15, 1547).

It is also recorded that a delegation of men confronted Calvin and protested that if the adultery laws were rigorously enforced, all their wives would be thrown into the Rhone. Calvin chided them for their frivolous behavior.

36. S.D., vol. 2, p. 526, fol. 859, (March 1, 1549).
37. S.D., vol. 2, p. 530, fol. 865-866, (December 17, 1549).
38. S.D., vol. 2, p. 527, fol. 859, (March 1, 1549).
39. S.D., vol. 3, p. 148, fol. 1054, (August 11, 1564).
40. With the approval of Beza: "Decided that one show them to M. de Bèze, and if he finds them good, they shall be authorized." (S.D., vol. 3, p. 158, fol. 1054, [August 11, 1564]).

41. Ibid.
42. S.D., vol. 2, p. 526, fol. 859, (March 1, 1549).
43. Kingdon, Robert M. "The Economic Behaviour of Ministers in Geneva in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century." ARG, vol. 50, (1959), pp. 33-39.
44. See footnote 1. Geneva's moral codes were accentuated in severity by religious propagandists in the next centuries. However, they did grow in complexity late in the sixteenth century. See pp. 480-481.
45. See Chapter Two, pp. 23-29; Chapter Twelve, pp. 332-340.
46. This was implicit in the decree founding the Hôpital-Général: "On which it is considered that to nourish concord and obtain the peace of God, it is first necessary to take care of the poor." (RC, November 12, 1535).
47. An ordinance of 1558 had limited displays of jewellery and the size of banquets. (S.D., vol. 3, p. 86, fol. 974, October 11, 1558 ).
48. S.D., vol. 2, p. 530, fol. 865-866, (December 17, 1549).
49. Quoted in: Choisy, Eugène. L'état chrétien calviniste à Genève au temps de Théodore de Bèze. Geneva, 1902, p. 145.
50. S.D., vol. 3, p. 148, fol. 1054, (August 11, 1564).
51. Thoreston Bunde Veblen (1857-1929) was an American economist who criticized lavish outlays on luxuries for their lack of social utility. Similarly, he scourged those who had inherited large sums of money and merely indulged themselves in these idle fripperies, for failing to use their lives and wealth in a manner which would benefit society.

The social implications of the use of wealth fascinated Veblen, and this quotation from his major work, The Theory of the Leisure Class (New York, 1924), echoes Calvin's ideas:

[The expenditure] is here called waste because it does not serve human life or human well-being on the whole, not because it is waste or a mis-direction of effort from the standpoint of the individual consumer. (Quoted from Dorfman, Joseph. Thoreston Veblen and his America. New York, 1961, p. 177.).

Although the overt Christian understanding of Calvin is lacking, Veblen's emphasis on the social responsibility incumbent upon those in possession of wealth (Christian stewardship) is very similar to Calvin's beliefs.

52. Babel, "Les métiers," pp. 20-21.
53. See bread pricing chart, Appendix, p. 545.
54. Chapter Sixteen, pp. 428, 436-438.
55. Their corresponding economic effects are the subject of the studies of Weber and Tawney. See footnote 1.
56. S.D., vol. 2, pp. 500-505, fol. 841, (May 16, 1547).
57. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 216-217.
58. The paintings of the Calvinist Dutch Masters reflect his concern for realism in artwork.
59. Ramsay, M.P. Calvin and Art. Edinburgh, 1938, passim.
60. Naef, Les origines, p. 265.



## Chapter Nineteen

### The Company of Pastors

The ethical and social concern abiding in the Protestant religious leaders of Geneva from the time of the Reformation has been demonstrated and referenced in many specific areas. The early evangelists of the city were active in the original efforts to reorganize the hospital and to relieve the suffering of the poor. Calvin showed a life-long interest in safeguarding the rights of the less fortunate in ways ranging from sponsorship of hospital collections to stimulation of local employment opportunities. The Company of Pastors, both during Calvin's lifetime and after his death, continued these twin concerns of caring for the poor and of working to improve the over-all social environment of the entire community.

All of these early Protestant evangelists and pastors seem to have shared not only a common theological foundation but also a similar altruistic viewpoint and an activist temp-

erament. On the other hand, they issued from disparate social and educational backgrounds. Because of their essential theological agreement but personal diversity, they managed to fulfill different functions and to answer varying needs in Geneva's period of religious uncertainty and social upheaval. Perhaps one, two, or even three of them could never have accomplished what all of them together did so successfully. This chapter will deal with these men as individual personalities and as a combined, motivating part of the Reformation which so altered Geneva.

The first preachers, Antoine Fromment, Guillaume Farel, and Pierre Viret, were of humble origins and unexceptional educational backgrounds. Their deep, undaunted fervor for the evangelical course was often the necessary counterweight to their lack of social finesse and scholarship. Also, like Bucer, Luther, and Zwingli, these early Protestant zealots were products of the Roman Catholic Church who saw in the Reformation an answer to their spiritual yearnings.

Antoine Fromment and Guillaume Farel have remarkably similar backgrounds. Both were born in Dauphiné, involved in French Roman Catholic reforming movements, and converted to Protestantism in the decade of the 1520's. Both were effective preachers who found it easier to work on their own than to be part of a formally organized, spiritually bereft Church.

Fromment installed himself in Geneva about 1532, finding support among the early evangelical sympathizers (Jean Chautemps, Baudichon de la Maison neuve, and Claude Salomon). Eventually, he even won the trust and limited approval of the magistrates, culminating in the Bernese letters which provided for partial assembly rights for the evangelicals and for the successful entry into Geneva of Guillaume Farel. Fromment, more than anyone, was responsible for encouraging the Genevan Reformation in its beginning years. His eyewitness account of the Reformation, Les Actes et Gestes merveilleux de la cité de Genève, supplies numerous fascinating and personal details about the movement at a crucial time.

Guillaume Farel was a preacher in the Meaux community until its demise, whereupon he fled to Basle in order to escape the ensuing persecutions. Once there, he was encouraged by both local and Bernese authorities to preach in their newly-acquired French-speaking areas to the west. His first attempts to do so in Geneva resulted in hearty rebuffs, even to the point of being dragged out of a church by a burly monk who had tight hold on his beard. Characteristically, the incident failed to dampen Farel's enthusiasm and dedication.

After the Bernese letters of 1534 (which gave Farel specific rights to open-air preaching), he and Fromment gained ever-greater followings. Farel, always the firebrand preacher,

roused crowds to a high pitch, ultimately culminating in the seizure of the Cathedral and the smashing of its statuary. While Farel thrived on conflict and controversy, both he and Fromment were careful to win the confidence of the magistrates and to assist in Geneva's fight for independence. After the Reformation was achieved by a vote of the Conseil Général in May, 1536, the two were assigned the task of forming Geneva's new, reformed Church.

Although Pierre Viret only touched Geneva sporadically, he was essential to the establishment of the Reformed Church throughout French-speaking Switzerland. Of all the pastors of this period, only Viret was a native-born Swiss, raised in a small farming village in the north of the Pays de Vaud. His earliest preaching occurred within his native region, but his reputation elsewhere grew steadily. After the 1536 disputation at Lausanne, he was given charge of the Church there with the approval of the Bernese government. Viret also participated in the major public debates in Geneva but only occupied a pastorate in that city decades later, having departed Lausanne after an argument with the Bernese authorities.

Together, the preachers quickly discovered that there was a great difference between agitating for religious reform and organizing a new Church. The local religious situation fell into total chaos. The Roman Church was disestablished

and its clergy chased away, but no regular services or preaching had yet begun. The Genevan Reformation seemed like a rudderless boat, drifting helplessly in dangerous currents. Both external threat (Savoy) and internal dissension (a sizable although presently dormant Roman Catholic party) menaced the aspirations of the new venture even before it had really begun.

Into the maelstrom of this political and religious turmoil wandered the unsuspecting academician, John Calvin. A native of Picardy (in the north of France) and the son of an undistinguished notary, Calvin had been exposed to the French academic community, where he had thrived, during the several years before his arrival in Geneva. He was, by his own confession, an introverted scholar, quite unlike Geneva's three earliest evangelists. Similarly, the fiery preaching of Farel and Fromment was totally alien to him; his sermons were theological works, usually exegetical expositions on a particular passage or theme. Throughout his life, he always seemed uncomfortable as a charismatic personality or as a leader of men.

When religious persecutions were renewed in France in 1535, Calvin fled to the Swiss university town of Basle. Here he published the first edition of his Institutes early in the following year. The book, an immediate success, became the most widely circulated attempt to systematically define the Protestant theological viewpoint.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1536, Calvin decided to travel to Italy in order to visit Renée of France (daughter of King Louis XII), who had married the Duke of Ferrara. She was openly sympathetic to the Protestant cause and had assembled a group of French exiles around her despite the serious disapproval of her husband and family. Calvin's visit lasted only a few weeks, after which he intended to settle in Strasbourg and to work with Martin Bucer. Unfortunately, war between Charles V and the French forced him during his northward journey to detour through Geneva, where he checked into a hostelry.

Word of the now-famous scholar's arrival reached Farel, who was assuming charge of Geneva's Reformation. For his own part, Farel had the good sense to realize that inciting and organizing required two different sets of talents. Hence, he speedily and eagerly sought Calvin out and pleaded with him endlessly to take charge of Geneva's Church. Calvin refused, explaining his plans to pursue a quiet life of study in Strasbourg. Realizing the futility of his pleading requests, Farel switched tactics. He began to rail furiously against Calvin, promising that if he rejected this holy opportunity, God would never forgive his selfishness. Years later, Calvin reflected on their first meeting:

He [Farel] went so far as an imprecation, that it might please God to curse the rest and quiet-

ness I was seeking, if in so great a necessity I withdrew and refused aid and succor. Which word so horrified and shook me that I desisted from the journey I had undertaken: in such a way, however, that, feeling my shame and timidity, I did not want to commit myself to discharge any particular duty. 2

And so, just as the rest of Geneva had bowed to Farel's intractable will and fiery rhetoric, the twenty-seven year old Calvin did the same.

The problems of creating an organized Church out of nothing proved a formidable task. First of all, the civil government held total control over all ecclesiastical property and sources of revenue.<sup>3</sup> Second, no qualifications were required to be certified a pastor, so many former priests and monks now called themselves "preachers" with the sole intent of continuing their earlier, easy life style. Next, standards of Christian education had fallen incredibly far since no church organization had functioned properly for years. Finally, a syncretism of Roman Catholic ceremonies and folk superstition had grown pervasive among the less educated over the years, removing religion to the realm of the primitive and fearsome.<sup>4</sup> Calvin's first impressions summarize the situation:

When I first came into this Church there was almost nothing there.



They preached and that was all.  
They sought out the idols indeed,  
and burnt them, but there was no  
reformation. Everything was in  
tumult. 5

These various obstacles led Calvin and Farel to ask the Councils for greater independence in the establishment of the Reformed Church. Two prerogatives requested in particular were the right to decide cases involving potential excommunication (presently under the jurisdiction of the secular authorities) and the publication of a statement of belief, destined to be signed by the head of each household. Unfortunately, reaction was swift and negative from the Councils. The civil elections of 1538 went to the opponents of the preachers, and the original reformers were told to leave Geneva.

Upon his departure, Fromment took a parish outside the city. Several years later, during a period of relative peace in his life, Fromment wrote Les Actes et Gestes. Sadly, however, his last years were spent unhappily in the midst of serious personal problems.

Farel likewise left Geneva, moving to Neuchâtel. There he headed the pastors of that city until his death in 1565, one year after Calvin.

Viret led the Lausanne Church until the clergy there sought greater independence for their Church and fought with

the Bernese authorities. In 1549, he left Lausanne to return to Geneva.<sup>7</sup> After a few years there, Viret then departed for France to embark on a very successful career of proselytizing.

Calvin simply continued on his original journey after the two-year hiatus to Strasbourg for a life of study and of ministry to the French refugee congregation there.

It is well known that Calvin circulated among academicians and wealthy merchants in Paris and again in Strasbourg. Furthermore, his support in Geneva had and would always come from merchants like Jean Chautemps and Baudichon de la Maison neuve. Later, his close French friends and advocates were to include Laurent de Normandie, Jean Crespin, Guillaume de Trie,<sup>8</sup> the Trembley brothers, and a host of other well-educated and well-to-do entrepreneurs. There is no question that most of Calvin's following and political strength issued from intellectuals,<sup>9</sup> artisans, and merchants.

A brief look at the career of Calvin's younger brother Antoine might further substantiate the compatibility Calvin found and nourished between the commercial and theological or academic worlds. Antoine followed John to Geneva in the mid-1540's and purchased the rights of bourgeoisie in 1546.<sup>10</sup> Over the years, he gained so in stature and wealth that he was chosen to serve as grain négociant for Geneva in 1561, buying and selling wheat to the city at a profit. This position re-

quired connections in foreign markets, trust, and considerable personal resources.<sup>11</sup> By 1565, his son David was apprenticed as a passementier (lace-maker).<sup>12</sup> Three years later, Antoine is known to have guaranteed a 1,000 florin loan made to de Normandie,<sup>13</sup> a substantial sum of money in those days. In spite of his distinguished character, Antoine never entered politics, possibly because of his brother's position and a fear of accusations of collusion. Although Calvin always did protest that he was a poor, timid scholar who did not understand the business world, he certainly maintained comfortable connections among the worldly entrepreneurs with whom his brother Antoine associated.

After Geneva's 1540 elections, the supporters of the preachers were returned to power in the Councils. Immediately they asked Calvin to come back from his quiet, studious exile in Strasbourg to resume his former post. Calvin adamantly refused one delegation after another until external circumstances intervened.

The Roman Catholic Cardinal Sadoleto attempted to lure Geneva back to the Roman fold by publishing a persuasive letter. The Councils sent a deputation with this missive to Calvin in Strasbourg. His response to Sadoleto's arguments provided a statement of evangelical beliefs and a rallying point that silenced the Cardinal for good. At the same time, it re-

moved any doubt still remaining in Geneva and even convinced Calvin that he was the right man to reorganize the city's Church.

The Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 outline the conditions under which Calvin agreed to accept the Councils' offer,<sup>14</sup> so that this time around circumstances would be quite different. No internal opposition was organized against the pastors, and there was no thought of a return to the Roman Church. Politically and militarily, life was relatively stable. The original three preachers were now dispersed, but Calvin and the Councils wisely dismissed the largely disinterested and opportunistic "fill-in" clergy.

The Reformed Church organization employed few full-time people. The monasteries and convents had been disbanded; the mendicants chased away. All the Roman ecclesiastics previously involved in the charity system were replaced by one full-time hospitalier and a few assistants. The hospital and bourse procureurs were all volunteers from the Councils with full-time employment elsewhere. Many of the Roman Catholic sacerdotal functions had been abolished by Reformed theology.<sup>15</sup> All of the secular episcopal duties, especially the minting of Genevan coinage and the administration of justice, had been assumed by the Councils even before the Reformation edict of May, 1536. Whereas the former ecclesiastical system had ap-

proximately one-tenth of the city's entire population on its payroll, republican Geneva employed less than one hundred people for the successful accomplishment of the same civil and religious functions.<sup>16</sup>

Because Geneva failed to produce any native preachers, the town was dependent upon foreign clergymen. Calvin was a transitional figure in the Genevan Church and amongst its ministers, while at the same time remaining the single point of stability and reference. Because he was the only source of civic doctrine, he endured a series of great controversies over various specific issues in the theology of the Reformed Church with visiting "thinkers" and with his new co-pastors from 1541 until 1554. Miguel Servetus, while a visitor in Geneva, challenged the divinity of Christ and disclaimed the Trinity. His condemnation and death led schoolmaster Sebastian Castellio<sup>17</sup> to attack Calvin in 1554 for the execution. Battles with Jerome Bolsec and Jean Trolliet over predestination in 1551 and 1552 brought that topic to the fore and heightened Calvin's theological output on the particular subject.<sup>18</sup>

Such public and lengthy debates on predestination have left posterity very detailed thoughts on the topic, thereby artificially increasing its importance in Calvin's overall theology. Within the Institutes, published years earlier, the

subject of predestination was considered only twice, and then not as an "independent doctrine,"<sup>19</sup> in connection with the central issue of redemption through Jesus Christ. Perhaps the emphasis and interpretation popularly placed on Calvin's treatment of the predestination question comes in fact from the Lapsarian controversies of his confessional descendents in the seventeenth century. Any erroneous reduction of Calvinism to a fatalistic ideology which accepts social distinctions because God predestined them is a flagrant misunderstanding not only of Calvin's theology but of everything that he tried to accomplish in Geneva as well.<sup>20</sup>

One of Geneva's most notorious cases of dispute among the pastors was that concerning Philip de Ecclesia, a contentious member of the Company. Ecclesia had been acquainted with and sympathetic to Jerome Bolsec during his predestination debates with Calvin.<sup>21</sup> For himself, Ecclesia was charged in 1552 with a number of different offenses,<sup>22</sup> most of which concerned doctrinal irregularities promulgated from his pulpit in Vandoeuvres. Yet, near the head of the list of charges arraigned against him was his contraction of usury through a certain unsavory character named Ozias.<sup>23</sup> Ecclesia had already been warned of usurious connections with Ozias as early as 1549 and been asked to avoid him.<sup>24</sup> Unlike the other well-

to-do pastors who loaned openly, Ecclesia appears to have dealt through this shady intermediary, who handled the usurious contracts and collections for him much as a loan-shark does today. In 1553, Ecclesia was deposed by the Petit Conseil.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, the personal example set by the majority of pastors (and of course the earliest reformers<sup>26</sup>) must have lent credence to the ideas and goals they sought to impress upon the city. As a young humanist, Calvin wrote in his commentary on Seneca's De Clementia that the best way to improve public morality was not by strictness or punishment but through example.

"Surely fear is a poor teacher of morality," says Pliny.... So indeed it is; forced correction irritates man; by example man is most gently admonished. 27

While Calvin denounced monasticism and voluntary poverty as forms of stealing, he did recommend, and himself live, a life of simplicity. In sharp contrast to the Bishop and Canons before him, Calvin earned and spent little, having no real interest in acquisition and accumulation. His salary was far below that of a well-born canon or bishop, and without their supplemental sources of rents, benefices, etc. In fact, the average clergyman's salary by 1560 was about 400 écus plus free housing; even considering the inflation from 1530, this amount



represents a considerable drop from that paid to the Cathedral ecclesiastics.<sup>28</sup> Calvin's total estate at the time of his death was valued at only 225 écus. He willed one-tenth (a tithe) to his favorite charities and had the remainder divided<sup>29</sup> between his four nieces and three nephews.

The connection between the Reformed Church (the preferred ecclesiastical institution in the Imperial Cities) and Renaissance ideology is evident in the titles and functions of the Reformed clergy. The twin pillars of the Renaissance were a renewed concern for learning and a belief in the innate dignity of man. The Reformed clergy, in an appropriate corollary, were known as "preachers" and as "ministers." The former title indicated their function as interpreters of the Scriptures to the community from an exegetical standpoint (the Renaissance technique). They were to educate the community spiritually, spread the Gospel through their sermons and writings, and encourage the founding of schools.

As ministers, the clergy were to work for the betterment of the human condition, caring for both the spiritual and material needs of man. Renaissance thinking had challenged the medieval concept of poverty, so it was no longer naïvely considered the pathway to Heaven. Rather, the very existence of the poor testified to the material greed and inequities and the spiritual inadequacies of the entire community. The cler-

gy were not simply to minister verbally; they were to encourage the Christian duty of coming to a brother's aid and to be the living example of such.

By the end of the tumultuous period of 1541 to 1554, large numbers of French refugee pastors were arriving in Geneva to escape royal persecutions. Most of these men, like Calvin himself, had come to accept the Reformation after first having pursued humanist studies. Many in fact had been convinced in part by Calvin's Institutes, so they treated him as the master theologian rather than as a theological adversary. Just as they accepted his doctrine, they shared his concerns with the erecting of God's Kingdom on earth.

These new pastors were quite different from the original group. First, they were nobles<sup>30</sup> like Theodore de Bèze and Nicholas Colladon, or at least wealthy bourgeois from France. They were accustomed to a far more refined life-style than the early preachers or even those of Bolsec's ilk; thus they had sacrificed a potential life of ease in order to follow their convictions to provincial Geneva. Second, few had a Roman Catholic clerical background as former priests or monks. They were well-mannered and well-educated humanists, although not interested in doctrinal controversy or in winning converts through preaching and disputation. On the whole, they were more concerned with pastoral care, educational work,

and social activism.

In spite of their firm religious convictions and Calvin's example of simplicity, the French immigrant pastors did maintain their urbane manners and relatively affluent lifestyles in Geneva. While their habits and displays of prosperity were underplayed and did not even approximate those of former Roman Catholic Church hierarchy, their tastes did lead them to reject Calvin's extreme austerity. Nonetheless, the city's residents did not look askance at them. In that era, most people believed that the trappings of one's class should be displayed (although not necessarily ostentatiously) in order to indicate rank and the respect appropriate to it. Also, any signs of nobility and wealth could not but help a provincial, revolutionary town gain international respectability. Finally, such familiarity with wealth, the handling of money, and business activities and management<sup>31</sup> provided the new pastors with a most useful insight and expertise in Geneva's economic situation, as well as the opportunity to personally invest in the city.

The new breed of Calvinist pastors regularly loaned personal monies at interest, nearly always<sup>32</sup> following the city's strict usury laws. It was essential that their individual lending habits be above reproach. Their loans were primarily for the creation of new wealth (building houses,

opening shops, starting businesses, etc.) and, through the stimulation of employment and general prosperity, the promotion of the public weal. By loaning at interest rather than claiming a percentage in the investment (like the agricultural rent system<sup>33</sup>), the pastors allowed the borrower to run his business without intervention and without having to share any of his eventual profits.

Many of the wealthy pastors did not hesitate to rent property as well or to sell it at a profit. One of the most interesting property cases had to do with François Bourgoïn, sire d'Aignon, for whom (as with all the city pastors) free housing was provided by the secular government. However, because he was living in his own private residence, the city decided to sell his unoccupied manse in 1556. Upon hearing this, Bourgoïn requested the right to lease it from the city, at a special price of 400 écus, and in turn to abrogate his future rights to free housing. The civil authorities agreed to the stipulated conditions and lease. Immediately thereafter Bourgoïn (still living in his own house) had an intermediary sublease the house to someone else and then, in 1560, sell half the property for 342 écus<sup>34</sup>, thereby resulting in quite a good profit for the pastor. Through all of these clever real-estate maneuvers, Bourgoïn seems to have overlooked the fact that the deed to the house had never techni-

cally passed to him, nor had it been intended to do so. A special city tax applied to the property in perpetuum and payable to city coffers appears to have kept the magistrates complacent about these questionable transactions.

In an altruistic vein, many others in the Company of Pastors placed money in trusts for theological students and made various charitable contributions, not openly seeking gain at all. Often these transactions were made before the minister went off to hostile France on missionary work.<sup>35</sup>

The pastors readily joined with Calvin in the fight for legislation of social welfare programs and equitable economic opportunities. Because unemployment due to the refugee influx was especially high in Geneva until the immigrant industries began to flourish, Calvin considered joblessness a particularly pressing problem. Poverty, physical suffering, and disillusionment could only be eliminated by "finding the means to create a profession for the poor to work at."<sup>36</sup>

Calvin appeared before the Councils on numerous occasions in 1544 and 1545<sup>37</sup> to encourage the development of new industries, primarily weaving. This latter was to be accomplished most easily through a job-training scheme at the hospital. Thanks to the combined efforts of Calvin and Michel Varro (hospital procureur during this period), instruction in weaving was begun at the Hôpital-Général.<sup>38</sup> The 1553 ordinances for that

charitable institution (which Calvin also had a hand in drafting) went even further in grappling with the unemployment problem. Poor or orphaned boys were placed in specific apprenticeship programs, with the hospital system paying for the contracts. Girls were trained not only as servants and hospital aids but also in other simple occupations.<sup>39</sup>

The hospital system, of course, continued to provide the poor with loans and even outright grants for the purchase of necessities. At times when this seemed insufficient, special collections were held for the needy.<sup>40</sup> Many of the sumptuary laws were specifically designed to prohibit exploitation of these people or, in fact, of all Genevan residents whatever their class. An identical purpose was behind the injunction against all commodity speculation and hoarding.<sup>41</sup> For the pastors, increase in the cost of necessities or artificial provocation of scarcity was against God's laws by causing social discontent for all and producing profit for a few without any corresponding labor.<sup>42</sup> Ordinances regarding the quality of medicine, surgery, and apothecaries<sup>43</sup> assured the most honest health care available for that time period.

The regulation of industries, the monitoring of their products, prices, and practices, and the proscription of monopolies kept Genevan commerce equitable to workers, management, investors, and consumers alike. In fact, the new labor-

relations pact, based on mutual responsibility and cooperation, came into effect in 1560 and endured for two centuries. Through the devotion of his own time and energies in 1559, Calvin encouraged the Petit Conseil to rescind a statute denying the right of workers to form coalitions and, at the same time, fixing a maximum amount on salary levels. Later, the pastors lobbied for regular salary increases to meet the rise in living costs.<sup>44</sup> Even the rights of laboring minors were looked after; a guard was sent by the Seigneurie to collect their wages directly from their employers for them.<sup>45</sup>

In the Councils and from the pulpits, the pastors argued vociferously against usury in particular. Charges of such were often difficult to prove, because lending contracts had to be registered with a notary who would not, of course, allow himself to be incriminated on paper. Invariably, the notary recorded the loan using the imprecise phrase "with the interest permitted by law." In turn, the legal interest rate could be circumvented by recording the amount of the loan as higher than the sum which had actually been lent.<sup>46</sup> That such procedures occurred not infrequently was a testimony to the unavailability of money and to the expectation of always greater return.

Needless to say, such practices were widespread and well known; in fact, they encouraged ever more careful pre-



cautions against usury.<sup>47</sup> However, it flourished undercover in Geneva well after Calvin's death. Beza personally sought a reasonable compromise for this difficult issue. It was wrong to loan money at rates far in excess of the legal one. At the same time, ready and plentiful capital for investment was essential to the prosperity of the city, so lenders must not be discouraged. On the other hand, investors should be prohibited, through statutes, taxation, etc., from removing their profits, and even capital, at will from the city. Yet safeguarding the economic interests of the poor stood above all of these considerations.

One encouraging instance of the effect of the preachers' sermons against usury is well worth noting. In 1582, Ami Varro, a well-respected councillor, heard usurers denounced from the pulpit as dogs and thieves. Anxious to cleanse his conscience and amend his ways, Varro demanded a hearing before the Petit Conseil to reveal his personal finances and lending practices. His peers promptly convicted him of usury (having charged 10% interest for his loans) and forced him to forfeit the principal.

Clerical opposition in 1568 to the Councils' creation of a public bank which was to loan money at 10% was two-fold. First and most obviously, the interest rate was usuriously high. Secondly, interest was considered to be ethically con-

tracted only between two private individuals, not through a private company or even a public institution. The pastors feared, as Beza stated, that people elsewhere would declare "in Geneva everyone is a banker, which is a horrible thing."<sup>48</sup>

While the ministers were unable to stop the bank's formation,<sup>49</sup> they were successful in having its legal chargeable rate reduced to 8.3%, particularly through the efforts and arguments of Nicholas Colladon. Virtually none of the pastors was as vocal and as involved as he against economic abuses. While leading the fight against the bank, he also protested a new debtor's law, passed that same year (1568), which clearly discriminated against the poor. If an individual had sufficient collateral for his debts, he could not be arrested or sent to prison for failure to pay. Those without the goods to serve as collateral were ordered off to jail where they had no hope of ever earning the money to pay off what they owed.

In spite of Colladon's sincere dedication to the poor and anxiety to ameliorate their plight, he was frequently disagreeable and quarrelsome; he even had a running dispute with Beza for years. Support among his fellow pastors eventually evaporated. In 1571, the magistrates demanded his resignation for failing to provide information relating to a case between a client and a money-lender which Colladon had obtained during

a confession.<sup>50</sup> Finally, the Petit Conseil was forced to dis-  
miss him.<sup>51</sup>

Not only did the pastors sermonize, encourage, admonish, lobby, and suggest; they actually entered community disputes as arbitrators, particularly in grievances between workers and employers. During the printers' conflict of 1561, when the city government abolished the "mercuriale" (the customary Wednesday holiday), the Company successfully had the tradition reinstated.<sup>52</sup> This sort of ethical, non-acrimonious intervention, plus the availability and response of the hospital system, did indeed help Geneva to avoid the strikes, riots, and dissension<sup>53</sup> that crippled Lyons and Paris during the sixteenth century.

As has been noted many times before, Calvin was a fervent opponent of the compartmentalization of man's life into the sacred and the secular. The totality of existence was to be understood and lived through the laws and implications of the Gospel, which centered largely on the ideal of love. Thus, the Church had the right, indeed the necessity, to act as a moral check on society in every conceivable realm. It is not surprising, then, that Calvin and the Company of Pastors concerned themselves in the economic life and welfare of Geneva and readily intervened when a situation or abuse merited their attention. They conceived of themselves as Old Testament prophets who rebuked the secular authorities when the will of

God and the rights of man were violated.<sup>54</sup> In fact, when Calvin wrote against the exploitation of the poor and described the state's obligations to protect them, his references came primarily from Jeremiah and the "Lessons and Well-known Expositions from the Twelve Lesser Prophets."<sup>55</sup>

Just as important as the legislation Calvin initiated and the abuses he corrected was the tone he set for the business practices that evolved in Geneva. The public was always to be protected from bad merchandise and unscrupulous merchants. Complaints were to be aired before, and acted upon by, the Consistory.<sup>56</sup> A modern economist explains that

the power of his moral authority acted strongly on the economic activity of the city in the years which followed him. 57

Unfortunately, as the years did progress, Geneva's city government became more ingrown and oligarchic, a common misfortune in the Imperial Cities during the latter half of the sixteenth century.<sup>58</sup> This rigidity encouraged the pastors to be far more critical of the civil authorities than they had been even during Calvin's lifetime.

Throughout the sixteenth century then, Calvin and the Company of Pastors did exercise a very real influence over the economic life of Geneva by their example, through their preach-

ing, and behind the scenes. They acted as a check upon abuses, a motivating force for the councillors, and a buffer between the common people and the authorities. Even their rendering of tacit approval was felt. Ultimate agreement with the Councils on most issues was to be expected, for the Councils' members had been the preachers' first and most faithful supporters.

However, the locus of real power in Geneva always remained in the Petit Conseil. The pastors were never legally able to do more than advise, and their advice was far from binding. Calvin himself never possessed the authority to decree anything in the secular realm. He was answerable to the Petit Conseil, and only by implementing the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances did he even gain a relative independence for the Church. In episodes such as the establishment of a public bank<sup>59</sup> or the admonishment to Calvin to behave more respectfully toward the magistrates, the Councils did not hesitate to overrule the pastors or exercise their legal authority.<sup>60</sup> In two areas (the laying-on-of-hands for ordination and a monthly rather than quarterly celebration of the Lord's Supper), Calvin was even unsuccessful in securing Church programs he believed important.

All in all, Calvin never possessed the near-dictatorial power over every decision made in Geneva that the popular misconception of his role assumes. The degree to which Calvin,

the Company of Pastors, and the Councils did agree and work together for the common weal in sixteenth century Geneva is nevertheless a tribute to the theological and ethical example and impact of the scholarly, introverted French reformer.

## Chapter Nineteen Footnotes

1. Calvin's intellectual contributions to the Reformation lay not in his creativity (because he was not a terribly original thinker) but in the encyclopedic scope of his background. Anyone who has read his Commentary on Seneca's "De Clementia" (written at age 23) and then looked at the first edition of the Institutes (age 26) cannot help but be astounded by the range and detail of the references he could bring to bear on two totally different fields at an age when few could have accomplished as much in only one. His phenomenal background and accurate recall spanned the Classics, the Bible, the Patristic writings, and the Renaissance humanists.
  2. Quoted from: Wendel, François. Calvin. London, 1963, pp. 48-49.
  3. Chapter Five, pp. 96-100.
  4. A popular story of superstition and ignorance in the neighboring Vaud follows to illustrate the point: a carpenter cut a block of pine in half. One piece was used to make a kneading trough for the artisan's mother, the second he fashioned into a statue of St. Joseph. The carpenter's mother rhymed:
 

"O san D'josé, frare di m'impataire,  
mon fi t'a fé: su-io pas ta granmaire?"

(Oh, St. Joseph, brother of my kneading trough,  
My son has made you: therefore, am I not your  
/grandmother?)
- Read, Meredith. Historical Studies in Vaud, Berne, and Savoy, vol. 1. London, 1897, p. 229.
5. C.O., vol. 9, col. 891.
  6. The foremost issue raised against Farel and Calvin was their insistence that their town credo be signed by the head of each household.
  7. In this era, Theodore Beza left Lausanne to become Rector of Geneva's new academy.
  8. Hauser, Henri. Les débuts du capitalisme. Paris, 1931, p.51.



9. For a statistical breakdown, see Appendix, p. 534.
10. Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967, p. 110.
11. Bergier, Jean-François. "Commerce et politique du blé à Genève aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles." RSH, vol. 14, (1964), p. 549.
12. Karmin, Otto. L'apprentissage à Genève de 1539-1603. Geneva, 1910, p. 11.
13. Heyer, Théophile. "Notice sur Laurent de Normandie." MDG, vol. 16, (1867), p. 415.
14. Specifically, the right of excommunication belonged to the Church alone, a university would be founded, and the duties of the pastors and magistrates were spelled out, especially with regard to final authority in specific matters.
15. The mystical and sacrificial aspects of the mass were attacked on theological grounds, but in truth many people regarded the ceremony and the concept of transubstantiation so at odds with "observable fact" as to be only sham. Thus, the charismatic and mysterious aura of the Roman liturgy was eliminated as well as the priest's sacerdotal functions. In their place, a sermon (a group teaching session) and community prayers and hymn-singing (the community acting as a spiritual unit before God) were substituted. The complete elimination of the charismatic and mystical aspects of religious expression by the Reformed theologians remains debatable.
16. For an idea of the savings, see Chapter Nine, pp. 226-227.
17. By the date of its publication, Castellio had already moved to Basle, following doctrinal differences with Calvin.
18. The involved nature of these arguments and Calvin's replies have not merely left posterity with a lot of detailed Calvinist thought on predestination. Moreover, they inaccurately emphasize the importance of predestination to Calvin's over-all theology.
19. Wendel, Calvin, p. 265.

20. It is not within the intent or scope of this work, nor is it essential to proof of this point, to delve any more deeply into Calvin's concept of predestination. The immensity and complexity of this issue, as dealt with by Calvin and other theologians through the centuries, make even a brief statement of his standpoint so simplistic as to be meaningless. The subject is best restricted to a theological treatise. For a careful, concise study see: Wendel, Calvin, pp. 263-284.
21. Bergier, Jean-François, and Robert M. Kingdon. Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève, vol. 1. Geneva, 1964, p. 134.
22. Ibid., p. 151.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p. 56, footnote 3.
25. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 152-153.
26. Ibid., p. 218.
27. Battles, F.L., and A.M. Hugo (eds.). Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's "De Clementia." Leiden, 1969, p. 307.  
Perhaps this illustrates a change from a humanist to a Christian understanding of man's nature in Calvin's thought.
28. Kingdon, Robert M. Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France 1559-1563. Geneva, 1956, p. 96.
29. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 93.
30. Kingdon, Robert M. "The Economic Behaviour of Ministers in Geneva in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century." ARG, vol. 50, (1959), p. 33.
31. Prior to their resettling in Geneva, the nobles had managed estates, the bourgeois their shops and businesses.
32. Nicholas des Gallars, sire de Saules and influential member of the Company of Pastors, is one example of a pastor who loaned money frequently. See: Kingdon, "The Economic," pp. 33-39.
33. The investment policy of the Cathedral Canons and the Company of Pastors illustrates this point. The Roman Catholic

Church's investments were concentrated on agricultural "rents," a device which took a percentage of the peasant's labor. The new economic policy, as Calvin described in his writings on interest-taking, supported a fixed return on a sum of money invested for legitimate business projects. As the business expanded, the profit returned on the initial outlay grew. In short, in the Calvinist economic scheme, income was used productively to create new wealth. It raised the standard of living for the entire city and provided employment. The old rent system used money only to maintain the economically unproductive nobility and to drain the resources of the peasant. The traditional order failed to create new wealth and simply continued a stagnant social order.

34. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

35. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

36. RC, December 29, 1544.

37. RC, December 29, 1544; December 31, 1544; January 27, 1545; March 19, 1545.

38. Doumergue, Emile. Jean Calvin: les hommes et les choses de son temps, vol. 5. Lausanne, 1917, p. 679.

Doumergue categorically refutes claims that Calvin impressed residents of the Hôpital-Général into weaving projects by threatening to withhold food and shelter if they refused.

39. It is interesting to note that three of the major formulations of Calvin's economic policy came to light within the years 1544-1545. First, there was his collaboration with the Councils in deciding a course on the taking of interest. Late in 1544 he made attempts to fight unemployment through the creation of new industries via the hospital weaving project. Finally, in November of 1545, he wrote his famous letter to merchant Claude Sachins, in which he declared business transactions and the merchant life to be a worthy vocation for a Christian to follow.

40. In 1545, a collection was taken at the direct instigation of Calvin. See: Odier-Cazenove, Jean-Jacques-Louis. L'Hôpital de Genève, depuis son origine jusqu'à 1842. Geneva, 1862, p. 31.

41. Originally, proclamations against hoarding and speculation only pertained to grain.

42. Biéler, André. La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin. Geneva, 1959, pp. 169-170.
43. Passed in 1569.
44. Biéler, La pensée, pp. 162-164.
45. Ibid., p. 158.
46. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, p. 218.
47. Ibid., pp. 217-219.
48. Quoted in: Biéler, La pensée, p. 169.
49. However, the bank collapsed shortly thereafter from gross mismanagement.
- Monter, E. William. "Le change public à Genève, 1568-1581." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, pp. 265-290.
50. Choisy, Eugène. L'Etat chrétien calviniste à Genève au temps de Théodore de Bèze. Geneva, 1902, pp. 44-67.
- Aubert, Hippolyte. "Nicholas Colladon et les Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève." BHG, vol. 2, (1898-1904), pp. 138-164.
51. Jullien, Alexandre (ed.). Histoire de Geneve. Geneva, 1951, pp. 258-260.
52. Kingdon, Geneva and the Coming, p. 97.
- Later in the century, the "mercuriale" was moved to Monday. S.D., vol. 3, p. 393, fol. 1228, (December 4, 1583).
53. Biéler, La pensée, pp. 161-166.
54. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, pp. 144-145, 217-221.
55. Often, Calvin will begin an exegetical theme by stating: "The prophet here admonishes..." or uses wording very similar to that.
- Biéler, La pensée, pp. 298-299.
56. McNeill, John T. The History and Character of Calvinism. New York, 1954, p. 190.

57. Bergier, Jean-François. Genève et l'économie européenne de la Renaissance. Paris, 1963, p. 84.
58. Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972, pp. 111-112.
59. Martin, Paul-Etienne. "Calvin et le prêt à l'intérêt à Genève." Mélanges...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, p. 263.
60. This tendency to be at odds with one another only intensified as the century progressed.

Conclusion

## Conclusion

The history of Social Concern and the Reformation in Geneva is, to a very large extent, the dynamic interplay between theology and action. Social and economic policy in Geneva, as in many other cities, developed as the practical expression of "reformed" theology, the logical consequences within the world of the Reformation's particular emphasis on the Gospel and the New Testament Church. Its radical pruning of the spiritually-bankrupt, late-medieval Roman Church, its cutting back to the very root of the Christian message, brought forth a flowering of concern for one's neighbor which was at the very heart of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

It has been demonstrated throughout this paper that the renewed emphasis on the Gospel and the institutional means for implementing its commandments did not occur in a



vacuum. Geneva, in common with many other cities in "reformed" Europe, was able to create its own religious institutions by building upon current "popular" theological interpretations and local traditions. The Reformers needed such popular interest in theological speculation and such institutions and local ordinances through which to channel their understanding of the implications of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and their message of appropriately responsive public and private actions.

Throughout the preceding two centuries, many scholars and "prophets" had challenged the contradictions between the institutional Church and the New Testament; Wycliffe and Huss were prominent among them. But to right the failures of the existing Roman Church without the creation or auspices of a counter-institution was impossible for these early reformers in the face of ecclesiastical repression. The preconditions or catalysts for such a new institution proved to be the development of Renaissance learning and its dissemination via the movable type press and the rise of cities.

The unity and power of the Roman Church were destroyed, in part, by the Reformation because its philosophical bases rendered inadequate the long-held intellectual assumptions of the Medieval era. Even before 1517, Scholastic concepts in theology and about the nature of man's world had come under attack by both humanists and religious reformers; scholasti-

cism's static view of society and the universe was challenged by Renaissance academics and city burghers alike. Social, scientific, and ecclesiastical theories, often propagated in the vacuum of a monastery, no longer correlated with clearly observable data and were thus rejected by the leading religious and secular minds.<sup>1</sup> In truth, the medieval world crumbled with the enlightenment of Renaissance learning.

Reformed theology demanded that the Medieval Church be pruned on many centuries' overgrowth of incorrect or unnecessary doctrine, law, and ceremony in order to get to the root<sup>2</sup> of the Christian message; only then could the Gospel flower in their own age. This doctrinal clarification was to be accomplished largely through applying the Renaissance method of exegesis to the Holy Scriptures and disseminating the results through readily available pamphlets, tracts, and books (thanks again to the invention of the press). The rise of literacy, printing, and the Reformation went hand in hand.

Whereas the Reformed Church sought to judge and to be judged by New Testament standards, as understood through careful biblical study, the Roman Church seemed to conceive of itself as its own judge and standard. By emphasizing the primacy and sanctity of tradition, the Medieval Church became a self-perpetuating monolith which had neither the need nor the desire for admitting past mistakes of doctrine or emphasis. With no external criteria to use as a yardstick and confronted

with contradictions, its clergy could only say (as they did before the Genevan Councils in 1535) that

[they] had been accustomed to living as their fathers had taught them, not enquiring about such things; that is why they ask to be left in the service they performed before. 3

Finally, the Medieval Church was self-absorbed at the expense of its commitment to the well-being of its flock. As an institution, it consistently wanted to increase its power and authority in non-spiritual realms. It taught its members to seek after their own personal salvation without considering how such a self-centered endeavor might affect their brother or their community. The Reformers, on the other hand, emphasized Paul's doctrine that salvation could not be earned but that through good works and through commitment to one's brother, a Christian displayed the power and purpose of Christ in all aspects of his life. Such a biblical understanding caused Calvin, for example, to carry the injunctions and consequences of the Gospel into such diverse and previously untouched areas as public building codes, food production, and monetary policy, all within the civil realm.

In the late Middle Ages, cities grew at the expense of both the countryside and the feudal nobility who ruled it. The cities were not just a collection of individuals whose

houses adjoined; rather they were corporate institutions in their own right. Their burghers developed manufacturing trades, learned how to amass capital, and used the capital to create new wealth and more jobs, thereby enlarging the cities and their influence. The burghers were more energetic than the nobility and far more democratic.<sup>4</sup> Their enquiring minds demanded new and better ways to achieve their many objectives. They were willing to re-examine a situation to make certain everything was being done in the most practical way possible; tradition, for its own perpetuation, was simply not a compelling argument to them.

Just as in practical and governmental matters, the theological assumptions held by the cities' residents were far different from those of the farmer-peasant or the nobility. First, the townsmen believed that both they and their corporate institution (the city) stood accountable before God, and they would be judged before Him for their actions.<sup>5</sup> The individual and the city were therefore indivisible and wholly responsible for obeying God's commandments. For that very reason, religious leaders should be residents of the towns they served.

Following from this, the burghers also believed that neither they nor their city could hide behind the institution of the Church and its mechanical and monetary recompense for

sin if or when they recognized the Church's failure or want of "Christian"<sup>6</sup> principle regarding particular issues or doctrine. The Church was not an automatic, inexorable, all-protective mediator between God and man.

Thirdly, the literate city-dwellers who could possess a Bible (which they had traditionally seen as the authority in spiritual matters) were able to verify Church doctrine and practice, as proclaimed by Rome. They asked that the Church conform to the Scriptures through the implementation of the commandments of God, as given by Christ, and through evangelical preaching. Their mentality demanded consistency between belief and action, and their practical, result-oriented lifestyle looked for ways in which to accomplish that harmony with an economy of purpose. Quite simply, the burghers believed in a simplicity and a consonance in lifestyle, in institutional government, and in ecclesiastical matters.

As the cities grew and matured, they became more responsible institutions in their own right and eventually began to drain authority from the Medieval Church. In the countryside, on the other hand, no such corporate identity existed. A rural dweller, no matter how theologically enlightened or aware, did not have the strength, in size, numbers, power, or economy, necessary to apply leverage against the Roman Church, a self-satisfied, non-self-critical struc-

ture.

The development of the late-medieval cities was therefore essential to the growth of the Reformation, for they provided the institutional framework for carrying out corporate change and the means for enforcing it. Equally important, their citizens generally held the very theological assumptions which the Reformers espoused and cherished. It is only natural then that their message found some of its strongest supporters within city walls. Without this hospitable, nurturing soil, Luther and Calvin's teachings might have withered like Huss' before them.<sup>7</sup>

The Reformed Church established in Geneva was different from its Roman predecessor in a number of important ways. First, it was biblically based, radically and earnestly seeking to imitate the New Testament Church and to conform much more closely to it in form and spirit than seemingly did the Roman Church. The Reformed Church believed that its primary role was to spread the Good News and so tried to cut away all meaningless or extraneous things to bring the Christian message to full flower. Its parishioners were not to be concerned with performing works in order to earn their souls' salvation (since that came through God's grace alone), but rather with carrying out the commandments of God. In the area of social concern, these included feeding the hungry,

clothing the naked, and caring for the sick, the solitary,  
and the stranger.<sup>8</sup> Thus, comprehensive programs to accomplish these objectives were inaugurated by the Genevan Councils within a few months of the Reformation decrees.

Clearly, the Reformers like the burghers demanded consistency between ideals and actions, doctrine and deeds. They were less concerned about ceremony and Canon Law and far more interested in the practical applications of belief.

Next, the reforming theologians conceived of ministry as both service to God and "service to man,"<sup>9</sup> not as privilege or power over man. While all the Reformers to one extent or another rejected the trappings and operation of the hierarchical organization of the clergy, Calvin's approach was the most radical. He re-examined the New Testament and found, he believed, Scriptural warrant for a ministry divided by function rather than by rank. Within that ministry was one specific group which was to care for the poor: the diaconate.

Calvin found New Testament justification for the diaconate in Acts 6: 1-6, I Timothy 3: 6-10, and Romans 12: 8, where they were specifically charged with providing for the material needs of the poor. Calvin's deacons were laymen from the Councils who were ordained for that very purpose. In fact, Calvin brought the laity into the ministry of the



Church in a way no other major Reformer had done. His decision showed how the unity of purpose within the city could find practical expression in the work of the Church.

Rank and dignity, office and function, lay and clerical, equality and diversity—all these elements have their place; but they are now integrated into a whole which really has the appearance of a people of God. The key to this truly biblical synthesis Calvin reiterates ceaselessly in different words and ways. 10

Through the diaconate, the commandments of the New Testament were given practical expression. They cared for the needs of the unfortunate far better than the Roman Church had ever managed. The deacons took a comprehensive view of the needs of the entire city, not just the feeding and clothing of the poor, but the provision of housing, jobs, and training as well. They placed orphans with families and housed the old and infirm. All of these programs, financed largely through confiscated Roman Church property, put resources to work in a pious project whose efficacy rivals any contemporary governmental social enterprise. Similarly impressive, the programs were administered almost exclusively by part-time volunteers.

In conjunction with these social programs, the Reformers redefined the Christian attitude toward poverty and suf-

fering. The Medieval Church had taught that such travails brought the victim closer to God, and that money paid to ease those burdens helped the donor earn his salvation. The Reformers, on the other hand, believed that since man was saved by grace alone, through faith, poverty as such did not insure salvation for either the sufferer or his benefactor.

Mendicancy in particular was to be stopped, because it seemed an example of doctrinal error and theological hypocrisy.<sup>11</sup> Also, such disorganized and uncoordinated voluntary giving provided only sporadic and undependable relief to the truly impoverished. The Genevan Councils recognized this in 1458 when they proclaimed, "...it is not sufficient to do good, if it does not benefit the good in the manner deserved."<sup>12</sup>

Calvin taught that poverty was a scourge upon mankind which existed only because of man's selfishness, because of his unwillingness to share God's bounty as Christ had commanded. The existence of poverty was indicative of man's fallen nature as well, because, in a state of Grace, man would of course be concerned about the welfare of his brother. Such a reformulation of the concept of poverty was a radical difference between the medieval Roman Church and the Reformed Church.

John Calvin and his associates spread among the populace the firm belief that they were recreating the New Testament Church in Geneva. One is constantly struck by their rigorous devotion to the application of Christian love and concern to daily life and its problems. While the Genevan Church may have tended toward legalism in the latter half of the century, during Calvin's lifetime it stood squarely for the application of the Good News of Jesus Christ into every aspect of Genevan life.

During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, most of the Imperial Cities in Germany did become casualties of the rising power of princes and emperors. Only on the Swiss plateau, from Zürich and Schaffhausen in the east to Geneva at its western edge, could the self-supporting cities preserve their independence. Free, municipal Churches in most German cities were eliminated by their new overlords in favor of Lutheran or Roman Catholic Churches. Nevertheless, the Imperial Cities left the world as impressive heritage of Christian values and a concern for personal freedoms, the two salient legacies of Geneva's own Reformation.

## Conclusion Footnotes

1. It is indeed ironical that to establish its theological policy on economics and the nature of money and numerous other subjects, the Medieval Church relied on the pagan philosopher Aristotle.
2. "Radical," after all, means "root;" the Reformers should be seen in that context, of returning to the root of the Christian message.
3. See Chapter Four, p. 70.
4. Grimm, Harold J. "Luther's Contributions to Sixteenth-Century Organization of Poor Relief." ARG, vol. 61, (1970), pp. 222-223.

The theme is also common to:

Moeller, Bernd. Imperial Cities and the Reformation. Philadelphia, 1972, p. 41 passim.

5. This is, of course, a major theme in the theology of Luther.  
See: Grimm, "Luther's" p. 224.
6. As defined by a close study and careful interpretation of the Gospels.
7. Huss had strong local support in his native land, Bohemia. Following his execution in 1415, his teachings did not spread.
8. For example, since Jesus taught mankind to feed and clothe the poor, it was necessary for the city to do exactly that. Luther wrote:  
  

On Judgement Day...God will not ask a person how many endowments for masses he has made or how much money he has given to Churches or monasteries; but he will say: "I was hungry, and you gave me no food. I was naked, and you did not clothe me." The motivation for giving should be love. (Grimm, "Luther's," p. 225).
9. McCord, J.I., and T.H.L. Parker (eds.). Service in Christ. London, 1966, pp. 101-109.
10. Ibid., p. 103.
11. Hypocrisy, because most mendicants managed to live rather well from their begging.
12. See Chapter Two, p. 33.

Appendix

## CITY PLAN OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY GENEVA

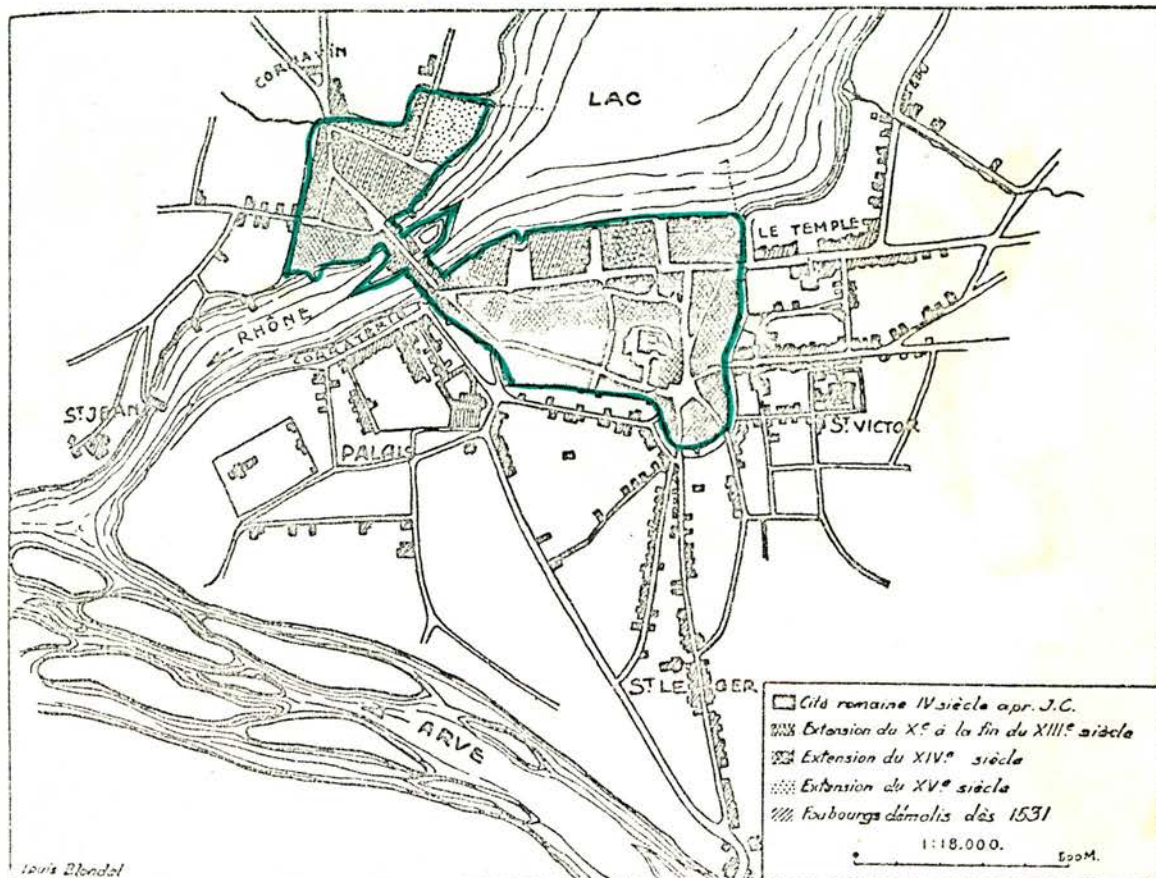


FIG. 18. La ville avec ses faubourgs à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle.  
Le quartier entre Coutance et la rue Rousseau, à Saint-Gervais, est hachuré par erreur du XIV<sup>e</sup> au lieu du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle.

All buildings outside the green perimeter were demolished as part of the defense preparations of the 1530's. These suburban areas housed about 10% of the metropolitan population. For the next two centuries, Geneva lived behind walls before venturing out once again to build on this land.

Source: Blondel, Louis. Le développement urbain de Genève à travers les siècles. (Les cahiers de préhistoire et d'archéologie, vol. 3). Geneva, 1946. p. 49.



THE FATE OF THE MONASTERIES  
IN POST-REFORMATION GENEVA (+1536)

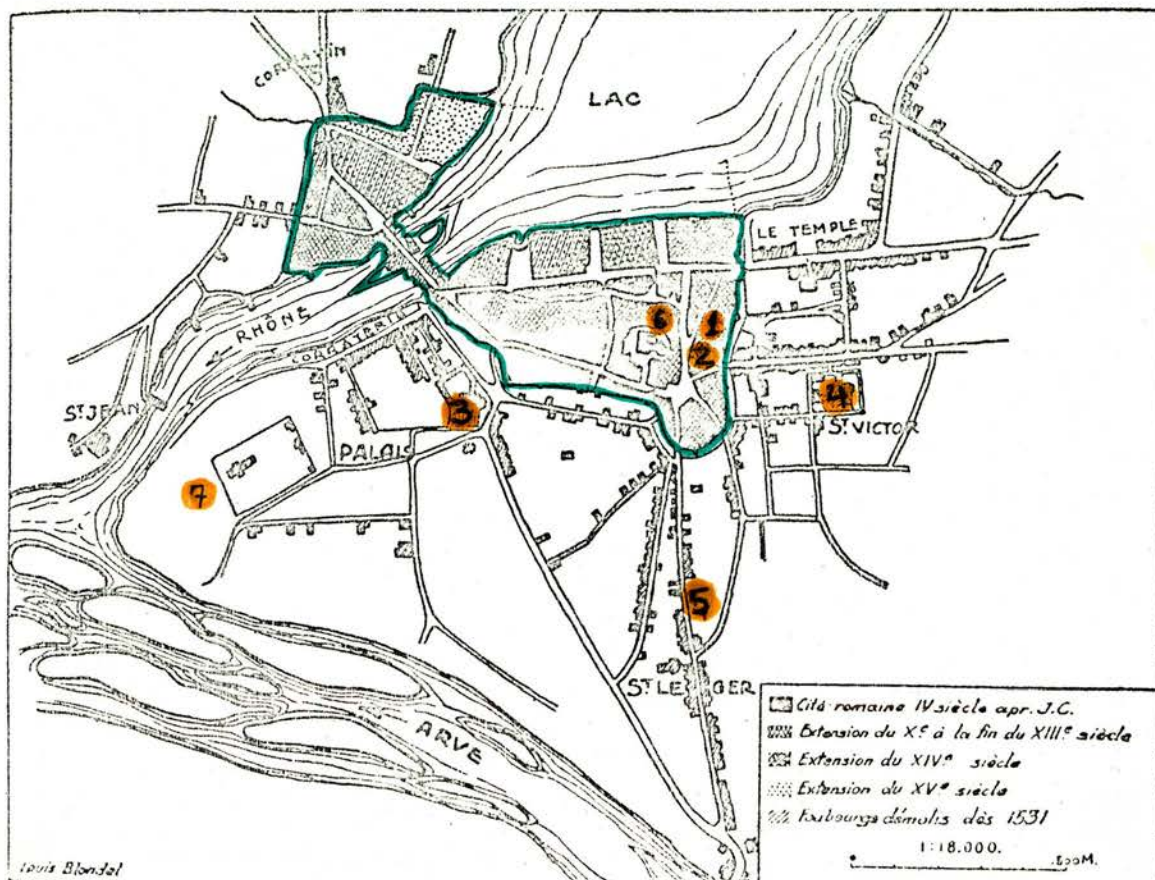


FIG. 18. La ville avec ses faubourgs à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle.  
Le quartier entre Contance et la rue Rousseau, à Saint-Gervais, est hachuré par erreur du XIV<sup>e</sup>, au lieu du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle.

1. Rive (Franciscans/Cordeliers): founded 13th century.  
Used for the new town school, College de Rive. Finally  
demolished in 1554.
2. Ste.-Claire (Franciscan nuns/Clarisses): founded 1474.  
Housed new Hospital-General, and was demolished in 1707.
3. Palais (Dominicans/Jacopins): founded 13th century,  
and destroyed 1535 in defense preparations.



Population of Geneva

1464 - 10,500	1532 - 11,500	1559 - 15,000 (?) (Refugee Peak)
1475 - 11,000 (Peak of trade fairs)	1537 - 10,300 (War, fauxbourgs destroyed)	1589 - 13,000

Source: Blondel, Louis. Le développement urbain de Genève à travers les siècles. (Les cahiers de préhistoire et d'archéologie, vol. 3). Geneva, 1946, passim.

Ministers Dispatched from Geneva to France

1555 - 1	1558 - 22 (21%)	1561 - 12 (11%)
1556 - 3	1559 - 32 (32%)	1562 - 12 (11%)
1557 - 11 (10%)	1560 - 12 (11%)	

Source: Kingdon, Robert M. Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France 1555-1563. Geneva, 1956, p. 145.

Influx of Refugees

1549 - 94	1553 - 77	1557 - 894
1550 - 126	1554 - 353	1558 - 734
1551 - 314	1555 - 389	1559 - 1727
1552 - 58	1556 - 332	1560 - 56 (January only)

Source: Monter, E. William. Studies in Genevan Government 1536-1605. Geneva, 1964, p. 24.

<u>HOSPITAL</u>	<u>FOUNDER</u>	<u>ORIGINAL PATRON</u>	<u>1530 PATRON</u>
Nôtre Dame	?	Cathedral Chapter	Syndics (1530)
Bourg-de-Four	Bourgeois	Founding Families	Same Families (lay)
St. Jacques	Bourgeois	Dukes of Savoy	Syndics through Pyssis, 1452
Trinite	Bourgeois	Confraternity	Same Confraternity (lay)
St.-Bernard	Bourgeois	Provost of Grand-St.-Bernard + Syndics	Same (lay + cleric)
Pauvres Honteux	Bourgeois	Confraternity	Syndics, about 1520
Madelaine	Bourgeois	Syndics	Same, (lay)
Marlioz	Bourgeois	Curé de Marlioz	Syndics (absorbed by Pyssis)
Pyssis	Savoy + Syndics	Syndics	Same (lay)
Pestiférés	Savoy + Syndics	Syndics	Same (lay)

## II. Les hospitaliers de l'Hôpital-Général

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Claude Salomon, dit Pasta<br/>14 novembre 1535 (RC, Rivoire &amp; van Berchem ed., XIII, 351-352)<br/>28 janvier 1536 (<i>Ibid.</i>, p. 414, re sa mort)</p> <p>2. Lois Bernard<br/>22 février 1536 (RC, Rivoire &amp; van Berchem ed., XIII, 457)</p> <p>3. Jean Leurat<br/>14 juin 1537 (RC, vol. 31, fol. 1)</p> <p>4. Claude Magnin<br/>31 août 1538 (RC, vol. 32, fol. 137)<br/>29 juin 1540 (RC, vol. 34, fol. 314 v.)</p> <p>5. Anthoine Chicand<br/>30 juin 1540 (RC, vol. 34, fol. 317 v.)</p> <p>6. Jean Fontannaz<br/>21 décembre 1541 (RC, vol. 35, fol. 441)<br/>2 mai 1543 (RC, vol. 37, fol. 82)</p> <p>7. Pierre de Rages<br/>2 mai 1543 (RC, vol. 37, fol. 82)<br/>28 juillet 1550 (Reg. morts, I, 16)</p> | <p>8. Pierre Jean Jesse<br/>11 août 1550 (RC, vol. 45, fol. 64 v.)<br/>12 mai 1553 (Arch. hosp., Aa 2, fol. 41 v.)</p> <p>9. Jullian Boccard<br/>12 mai 1553 (RC, vol. 47, fol. 73 v.)<br/>10 février 1557 (Arch. hosp. Aa 2, fol. 177)</p> <p>10. *Jean Collondaz<br/>12 février 1557 (RC, vol. 53, fol. 10)<br/>18 juin 1560 (RC, vol. 56, fol. 51)</p> <p>11. Pierre Sommareta<br/>18 juin 1560 (RC, vol. 56, fol. 51 v.)<br/>12 novembre 1560 (mort — RC, vol. 56, fol. 100)</p> <p>12. Pernet des Fosses<br/>15 novembre 1560 (RC, vol. 56, fol. 100 v.)<br/>29 mai 1561 (RC, vol. 56, fol. 196 v.)</p> <p>13. Pierre Dance<br/>3 juin 1561 (RC, vol. 56, fol. 198 v.)</p> |
|---|---|

\* Membre du Consistoire au même temps

90

## The hospitaliers.

Source: Kingdon, Robert M. "The Deacons of the Reformed Church in Calvin's Geneva," in Mélanges... à Henri Meylan. Geneva, 1970. p. 90.

## 799. Serment des prédicants et des diacres.

A.

P. C., 16 juillet 1542.

Le mode du serement faictz par les predicans et dyacres pres-  
5 sentés par devant tout le peuple, dymenche 16 de juillet 1542.

Premierement jurent fidelement annoncé la parolle de Dieu et  
edifficacion du peuple et de servi en bonne conscience à ceste esglise  
à laquelle Dieu m'a obligé; et d'estre loyal à Seigniorie, et gardé le  
bien et l'honneur comment vrays fideles doivent faire, et de monstré  
10 bon exemple de subjecgion, en obeyssant au loys et ordonnances par  
ladiete Seigniorie; reservant toujours la liberté de presché sa parolle  
comment nostre officé le porte, selon son saint commandement.

R. C., vol. 36, fol. 72.

## The Deacons' oath.

Source: Les Sources du Droit, vol. 2.

APPENDIX

LES DIACRES DE L'ÉGLISE RÉFORMÉE DE GENÈVE AU TEMPS DE CALVIN

I. Les procureurs de l'Hôpital-Général

- 1535: Conradus Vicky (Vity, Vyty, Vytyz)  
Claude Bernard  
Aymo Vuilliermy (Valliermoz, Vuillier-  
mo, Vuilliermy)  
Franciscus Comitiss (Conte)  
Johannes Amedeus Curtet  
(RC, Rivoire & van Berchem ed.,  
XIII, 351-352, 14 novembre  
1535)
- 1537: Amy Porral (Porralis)  
Jean Bordon (Bourdon)  
(RC, vol. 31, fol. 1, 14 juin 1537)
- 1538: Pierre Tissot  
Jean Bordon  
(RC, vol. 29/3, fol. 37 v., 1<sup>er</sup> mars  
1538)  
(encore procureurs en 1540—  
RC, vol. 34, fol. 118, 1<sup>er</sup> mars)
- 1541: Jean Bordon  
Michel Varro  
Jean Pictrod  
Aymo Vuilliermoz  
(RC, vol. 35, fol. 64 v., 9 février  
1541)
- 1541: (fin de l'année):  
Jean Coquet  
Jean Chautemps  
Michel Varro  
Loys du Fort  
(PH, 1271, 28 décembre 1541,  
Inventaire des meubles de l'hôpi-  
tal général de Genève)
- 1542: Jean Coquet  
Jean Chautemps  
Loys du Fort  
Michel Varro  
(Arch. hosp., Aa 1, fol. 1, février  
1542)
- 1543: Jean Coquet, syndic  
Jean Chautemps  
Loys du Fort  
Michel Varro  
(Arch. hosp., Aa 1, fol. 44,  
11 février 1543, et ss.)
- 1544: Jean Coquet  
Jean Chautemps  
Loys du Fort  
Michel Varro  
(RC, vol. 38, fol. 68 v., 8 février  
1544)
- 1545: Jean Coquet  
Jean Chautemps  
Loys du Fort  
Michel Varro  
(RC, vol. 40, fol. 22, 12 février  
1545)
- 1546: Jean Coquet  
Jean Chautemps  
Loys du Fort  
Michel Varro  
(RC, vol. 41, fol. 11 v., 11 février  
1546)  
Jean Coquet est mort et a été rem-  
placé par Anthoine Chicand en  
octobre  
(RC, vol. 41, fol. 219, 12 octobre  
1546)
- 1547: Jean Chautemps  
Loys du Fort  
Michel Varro  
(RC, vol. 42, fol. 75 v., 4 avril  
1547)  
Anthoine Chicand, syndic  
(Arch. hosp., Aa 1, fol. 267,  
13 mars 1547, et ss.)
- 1548: Anthoine Chicand  
\* Pierre Bonna (Bonnaz)  
François Vuillens  
Jean Leurat  
(RC, vol. 43, fol. 13 v., 7 février  
1548)

The procurers of the hospital

Source: Kingdon, Robert M. "The Deacons of the Reformed Church in Calvin's Geneva," in *Mélanges...* Henri Meylan. Geneva, 1970. pp. 88-89.

- 1549: Anthoine Chicand  
Pierre Bonna  
François Vuillens  
Jean Leurat  
(RC, vol. 44, fol. 12 v., 5 février  
1549)
- 1550: Jean Phillipin  
(Anthoine Chicand  
François Vuillens  
Jean Leurat)  
(RC, vol. 44, fol. 323, 13 février  
1550)
- 1551: Michel de l'Arche  
(Jean Phillipin  
François Vuillens  
Jean Leurat)  
(RC, vol. 45, fol. 195 v., 16 février  
1551)
- 1552: \* Jean Phillipin, syndic  
Michel de l'Arche  
François Vuillens  
Jean Leurat  
\* Guillaume Beney (Benôit)  
(RC, vol. 46, fol. 157 v., 15 février  
1552)
- 1553: Pernet des Fosses, syndic  
Jean Amed Curtet, dit Bottellier  
\* Michel de l'Arche  
Jean Balard, le jeune  
Jean Lois Ramel  
(RC, vol. 47, fol. 12, 13 février  
1553)
- 1554: Michel de l'Arche, syndic  
Claude Delestra  
Pierre d'Orsières  
Jean Amed Curtet, dit Bottellier  
(RC, vol. 48, fol. 6 v., 8 février  
1554)
- 1555: \* Pierre Jean Jesse, syndic  
Michel de l'Arche  
Jean Amed Curtet, dit Bottellier  
Claude Delestra  
Pierre d'Orsières  
(RC, vol. 49, fol. 7, 7 février  
1555)
- 1556: Jean Chautemps, syndic  
Pierre Jean Jesse  
\* Jean Donzel  
\* François Lullin  
\* Guillaume Chicand  
(RC, vol. 51, fol. 8, 12 février  
1556)
- 1557: \* Guillaume Chicand, syndic  
Jean Chautemps  
\* Jean Donzel  
Girard Catry  
Jean Chrestien, dit de Roquemont  
(RC, vol. 53, fol. 8, 11 février  
1557)
- 1558: \* Jean Donzel, syndic  
\* Guillaume Chicand  
Jean Chautemps  
Girard Catry  
Jean Chrestien  
(RC, vol. 54, fol. 78, 8 février  
1558)
- 1559: Jean Porral (Porralis), syndic  
\* Guillaume Chicand  
Jean Chautemps  
Girard Catry  
\* Claude Testu  
(RC, vol. 55, fol. 3, 7 février  
1559)
- 1560: Jaques Blondel, syndic  
Pernet des Fosses  
Guillaume Chicand  
Girard Catry  
Aymoz Plonjon (Plongeon)  
(RC, vol. 56, fol. 5, 8 février  
1560)
- 1561: Guillaume Chicand, syndic  
Jaques Blondel  
Jean Collondaz  
Aymoz Plonjon  
\* Girard Catry  
(RC, vol. 56, fol. 147, 13 février  
1561)
- 1562: \* Amy Chasteauneuf  
Pierre Chappuis  
\* Girard Catry  
\* François de Roches  
(RC, vol. 57, fol. 5 v., 12 février  
1562)
- 1563: \* Bertholome Lect, syndic  
Pierre Chappuis  
\* Girard Catry  
\* François de Roches  
(RC, vol. 58, fol. 5, 11 février  
1563)
- 1564: \* (Claude) de la Maisonneuve, syndic  
Pierre Chappuis  
\* Girard Catry  
\* François de Roches  
(RC, vol. 59, fol. 3 v., 10 février  
1564)

\* Membre du Consistoire au même temps

## COMPARISON OF OCCUPATIONS

	<u>Montpellier, 1560</u>		<u>Refugees in Geneva, 1549-1560</u>	
	number	percentage	number	percentage
Total Members	817		4776	
Those Listing Professions	561	68.7 %	2247*	47 %
Artisans	387	69.0 %	1536	73.6 %
Professionals <sup>@</sup>	87	15.4	275	13.2
Merchants	24	4.3	180	8.6
Bourgeois	23	4.2		
Nobles	13	2.3	20	.96
Farmers & Rural Laborers	27	4.8	77	3.7

\* Geisendorf lists 159 occupations as "others," so calculations are based on 2088.

@ Professionals include Lawyers, doctors, notaries, educators, etc.

Sources: The 1560 list of registered attenders of the Reformed Church in Montpellier, in Ladurie, Emmanuel. Les Paysans de Languedoc, vol. 1. Paris, 1966. pp. 333-356, reproduced in J.H. Elliott. Europe Divided (1559-1598). Glasgow, 1968. p. 34.

Calculations from the Livre des Habitants, in Geisendorf, Paul-Frederic. "Métiers et conditions sociales du premier Refuge a Genève," in Mélanges... Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963, pp. 239-249.

## THE HOSPITAL IN THE 1541 ECCLESIASTICAL ORDONNANCES

*Procureurs de l'hospital*

Que le nombre des quatres procureurs demeure comme il a esté, dont l'un aura charge de la recepte comme il a esté dict, tant affin que les provisions soient faictes myeux en temps, [que] affin que ceulx qui voudront faire quelque charité soient plus certains que le bien ne sera employé aultrement que à leur intention. Et si le revenu<sup>1</sup> ne suffisoit ou bien qu'il y survint nécessité extraordinaire, la Seigneurie advisera de adjuster selon l'indigence qu'on y verra.

Que l'election tant des procureurs que des hospitaliers se face comme des anciens *et commis au Consistoire*, et en les eslisant qu'on suyve la regle que baille saint Paul des dyacres, *I Timoth. 3. Tite 1.*

Touchant l'office *et auctorité* des procureurs nous confermons les articles que par nous leur ont ja esté ordonnez, moyennant que en choses urgentes et où il y auroit danger de differer, principalement quand il n'y a point grande difficulté et qu'il n'est pas question des grandz despens, qu'ilz ne soient pas contrainctz de s'assembler tousjours, mais que un ou deux puissent ordonner en absence des aultres ce qui sera raison.

Il sera mestier de veiller diligemment que l'ospital commun soit bien entretenu et que ce soit tant pour les malades que vieilles gens qui ne peuvent travailler, item femmes vefves, enfans orphelins et aultres pouvres. Et touteffois qu'on les tienne en un cors de logis à part et separé des aultres.

[8] Item que la sollicitude des pouvres qui sont dispersez par la ville revienne là, selon que les procureurs en ordonneront.

Item que oultre l'hospital des passans, lequel il est besoing de conserver, qu'il y ait quelque hospitalité à part pour ceulx qu'on verra estre dignes de charité speciale. Et pour ce faire qu'il y ait une Chambre deputee pour recepvoyr ceulx qui seront adressez des procureurs et qu'elle soit reservee en cest usaige.

Que sur tout cela soit en recommandation que les familles des hospitaliers soient honnestement reiglees et selon Dieu, veu qu'ilz ont à gouverner maison desdiee à Dieu.

Que les Ministres *et les commis ou anciens avec l'un des seigneurs sindicques* aient de leur part soing d'enquerir s'il y avoit quelque faulte ou indigence de vie, affin de prier et admonesté la Seigneurie de y mettre ordre. Et que pour ce faire tous les trois mois quèlcuns de leur compagnie avec les procureurs facent visitation à l'hospital pour cognoistre si tout est bien reiglé.

Il faudra aussi que tant pour les pouvres de l'hospital que pour ceulx de la ville qu'ilz n'ont pas de quoy s'ayder qu'il y ait un medecin et un chirurgien propre *aux gaiges de la ville*<sup>1</sup>, qui neantmoins practiquassent en la ville, mais cependant fussent tenuz d'avoir soing de l'hospital et visiter les aultres pouvres.

Quant est de l'hospital pour la peste, qu'il ait tout son cas separé à part, et principalement s'il advient que la ville fust visitée de ceste verge de Dieu.

Au surplus pour empescher la mendicité laquelle est contraire à bonne police, *il faudra que la Seigneurie commette quelcungs de ses officiers*; et ainsi avons ordonné à l'issue des eglises pour oster de la place ceulx qui voudroient resister. Et si c'estoient affronteurs ou qu'ilz se rebecassent, les mener à l'ung de messieurs les sindicques. Pareillement que au reste du temps les diseniens prinsent garde que la deffense de ne point mendier fust bien observée.

Source: Bergier, Jean-François, and Robert M. Kingdon, Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Geneve au temps de Calvin, vol. 1. Geneva, 1964, pp. 7-8.



Item qu'il ne doibge percer bossot de vin ny meure boytte que premierement cela ne soit esté visité et ordonné par lesditz s<sup>r</sup> procureurs.

Item que ledit hospitalier doibge avoir ung registre out il aye à escrire et registrer tous les pauvres qui seront à l'hospital et tous ceux qu'il alberge de nuyet; et pareillement tous ceux ausquelz l'on porte l'aumosne par la ville; et aussi tous ceux esquelz est ordonnee aumosne ordinaire. Et que cela il doibge meure devant les procureurs le dimanche.

10 Item que ledit hospitalier ne puyse ny doibge ordonner aumosne ordinaire à personne que soit sans l'ordonnance desditz s<sup>r</sup> procureurs.

Item que il doibge et soit tenuz faire souvent la visitation des mallades, pour scavoir dire le dimanche aux procureurs comment il se portent et lequel des malades est guery, et lequel trespassé, et lequel gist encor au lict mallade.

Item ledit hospitalier devra toutes les dimanches amener devant les procureurs les enfans, filz et filles, de l'hospital, affin que iceux procureurs puyssent avoir avy le-quelz sont propres à metre dehors à metier ou à service, et lesquelz non. Et que cependant il se enquierent selon la qualité des enfans des metiers plus propres pour iceux, et veoir où l'on les pourra loger.

Item que ledit hospitalier ne puyse point prendre de serviteur ny de chambriere pour ledit hospital sans l'ordonnance desditz procureurs.

25 Item que ledit hospitalier ne doibge prendre ny faire prendre chose que soit pour ledit hospital chez l'apothicaire sans l'ordonnance desditz procureurs.

Item que ledit hospitalier ne puyse ny doibge recevoir ny retirer pour ledit hospital chose que soit des graines, sinon des mains 30 du receveur des graines de la Seigneurie.

Item et que s'il advient que le serviteur dudit hospital ou autre pour icelluy hospital heubse exigé quelque graine, qu'il la doibge incontinent faire porter et mener aux greniers de la Seigneurie, es mains dudit general receveur des graines.

35 Item que da tems de la reception des vins dudit hospital, il soit tenuz, incontinent qu'il en aura receu, le dimanche après le reveler et dire aux procureurs et leur monstrier son registre pour scavoir de qui et combien il en aura receup.

### 905. Ordonnances sur l'Hospital.

CC, 12 mai 1553.

10 Sont esté leues les ordonnances dernièrement sus l'Hospital faictes etc. Et sus icelles est esté arrêté que les ordonnances faictes en Conseil ordinaire soyent observées et sont acceptees etc.

R. G. vol. 47. fol. 73 v<sup>o</sup>.

### 15 Ordonnances faictes en Petit Conseil le 2 mars 1553.

Premierement que cela soit continué pour le regime dudit hospital que l'hospitalier doibge demeurer et aye son habitation audit hospital.

15 Mais sus ce est advisé que l'hospitalier qui sera esleu ne soit point chargé de famille; et que, estant et residant à l'hospital, il n'y face que une enyisine.

20 Item et que venant led. hospitalier à l'hospital, il doibge le bien dudit hospital tout recevoir par bon inventaire.

Item que ledit hospitalier ne doibge point avoir de train de marchandise ny autre quel qu'il soit, sinon tant seulement sa charge et gouvernement dudit hospital.

25 Item et affin qu'il puyse mieux entendre audit gouvernement sans ailleurs estre empesché, si ledit hospitalier a du bien ou chevans requérant gouvernement, qu'il admodie icelluy pour le tems qu'il sera à l'hospital, affin qu'il ne se y occupe et n'y vacque, et qu'il n'y employe les serviteurs ny enfans de l'hospital.

30 Item que ledit hospitalier n'aye puysance d'employer de l'argent de l'hospital, soit en acheptz ou autre chose que ce soit plus hault de soixante solz monnoie de Geneve, sinon que ce soit par l'ordonnance des s<sup>r</sup> procureurs dudit hospital.

Item et qu'il doibge le dimanche après tel employment, scavoir 35 à dire et monstrier auxditz procureurs de l'hospital en quoy et pour quoy il aura lesdictz soixante solz employez.



Item que ledit hospitalier ne doibge point tenir de vigne ny faire à faire à sa main; mais les vignes dudit hospital soient toutes baillées et mises en admodiation à my fruit.

Item ledit hospitalier gardera pour ledit hospital douze vaches pour l'entretènement des pauvres; et pour mieux et plus commodément icelles vaches entretenir, il pourra garder pour l'hospital et faire cultiver, laborer et semer les terres dudit hospital qui sont en ceste cité, et les fruitz d'ycelles, ensemble des préz, recueillir audit hospital. Mais quant ce viendra à escourre, il debvra faire porter les graines au grenier es mains du recepveur general, jouxte ce qu'en est des-usdict.

Item et que ledit hospitalier soit tenuz et doibge tous les moys rendre compte es mains des procureurs des fruitz desdictes douze vaches.

Item et que l'on laisse audit hospitalier pour ledit hospital les 15 cheneviers dudit hospital, pour y semer et recueillir des cheneves et des raves selon son tems au proffit dudit hospital.

Item et que ledit hospitalier soit tenuz, tous les ans quant il aura recuilly le cheneve, le dimanche après dire et reveler aux ditz procureurs le nombre des manobz dudit cheneve et en rendre bon compte.

Item et quant il aura mis le fil chez le tissoc pour faire la toylle, le dimanche après il le doibge dire aux ditz procureurs, et combien il en aura ordyt.

Item et que la toylle estant faicte, ledit hospitalier n'en doibge point coper ny faire coper sans l'ordonnance desdictz procureurs.

Item que ledit hospitalier ne doibge avoir ny prendre plus hault d'une coppe d'avoine par semaine pour ung chacun cheval dudit hospital.

Item que toute la truche que se fera audit hospital doibge estre mise à la clé à part, et icelle clé soit mise es mains desditz procureurs, tellement que ledit hospitalier n'en puyse point prendre sans l'ordonnance d'yeux.

Item que ledit hospitalier soit tenuz et doibge, avec le munier dudit hospital, aller recepvoir les bledz aux greniers et des mains du recepveur des graines de la Seigneurie, et de là le faire conduire au moulin par personne expresse que debvra veoir comment il se fauldra, sans le porter à l'hospital: et soit pesé auxditz greniers, tant par ledit general recepveur que hospitalier et munier, avec une romanne que debvra là estre myse; et que l'hospitalier [prenne] ung escript du poys, affin qu'en recepvant la farine en l'hospital, il la repose à la romane dudit hospital et scayche cognoistre s'il y sera bien le poix, ou s'il s'en fauldra et combien.

Item et que le dimanche après, ledit hospitalier soit tenuz et doibge rapporter aux ditz procureurs de l'hospital ce que sera esté faict dudit bled et combien ce sera failly du poydz.

Tout cecy sus escript estant veu sommairement en Conseil ordinaire, jedy second de mars mil v<sup>e</sup> cinquante troys, est esté trouvé bon et est esté aprouvé.

Et pour l'estat et entretènement dudit hospital quant à l'argent qu'il fault manuellement debourser, audit Conseil est esté arrêté que, tous les quartems dès icy à l'advenir, sera faict mandement au thesaurier de livrer aux procureurs dudit hospital la somme de troys cens florins. Ce que ledit thesaurier debvra incontinent comment les autres mandemens livrer et poyer.

*Ordonnances sur l'estat de la Médecine, Pharmacie et Chirurgie, passées au Conseil le XI<sup>e</sup> may 1569.*

(Il n'existe, à ma connaissance, aucun exemplaire complet et authentique de ces Ordonnances datant de l'époque de leur promulgation. Le texte ci-dessous est celui qui figure au Livre des Ordonnances (Man. Hist. N° 28 bis). Le copiste de 1697 a certainement modernisé l'orthographe et peut-être modifié quelques expressions déjà vieillies de son temps).

#### Article 1<sup>er</sup>

Premièrement que désormais nuls Médecins, Pharmaciens ni Chirurgiens nouveaux venus n'entreprendront exercer l'art sans avoir donné preuve suffisante de leur savoir, soit pour estre gradués en université fameuse, ou avoir bon témoignage des lieux où ils auront exercé leur art, ou qu'ils soient auparavant que pratiquer examinés, les Médecins par les Médecins, et les Apothicaires et Chirurgiens par les trois estats de Médecine, en présence des Députés de la Seigneurie. Estans trouvés capables, leur seront données lettres patentes afin qu'ils soient tenus avec honneur au rang des autres.

2.

Que tous les Médecins, Apothicaires et Chirurgiens s'assembleront deux fois l'année, assavoir le premier Meesredy de Septembre pour enquérir s'il y auroit quelque désordre en la ville touchant leur art ou ceux qui l'exercent, pour remonstrer et corriger le tout amiablement, présents lesdits Seigneurs Députés.

3.

Que les Médecins, Apothicaires et Chirurgiens dressent un dispensaire pour ceste ville et que ceux qui le dresseront se trouvent toutes les semaines une fois, en certain lieu et heure, là où pourront venir les autres Médecins, Apothicaires et Chirurgiens et dire leur avis sur ce qu'on aura traité l'ailé toute la semaine, puis sera signé et approuvé par tous les Médecins, Apothicaires et Chirurgiens demeurans en ceste ville et mis en lumière.

4.

Que tous les ans soit choisi un Médecin qui lise quelques mois de l'année aux Chirurgiens et qui fasse anatomies publique

#### LA MÉDECINE A GENÈVE

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avec un Chirurgien, et un autre qui lise l'hiver aux Apothicaires, et se fasse ladite élection par la plus grand voix desdits trois Estats, présents lesdits Seigneurs Commis, sans prétendre aucun salaire de la Seigneurie.

5.

Que les Médecins entoux tiennent l'ordre et le rang accoutumé afin d'éviter confusion et querelles aux consultations et assemblées: c'est que les derniers venus en la ville parlent les premiers en montrant, horsmis que celui qui aura pansé le malade proposera le premier la maladie. Le mesme ordre soit observé des Apothicaires et Chirurgiens, mais quand ils seront appelés par la Seigneurie, les premiers assis parleront devant.

6.

Que nul Médecin, encores qu'il entende la Pharmacie et Chirurgie, ne s'ingère d'appliquer cataplasmes, unguens, emplastres et autres remèdes requérans opération manuelle, ne faire opérations manuelles sans l'assistance d'un Chirurgien, si ce n'estoit pour son mesnage particulier.

7.

Que nul Médecin ne s'ingère de faire ou exhiber aucun médicament sans Apothicaire, seulement se contenteront de prescrire chez le malade la raison de vivre.

8.

Que outre les Médecins députés pour le grand hospital et pour les estrangers, chacun Médecin soit tenu visiter les du quartier auquel il habitera, estant requis par

9.

et Chirurgiens en leurs receptes soient tenus vi. la datté, et signer les susdites receptes.

10.

certissin des maladies suspectes.

#### PIÈCES JUSTIFICATIVES

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#### Des Apothicaires.

##### Art. 1<sup>er</sup>.

Que nul ne soit admis à la Maistrise s'il n'est Citoyen ou Bourgeois.

2.

Que, deux ou trois fois l'an, les boutiques des Apothicaires soient visitées à l'impourveu par deux Médecins, deux Apothicaires et les Commis de la Seigneurie, lesquels promettront personnellement visiter les drogues et compositions en bonne conscience, sans haine ou faveur des uns ou des autres, et jeter là celles qui seront corrompues ou gastées afin qu'elles ne soient mises en usage, et seront aussi lesdits Apothicaires tenus par leur serment d'exhiber toutes leurs dites drogues et compositions.

3.

Les apothicaires ne feront aucune composition d'importance touchant celles du dispensaire qui contiennent plusieurs ingrédients, qui ne soit dispensée en présence d'un médecin et d'un apothicaire des premiers qu'on rencontrera, pour voir les ingrédients et la mixtion, si bon leur semble, puis soussigneront la description et visitation de ladite composition, en cottant la datté et quantité; autant pour le regard des médicaments concernant la chirurgie.

4.

Que les apothicaires fassent et dressent dorénavant toutes leurs compositions selon le dispensaire qui sera dressé expressément pour cette ville, sans préjudicier au médecin s'il fait faire quelque composition particulière, comme bon lui semblera pour son malade particulier laquelle l'apothicaire ne sera contraint de dispenser qu'autant que le malade en aura besoin, afin que cette ville soit assortie de toutes bonnes compositions pour servir aux médecins des champs envoyant les receipts ici, ou bien aux estrangers accoutumés à plusieurs compositions. Et d'autre part aussi, afin que les apothicaires ne soient grevés de plusieurs compositions ou simples qui se pourroient gaster, quand ils fe-

ront une composition qui ne sera trop vulgaire, ou quand ils achèteront ou feront venir quelques drogues exquises, en pourront advertir leurs compagnons, afin que les autres ne prennent peine s'ils ne veulent de la faire, de peur qu'elle ne leur demeure trop long temps sur le dos, ne se gaste et corrompe, et pourront accorder entr'eux d'un prix raisonnable d'icelle, pour en prendre quand ils auront de besoin, afin de vivre et de gagner honestement ensemble.

5.

No sera loisible aux Apothicaires de composer médicamens autres pour les champs que pour la ville, ains se arrêteront à la simple recepte proposée au dispensaire.

6.

Que tous les Apothicaires n'ayent qu'un poids médicinal de loton, marqué par les Commis de Messieurs et quarré, afin qu'on ne prétende cause d'ignorance d'avoir pris l'un pour l'autre, lequel poids sera visité et échantillonné quand bon semblera à la Seigneurie; duquel poids se pèseront tous les médicamens composés; ledit poids sera de douze onces la livre, et l'once de huit drachmes, et la drachme de trois scrupules, et le scrupule de vingt grains poids d'or.

7.

Que nul apothicaire ne s'ingère d'ordonner aucun médicament ou remède, tant intérieur qu'extérieur; ne se mesle aussi de visiter les malades, ne faire les opérations manuelles concernantes la chirurgie, excepté pour leur famille.

8.

Que l'apothicaire ne prépare aucun médicament ordonné par empiriques, coureurs et charlatans ou femmes et autres personnes ignorantes ni aprouvées, sans comprendre ici les receptes venans de dehors si elles sont de médecins et chirurgiens faites selon l'art.

9.

Les apothicaires ne délivreront aucuns poisons, comme antimoine préparé, cantarides, sublimé, arsenic et autres médicamens faisans actes vénéneux, ne bailleront aux vulgaires, encore qu'ils le requièrent, médicament aucun corrosif et violemment évacuant, comme ellebore, scamonee, coloquinthe, cotignac laxatif, tablettes de succo rosarum, diacarthami, et toutesfois pourront délivrer aux orfèvres et maréchaux les drogues nécessaires pour leur mestier.

10.

Que les Maistres Apothicaires n'empeschent, si il n'y a affaire urgent, que leurs serviteurs et compagnons ne fréquentent l'hyver les lectures à eux accordées par la Seigneurie; et aussi s'il se trouvoit quelqu'un qui voulut prendre la peine de leur faire démonstration l'esté des simples de ce quartier et dire leurs noms, prenant pour semaine un jour certain et une heure commode, qu'ils soient tenus leur permettre, afin que la jeunesse s'accoutume à bien connoitre la matière de son art.

11.

Que les apothicaires, droguistes et espiciers revendeurs qui ne sont apothicaires aprouvés ne vendent marchandise qui ne soit grabelée suivant les précédentes ordonnances.

12.

Que les grossiers, espiciers et revendeurs, qui ne sont apothicaires, ne vendent emplastre, thériaque ne autre composition médicinale, aussi qu'ils ne vendent drogue aucune qui soit sophistiquée et adulterée.

#### Des Chirurgiens.

##### Article 1<sup>er</sup>.

Les Chirurgiens se mesleront seulement de donner ordre et penser les maladies qui occupent les parties extérieures, comme

apostumes, inflammations et autres tumeurs, ulcères de quelle espèce qu'elles soient, playes, dislocations, fractures, et autres maladies et opérations concernantes leur charge et art, comme incisions, seringations, applicquement de tentes, de ventouses, sangsues, cautères actuels et potentiels, sétons, phlébotomies, paracentèses, cataplasmes, emplastres, unguents, inonctions, fomentations, imbrocations, bandages et ligatures, et ordonner tout ce qui concerne leur art, assavoir les choses extérieures, ne touchant aux maladies intérieures, occultes et latentes, qui ne sont sujettes à la veüe; excepté ceux desdits chirurgiens esquels il aura esté spécialement permis par nosdits Seigneurs, après avoir eu examen de leur suffisance.

2.

Que nul chirurgien n'ait à préparer les médicamens, mais qu'ils fassent leurs médicamens, comme font les médecins, chez les apothicaires, horsuis qu'ils peuvent avoir leurs médicamens généraux préparés par les apothicaires, qu'ils ont accoustumé de porter avec eux, comme emplastres, unguents et poudres, lesquels ils pourront mixtionner sur le champ selon qu'ils trouveront leurs maladies muées et changées, mesmes aussi que sur le champ pour mixtionner les médicamens qu'on appelle *paratu facilia*, c'est-à-dire des choses qu'on peut avoir promptement sur le lieu où on est, excepté quelques baumes qu'ils usent pour les playes communes entre eux.

3.

Que les Maistres Chirurgiens permettent à leurs serviteurs et compagnons d'aller aux lectures de Chirurgie et aux Anatomies. — Qu'ils ne saignent sans avis du Médecin, sinon aux maladies qui concernent leur art.

4.

Nul serviteur demeurant chez un maistre, tant apothicaire que chirurgien, sortant de son service volontairement, ne pourra besongner aux deux plus prochaines boutiques de son premier maistre sans le congé d'iceluy, mais si le maistre leur donne

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congé. ils pourront travailler là où ils trouveront de la besongne, soit loin ou près.

5.

Le serviteur avertira son maistre quelque temps auparavant afin qu'il puisse se pourvoir, ou luy en adressera s'il s'en trouve.

6.

Que les Tailleurs de pierres, hernies, Abatteurs de cataractes, Rabilleurs de luxations ou fractures, n'ayent à exécuter aucune de ces opérations sans la présence d'un Médecin et Chirurgien tels que bon semblera au patient, et que les susdits n'outrepassent ce de quoy ils feront profession, sinon ceux esquels il aura esté spécialement permis.

7.

Que nulles femmes ou filles ne se meslent de recevoir les enfans qu'elles ne soient admises et jurées après cognoissance de leur prudence et suffisance, par le rapport des Commis, qui seront tenus les advertir soigneusement des choses dont elles pourront user en cas de nécessité urgente.

8.

Et aussy n'ayent lieu en ceste Cité et terres d'icelle les Charlatans, Empiriques ne Coureurs, ne aussy les femmes qui se meslent de Médecine, Pharmacie et Chirurgie.

9.

Qu'un Médecin, un Apothicaire et un Chirurgien et aucuns du Conseil soyent députés chascun an et renouvelés pour prendre garde et veiller si les susdits Edits seront exécutez et entretenus en leur teneur.

10.

Et pour veiller à toutes maladies contagieuses, comme Peste soit qu'elle pullulast hors de la ville ou dedans, Ladrerie, Verolle, et aussy prendre garde à la netteté de la ville, et pour pourvoir de médicamens prévenans la peste, lesquels ayent autorité de

**vacquer les Médecins, Apothecaires, Chirurgiens et Sages femmes, selon que le besoin sera pour rapporter le tout à la Seigneurie.**

11.

**Ceux que seront trouvés défaillois à ce que dessus, seront à la peine de soixante sols pour le première fois, et de dix florins pour la seconde, et à la troisième fois d'estre punis arbitrairement.**



The tendency in Geneva government to devise more involved ordonnances to deal with institutions as the sixteenth century progressed are well-illustrated in these jail codes. In Geneva, the end of the sixteenth century marked the beginnings of government bureaucracy--a desire to govern through regulation, rather than leaving decisions very much up to the discretion of the official, as had been the case.

Source: Les Sources du Droit, vol. 2.

**739. Affermage de la garde des prisonniers.**

C. O., 27 novembre 1537.

Icy est parlé de admodier à Pierre de Veyrye, guedt, la garde des prisonnier et est resolu la luy admodier pour trois ans prochains à venir, pour cinquante florins pour an, sus les conditions et paiches suyvantz: 5

Premierement qu'il jure et promettement feablement garder les prisonniers et tenir secret ce qu'il aorra des examens.

Item de reveller à la justice ce qu'il entendra d'yceulx.

Item de les tenir et gouverner honnestement et es lieux et prisons et à la facon que luy sera ordonnee et commandee. 10

Item sera content de prendre dix solz que pour l'intraige que pour la sortie de ceulx que seront estrangiers prys pour debte au à l'instance de partye.

Item et ne prendra que la moytié des bourgeois de la ville.

Item qu'il ne demandera sinon quattres solz de la dispense 15 d'ung jour.

Item six deniers pour la garde.

Item pour ceulx qui seront là menés faira payer la menne accoustumee quattres solz.

Item que il gouvernera les prisonniers pour cryme, desqueulx 20 sera en après exequutee justice, jusques au vuytiesme<sup>1</sup> jour à ses despens, s'il y demeurent tant; et passés lesdicts dix jours se contentera de trois solz pour jour de leurs despens que payerons. S'il sont laché par grace au composition, il payeront le tout.

Il debvra rendre les albillemans des malfaiteurs condempnés au 25 horreaulx et reveller à la justice ce qu'il leur a trouvé portant.

R. C., vol. 31, fol. 120 v<sup>o</sup>.

**790. Règlement pour le geôlier.**

[Mai] 1541.

5

Ordonances pour le souldan de l'Eveschee. 1541.

Premierement se debvraz admodié ladicte mayson de troys ans en troys ans pour le pris de cinquante florins pour an.

Item le souldan que seraz admys debvraz donné bonne caution 10 de bien et loyallement excercyr son office, et de rendre bon compte des prisonnyers que lui seront remys.

Item ledietz souldan debvra recovré pour l'yntirage et sortie d'ung chescun prisonyer estans detenus pour debte, estrangiers 10 s. et pour les bourgeoys . . . . . 5 s.

15 Item pour laz dispence desdictz prisonyers, pour ung chescun jour, tam pour ladicte dispence que pour laz garde 4 s. 6 d.

Item pour la menne d'ung chescun d'iceulx prisonyers 4 s.

Les aultres prisonyers prys et detenus pour cas de crisme, duran huict jours le souldan sera tenus de les 20 allimenter à ses despens, et après ses huyet jours aux despens de laz ville az troys solz pour jour . . . . . 3 s.

Et si sont laché par grace ou composition payeront le tout.

Item debvront rendre les abilliemens des condampnés az l'exequuteur des malfaiteurs, et revelleraz à la justyce qu'il leur auraz 25 trové de dessus.

Item les prisonyers pour correction allan tenyr prison de leurs bon gré ne payeront poient de l'instrage ny sortie.

Item le souldan seraz tenus de maientenyr covert ladicte mayson az ses despens.

Ordonances sus le regime, exaction et gouvernance des prisons de la cité de Geneve, fayctes, passés et reconfirmés ce quattorziesme de janvier 1544.

Premierement la moyson desdictes prisons nommé l'Eveschee ce 30 debvra admodier toutjour pour troys ans, pour le prys d'ung chascun an de cinquante florins. Et debvra la garde et souldan desdictes prisons maentenyr coverte ladicte moyson à ses despens.

Item le souldan que sera admys et accepté par la Seygneurie debvra donner bonne caution de bien et loyalement exercer son office, et sera tenuz de observer et garder ce que si après sera declayré.

Assavoyer de rendre bon compte des prisoniers que luy seront remys, coment de cieulx que seront detenuz pour debtes; de non 5 les relacher sans le consentement des parties que les auront fayct detenyr, sus poienne de poyé la debte et de poienne arbitraire pour la Seygneurie.

Item et cieulx que seront detenu pour cas de crime, que icieulx les doybge tenyr en assurance et à icieulx ne debvra laysser parler 10 ne converser avecque persone sans la licence de la Seygneurie.

Et les prisoniers que luy seront remys à poienne de la vie, que nul ne parle à eulx, coment diest est. Et ne soyt permys que à icieulx soyt rien appourter soyt de victualyes ou accoustrement que ne soyt revisité si ly az chose aulcune, soyt lectres, papiers, 15 encre, plumes, cordes, fillet, cuteaulx ou aultre chose dont puyssse user d'aulcune subtilité et finesse.

Item ne debvra recepvoyer poient de lectres pour ballier esdictz prisoniers criminel, et icelles ne deslyvrer que premierement que soyent monstrés à la Seygneurie ou aux deputés sus la justice de crisme.

20 Item ledictz souldan pourra recovrer pour l'intrage et sortie d'ung chascun prisoniers estant detenuz pour debte, assavoyer des estrangers que ne sont de la ville, 10 s., et de cieulx de la ville, par debte, 5 s.

Item pour la dispence desdictz prisonyers detenuz pour debtes, 25 pour ung chescun jour pourra recovrer par une chescune persone, tam pour ladicte dispence que pour la garde, 4 s. 6 d.

Item pour la menne d'ung chescun prisonier par debtes, 4 s.

Concernant les prisoniers pryns et detenuz pour cas de crime, durant huyct jours le souldan sera tenuz de les allymenter à ces 30 despens, et après les huyct jours aux despens de la Seygneurie à rayson de troys solz monnoye pour jour. En cas que lesdictz prisoniers soyent pugniz par poyenne corporelle ou qu'il fussent si povres qu'il ne hussent de quoy poyé, alors la Seygneurie supportera tel despens à rayson desdictz troys solz comment diest est.

35 Mes si tel prisoniers criminel estient liberés des prisons par grace ou composition et qu'il hussent de quoy satisfayre leur despens, alors icyeux seront tenuz de poyé audictz souldan lesdictz despens, à rayson pour ung chescun jour comment les prisoniers detenues pour debte. Et si n'ayvent de quoy et qu'il falle que la Seygneurie supportasse ou donasse lesdictz despens audictz prisonier povre, en tel cas ledictz souldan se debvra contenter de troys solz pour jour, comment aut precedent article est declayré.

Item ledictz souldan sera tenuz, incontinant qu'il ly sera mené 5 ung prisonier criminel, le venyr reveller à la Seygneurie, affin de aller fere fayre inventayre de ce qu'il portera avecque luy, soyt or, argent, bagues, bastons ou aultres choses. Et que de tel inventayres en soyt fayet deux doubles dont l'on sera remys audictz souldan et l'autre à la Seygneurie ou à mons<sup>r</sup> le lieutenant pour (en tenyr bon compte 10 desdictes choses tantes foys et quantes que mestier sera.

Item si aulchongs prisoniers criminel estient exequutés par le dernier supplice et à mort, les accoustremens d'icieulx debvront appartenyr à l'exequuteur desdictz malfaycteurs et le souldan ne ly debvra à cella contredire. 15

Item les prisoniers detenuz pour correction et allant tenyr prison de leur bon gré ne seront tenuz de poyé poient de intrage, sortie ny la menne. Et si sont rebelles et desobeyssant et qu'il fallu les mener, poyeront pour la menne, 4 s.

Item les prisoniers remys en pain et eau pour castigation ne 20 seront tenuz de poyé synon deux solz pour jour et ne poyeront poient de intrage, ny sortie, ny menne, synon qu'il fussent rebelles; alors poyeront pour ladicte menne, 4 s.

*L'ordre de la constitution de l'office dudictz souldan contennuz aux esdict passés par le General conseil.* 25

Que cest office ne soyt à certain temps; toutesfoys qu'il aye revision de troys ans en troys ans pour scavoyer si celluy qui il est fayct bien son debvoyer. L'election sera aut conseil Ordinayre, la reconfirmation aux Deux Cens; et soyent mys deux en avant pour accepter le plus propre, comment il a esté diest des aultres offices. 30

*La forme du seyrement dont il usera sera telle:*

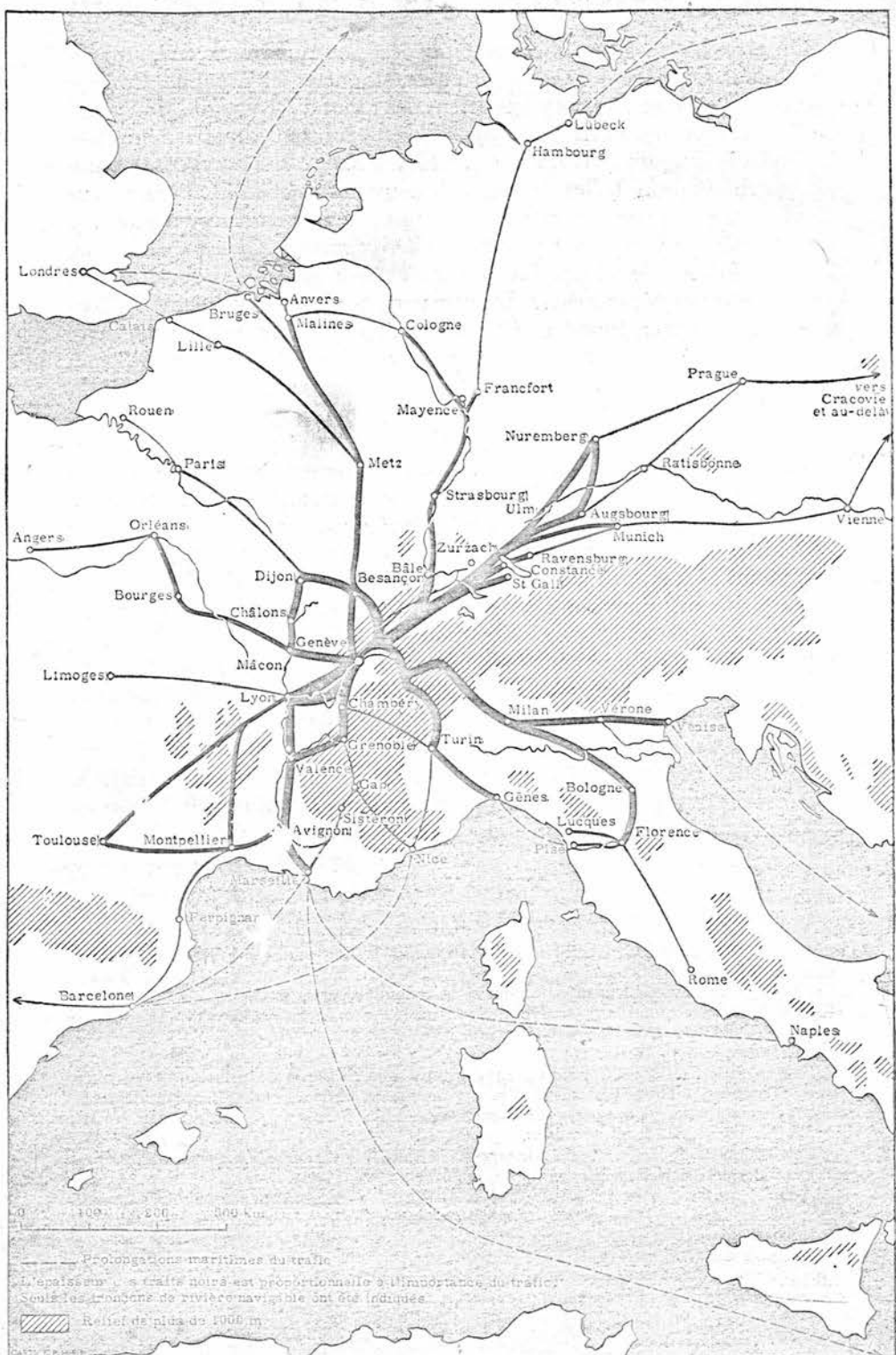
Je promest et jure de faire fidelle garde de cieulx que me seront commys, pour en rendre bon compte sans fraude.

Item de tenyr chescun prisonier enserré ou plus ou large, selon qu'il me sera commandé. 35

Item aut cas qu'il me sera deffendu ne permestre que aucun parle aux prisoniers, de m'en donner si songneuse garde qu'ilz ne ce

### Range of Genevan Commerce in the Fifteenth Century

(Note the heavy reliance on Lyons, southern Germany and the cities of the Swiss plateau).



Bergier, Jean-François. Genève et l'économie européenne de la Renaissance. Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., c. 1963. p.354.



## Articles of the "Franchises" that Protected Usurers

*Art. XXXIV* : De ceux qui trepassent sans faire de testament. — Item que se aucun clerc, citoyen, juré ou habitant de la dite cité meurt sans testament, ou *soit usurier public ou non, bastart ou aultre, quelqu'il soit ou de quelle condition*, les enfants qu'il aura soient ses héritiers...

*Art. XXXV*. Des testaments à devoir faire. — Item qu'à chacun clerc, citoyen, bougoiys et juré de Genève soit licite de faire testament à sa propre volonté et à son plaisir de quelle condition qu'il soit : *et que par sa condition, estat, nativité mains legitime, soit usurier publique ou bastart, qu'on ne puisse en manière quelconque impugner ne contredire à ce testament ainsi fait.*

*Art. XXXIX* : Des biens des usuriers mors ou aultre en la cité, lesquels ne se doivent point occuper. — Item que se quelque clerc ou lay qui *soit usurier* ou aultre citoyen ou habitant de la cité trespasse et meurt estre fait testament ou non estre fait, les biens qu'il avoit au temps de sa mort ne se doivent ne ne puissent par nous ou aultres nostres officiers quelz qu'ilz soient occuper ne détenir ; *ne aussi à cause de ceste usure on ne le doive ne puisse molester ou inquieter* ne aulcunement faire inventaire de ces biens, mais celuy qui sera son heritier, *nonobstant qu'il soit usurier publique* de sa propre autorité les biens dudit mort il puisse prendre et posséder comme siens propres...

*Art. LXXVII* : Que nul à cause d'usure ne soit molesté ne inquiet. — *Item que nulz à cause de usure faite publiquement par quelconque que ce soit, bourgeois, citoyen, habitant, clerc ou lay, ou homme ou femme, par nous, nostres successeurs, nostre vidomme ou aultres officiers ne soit inquieté, accusé, argué, ne en aulcune manière molesté : ne contre celuy ou celle ou ses biens saisir, sequestrer ne mettre à nostres mains ou à nostre court deduyre ; ne les biens d'ung tel ou telle vif ou mort occuper ne apprehender : ou faire inventaire desditz biens, ne en manière du monde aultre quelque droit que ce soit preprendre. Mais les heritiers de celuy ou d'icelle, par testament ou sans testament, ou ceulx qui ont cause d'icelluy ou auront au temps advenir, lesditz biens de leur propre auctorité puissent et à eulx soit licite prendre, retenir sans reprehension, nonobstant toute question par nous et nostres officiers faire ou devoir à faire es biens desditz usuriers qui seroient par le présent ou seront au temps advenir.*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. EDOUARD MALLET, «Libertés, immunités, us et coutumes de la cité de Genève», dans *Mém. et Doc. de Genève*, 2 (1843), pp. 298-300. Les articles supprimés par Félix V sont imprimés en italique. Cf. pp. 389-391, Bulle du pape Félix V, 22 mai 1444. Voir aussi JACQUES MAYOR, *L'ancienne Genève...*, 1<sup>re</sup> série, Genève 1896, pp. 22-51. — EMILE RIVOIRE et VICTOR VAN BERCHEM, *Les Sources du Droit du canton de Genève*, I, Aarau 1927, pp. 190-237. Cf. LÉOPOLD MICHELI, *Les institutions municipales de Genève au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, (*Mém. et Doc. de Genève*, 12 (1912)).

Reproduced from: Martin, Paul-Etienne. "Calvin et le prêt à l'interêt à Genève," in Mélanges d'histoire...Antony Babel, vol. 1. Geneva, 1963. p. 253.

820. Poids du pain variant suivant le prix du blé.  
1545.

S'ensuyt le taux et vente du pain, tant blanc, moyen que gros, le rednysant au poix et prenant 18 onces en la livre, auquel est à trouvé que les vendeurs ont souffisant prouffit, estant le froment tant chier que à bon marché sans tromperies, selon l'ordre icy mis facilement à entendre à tous. Lequel ordre a esté commandé estre observé en ceste cité de Genesve, l'ayant plusieurs foys publié au son de trompe, selon le mode accoustumer. Et icelluy reconfirmé en l'an présent 1545.

L'ordre que le pain blanc doit peser.

Le pain de 3 d. Le pain de 6 d. Le pain de 12 d.

La couppe vaillant

	à rayon de 24 sz.	13 onces	11 8 onces	2 ll 16 onces
15	A 27 solz	11 onces	1 ll 4 onces	2 ll 8 onces
	A 30 sz	10 onces	1 ll 2 onces	2 ll 4 onces
	A 33 sz	9 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	1 ll 1 once	2 ll 2 onces
	A 36 sz	9 onces	1 ll	2 ll
	A 39 sz	8 onces <sup>1/3</sup>	16 onces <sup>2/3</sup>	1 ll 15 onces <sup>1/3</sup>
	A 42 sz	7 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	15 onces	1 ll 12 onces
	A 45 sz	7 onces <sup>1/4</sup>	14 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	1 ll 11 onces
	A 48 sz	6 onces <sup>3/4</sup>	13 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	1 ll 9 onces
	A 51 sz	6 onces <sup>1/4</sup>	12 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	1 ll 7 onces
	A 54 sz	6 onces	12 onces	1 ll 6 onces
	A 57 sz	5 onces <sup>3/4</sup>	11 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	1 ll 5 onces
	A 60 sz	5 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	11 onces	1 ll 4 onces
	A 63 sz	5 onces <sup>1/4</sup>	10 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	1 ll 3 onces
	A 66 sz	5 onces	10 onces	1 ll 2 onces
	A 69 sz	4 onces <sup>3/4</sup>	9 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	1 ll 1 once
	A 72 sz	4 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	9 onces	1 ll
	A 75 sz	4 onces <sup>1/3</sup>	8 onces <sup>2/3</sup>	17 onces <sup>1/3</sup>
	A 78 sz	4 onces <sup>1/4</sup>	8 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	17 onces
	A 81 sz	4 onces	8 onces	16 onces
	A 84 sz	3 onces <sup>3/4</sup>	7 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	15 onces
	A 87 sz	3 onces <sup>2/3</sup>	7 onces <sup>1/3</sup>	14 onces <sup>2/3</sup>
	A 90 sz	3 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	7 onces	14 onces
	A 93 sz	3 onces <sup>1/3</sup>	6 onces <sup>2/3</sup>	13 onces <sup>1/3</sup>
	A 96 sz	3 onces <sup>1/4</sup>	6 onces <sup>1/2</sup>	13 onces.

Notés, pour ce que le pain à l'équipolent est de moindre poys denpuyz troys florins en sus, c'est pour les rebouretz quil se trent de meilleure valeur.

L'ordre du pain moyen.

A 30 solz la coppe mesure de Genesve, la lyvre vault 5 d.	5
A 35 solz 5 d. <sup>1/2</sup>	A 70 sz 9 d.
A 40 sz 6 d.	A 75 sz 9 d. <sup>1/2</sup>
A 45 sz 6 d. <sup>1/3</sup>	A 80 sz 10 d.
A 50 sz 7 d.	A 85 sz 10 d. <sup>1/2</sup>
A 55 sz 7 d. <sup>1/3</sup>	A 90 sz 11 d.
A 60 sz 8 d.	A 95 sz 11 d. <sup>1/2</sup>
A 65 sz 8 d. <sup>1/2</sup>	A 100 sz 12 d.

Et ainsi suyvant ledict ordre en montant de 5 sz en 5 solz par coppe, la lyvre monte de ung denier. Semblablement en ravallant de 5 solz en 5 solz, ravalle d'ung denier.

L'ordre du gros pain.

A 30 solz la coppe mesure de Genesve, la lyvre vault 4 d.	15
A 35 solz 4 d. <sup>1/2</sup>	A 70 sz 8 d.
A 40 sz 5 d.	A 75 sz 8 d. <sup>1/2</sup>
A 45 sz 5 d. <sup>1/3</sup>	A 80 sz 9 d.
A 50 sz 6 d.	A 85 sz 9 d. <sup>1/2</sup>
A 55 sz 6 d. <sup>1/2</sup>	A 90 sz 10 d.
A 60 sz 7 d.	A 95 sz 10 d. <sup>1/2</sup>
A 65 sz 7 d. <sup>1/2</sup>	A 100 solz 11 d.

Et ainsi suyvant de 5 solz en 5 sz par coppe, la lyvre en montant 25 monte de une maille<sup>1</sup>.

Semblablement en ravallant de 5 solz en 5 solz, ravalle d'une maille.

Placard in-folio imprimé en caractères gothiques, avec les armes de Genève en tête; Arch. de Genève, P. H., n° 1369; deux autres exemplaires sont collés sur chaque 30 face d'une tablette de bois vernoulu.

TABLEAU II. — Prix du blé à Genève (suite)

DATES	PREX PAR COUPE	RÉFÉRENCES
1487	12 s. 9 d. 3/29	Reg. du Conseil, IV, p. 247. CHAPONNIÈRE et SORDET, <i>loc. cit.</i>
1489	26 s.	
1494	12 s. 9 d. 3/5 13 s. 14 s. 16 s. (19 août)	Reg. du Conseil, V, p. 209. CHAPONNIÈRE et SORDET, <i>loc. cit.</i>
1495	16 s. 15 s. 6 d. 18 s. 15 s.	
1496	12 s. 10 s. 10 d. 13 s. 15 s. 15 s. 6 d. 16 s.	AEG, Reg. du Cons., vol. 37, fol. 266. AEG, Finances BB 1, fol. 8. <i>id.</i> , fol. 27. <i>id.</i> , fol. 26.
1497	17 s. 11 d. 1/4	
1498	12 s. 6 d. 6/11 18 s. 17 s. 1 d. 4/5	Reg. du Cons., vol. 38, fol. 212 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 38, fol. 368 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 39, fol. 64. Finances BB 1, fol. 8.
1499	16 s. 5 d. 1/7 17 s. 6 d.	
1500	23 s. 3 d. 3/9 23 s.	Reg. du Conseil, VIII, p. 380. <i>id.</i> , X, p. 463. CHAPONNIÈRE et SORDET, <i>loc. cit.</i>
1504	50 s.	
1505	50 s.	AEG, Reg. du Cons., vol. 37, fol. 266. AEG, Finances BB 1, fol. 8. <i>id.</i> , fol. 27. <i>id.</i> , fol. 26.
1508	24 s. 22 s.	
7 septembre 1515	21 s.	Reg. du Conseil, VIII, p. 380. <i>id.</i> , X, p. 463. CHAPONNIÈRE et SORDET, <i>loc. cit.</i>
6 septembre 1527	26 s.	
1529	48 s.	AEG, Reg. du Cons., vol. 37, fol. 266. AEG, Finances BB 1, fol. 8. <i>id.</i> , fol. 27. <i>id.</i> , fol. 26.
1531	45 s.	
1535	28 s.	Reg. du Cons., vol. 38, fol. 212 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 38, fol. 368 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 39, fol. 64. Finances BB 1, fol. 8.
1536	36 s.	
9 novembre 1543	75 s. <sup>1</sup>	Reg. du Cons., vol. 38, fol. 212 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 38, fol. 368 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 39, fol. 64. Finances BB 1, fol. 8.
8 janvier 1544	30 s.	
11 avril 1544	96 s.	Reg. du Cons., vol. 38, fol. 212 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 38, fol. 368 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 39, fol. 64. Finances BB 1, fol. 8.
20 mai 1544	96 s.	
24 mai 1544	80 s. <sup>2</sup> 84 s. <sup>3</sup>	Reg. du Cons., vol. 38, fol. 212 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 38, fol. 368 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 39, fol. 64. Finances BB 1, fol. 8.
11 septembre 1544	75 s.	
9 décembre 1544	102 s.	Reg. du Cons., vol. 38, fol. 212 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 38, fol. 368 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 39, fol. 64. Finances BB 1, fol. 8.
13 janvier 1545	36 s.	
1. Prix de gros proposé à la Seigneurie par un fournisseur. 2. Prix d'achat en gros. 3. Prix de vente au détail.		
27 janvier 1545	84 s.	Reg. du Cons., vol. 39, fol. 115. <i>id.</i> , vol. 40, fol. 121. <i>id.</i> , vol. 42, fol. 14 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 53, fol. 107. <i>id.</i> , fol. 149 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 314. <i>id.</i> , vol. 54, fol. 65 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 357. <i>id.</i> , vol. 55, fol. 21. <i>id.</i> , fol. 44. <i>id.</i> , fol. 125.
20 mai 1545	24 s.	
10 février 1547	15-18 s.	Reg. du Cons., vol. 39, fol. 115. <i>id.</i> , vol. 40, fol. 121. <i>id.</i> , vol. 42, fol. 14 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 53, fol. 107. <i>id.</i> , fol. 149 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 314. <i>id.</i> , vol. 54, fol. 65 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 357. <i>id.</i> , vol. 55, fol. 21. <i>id.</i> , fol. 44. <i>id.</i> , fol. 125.
19 avril 1547	60 s. <sup>1</sup>	
25 mai 1557	66 s. <sup>1</sup>	Reg. du Cons., vol. 39, fol. 115. <i>id.</i> , vol. 40, fol. 121. <i>id.</i> , vol. 42, fol. 14 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 53, fol. 107. <i>id.</i> , fol. 149 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 314. <i>id.</i> , vol. 54, fol. 65 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 357. <i>id.</i> , vol. 55, fol. 21. <i>id.</i> , fol. 44. <i>id.</i> , fol. 125.
30 août 1557	48 s.	
31 janvier 1558	36 s.	Reg. du Cons., vol. 39, fol. 115. <i>id.</i> , vol. 40, fol. 121. <i>id.</i> , vol. 42, fol. 14 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 53, fol. 107. <i>id.</i> , fol. 149 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 314. <i>id.</i> , vol. 54, fol. 65 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 357. <i>id.</i> , vol. 55, fol. 21. <i>id.</i> , fol. 44. <i>id.</i> , fol. 125.
16 janvier 1559	44-48 s.	
20 mars 1559	44 s.	Reg. du Cons., vol. 39, fol. 115. <i>id.</i> , vol. 40, fol. 121. <i>id.</i> , vol. 42, fol. 14 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 53, fol. 107. <i>id.</i> , fol. 149 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 314. <i>id.</i> , vol. 54, fol. 65 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 357. <i>id.</i> , vol. 55, fol. 21. <i>id.</i> , fol. 44. <i>id.</i> , fol. 125.
11 mai 1559	40 s.	
6 octobre 1559	84 s.	Reg. du Cons., vol. 39, fol. 115. <i>id.</i> , vol. 40, fol. 121. <i>id.</i> , vol. 42, fol. 14 v. <i>id.</i> , vol. 53, fol. 107. <i>id.</i> , fol. 149 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 314. <i>id.</i> , vol. 54, fol. 65 v. <i>id.</i> , fol. 357. <i>id.</i> , vol. 55, fol. 21. <i>id.</i> , fol. 44. <i>id.</i> , fol. 125.
1. Prix de vente au détail.		

## Some European Price Rises, Sixteenth Century

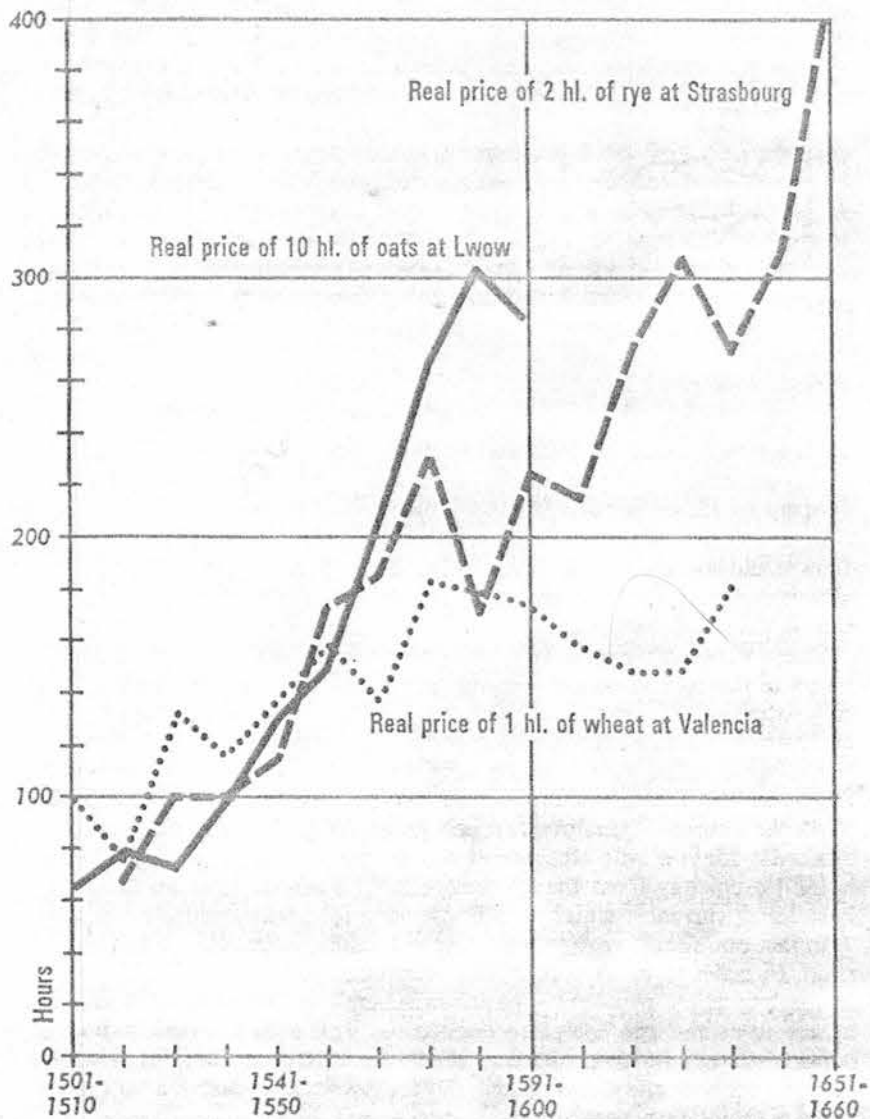


Fig. 47: Real prices of cereals at Strasbourg, Lwow and Valencia

After René Grandamy in J. Fourastié, *Prix de vente et prix de revient*, 13th series, p. 31. The prices are calculated in hourly rates for bricklayers' labourers. The drop in the standard of living is less marked at Valencia than in the two other continental towns.

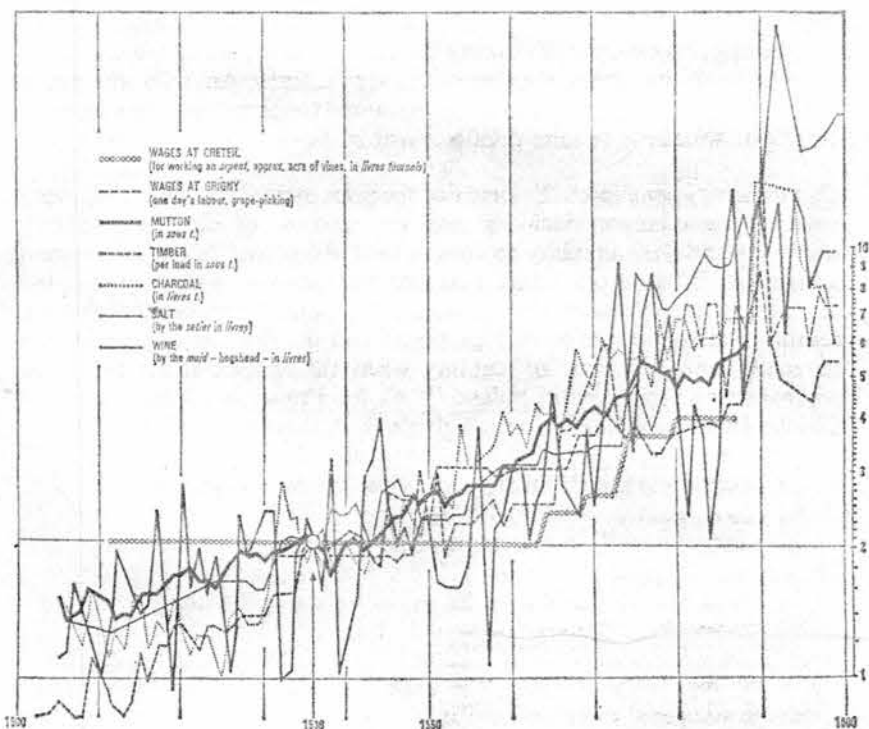


Fig. 44: Rising prices in Paris, from the archives of charitable institutions

Note the discrepancy between wages and price movements, the sharp rises in salt prices. The price of mutton represents the average general rate of increase. From archives of the Parisian *hôpitaux*, unpublished research by Micheline Baulant.

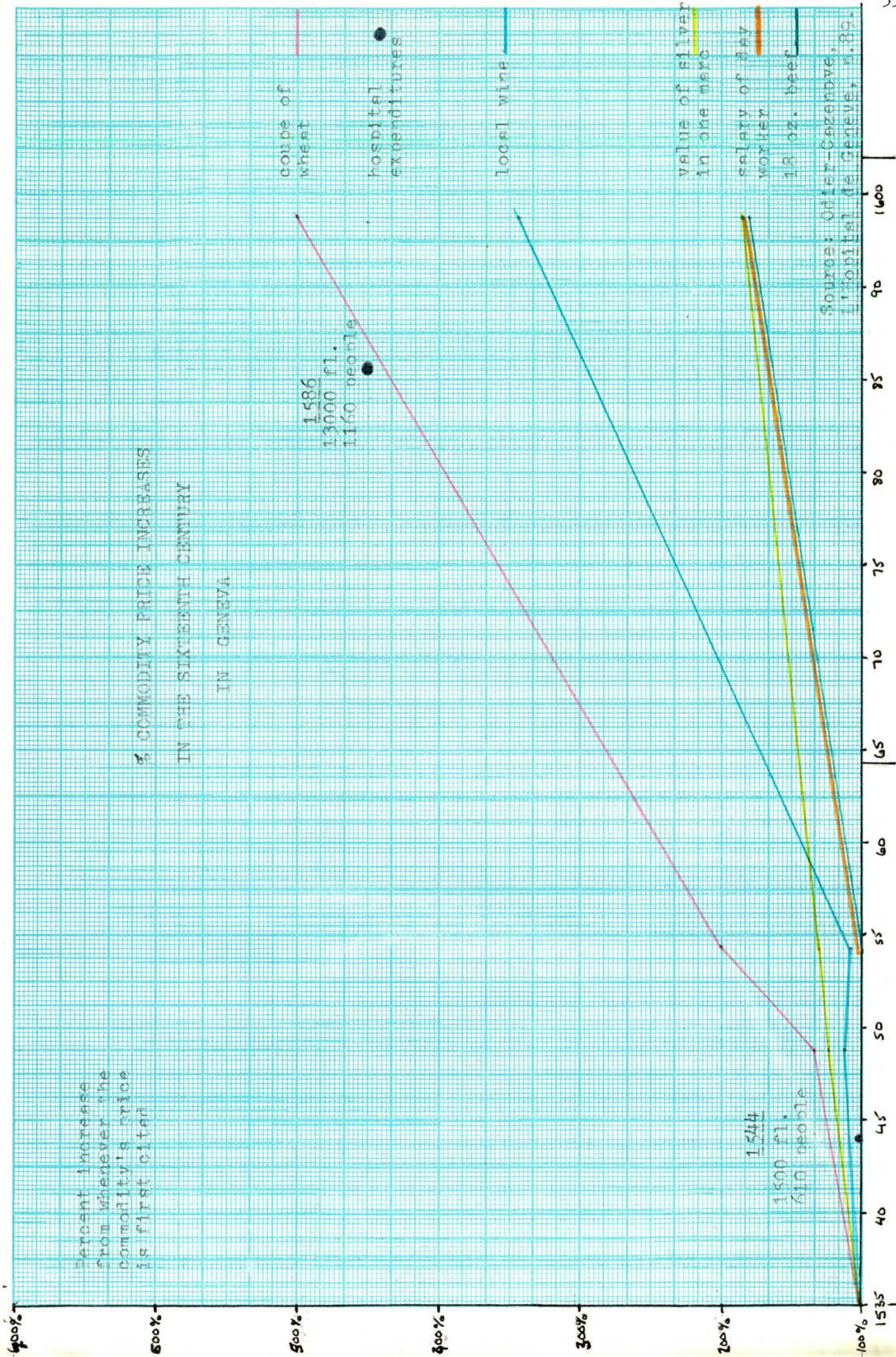
Source:

Braudel, Fernand (trans. Sian Reynolds). The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. 1. London, 1972. p. 526 (upper), and p. 520 (lower).



### % COMMODITY PRICE INCREASES IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY IN GENEVA

Percent increase  
from whenever the  
commodity's price  
is first cited



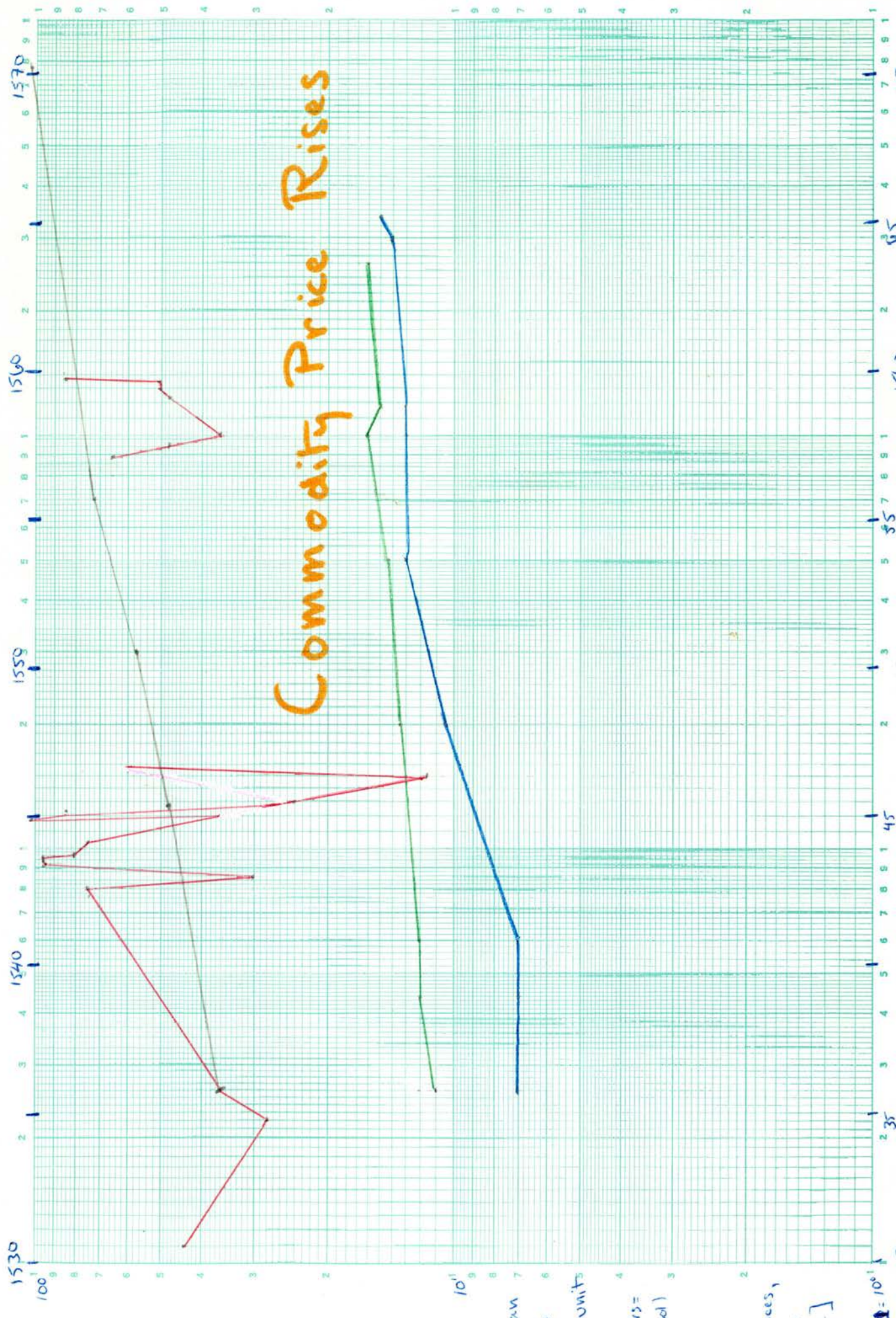
Source: Odier-Cazenove,  
L'Hopital de Geneve, p. 89.

L'ESCALADE

CALVIN'S DEATH

H-G'S FOUNDATION





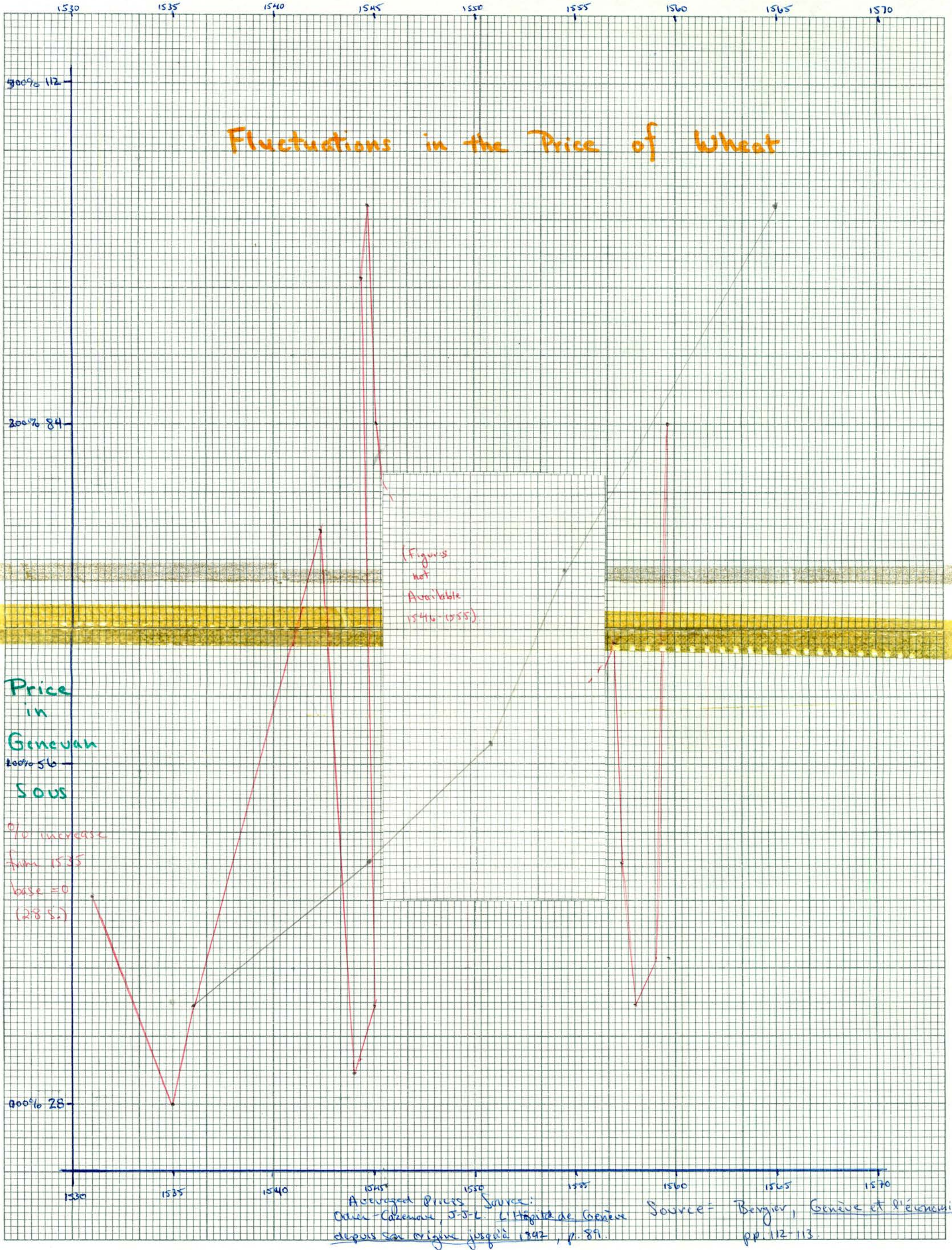
— mutton, deniers per ounce (conv. to sols) Las Sources du Droit 1570  
 — beef, deniers per ounce (conv. to sols) Las Sources du Droit  
 1 ounce = 31.25 grammes x12

— Price of coupe of wheat. Bergier, *banquet et fermage*, pp 112-113  
 — Price of coupe of wheat, weighted average over years.  
 1 coupe = 79.8 lbs Itizes

General  
 Sols  
 per units  
 12 deniers =  
 1 sou (sol)  
 [meat prices,  
 x12 for  
 scale]



# Fluctuations in the Price of Wheat



Averaged Prices Source: Olier-Cazemore, J-J-L. L'Histoire de Genève depuis son origine jusqu'à 1847, p. 89.

Source = Bergier, Genève et l'économie, pp. 112-113.



## Rise in European Wheat Prices, 1530-1570

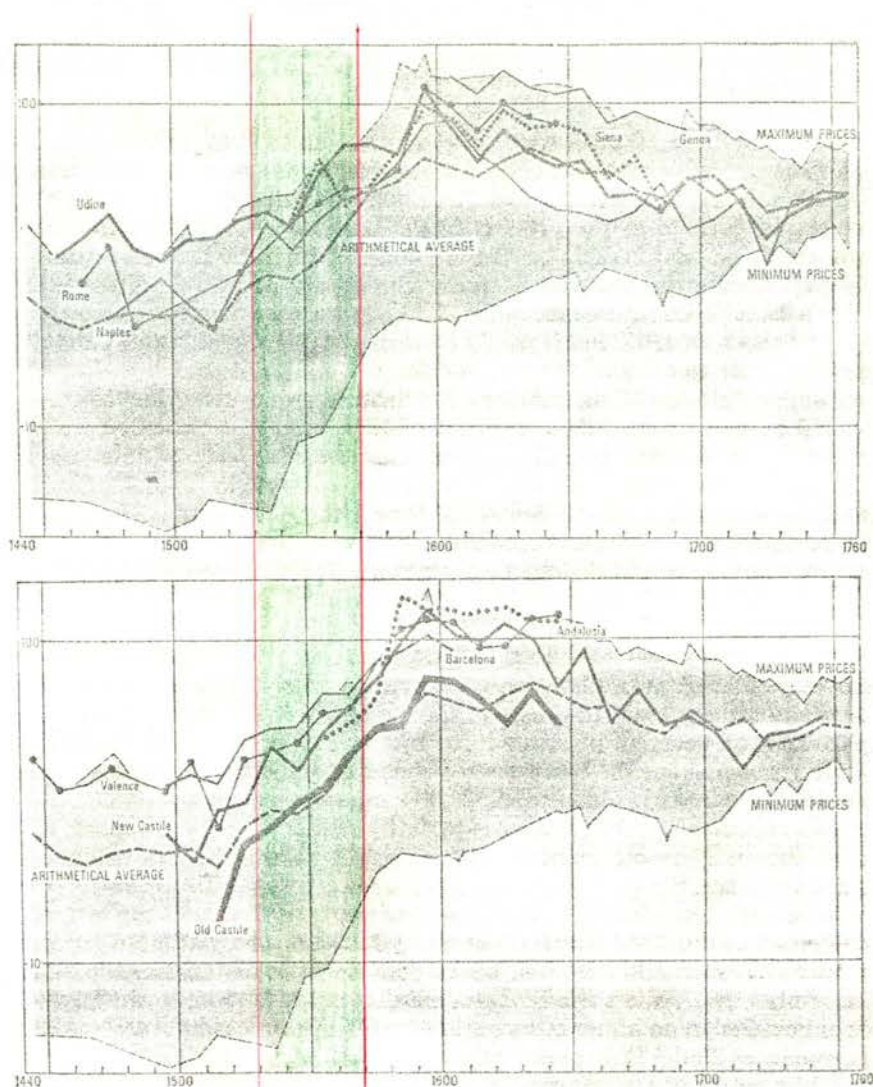


Fig. 42: *Wheat prices in the Mediterranean and Europe*

From F. Braudel and F. C. Spooner, Vol. IV of the *Cambridge Economic History*, (p. 470). From about fifty series of wheat prices, calculated in grams of silver per hectolitre, it has been possible to construct the range of cereal quotations (the shaded zone represents the range between maximum and minimum prices) for the whole of Europe and the arithmetical average (dotted line) of all these prices. Prices rose universally of course throughout the sixteenth century. On this 'envelope' I have superimposed, in two separate diagrams for the sake of clarity, various Mediterranean price-curves. It will be noted that the curve for Old Castile coincides almost exactly with the arithmetical average. All the other Mediterranean curves are well above average, at least until 1620 and in some cases even later. The Mediterranean or at least the Christian Mediterranean, since there are no price series available for the eastern part of the sea where prices were certainly lower, was a zone where bread was expensive, reaching almost the maximum price for the period. After the middle of the seventeenth century Mediterranean prices are much nearer the average, but it should be noted that during this period European prices in general were tending to converge as is clearly shown by the pronounced narrowing of the shaded zone. The distance between maximum and minimum was to decrease even further during the eighteenth century.

     = 1530-1570

Source:

Braudel, Fernand (trans. Siân Reynolds). The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. 1. London, 1972. p. 218.

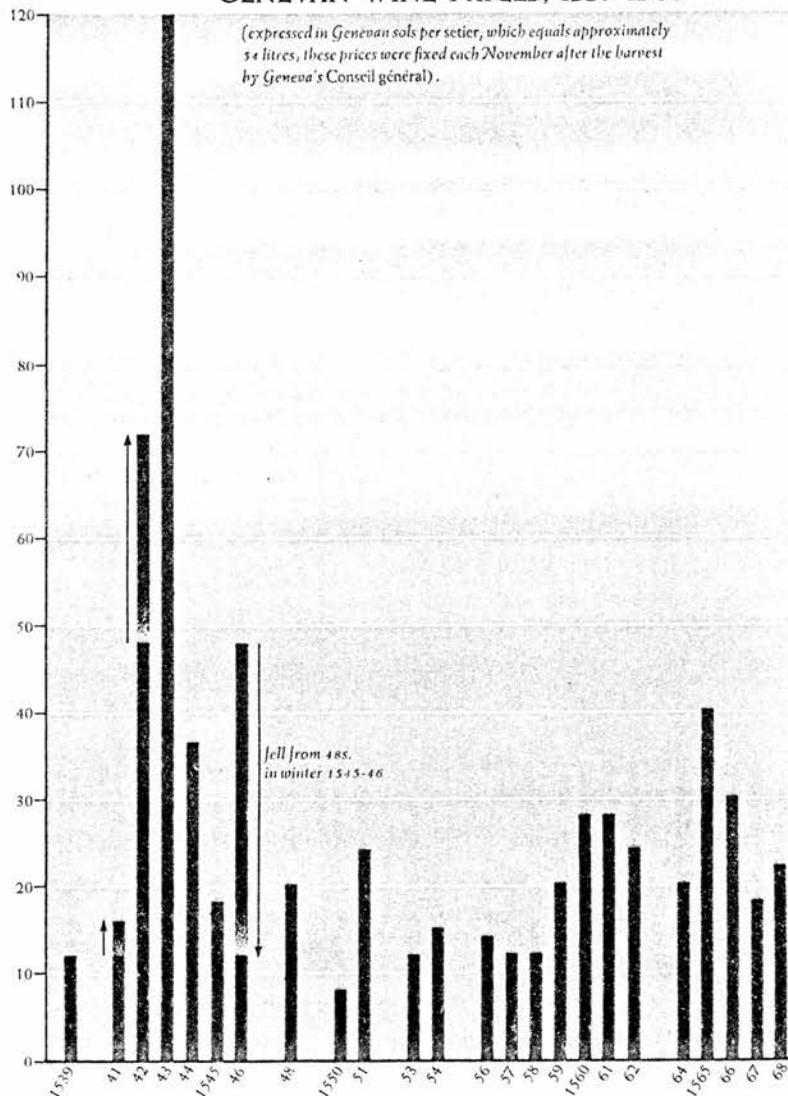


# Fluctuations in the Price of Meat





### GENEVAN WINE PRICES, 1539-1568



Source:

Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967. p. 160.

VILLE ET CAMPAGNE

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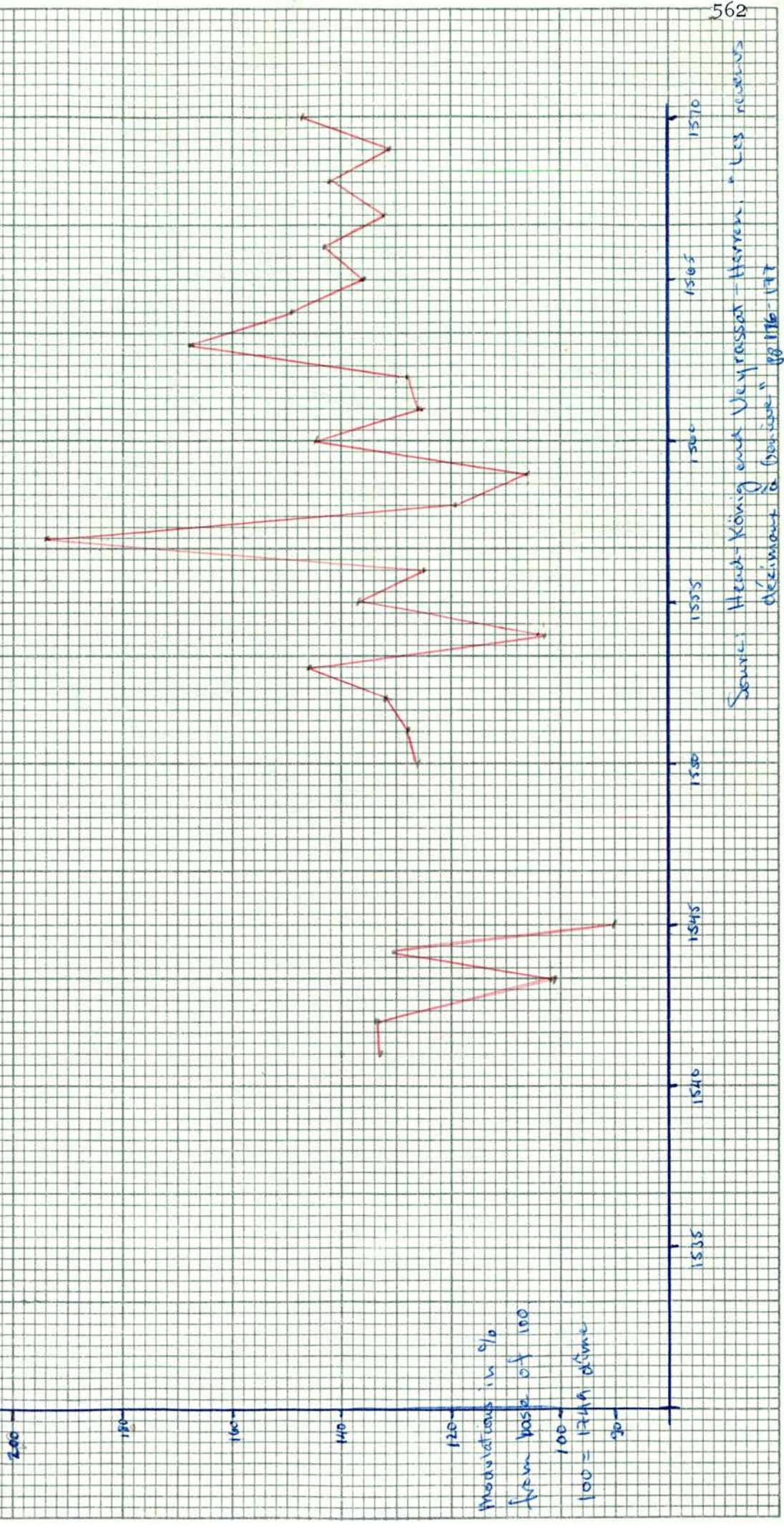
## II. 1539-1568

ANNÉES	PRIX OFFICIELS fixés par le Conseil général vers le 11 nov.	AUTRES PRIX OFFICIELS		REMARQUES	RÉFÉRENCE AEG, Reg. du Conseil vol. fol.	
		Quantième et mois	Prix		vol.	fol.
1539		17 sept.	6 den. le quart.	<i>actendus que Dieu mer- cy il y a beaucoup de vin.</i>	33	288 v.
1541		3 mai	8 den. le quart.		35	189
—		30 août	6 den. le quart.	vin rouge	—	302
1542	3. s le quart. (vin vieux) 2 s. le quart. (vin nouveau)			il y a cherté	36	161 v.
1543	10 ff. le set.				37	272 v.
1544	3 ff. 6 s. le set.				39	35 v.
1545		14 sept.	1 s. le quart.		40	237 v.
—	18 s. le set.				—	290 v.
—		22 déc.	2 s. —	vin blanc de Soumont	—	333 v.
—		—	2 s. 6 den. le quart.	vin rouge de Chau- tagne. Mais cer- tains le vendent déjà 3 s.	—	—
1546		22 avril.	2 s. 6 den. le quart.	dans les auberges. Le 8 juillet, poursuites contre les débitants qui vendent le vin blanc 3 s. le quart.	41	78
—	12 s. le set.				—	140
1548	20 s. —			<i>pour ce que la grace Dieu il en a heu assés de vin.</i>	43	245
1550	8 s. —				45	127
—		18 nov.	1 s. le quart.	il y abondance de vin	—	130 v.
1551		20 nov.	1 s. —	pour le meilleur vin	46	97
1553	12 s. —				47	179
1554	15 s. —				48	149 v.
1556	14 s. —				52	97
—		24 déc.	16 den.—		—	167
1557	12 s. —				53	404
1558	12 s. —				54	327 v.
1559		14 sept.	2 s. le quart.	pour le meilleur vin vieux	55	111
—			1 s. —	pour le vin nouveau	—	143 v.
—	20 s. —				—	—
1560		6 juin	20 den.—	de blanc	56	47
—			2 s. —	de Semine	—	—
—		2 août	vente libre		—	66
—	28 s. —				—	101

Source:  
Bergier, Jean-Francois. Genève et l'économie européenne  
de la Renaissance. Paris, 1963. p. 119.



# Product of the Dime



Source: Herz-König und Veyrossat - Harren, + Les nouveaux décrets de l'empire" pp. 116-117



## Lyons' Spice Trade Routes

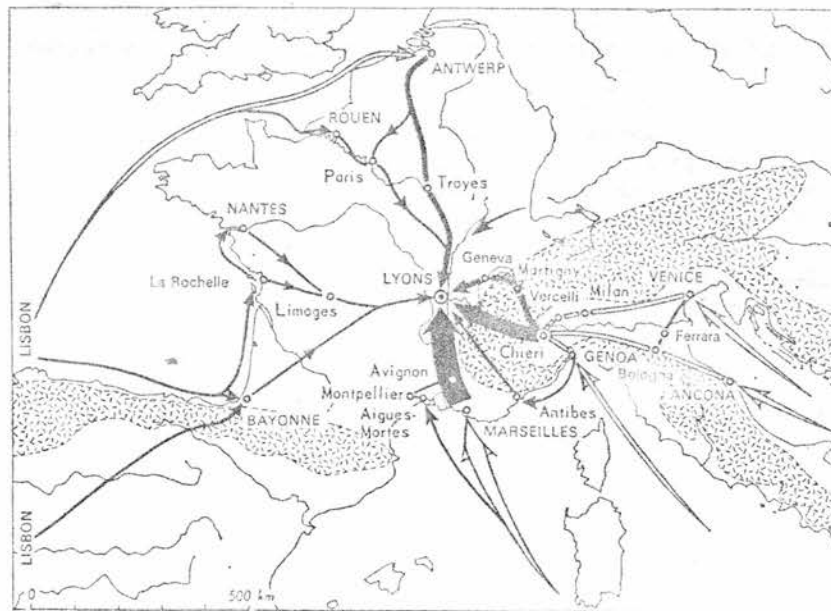


Fig. 17: Lyons and the spice trade, according to accounts between 1525 and 1534

From R. Gascon, 'Le siècle du commerce des épices à Lyon, fin XVe-fin XVIe siècle', in *Annales E.S.C.*, July-August, 1960. Note the predominance of the routes from Marseilles and from Chieri, over the Alps, in the concentration of traffic at Lyons.

**Source:**

Braudel, Fernand (trans. Siân Reynolds). The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. 1. London, 1972. p. 218.

exponentur Item quod ille Cl. Solomonis et ejus uxor, cum suis prescrip-  
 criptis pactis, ad regimen predictum electi maneant et officium ipsum  
 sancte exerceant. Et ut in futurum jacturam de suis bonis non patian-  
 tur, fiat eis acceptum et assurectio de dictis bonis sibi restituendis  
 in casum predictum, sine fraude.

R. C., vol. 28, fol. 152 v<sup>o</sup>—153 v<sup>o</sup>.

#### 684. Pouvoirs donnés au Conseil ordinaire pour la frappe de la nouvelle monnaie.

CC, 24 novembre 1535.

10 Fuit inter nos advisum quod nos, qui, primum et ante talium  
 principum originem, moneta nostra in civitate excussa, — ut adhuc  
 pluribus petiis argenti in nostrorum civium manibus reperitis satis  
 patet, — uti consueveramus modum et ordinem cudeude monete que  
 cursum presertim inter nostros habeat domus, ac cadere et excutere  
 15 faciamus, eamque excussam capi et pro ea victualia et mercantias  
 dari faciamus. Et ut hujusmodi ordo discretius dari possit, electionem  
 magistri et aliorum officiariorum dicte monete perficiende nostro  
 ordinario consilio remisimus; quod Veneris proxime futura advidere  
 habeat super eadem, ipsamque electionem et officiariorum provisionem  
 20 facere, et tandem monetam excudi et postea capi et cursum habere  
 disponat, ordinet et faciat. Et nos omnia ex tunc rata habemus.

R. C., vol. 28, fol. 160 v<sup>o</sup>.

Impr.: Eugène Demole, *Histoire monétaire de Genève*, dans M. D. G., in-4, t. I<sup>er</sup>, p. 7 n. 2.

#### 685. Organisation du monnayage.

CC, 5 décembre 1535.

25 Fuit loquutum de cudeuda moneta et auditus nobilis Claudius  
 Savoye, cui commissum extiterat initium. Et fuit advisum quod ipse  
 debeat prosequi et facere bonam monetam, talem videlicet quod non  
 valeat unquam ab aliquo condempnari. Et quia ipse facit principium  
 30 reassumptionis et revelationis monetagii nostri, in quo principio graves  
 incidunt expense, et ne de sua mersede infuturum dubitare valeat,  
 sic fuit advisum et resolutum quod nos ad dictam monetam ipsum  
 Claudium Savoye, pro se et ejus liberis masculis et legitimis naturali-  
 bus acceptantem, magistrum creamus et ordinamus, sibi que omnem  
 35 auctoritatem quantum possumus cudeudi monetam damus et conferi-

mus; ita tamen quod bonam monetam, irreprehensibilem cudi facere  
 debeat, et se ab errore et fallia totaliter abstinere; ita etiam quod  
 ipse debeat nobis reddere emolumenta que superioribus reddenda sunt  
 propter superioritatem nostram, quam nobis retinemus; et nostris  
 officariis, — puta: magistris, gardie, de l'essey, monetariis, opperariis, 5  
 generali et aliis nostris officariis, quos ad dictum exercitium eligendos  
 ducerimus, — satisfacere habeat, prout alii magistri monetarum solent.

Et ipse debeat suis solitis stipendiis contentari et nobis terminis per nos  
 sibi postea statuendis, juxta articulos monete sibi per nos formandos,  
 bonum reddere computum; solumque magistratus officium sub sub-10  
 jectionibus et oneribus solitis ad se retinere; alabastrum seu capsam  
 ad ponendum petias que dominis videndas reservantur habere; neminem  
 defraudare; nullum operariorum seu officiariorum dicti exercitii in  
 suo exercitio perturbare; immo cum omnibus fideliter agere at prout  
 et quemadmodum magnorum principum monetarii facere coguntur. 15  
 Declarantes quod nos intendimus duntaxat officium quod dicitur  
*maistre de monoye*, latine *magister monete*, cum solitis preminentiiis  
 honoreque et onere ac sub solitis stipendiis ejusdem sibi Claudio  
 Savoye, ad ejus vitam naturalem et post eum alteri ex ejus filiis  
 naturalibus et legitimis masculis, videlicet eidem qui dictum officium 20  
 propitiis exercere connoverit et poterit, committere et conferre; et  
 postea sibi officarios juxta nostram voluntatem eligere, de quo nobis  
 omnem reservamus potestatem. Et ipse nobis bona fide promisit se  
 taliter acturum quod et nos et omnes ad quorum manus moneta per  
 eum excussa pervenerit eadem tanquam bona, immo et multo meliori 25  
 quam vicini nostri cudant, poterint merito contentari. Submittens se  
 sponte omni castigationi perditionique officii hujusmodi, ac corporis  
 et bonorum, in casum in quem ipse in dicta moneta falsitatem com-  
 misisse reperiat in futurum. Promittens etc. . . . Renuncians etc. . . .

R. C., vol. 28, fol. 169 v<sup>o</sup>.

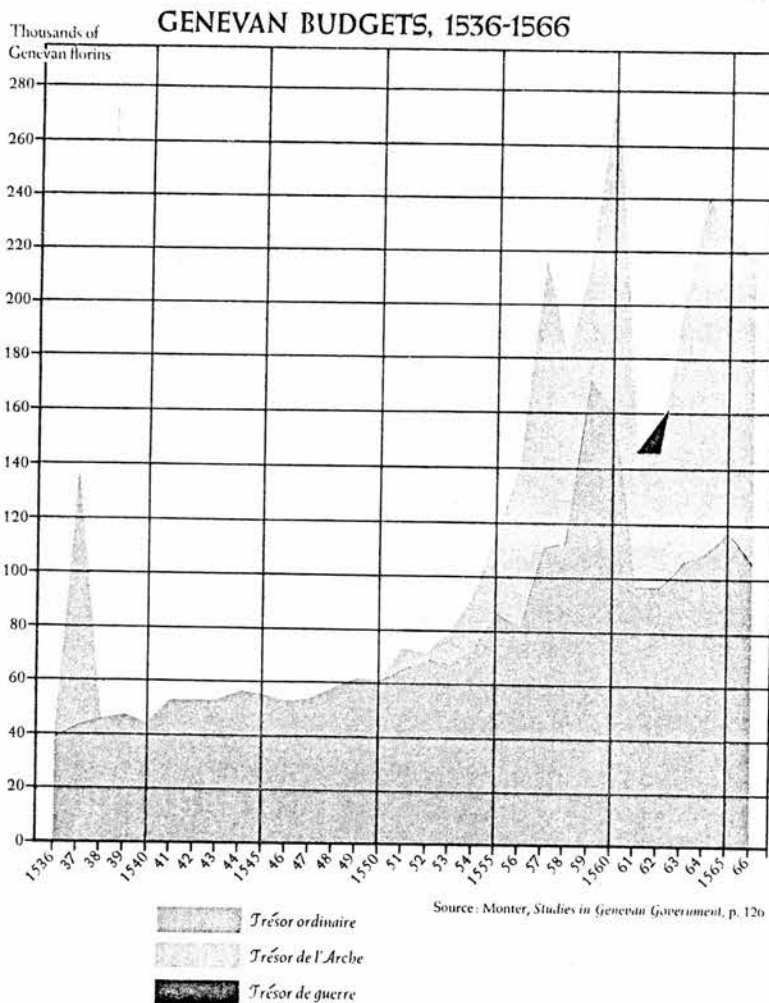
Impr.: Eug. Demole, *Histoire monétaire de Genève*, dans M. D. G. in-4<sup>o</sup>, t. I<sup>er</sup>, p. 8 n. 3.

#### 686. Officiers de la monnaie.

CC, 24 décembre 1535.

Fuit resolutum quod, pro tutiori factura dicte monete, domini  
 sindici debeant exercere officium quod dicitur *generalis*, et eligatur 35  
 unus *essayer* et unus appellatus *la garda*, qui fideliter debeant sua  
 exercere officia. Et fuerunt electi Claudius Chasteaulxneufz, auri-





These budgets (like the official wine prices tabulated in Graph #2) are expressed in Genevan florins, which was a "money of account" rather than a coinage. The value of this "money of account" relative to a stable and undebased coin, the *écu-sol* of Savoy, inflated by exactly 50% between the beginning of the Genevan Revolution in 1526 and the period immediately after Calvin's death. An *écu-sol* was worth 44 Genevan sous ( $3\frac{2}{3}$  florins) in 1526; it was worth 55 Genevan sous from 1536 through 1549; and it was worth 66 Genevan sous ( $5\frac{1}{2}$  florins) in 1568. (See J.-F. Bergier, *Genève et l'écon. européenne de la Renaissance*, pp. 439-40, for an exact table of yearly equivalents.)

Source:  
 Monter, E. William. Calvin's Geneva. New York, 1967. p. 157.

### GENEVA'S PUBLIC BORROWING IN SWITZERLAND

- 30 -

Voici un tableau approximatif montrant l'évolution du volume de ces emprunts négociés en Suisse :

Période (5)	Prêteurs	Emprunts nouveaux en Suisse ⌘	Dettes flottantes en Suisse ⌘	Total de la dette ⌘
1519	LU-Ville	1500	-	1500
1527	BE-particuliers	1500	1500	3000
1530-1533	BS-Ville et particuliers	19000	-	19000
1538-1546	BS-particuliers	26000	19000	45000
1563-1571	BS-Ville et partic. 88 % BE-Ville 12 %	86000	17000	103000
1583-1596	BS : 48 % Autres : 52 %	109000	23000	132000

Koerner, Martin. "Les modalités des emprunts genevois en Suisse au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle," in Bulletin du Department d'Histoire Economique, no. 4, (1973-1974). p.30.

## EXPENDITURES:

Purchases for public domain (a house near Town Hall: 467 fl.; parish tithes of Troinex: 1,890.; a small tiths, 210 fl.)	fl.	2,707
Quilents and interest rd. (93% at Base)	fl.	6,213 1/2
Wages for Petit Conseil and for Council of Two Hundred	fl.	1,180
Cash given to public almshouse	fl.	1,477
Wages of Syndics (312 1/2 fl.), Secy. (125), and Treas. (250)	fl.	687 1/2
Wages of Artillery-master, Fortress and Building-supervisors	fl.	251 1/2
Wages of <i>Santier</i> (Council valet) and liveried <i>guets</i>	fl.	491 1/2
Wages of <i>hospitalier</i> (100 fl.), heralds, surgeon	fl.	182 1/2
Wages of <i>guydons, chasseurs, belliers, coquins</i>	fl.	131
Wages of four regents at public school	fl.	541
Wages of clock-supervisors (three men)	fl.	177 1/2
Wages of clock-supervisors at St-Gervais (two men)	fl.	128
Wages of eleven night-watchmen and gatekeepers	fl.	289
Wages of <i>chatehans</i> at Pency and Céigny	fl.	137 1/2
Wages of seventeen ministers of the Word of God	fl.	3,095
Wages for sessions of the Consistory	fl.	78
Wages for inspections of rural parishes by Council and clergy	fl.	54
Wages and expenses of judicial executions	fl.	62
Pensions of Bonivard, Meigret, and six former priests	fl.	1,543 1/2
Expenses for recovering certain tithes and privileges	fl.	397
Expenses of <i>Chambre des Comptes</i> and building supervisors	fl.	193 1/2
Expenses of <i>chatehans</i> and artillery-master	fl.	189
Expenses of farmers of Arnoy-Draillant pastor's salaries)	fl.	295
Various civic expenses, incl. public arquebus contest	fl.	374
Public works done by smiths and guilders	fl.	132 1/2
Works by painters, glassmakers, locksmiths, saddlers, etc	fl.	35 1/2
Works by carpenters (929 man-days)	fl.	471
Work by masons and grain-carriers on fortifications	fl.	324
Expenses for metal, labor, and ammunition	fl.	395
Expenses for public livery and purchase of oak-trees	fl.	311
Additional wood purchased, incl. kindling	fl.	633 1/2
Gifts made by government	fl.	169 1/2
Extraordinary and unlisted expenses	fl.	296
Embassies and messengers (chiefly in France)	fl.	3,698 1/2
Banquets, incl. imports of wine and game (chiefly for Bernese)	fl.	920
TOTAL	fl.	29,453

Source for this and the following page:

Monter, E. William. Studies in Genevan Government.  
Geneva, 1964. pp. 17-18.

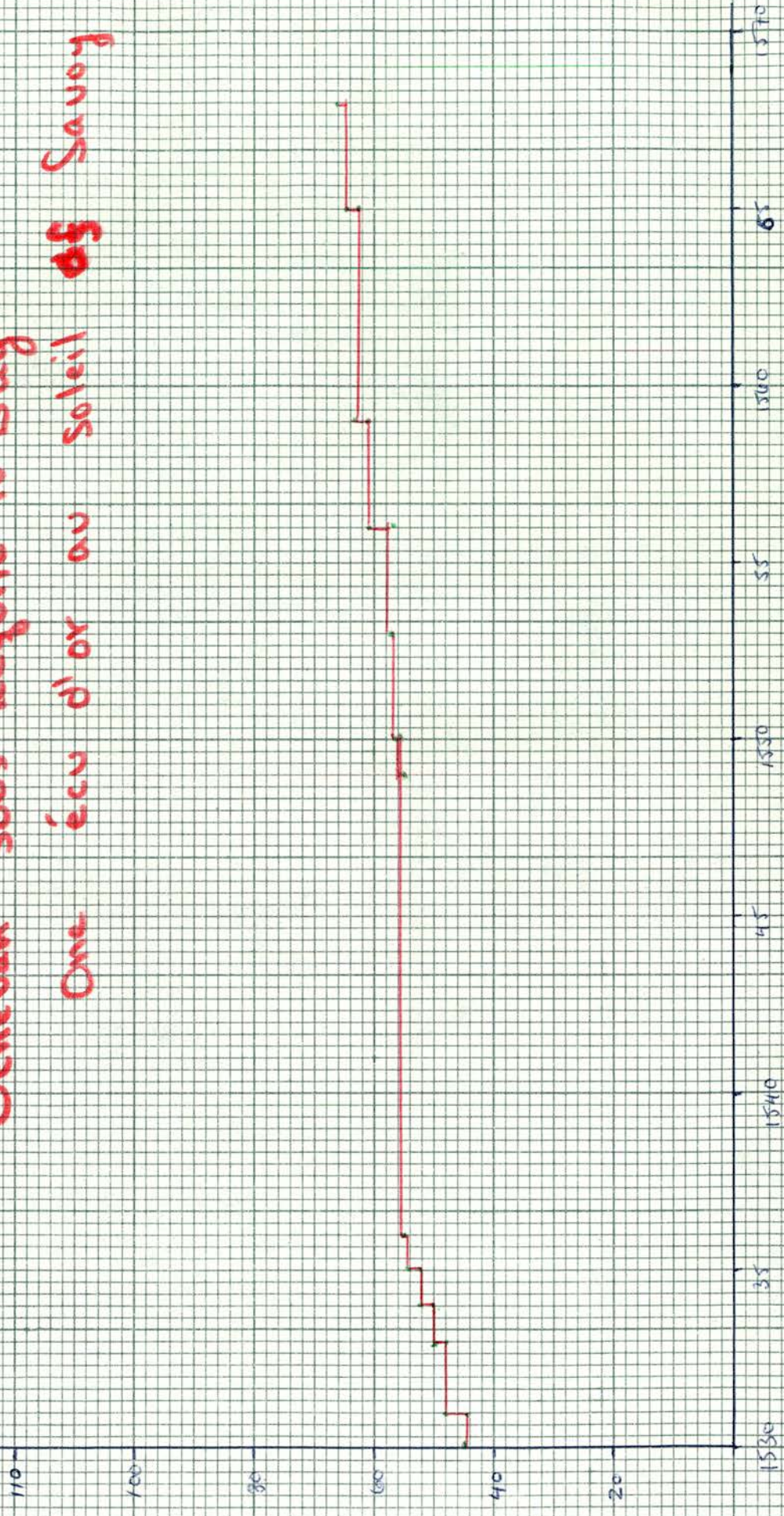
## CORNE'S BUDGET, 1544 (simplified)

## RECEIPTS:

Public seats used at Town Hall and Civil Court .....	fl.	490
Farm of <i>Halles</i> (customs duties) .....	fl.	1,003
Farm of <i>gabelle</i> on wine .....	fl.	1,886
Farm of <i>gabelle</i> on meat .....	fl.	1,653
Farm of <i>gabelle</i> on salt .....	fl.	629
Tolls on Rhone (80 fl.) and Arve (230 fl.) bridges .....	fl.	310
Taxes on weighing and exporting wheat .....	fl.	313
Tax on fishermen (550 fl.) plus Wednesday fishermen .....	fl.	615
Farm of five public squares, plus rent of meadow near walls ..	fl.	90
Rents of butchers' benches at two marketplaces .....	fl.	300
Charities owed to Convent at Rive .....	fl.	100
Rent for the large powder mill and hemp-works .....	fl.	95
Rent from the "large inn called the Lyon d'or" .....	fl.	156
Rent from eight different houses .....	fl.	143
Rent from homes of two Artichauds (Monathon, Chapeau- rouge) .....	fl.	29
Rent from various meadows and pastures .....	fl.	30
Fines to reclaim houses and church of St.-Germain .....	fl.	94
Quitrents on twenty-three other houses .....	fl.	346½
Quitrents on mills .....	fl.	20
Tithes from four parishes, two rural .....	fl.	425½
Creation of ten new <i>bourgeois</i> .....	fl.	315
Six fines, nearly all on reinstated Artichauds .....	fl.	3,211
Sales of public properties (a horse, a house for 878 fl., three rural tithes for appx. 1,500 fl.) .....	fl.	3,383½
Rec'd from other tithes and capitations .....	fl.	463
Profits made from loans .....	fl.	268
Farm of revenues of <i>mandement</i> of Peney-Satigny .....	fl.	3,260
Revenues of three rural parishes (Bourdigny, Peissy, Dar- dagny) .....	fl.	29
Revenues of parish of Armoiy and priory of Draillant (Cha- blais) .....	fl.	878
Revenues of <i>mandement</i> of Jussy .....	fl.	1,610
Revenues of St.-Victor (formerly held by Cluniac monks) ..	fl.	3,129
Revenues of twelve rural parishes (Malval, Russin, Celigny, Moens, Cartigny, Bossey, Laconex, Lully, Valléiry, Chaney, Neydens plus "Membre d'Erehan" and va- rious back debts) formerly held by cathedral canons ..	fl.	2,414½
<i>Lods</i> (property-transfer tax) on 21 estates .....	fl.	1,177½
TOTAL	fl.	29,437¼



# Genevan Sous Require to Buy One écu d'or au soleil of Savoy

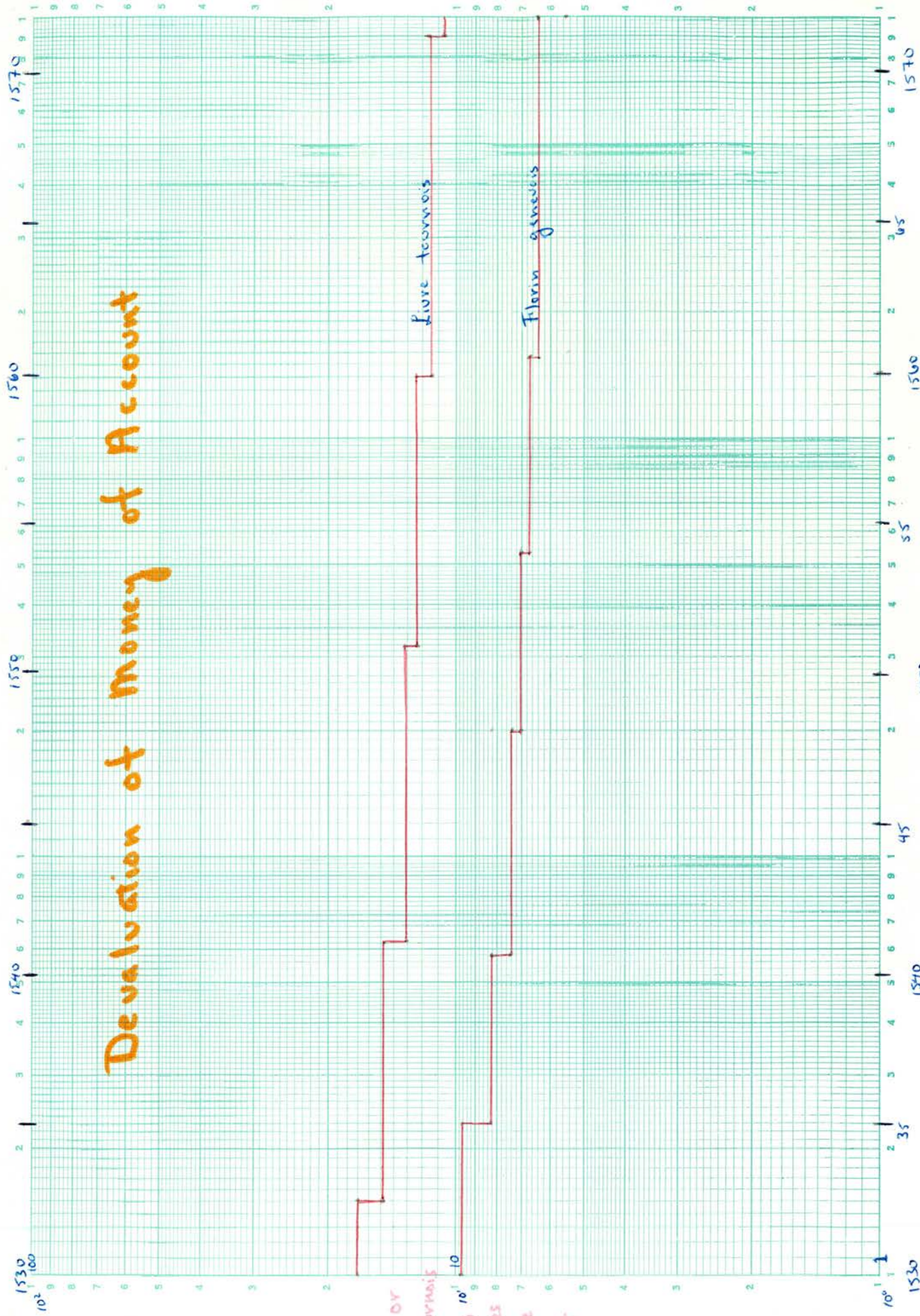


Source: Benoit, Jean-François. Genève et l'économie de la Renaissance. Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1973. pp. 139-140



# Devaluation of Money of Account

1 Flovin or  
1 £-tournois  
equals; 10'  
Grammes  
of Fine  
Silver



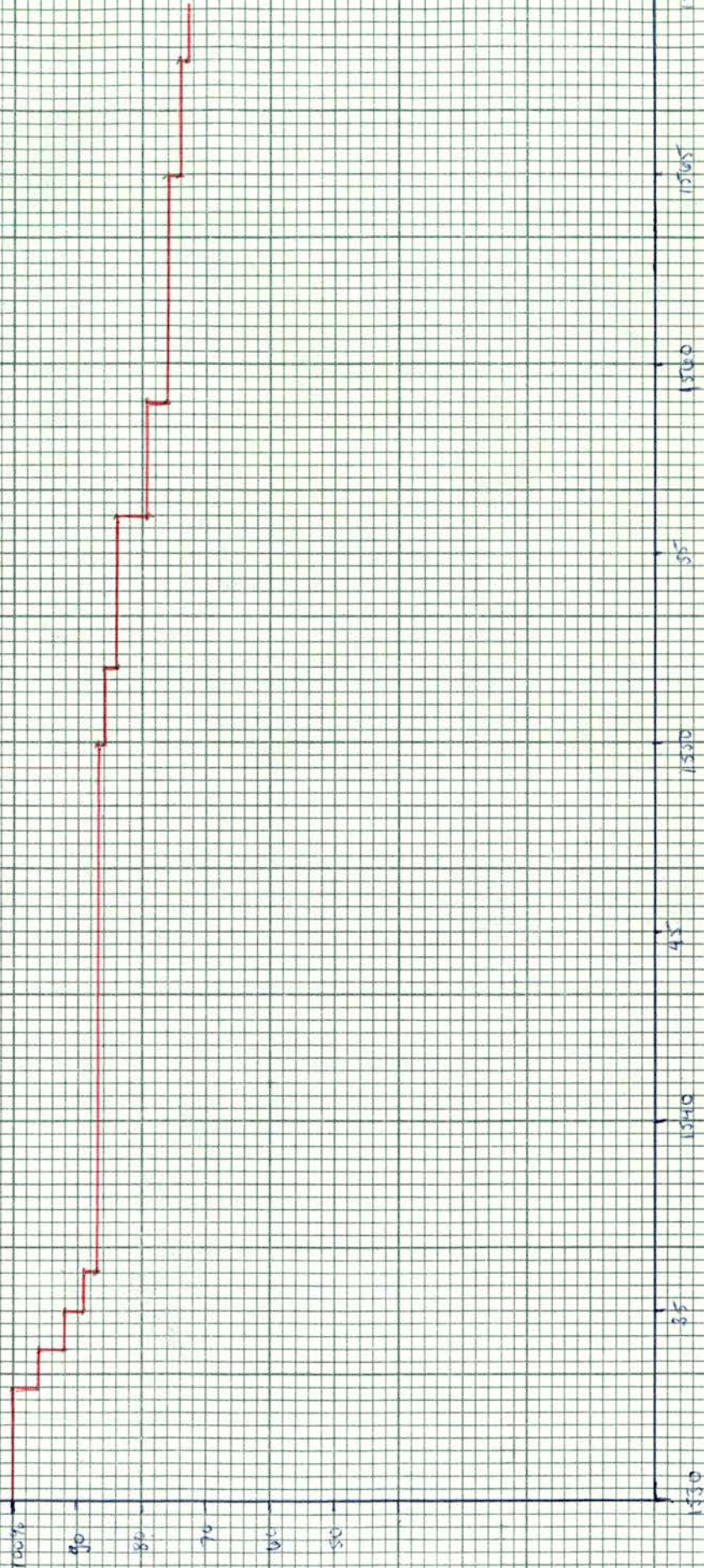
Livre tournois approximated from: Braudel, F., *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 1, London, Collins, 1972, p. 528. (trans. Siân Reynolds).



# Real Money vs. Money of Account

[Research and sales of Savoy vs. Le Flamin genevois]

% decrease,  
 1531 = base 0  
 arithmetically  
 plotted



Source: Bergson, Condition of the Savoyards, pp. 131-440.



## Devaluation of Money of Account, 1530-1570

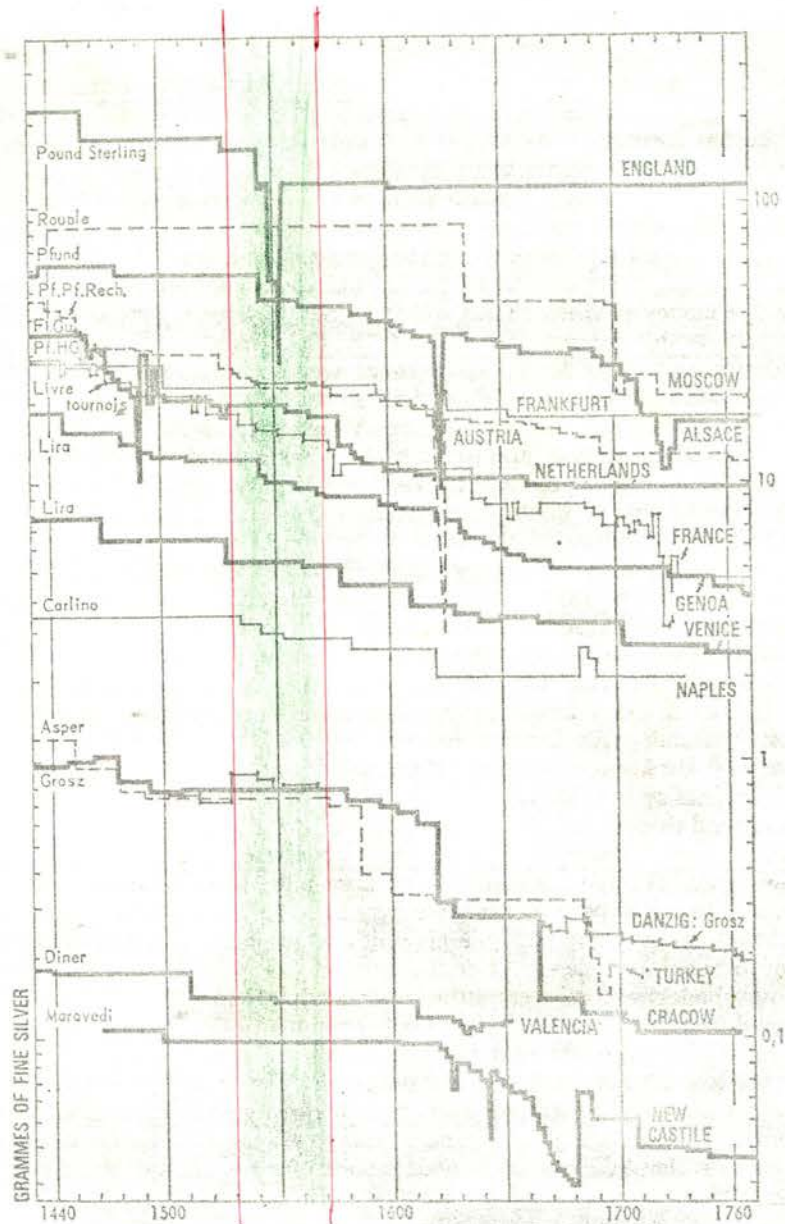


Fig. 48: Devaluation of moneys of account

This graph appears in the chapter by F. Braudel and F. C. Spooner in the *Cambridge Economic History*, vol. IV. The moneys are classified by their weights in grams of fine silver. Some were light, some heavy: some such as the pound sterling remained comparatively stable; others like the Polish *grosz*, the Turkish *asper*, and even the *livre tournois* were extremely unstable. Approximate values are given for the rouble and asper.

Pf. Pf. Rech = Pfund Pfennig Rechengulden.

Fl. Gu. = florin, after 1579 guilder.

Pf. HG. = Pfund Heller Gulden.

1530-1570 = 1530 to 1570

Source:  
 Braudel, Fernand (trans. Siân Reynolds). The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. 1. London, 1972. p. 528.

The Ecu d'or vs. the Genevan Florin, and a Table of Weights and Measures

MONNAIES

440

GÈNÈVE ET L'ÉCONOMIE

1556-1558	61 sous	soit 5 florins 1 sou
1559-1564	63 —	
1565-1567	65 —	
1568-1570	66 —	

POIDS ET MESURES

Poids

once	31,25	grammes
livre genevoise de 16 onces	489,6	—
livre genevoise de 18 onces (livre courante)	551,876	—
charge (2 balles) = 230 livres genevoises de 18 onces	env. 127	kg.

Mesures pour le blé

émine (ou mine)	2,48	litres
bichet = 8 émines	19,84	—
coupe = 4 bichets	79,365	—

Mesures pour le vin

pichollette		
pot = 4 pichollettes	1,126	litres
quarteron = 2 pots	2,257	—
setier = 24 quarterons	54,1565	—
bossette = 6 setiers	325	—
char = 2 bossettes	650	—

Le problème des monnaies ayant eu cours à Genève aux xve et xvie siècles et l'économie monétaire de la ville feront l'objet d'un chapitre du second volume de cet ouvrage. Pour mémoire, rappelons ici que la monnaie de compte est à Genève le florin petits poids de Savoie. Presque toutes les indications monétaires sont exprimées dans cette monnaie. Le florin se divise, on le sait, en 12 sous de 12 deniers chacun. Après la Réforme, et surtout sous l'influence du Refuge, le livre tournois tend à supplanter le florin comme monnaie de compte.

La monnaie réelle la plus courante est l'écu d'or au soleil, de Savoie. Jus- qu'au milieu du xve siècle, l'écu d'or vaut régulièrement 2 florins. Sa valeur nominale augmente ensuite rapidement. Un document<sup>1</sup>, précise ses valeurs successives (données ici pour la période qui nous intéresse) :

1463-1467	25 sous
1468	26 —
1469-1477	28 —
1478-1483	30 —
1484	31 —
1485	32 —
1486-1488	36 —
1489-1497	38 —
1498-1515	39 —
1516-1521	40 —
1522-1524	43 —
1525-1527	44 —
1528-1530	45 —
1531-1532	48 —
1533	50 —
1534	52 —
1535	54 —
1536-1549	55 —
1550-1552	56 —
1553-1555	57 —

soit 3 florins

soit 4 florins

1. AEG, Monnaie A 2, « Veoistre de la valeur des monnoyes, dès l'année 1463 à 1640. »



# INTEREST - TAKING

Genevan

10%

LEGAL

INTEREST

RATE

8%

%

7%

6%

5%

1530

35

1540

45

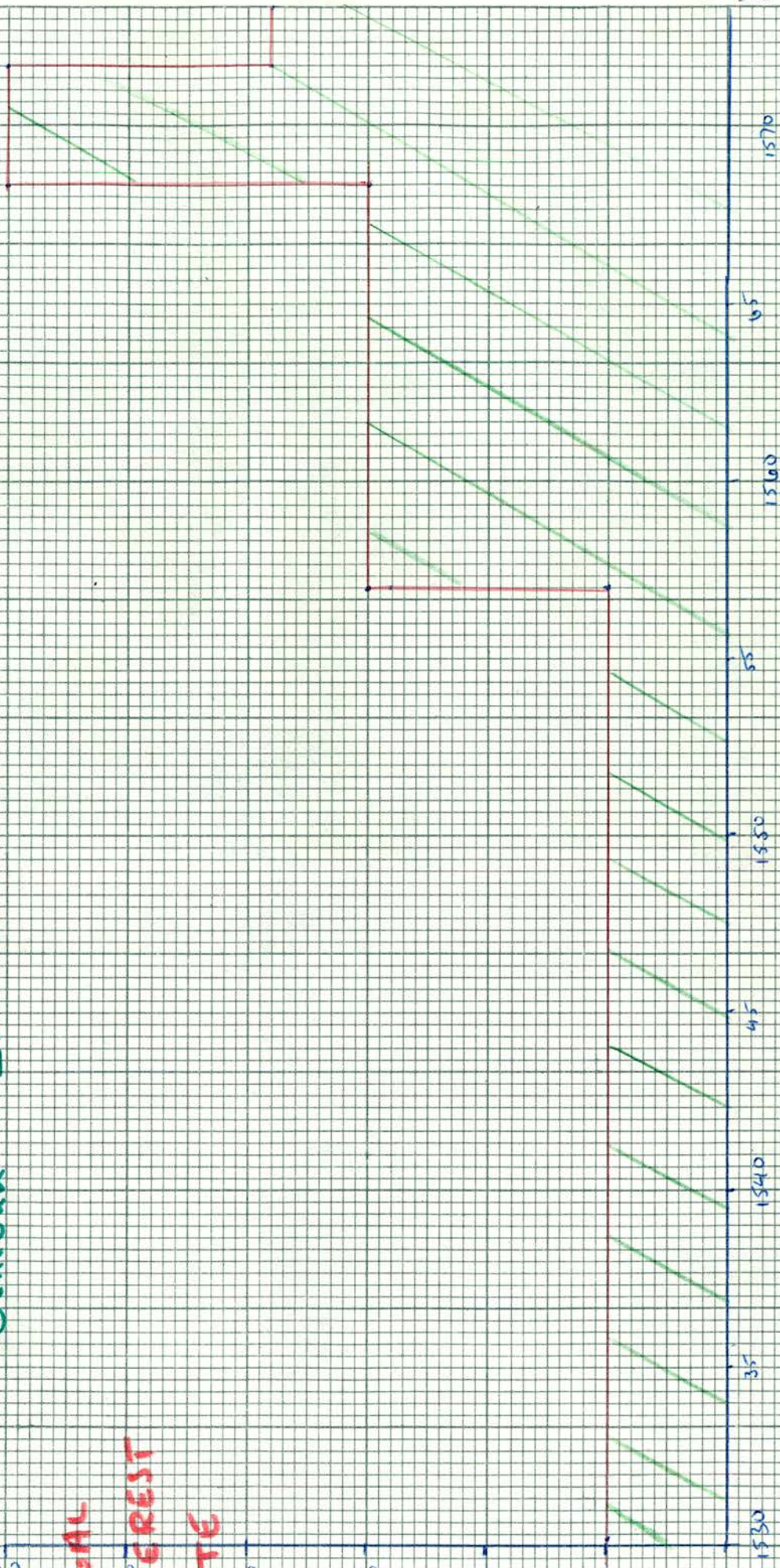
1550

55

1560

65

1570



Source: Bergier, S.F. "Taux de l'intérêt et crédit à court terme" p. 119.



Charter of the "cordonniers," or cobblers. This charter is fairly typical of the guild charters that emerged in this era. Note the provisions for caring for the poor in the hospital out of fines, paragraph six.

1393. Cordonniers.

C. O., 6 juillet 1608.

Ici a esté fait un reglement sur les cordonniers, en la forme suivante:

5 Que le premier jour de juillet par ci après le corps de l'estat s'assemblera pour faire election de 4 maistres, asscavoir deux primiers et deux grossiers, lesquels estans esleuz feront observer les ordonnances sur led. estat.

Qu'en l'election qui se fera on eslira gens de bien et sans ro-  
10 proche, et s'il est possible tous citoiens ou bourgeois.

Item que toutes assemblees soient deffendues pour adjouster ou  
diminuer sur le reglement de l'estat sans en advertir le s<sup>r</sup> commis  
et les quatre maistres esleuz.

Item que les maistres esleuz seront tenus de faire visite de la  
15 besoigne qui se fait dans la ville, du moins de deux mois en 2 mois,  
et plus frequemment s'il est possible.

Item que nul ne pourra lever boutique sans s'adresser aud. s<sup>r</sup>  
commis et m<sup>res</sup> esleuz, à peine de 25 florins, applicables: le quart à  
l'Hospital, l'autre quart aux s<sup>r</sup> commis, le 3<sup>e</sup> aux maistres esleuz, et le  
20 4<sup>e</sup> à la boite de l'estat, lequel argent de lad. boite sera employé pour  
subvenir aux necessités dud. estat.

Item que nul ne pourra dresser boutique sans faire apparoir  
d'avoir achevé son apprentissage et servi en après les maistres deux  
ans après led. apprentissage; et alors sera receu, recognoissant l'estat  
25 de dix florins, qui seront mis dans lad. boite. Et en ce ne sont com-  
pris le fils de maistre ni ceux qui espouseront filles de maistres.

Item que arrivant des maistres aians tenu boutique ailleurs et  
se retirant ici pour la religion, demandant congé aud. s<sup>r</sup> commis et  
maistres esleuz, leur sera permis lever boutique sans aucune adstriction.

30 Que nul maistre ne pourra prendre plus d'un apprentif et pour  
moins de trois ans; et sera tenu led. maistre advertir les maistres  
esleuz du jour qu'il le prend, pour éviter abus. Et led. apprentif sera  
tenu metre deux florins dans la boite de l'estat. Et ne s'entend pour  
regard des trois ans ceux qui auront atteint l'age de 20 ans, aus-  
35 quels est permis de les prendre pour un an.

Que nul maistre ne pourra desbaucher ou fere desbaucher un  
compagnon de la boutique d'un maistre, ni garçon, pour l'attirer en  
la sienne, à peyne de 10 ff., applicables comme dessus.

Que nul ne recevra aucun compagnon qui aye travaillé chez un  
autre maistre, sans demander aud. maistre au service duquel il a esté  
s'il est content et satisfait de luy, à peyne que dessus.

Que nul n'avancera à aucun compagnon arrivant en sa boutique  
pour travailler plus hault de deux florins; comme aussi en travail-  
lant en lad. boutique, ne luy fournira d'avance plus de deux florins,  
si ce n'est pour habits ou maladie qui luy pourroit survenir, et pour  
olvier à l'abus et desbauches qui s'y commettent; à peyne que dessus.

Item que nul ne pourra hausser le prix qui est à present, assa-  
voir cinq et six pour les primiers et quatre et cinq pour les grossiers. 10  
Et arrivant quelque cherté, lesd. compagnons s'adresseront aux maistres  
esleuz pour y pourveoir. Le tout à peyne que dessus.

Que nul ne pourra faire aucuns souliers ni bottes, asscavoir pour  
les souliers: du marroquin et les cartiers d'autre; de mesme des sou-  
liers de vache; l'empeigne de vache et les cartiers d'autre; les boetes; 15  
la tige de vache et les genouillieres d'autre; à peyne de confiscation  
de la besogne et 5 ff. d'amende applicables comme dessus.

Qu'en tous souliers à liege et panneffles la bordure sera du moins  
de veau gras, sauf tous souliers de couleur et patins, à peyne que  
20 dessus.

Que toutes premieres semelles de souliers gras de veaux et vaches  
ne sera de mouton, ains d'autre cuir gras; et qu'en toutes bottes la  
1<sup>re</sup> semelle sera forte, à peyne que dessus.

Qu'en toutes dernieres semelles sont deffendus tous cuirs de cheval,  
tous fronteaux et peaux de porc, ains seront de bon cuir gras, sauf 25  
les cuirs d'Auvergne, à peyne que dessus.

Item que tous differents qui surviendront entre les maistres pour  
leur estat, et compagnons, garçons et apprentifs, se adresseront ausd.  
s<sup>rs</sup> commis et maistres esleuz pour les apointer, à peyne que dessus.

Que s'il y a quelque maistre esleu qui soit en ombrage pour 30  
quelque occasion, il sera tenu s'en deporter et le s<sup>r</sup> commis en pour-  
voira d'un autre.

Item que là où le different passera cinquante florins, ils pour-  
ront choisir, outre le nombre des seigneurs commis et maistres esleuz,  
encores chacun un homme. 35

YEARLY PUBLICATIONS IN GENEVA  
(1550 - 1565)

Categories	1550	'51	'52	'53	'54	'55	'56	'57	'58	'59	1560	'61	'62	'63	'64	'65	Total	% of Titles
Calvin's Works	15	21	10	9	16	10	6	11	7	10	11	16	16	17	6	11	192	27.5
Theological X	4	6	13	7	6	4	5	13	24	21	10	10	9	5	12	10	159	22.8
School Books, Dictionaries, Catechisms +	1	3	-	2	6	2	1	7	3	4	2	2	7	4	6	2	52	7.4
History, Classics *	1	1	1	-	2	4	5	7	8	7	7	6	10	3	3	2	67	9.6
Political Tracts & Polemics #	3	5	4	2	6	1	2	4	11	9	7	6	4	7	1	6	78	11.2
Music & Drama	2	1	-	-	-	1	3	1	4	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	16	2.3
Bibles	-	5	7	8	3	11	9	3	3	2	10	5	18	11	5	5	105	15.0
Psalters	1	2	6	1	1	2	1	-	2	2 <sup>ⓐ</sup>	1 <sup>ⓐ</sup>	- <sup>ⓐ</sup>	1 <sup>ⓐ</sup>	1	2	6	26	4.2
Yearly Totals	27	44	41	29	40	35	32	46	62	56	48	47	66	48	35	42	698	100.0

x Included Bezza; Viret; Farel, Bucer, Luther, Oecolampadius; Bullinger.  
 # Polemics are both religious and political  
 + Included Juan-Luis Vives and Juan Valdes.  
 @ Included English Psalters.  
 \* Languages included Greek, French, Latin, Hebrew.  
 & Included an Italian Psalter  
 \* Included Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, and a few town ordinances.

Source: Chalx, Paul, Alain Dufour and Gustave Moeckli. "Les livres imprimés à Genève de 1550 à 1600." in Geneva, vol.7, (1959), pp. 235-394.

## 763. Cries: Halles et marchands.

4 juin 1539.

L'on vous faict ascavoer que nul marchantz privé ny estrangier  
 25 ne soyent ozé ny si hardis, durant les jours et termes des foyres  
 accoustumés en ceste cité, durant que les asles sont ouvertes commant  
 est de coustume, vendre, allier draps en groz sinon sus l'asle sus-  
 dicte. Et icieulx marchans vendant draps en groz doibjent icieulx  
 draps porter le premier jour de laz foyre sus les asles. Et s'ilz en  
 30 avoient par sus les champs qu'ilz ne fussent pas venues, lesdictz  
 marchans soyent tenus fayre appourter icelles balles sus les asles.  
 Et ce sus laz poienne comprinse en laz franchise pour ung chescum  
 et une chescune piece de draps et une chescune foys fayssant du  
 contrayre.

Item que nul ne soyent ozé ny si ardis enpourter ny sortier hors  
 la ville marchiandisses doibgeant peage, que premierement ne soyt  
 arreysonné par lesdictz maystre d'alles, et ce sus la poienne susdicte.  
 Item que nul ne soyt ozé ny si ardis mover ny hosté marchiandise  
 du port venant sus l'eau, que premierement ne soyt arreysonné par 5  
 le maystre de l'asle ou lesdictz maystre d'alle evoquer, sus la mesmes  
 poienne, sans grace avoer,

Item que nul ne soyt ozé ny si ardys de tenir poys pesant plus  
 de trente livres pour peser aulcune marchiandisses pour vendre ou  
 acchecter, sinon le poys de lad<sup>te</sup> asle, sus la poienne susdicte, sans 10  
 grace avoier.

Item que tous marchians, privé ou estrangier, amenant layne en  
 ceste cité les doibjent descharger en l'asle de ceste cité et non allieur,  
 sus lad<sup>te</sup> poienne.

Item que tous marchans estrangiers, mesmemant amenant en ceste 15  
 cité huyllie d'olyve, amandres, figues, raysins, oranges, peaulx et  
 aultre marchiandise, quielles quelle soyt, soyent tenus icelle des-  
 chargé en l'asle de ceste cité, et que nul ne soyet ozé ny si ardis  
 icelle retirer en sa mayson, grange ou aultre par, sus la poienne  
 susdicte, sans grace avoier. 20

Item que nul marchans, privés ny estrangiers, tenantz marchian-  
 disse commant espiceriez, amandres, ris, colliandres et aultres sortes  
 d'espiceriez pourtant gribel ne soyent ozé ny si ardis icelle vendre  
 ny accepter, que premierement ne soyent gribellés et celee du seaulx  
 de lad<sup>te</sup> asle, sus lad<sup>te</sup> poienne, sans grace avoier. 25

Jehan Coquet.

Les cries dessus faictes furent criees le 4<sup>me</sup> jour de juing par les  
 carraphes de la ville par Jeham Rouge, crie commune, en la presance  
 de moy soubtz signé notaire et à ce commis. — Et moy, Galloys, notaire.

P. H., n° 1225.

30



## Abbreviations

AEG	Archives d'Etat de Genève
<u>AHR</u>	The <u>American Historical Review</u>
<u>ARG</u>	<u>Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte</u>
<u>BHG</u>	<u>Bulletin de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Genève.</u>
C.O.	Baum, J.W., E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss (eds.). <u>Ioannis Calvinii Opera quae supersunt omnia</u> , 59 vol. Brunswick, 1863-1900.
S.D.	Rivoire, Emile, and Victor van Berchem (eds.). <u>Les Sources du droit du canton de Genève</u> , vol. 1-4. Aarau, Switzerland, 1927-1935.
<u>Mélanges...Antony Babel</u>	<u>Mélanges d'histoire économique et sociale en hommage au Professeur Antony Babel.</u> Geneva, 1963.
<u>Mélanges...Charles Braibant</u>	<u>Mélanges offerts par ses confrères étrangers à Charles Braibant.</u> Brussels, 1959.
<u>Mélanges...Henri Meylan.</u>	<u>Mélanges d'histoire du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle offerts à Henri Meylan.</u> Geneva, 1970.
<u>MDG</u>	<u>Memoires et Documents publiés par la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Genève.</u>
RC	Registres du Conseil de Genève, [date of entry].
<u>RSH</u>	<u>Revue suisse d'histoire/Zeitschrift für schweizerische Geschichte.</u>

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