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## Prologue: a provincial metropolis in the sixteenth century

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Veü que je suis le chef d'une duché qui passe  
 Un royaume en valeur tant soit il spatieux:  
 Veü qu'un grand Archevesque, un senat studieux  
 Equitable et sçavant chez moy prennent leur place:

Veü qu'en trafic mon port, tout autre port surpasse:  
 Veü qu'en rares esprits, grands et ingenieux,  
 En subtils artisans, en guerriers furieux,  
 Le renom des citez, les plus braves j'efface.

Veü qu'en foires, marchez, privileges et droits  
 Franchises, libertés, en pollices et loys  
 A ma gloire, une gloire immortelle est acquise.

Orgueilleuse il me faut desormais devenir  
 Et le rang qui m'est deu superbement tenir:  
 Non! car je n'auois plus l'aigneau pour ma devise.

'Sonnet de la ville de Rouen',  
*L'Histoire et Cronique de Normendie*  
 (Rouen, 1578)

'Ritual makes explicit the social structure', E. R. Leach has written.<sup>1</sup> If this is so, then there is no better introduction to sixteenth-century Rouen than that which the city itself provided King Henry II when it greeted him in 1550 with a royal entry.

<sup>1</sup> E. R. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure* (Boston, 1965), p. 15.

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The ceremony was a splendid one. Naked bands of Tupinamba Indians, brought from Brazil by the Norman mariners who regularly traded there, fought a mock combat on a meadow near the Seine. Neptune emerged from the river to confess to the king that, as virtue disarms Mars, so he was trembling in awe before him. Chariots ‘embellished with moldings, friezes, cornices, metopes, triglyphs, consoles, and other elements of architecture’ rolled past bearing tableaux vivants lauding the monarch for his attachment to the defense of the faith and assuring him of his immortal renown. Elephants, presumably of papier-mâché but in any case ‘so close to nature. . . that those who had seen live ones in Africa would have judged them real’, shambled along in front of ‘captives’ who represented the English soldiers recently defeated in the Boulonnais. Finally, amid the sustained paeans of praise for the vigorous and martial new king’s military prowess, the organizers of the entry, who had recently seen several of their *échevins* imprisoned for failing to collect royal war taxes with sufficient alacrity, also inserted a few reminders that a monarch could obtain glory by fostering the prosperity of his subjects as well as by winning battles.<sup>1</sup>

Such a ceremony was a way for Rouen to show off its wealth and importance. A leading expert has called the joyous entry of 1550 the most elaborate of all French Renaissance entries,<sup>2</sup> and only an extremely large and prosperous town could have staged such a show. Yet the king might have expected no less from Rouen, for it was one of his largest cities and the first half of the sixteenth century had been one of its most splendid periods. At once the administrative capital of Normandy, the seat of one of the largest archbishoprics in France, and a major center of both manufacturing and trade, Rouen’s importance was, in fact, such that contemporaries regularly called it the second city of the kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Francis I had even gone farther and told Charles V that Rouen was his largest city – adding that Paris was more than a city, it was a province.<sup>4</sup> Despite Lyon’s spectacular growth over the first half of the sixteenth century, Rouen’s claim

<sup>1</sup> *Cest la deduction du sumptueux ordre plaisantz spectacles et magnifiques theatres dressés et exhibés par les citoiens de Rouen. . . à la sacrée Majesté du Treschristian Roy de France Henry second. . .* (Rouen, 1551), now reprinted in a facsimile edition with an excellent introduction by Margaret M. McGowan, *L’entrée de Henry II à Rouen 1550* (Amsterdam, n.d.).

<sup>2</sup> Jean Chartrou, *Les entrées solennelles et triomphales à la Renaissance, 1484–1551* (Paris, 1928), p. 415.

<sup>3</sup> To cite just a few cases where Rouen is called the second city of the kingdom, all by authors who were not Normans and thus cannot be accused of chauvinism: M. N. Tommaseo, ed., *Relations des ambassadeurs vénitiens sur les affaires de France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1838), Vol. 1, p. 45; A. Chamberland, ed., ‘Le commerce d’importation en France au milieu du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle d’après un manuscrit de la Bibliothèque Nationale’, *Revue de Géographie*, xxxi (1892), p. 293; François de Scépeaux, Sire de Vielleville, *Mémoires*, Michaud and Poujolot, ser. 1, Vol. 9, p. 342; *Hist. eccl.*, Vol. 2, p. 763.

<sup>4</sup> This story is still repeated today in Rouen, and it is through this oral tradition that I became aware of it. See also Fernand Braudel and Ernest Labrousse, eds., *Histoire économique et sociale de la France*, Vol. 1, part 1, *L’Etat et la Ville 1450–1660* (Paris, 1977), p. 408.

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to pre-eminence among the cities of provincial France was still a strong one at mid-century. Its surviving parish registers, which begin in the middle decades of the century, suggest a total population of between 71,000 and 78,000 inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, Lyon's population can be calculated from similar evidence to have been roughly 58,000 in 1550.<sup>2</sup> The other leading provincial cities probably all fell in the range of 20–40,000 people.<sup>3</sup>

But the royal entry of 1550 was more than just a major artistic event and a civic rite of conspicuous consumption; amid all the ceremonies which a committee of Rouen's most learned and cultivated clerics and 'orators' had devised, many of the city's more important inhabitants also paraded past the royal reviewing stand on the plain of Ste Catherine-de-Grandmont. A number of meticulously detailed accounts of the order of march have survived, revealing the groups into which the inhabitants of the city classified themselves and the order of precedence accorded each one. These accounts also contain an enumeration of the participating trade guilds which is the nearest thing that exists to a complete occupational census of the city.

<sup>1</sup> Reliable parish registers have survived for 19 of the city's 36 parishes for the period 1599–1601. These record an average of 1,945 baptisms per year. In the decade 1690–99, according to Messance's *Recherches sur la population des généralités d'Auvergne, de Lyon, de Rouen et de quelques provinces et villes du royaume* (Paris, 1766), these 19 parishes accounted for 76 per cent of all baptisms celebrated in the city. Since they are scattered randomly across the city, it seems safe to assume that the percentage was not radically different in 1600. There would thus have been 2,568 baptisms celebrated in all 36 parishes. Adding to these figures, which are for Catholics only, another 156 Protestant baptisms, and assuming the birth rate of approximately 40 per thousand which demographic investigations of other Ancien Régime cities have shown to be normal for urban populations, the city's total population in 1600 can thus be estimated to have been about 68,000. Since the registers of 11 scattered parishes suggest that the number of baptisms had declined by between 5 and 15 per cent over the course of the preceding half century, the population around 1550 must therefore have been between 71,000 and 78,000 people.

On the problem of urban birth rates and the technique of estimating a total population from the level of baptisms, see Louis Henry, *Manuel de démographie historique* (Geneva–Paris, 1967), p. 53; Marcel Lachiver, *La population de Meulan du XVII<sup>e</sup> au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle (vers 1600–1870): Etude de démographie historique* (Paris, 1969), chs. 8–9; Maurice Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1970), pp. 94–105; and François Lebrun, *Les hommes et la mort en Anjou aux 17<sup>e</sup> et 18<sup>e</sup> siècles: Essai de démographie et de psychologie historiques* (Paris–The Hague, 1971), pp. 157–62, esp. p. 161n.

<sup>2</sup> According to figures kindly supplied me by Natalie Zemon Davis, 1,910 Catholic baptisms were celebrated per year in Lyon in the 1580s. Assuming a Protestant population comparable in size to Rouen's (as seems probable) and projecting these figures backward on the basis of what we know about the general evolution of Lyon's population from the evidence of scattered parishes, one arrives at a figure of approximately 2,315 baptisms around 1550. Again using a multiplier of 25, this is equivalent to a total population of around 58,000.

<sup>3</sup> Reliable estimates of other large urban populations in this period are rare, but it is known that Bordeaux had roughly 20,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the sixteenth century and surely more by 1550, that Amiens housed approximately 28,000 people in the 1560s, and that Angers, Nantes and Troyes all had about 25,000 inhabitants in 1600. Robert Boutruche et al., *Bordeaux de 1453 à 1715* (Bordeaux, 1966), p. 69; Edouard Maugis, *Recherches sur les transformations du régime politique et social de la ville d'Amiens des origines de la commune à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1906), Appendix iv; Alain Croix, *Nantes et le Pays nantais au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Etude démographique* (Paris, 1974), p. 208; Jean-Louis Bourgeon, *Les Colbert avant Colbert, destin d'une famille marchande* (Paris, 1973), p. 107; François Lebrun et al., *Histoire d'Angers* (Toulouse, 1975), p. 91.

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By scrutinizing these accounts of the royal entry of 1550 and supplementing them with other documents, it is possible to obtain a fairly detailed view of the structure of Rouennais society around mid-century.

After the archers of the admiralty had cleared a path through the assembled crowds, the city's clergy passed in review first, as befitted the first estate.<sup>1</sup> At their head<sup>2</sup> came the members of the four mendicant orders – the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians, and Carmelites – whose special purity as ratified by their vows of voluntary poverty earned them a place of honor in all processions. Next marched the secular clergy. The archbishop was absent at the time, as pre-Counter-Reformation archbishops typically were, so the dean of the archiepiscopal see led the group.<sup>3</sup> The canons of the cathedral chapter followed immediately behind their dean, comprising a well-to-do, highly educated group of some thirty men, many of whom also doubled as the curés of the richer city parishes. These men formed a clerical elite, drawn primarily from the leading bourgeois families which often had a tradition of membership in the cathedral chapter, passing positions on within the family from uncle to nephew. Scattered among them were also a few ex-courtiers whom the king had rewarded with rich benefices for their services, among them the erstwhile court poet Claude Chappuys, one of the chief designers of the 1550 entry. Behind the canons marched their poor relations in the cathedral, the chaplains, who came from somewhat more humble families but were nonetheless assured a comfortable living by their positions. The parish clergy came next – the single largest group within the first estate. They were a diverse lot. Several dozen well-educated and handsomely remunerated curés were accompanied by their vicars and by the numerous chaplains who formed a large clerical proletariat, living off the proceeds of the anniversary Masses that they recited each day for the souls of the dead. Bringing up the rear of the first estate came the members of the three non-mendicant – indeed, quite wealthy – religious houses located within the city walls: the Abbey of St Ouen, the Priory of St Lô, and the Hôtel-Dieu of the Madeleine.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following account of the order of march is based primarily on A.C.R., A 16, fos. 110ff, supplemented by *Cest la deduction du sumptueux ordre...*

<sup>2</sup> The municipal authorities who laid down the order of march did not specify any order of precedence within the first estate. I am assuming here that the clergy marched in the same order they typically followed in the large clerical processions of the time, detailed accounts of which may be found in François Farin, *Histoire de la ville de Rouen* (Rouen, 1668), Vol. 2, pp. 29–32, and M. C. Oursel, 'Notes pour servir à l'histoire de la Réforme en Normandie au temps de François I<sup>er</sup>, principalement dans le diocèse de Rouen', *Mémoires de l'Académie Nationale des Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettres de Caen*, 1912, pp. 201–5.

<sup>3</sup> The archbishop of Rouen for virtually the entire second half of the century was Charles, cardinal of Bourbon. The uncle of Henry of Navarre and himself one of the leading political figures in the realm, he was usually to be found at court and visited Rouen only on rare occasions.

<sup>4</sup> Sources do not exist for a full-scale social portrait of the clergy. The brief comments above about the social hierarchy within the first estate are based on such bits of evidence as do exist. Liasses G

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The total size of this first group in the procession was impressive. In the largest of Rouen's thirty-six parishes, forty to fifty masses were celebrated daily, supporting some twenty-five clerics per parish.<sup>1</sup> In all, an account of a 1534 church procession enumerates 524 parish priests and chaplains, plus another 29 canons, 197 mendicant friars, and 122 monks and nuns.<sup>2</sup> Allowing for those unable to participate due to infirmity or absence from the city, Rouen's first estate must have totalled approximately 900 individuals, or about 1.2 per cent of the city's population. Although imposing, such a large group of clerics was by no means exceptional for a city of the era. The percentage of clerics in the population of Frankfurt and Nuremberg had been the same or slightly higher prior to the Reformation,<sup>3</sup> while in more Mediterranean lands, the first estate was far larger. Madrid, for example, boasted forty-five convents housing 2,000 individuals in 1567, a date at which it was probably no larger than Rouen.<sup>4</sup> Sixteenth-century Bologna contained no less than 3,380 regular clerics out of a total population roughly comparable to that of the Norman capital.<sup>5</sup> One suspects that this far larger percentage of clerics in Spain and Italy is not unrelated to Protestantism's lack of success in these lands.

Following the clergy in the royal entry came Rouen's royal and municipal officials, who marched in reverse order of importance. At their head were the numerous minor functionaries who supervised commercial activity within the city: sixty-four *courtiers* of wine and cloth, who acted as

3424–42 and 3450–60 of the A.D.S.M. contain a large collection of wills and inventories after death of the canons and chaplains of the cathedral chapter. The extensive libraries and chests full of fine clothes they reveal indicate the education and prosperity of these men. Two studies of individual canons complement these documents and enable one to discern the ranks of society from which the chapter recruited its members: E. Le Parquier, 'Un chroniqueur rouennais à l'époque de la Réforme: Le chanoine Jean Nagerel', *Congrès du Millénaire de la Normandie (911–1911): Compte-Rendu des Travaux* (Rouen, 1912), pp. 223–44; and Louis-P. Roche, *Claude Chappuy (1575–1575): Poète de la cour de François I<sup>er</sup>* (Poitiers, 1929). A.D.S.M. 35 H, *Liber Professorum des Cordeliers*, reveals that the Franciscans drew their novices primarily from the surrounding rural areas; 16 of 24 new friars received from 1577 through 1585 came from rural villages. For the parish clergy one must rely on the sparse details provided by such parish histories as E. de la Querrière, *Description historique, archéologique et artistique de l'église paroissiale de Saint-Vincent de Rouen* (Rouen, 1844) and L. Prévost, *Histoire de la paroisse et des curés de Saint-Maclou depuis la fondation jusqu'à nos jours* (Rouen, 1970), as well as the brief remarks in D. Julia's suggestive, 'Le prêtre au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, la théologie et les institutions', *Recherches de Sciences Religieuses*, LVIII (1970), pp. 521–34.

<sup>1</sup> *Inv./Sommaire*, entry of Nov. 15, 1528; Prévost, *Saint-Maclou*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Farin, *Histoire de la ville de Rouen*, Vol. 2, pp. 29–32. The figures provided here appear reliable when verified against other scattered bits of data about the size of the first estate, notably A.D.S.M., G 9869; Francesco Gonzaga, *De origine seraphicae religionis Franciscanae eiusque progressibus* (Rome, 1587), pp. 577, 583; and L. de Glainville, *Histoire du Prieuré de Saint-Lô de Rouen*, Vol. 1 (Rouen, 1890), p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Bücher, *Die Bevölkerung von Frankfurt am Main im XIV und XV Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1886), pp. 517–21.

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Las clases privilegiadas en la España del Antiguo Régimen* (Madrid, 1973), p. 283.

<sup>5</sup> K. J. Beloch, *Bevölkerungsgeschichte Italiens* (Berlin, 1940), Vol. 2, p. 94.

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intermediaries for all foreign merchants dealing in such commodities, and an unspecified number of measurers of linen and grain, who watched for fraud in the sale of these goods. Then came the officials of the mint. Next were the forces of order: fifty *arbalétriers* (a special militia unit) and forty-seven sergeants of the *bailliage* and the *vicomté de l'eau*. The more important officials followed, distinguishable as such by their outfits of black satin and velours. First, side by side, were the lieutenant-general of the *bailliage* and the municipal *conseillers-échevins*. Second came the other, lesser municipal officials. A crowd of several hundred *notables bourgeois et marchands* followed, representing, in effect, the city politic – only these men voted in Rouen's municipal elections and participated in the so-called general assemblies of the city. Finally came the members of those courts whose jurisdiction extended over the entire province: the *cour des aides*, the admiralty, the jurisdiction of the waters and forests, and, most prestigious of all, the parlement.

Like the clergy, the officials formed an extremely large contingent – again some would have said too large. Constantly denounced yet inexorable, the multiplication of official positions that characterized the entire Ancien Régime had already progressed by 1550 to the point where those holding royal offices numbered at least 250. The parlement of Normandy had been founded in 1499 with 35 members; by 1554 it contained 66. The *cour des aides* had similarly grown from 8 to 15 members. Over the course of the second half of the century the proliferation of offices and officers was to continue. Three more courts were added to the already existing plethora of tribunals – the *siège présidial*, the *chambre des comptes*, and the *juridiction consulaire* – while the established courts all grew steadily.<sup>1</sup>

The final contingent of Rouennais to march before the king was a 627-man honor guard composed of a select group of artisans chosen from 'the elite among the great and infinite number of craftsmen of the city'. In all, seventy-two occupations were represented within this honor guard, an indication of the extremely broad range of crafts practiced in Rouen. (A comparable procession in Lille in 1565 included less than two-thirds this number of trades.)<sup>2</sup> No apparent logic governed the way in which the trades were arranged within the three companies into which the guard was divided, but the number of artisans from each craft represented seems to have been roughly proportional to its importance within the city. First, in red, came: 40 master weavers (*drapiers drapants*), 5 bit- and spur-makers

<sup>1</sup> By 1668, the *cour des aides* contained no less than 27 counsellors and the parlement well over 100. Farin, *Histoire de la ville de Rouen*, Vol. 1, p. 228; Jonathan Dewald, *The Formation of a Provincial Nobility: The Magistrates of the Parlement of Rouen, 1499–1610* (Princeton, 1980), p. 69. I would like to thank Professor Dewald for kindly showing me this work prior to publication.

<sup>2</sup> Robert DuPlessis, 'Urban Stability in the Netherlands Revolution: A Comparative Study of Lille and Douai' (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1973), p. 8.

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(*éperonniers*), 8 skimmers, 25 innkeepers, 4 dyers, 2 furriers, 2 nail-makers, 6 saddlers, 14 tailors, 4 *penmetiers* (I was unable to identify these), 12 chandlers, 4 inkwell-makers (*corretiers*), 15 shoemakers, 8 comb-makers, 5 men who decorated and gilded swords (*fourbisseurs*),<sup>1</sup> 2 hook-makers (*amichonniers*), 10 joiners, 10 bakers, 2 balance-makers, 6 sheath- and wallet-makers, 15 cordwainers, 10 hatters, and 1 oar-maker. Then, in green: 30 cloth retailers (*détailleurs de draps*), 6 silk-weavers, 20 goldsmiths, 12 dyers in woad, 6 linen dyers, 12 coopers, 3 makers of trunks and chests, 8 pastry cooks, 10 *crediers*, 2 wire-pullers, 6 linen-weavers, 30 hosiers, 6 leather-dressers, 12 leadsmiths (*plombiers*), 6 plasterers, 3 makers of tennis rackets (*raquetiers*),<sup>2</sup> 10 roofers and slaters, 4 makers of leather clasps and brooches (*esguilletiers*), 5 rope-makers, 4 pewterers, 1 mirrorer, 7 embroiderers, 4 makers of pack-saddles, and 3 pike-makers. Finally, in white: 6 cask-makers, 4 roast-vendors (*rôtisseurs*), 5 tapestry-weavers, 1 coffer-maker (*coffretiers*),<sup>3</sup> 5 glaziers, 2 purse-makers, 5 knife-makers, 5 bleachers, 10 brewers, 35 butchers, 6 tinkers (*maignents*), 6 surgeons, 6 pin-makers, 2 arbalete-makers, 4 sword-makers, 15 dyers in madder, 6 cobblers, 12 playing-card-makers, 6 used-clothing vendors, 3 book-sellers, 4 farriers, 2 parchment-makers, 25 tanners, 2 gold-leaf-makers, 20 apothecaries, and 10 grain merchants.

At the very end of the procession, after all the chariots, unicorns, goddesses, and elephants, a group of 70 splendidly dressed youths from the wealthiest families of the city, the children of honor, rode on horseback past the royal box. Once they had paraded past, the king stepped down and followed the procession across the bridge, past Neptune and the warring Tupinambas, and into Rouen.

Rouen's complex social structure, or at least (using Leach's words again) 'the socially approved "proper" relations between individuals and groups', could hardly have been presented more clearly than in this elaborate civic ritual.<sup>4</sup> First of all, the ceremony reveals that sixteenth-century Rouen was

<sup>1</sup> This was a classic case of guild hyperspecialization. The swords these men decorated were made by members of another guild, that of the *serruriers*.

<sup>2</sup> These men also often owned and operated *jeux de paume*.

<sup>3</sup> Precisely what differentiated these men from the *malletiers*, or makers of trunks and chests, and the *huchers*, or joiners, is unclear.

<sup>4</sup> In everyday life, of course, as is the case for men in any but the most primitive of societies, the inhabitants of sixteenth-century Rouen were bound by numerous and often contradictory solidarities – family, wealth, occupation, parish, and so forth. Any one of these might determine how they would behave on any given occasion. A truly complete model of Rouen's social structure would take all of these cross-cutting solidarities into account – and would be inordinately complex. But whatever the complexities of social relations in everyday life, there were certain occasions on which an explicitly hierarchical society grouped itself into the units and according to the order of precedence which it felt ought to structure it. The royal entry was such an occasion, and we will understand Rouennais society better if we examine what the ceremony can tell us. It is not suggested here that the categories into which the Rouennais divided one another were necessarily those which dominated group

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highly corporate in structure. Men were regularly classified according to the guild, tribunal, or religious order to which they belonged, and this is the case not only in this entry but in all documents in which social position is indicated – contracts, court records, tax lists, and so forth. Only for the monied elite of merchants, the *notables bourgeois et marchands*, were corporate divisions insignificant. This segment of society appeared at two different points in order of march; the men marched right after the municipal authorities and their offspring appeared at the very end of the procession as children of honor. Significantly, at each of these two points they formed an undifferentiated cluster of individuals. Rouen's merchants were not divided into trading companies or other corporations as were the English merchants.<sup>1</sup> Wealth was the prime determinant of social status at this level of society.

The many corporations which comprised Rouennais society in turn fell into several broad categories. Within lay society, the sharpest division separated an elite which wielded formal political power from the great bulk of people from the guild members on down who were systematically excluded from normal decision-making channels. This latter group, usually referred to contemptuously with a term such as '*le menu peuple*', was by no means undifferentiated; it was divided vertically into guilds and horizontally by wealth and status. (The fact that only a select group chosen from among the artisans was allowed to participate in the royal entry reveals the existence of the horizontal divisions.) As for the elite, it too was subdivided, first into *marchands bourgeois* on the one hand and judicial officials on the other, then, in the case of this latter group, into rival corporations ranked according to a hierarchy of importance that was clearly indicated by the order of precedence followed in the entry. Finally, separate from lay society, although linked to it by ties of family, existed the parallel world of the first estate. It too was divided vertically into corporations and horizontally by wealth and status.

The royal entry of 1550 was also revealing in whom it excluded. Several segments of society were conspicuously absent, most strikingly so Rouen's lawyers, the *procureurs* and *avocats*. They had boycotted the event. After having requested permission to march with the political officials of the town, they had been ordered by the city council to take their place instead among the *corps de métier*.<sup>2</sup> This they found to be beneath their dignity, and so

behavior, and in fact we shall see that the religious divisions which set the city's inhabitants most bitterly against one another did not pit one distinct element of society against another. I present the following model of Rouen's social structure simply as a way of understanding the structure of groups which comprised the community.

<sup>1</sup> Distinctions did exist within the merchant class – between linen merchants and wine merchants, for example – but these reflected merely an individual's specialization in one commodity or another.

<sup>2</sup> A.C.R., A 16, entry of July 17, 1550.



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they simply refused to march at all. Their boycott revealed their social position perfectly; it was an ambiguous one, midway between the world of officialdom and that of the guilds.

While the lawyers refused to participate in the royal entry because of their own pride, other groups were simply deemed unworthy to take part. Spectators watching the royal entry would never have known that Rouen contained a variety of sub-artisanal occupations in addition to the trades represented in the honor guard. There were, for example, the *maîtres de basses oeuvres*, whose job it was each evening to clean out the privies required by law in every house and to cart the night soil out of the city. There were the agricultural workers, primarily market gardeners, who, although not so numerous as in certain other French cities of this era, nonetheless formed a significant part of the population of the *faubourgs*. Finally, there were the domestic servants, day-laborers, and dockworkers. The members of all these sub-artisanal occupations lived on the fringes of poverty. In normal years, when employed, they could expect to scrape by, but when grain prices rose dramatically after a bad harvest, or when unemployment increased, or when (as often happened) both occurred simultaneously, these individuals, and indeed many poorer artisans too, ended up on the rolls of the *bureau des pauvres*.

With these men we touch on the final group missing from the royal entry: the poor. They had formed a substantial element within the city since the 1520s, when the classic process described by Le Roy Ladurie for Languedoc – that of rapid population growth outrunning a region's supply of arable land and breeding a growing number of dispossessed rural laborers – had produced a serious increase in the poverty problem in Upper Normandy as well. The cathedral chapter began regularly to set aside a weekly sum for the nourishment of the poor said to be flooding into the city in 1521, and ever thereafter the problem of how to provide for a sizeable group of men and women who depended upon charity for their survival was a constant source of concern for the city's authorities.<sup>1</sup>

The poor were not a fixed group in Ancien Régime France. They may be usefully divided between the 'structural' poor – the crippled, aged, or

<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's classic description of the economic and demographic background to the growing concern throughout Europe with the problem of poverty in the 1520s and 1530s may be found in his *Paysans de Languedoc* (Paris, 1966), part II, esp. pp. 317–26. Guy Bois's stimulating recent *Crise du féodalisme: économie rurale et démographie en Normandie orientale du début du 14<sup>e</sup> siècle au milieu du 16<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1976), passim, esp. pp. 67–72 and ch. 15, demonstrates that the same process was at work around Rouen. While dated, the study of Giuliano Procacci also retains considerable interest, particularly on this question of poverty: 'Strutture economiche e classi sociali in Normandia (con particolare riferimento alla regione di Rouen)', Procacci, *Classi sociali e monarchia assoluta nella Francia della prima metà del secolo XVI* (Turin, 1955). The local authorities' concern with the problem of poverty may be traced through G. Panel, ed., *Documents concernant les pauvres de Rouen* (Rouen, 1917), Vol. 1.

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infirm permanently dependent on charity – and the ‘conjunctural’ poor – those able to earn their own living most of the time but forced into mendicity whenever disaster struck, be it a personal catastrophe such as a prolonged illness or a social one such as the failure of the harvest.<sup>1</sup> This latter category naturally expanded or contracted in tandem with the economic situation. Two surviving censuses of those forced to rely on public charity reveal how dramatic these fluctuations could be, and how large the number of poor could become in crisis years. A year of prosperity, 1598, provides a baseline. In that year the parlement ordered the *lieutenant criminel* to assemble all beggars, vagabonds, and able-bodied poor in the city in order to choose 250 people to take part in the ill-fated attempt to establish a permanent French colony on Sable Island in Canada. The lieutenant and his men made the rounds of the city and then reported back to the court that they had found some 800 people.<sup>2</sup> This count does not include the aged, nor the infirm, nor, presumably, children. Furthermore, the prospect of a one-way ticket to a poorly charted, frigid wilderness may have led many among the indigent to attempt to elude the authorities. (This would not have been easy since they were inscribed on the parish rolls.) At the very most, such absentees may have quadrupled the number of the poor. The figure of 800 people thus suggests that in normal times those on relief formed a small percentage of the total population, no more than 5 to 7 per cent. The year 1586, however, was quite different. It witnessed one of the century’s worst harvests, and as was common in years of famine, a combined program of public works and bread distribution was organized. The able-bodied poor were set to work on the city’s fortifications in return for a daily ration of bread and a few *sous*. A list of those put to work when this program began records 917 men, 1,935 women, and 1,982 children between the ages of eight and fourteen – 4,834 people in all.<sup>3</sup> As the weeks passed and the crisis deepened, the number of those receiving relief grew; a record of the number of loaves of bread distributed each week between late June and early August in one of the city’s four quarters indicates a 113 per cent increase.<sup>4</sup> If this quarter was representative of the city as a whole, the number of those dependent on relief by August would have attained 14,260, when allowance is made for children under the age of eight too

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Pierre Gutton, *La société et les pauvres: L'exemple de la généralité de Lyon 1534–1789* (Paris, 1971), part 1, esp. p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> A.D.S.M., B, Parlement, Registres Secrets, entries of May 20 and 23, 1598.

<sup>3</sup> A.C.R., B 4, fos. 319–20. The far greater number of women than men should not be surprising. Single or widowed women tended to be in a more precarious economic situation than men and commonly outnumber them on lists such as this. For international comparisons, see J. F. Pound, ‘An Elizabethan Census of the Poor’, *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, VIII (1962), p. 141, and Bartolomé Bennassar, *Valladolid au siècle d’or* (Paris–The Hague, 1967), p. 436.

<sup>4</sup> A.C.R., Chartrier, tiroir 109.