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Marksburg: The Evolution of Administration, Trade and Economics from 12-15th Centuries, A.D.

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**Marksburg: the evolution of administration, trade and economics from the twelfth-
fifteenth centuries, A.D.**

by

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**An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of
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Marksburg

the evolution of administration, trade and economics from the twelfth-fifteenth centuries, A.D.



Introduction

Between the fifth and eighth centuries AD, central Europe experienced large amounts of migration. Known as the *Völkerwanderung*¹, an estimated 750,000 people moved in bands of 10,000-20,000² across Europe. As these bands moved across Europe, many established settlements on tribal or village systems. These new peoples created a hierarchy, setting themselves above those they defeated. Despite being socially marginalized, the original peoples remained technically free and retained full rights to their lands under the allodium system. The word *allod* is of Frankish origin³ and indicates property inherited along family lines⁴. The right to *allodial* lands could not be revoked by lieges, providing the holder with inalienable rights. *Allods* formed the basis for “political and economic power” in families, and was supported with strong *Landrecht* (property rights)⁵.

Furthermore, *allod* holders had no obligation to perform service for or pay rents to those who had conquered them⁶, unlike in the feudal system. *Allod* holders represented a class of freemen from all social classes. As contact and consequently warfare between groups increased, individuals granted their allods to the military leader in return for protection⁷. Since the land being transferred had no holds from an existing lord, whomever received the land consolidated the holding into their own inheritable properties. This practice prevented feudalism in the true sense of the word, where all land is given to a single person such as the king and then distributed to vassals⁸. Over time a small number of families accumulated vast holdings and established their own lineages as

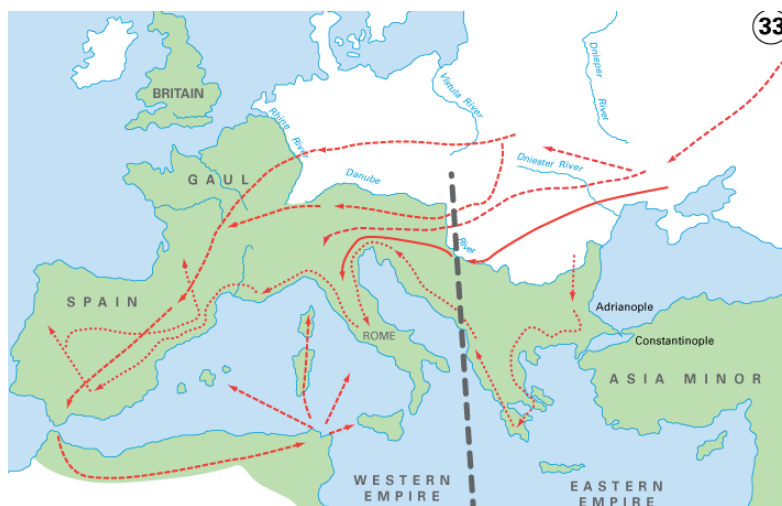


Figure 1: Migration of people across Europe from fifth-eighth century AD.

¹ Crabben, van der Jan. Migration Age. Ancient History Encyclopedia. July 2010. Accessed February 26, 2017. Web. http://www.ancient.eu/Migration_Age/.

² Heather, Peter. (2003). *The Visigoths from the Migration Period to the Seventh Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*. Boydell & Brewer Ltd.

³ Gierke, Otto (1908). *Allod*. *Beiträge zum Wörterbuch der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, cols. 103-138. Weimar.

⁴ Niermeyer, J. F. (1984) *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus*. 2nd edition. Leiden. pp. 36-38.

⁵ Ebel, Wilhelm. (1960). “Über den Leihgedanken in der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte.” *Studien zum mittelalterlichen Lehenwesen*, Vorträge und Forschungen. 5th Edition, Theodor Mayer. pp. 11-36.

⁶ Bax, B. (1894). *German Society at the Close of the Middle Ages: The Evolution of German Society*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.

⁷ Bax, B. (1894). *German Society at the Close of the Middle Ages: The Evolution of German Society*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.

⁸ Gordon Rotondo-McCord, Jonathan. (1991). *The Allod in the Medieval Rhineland*. Yale. 1991.

barons and princes. Regional feuds became more common and most freemen traded their lands for protection.

As their holdings grew, the warlords began to reverse the traditional *allodium* system and began granting fiefs to vassals who were sworn into their services. The original peoples conquered by these warriors developed into two classes—the wealthier ones became knights and lesser nobles, while the lowest rung of society developed into serfs. By the end of the eighth century, the numbers of freemen had decreased significantly, and feudalism was firmly entrenched as the foundation of society⁹. Despite the firm hold that feudalism had on society, *allods* played a significant role in property rights, territorial expansion and were a constant source of conflict between families and institutions. As invasions and regional warfare increased, those with large amounts of resources at their disposal began building castles to protect themselves and their households. Those who had granted these families their lands in return for protection could stay behind castle walls while under attack, and locals were often employed by those living in the castle.

Marksburg is one such castle, located above the Rhine in modern day Germany. It is one of the best-preserved castles with roots from the eighth century. Marksburg was never destroyed, and was continuously modified by its owners. It was held by several different families throughout its history, each of whom impacted the region through the economic policies which they implemented. Despite the degree of their influence on Marksburg, and the town of Braubach that developed with it, outside events were even more influential in determining the history of the region.

⁹ Riche, P. (1997). *The Carolingians: A Family Who Forged Europe*.



Figure 2: Map of the third division of Europe¹⁰. The red circle outlines the boundaries of the Middle Rhine, while the red dot represents Marksburgs location.

Marksburg and the Middle Rhine

Located between modern day Bonn and Bingen, the Middle Rhine area was rich with natural resources and offered numerous sites which were easily defensible. Reichsburg, the hill upon which Marksburg sits, has been a popular site in this region for several millennia. There is evidence of long-term pre-Roman dwellings, Roman structures, and soon after the fall of the

¹⁰ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.



Figure 3: Larger Roman settlements in the area. The red dot represents Marksburg.

Roman Empire, there were mentions of the Noble Freeman of Braubach¹¹. Most likely descendants of lesser nobles from Carolingian lineages, they founded the town of Braubach. Braubach was the first settlement on the east side of the Middle Rhine, founded around the seventh century¹². Figure 4 to the left illustrates the cities in the area and their founding dates¹³. The red dot super imposed on the map represents Marksburgs location. It is believed that the Freeman held Marksburg until the early 1100s, building several structures on the site. The Freeman are credited with building the lower keep of Marksburg, which still exists today, and dates to the 1100s¹⁴.

Unsurprisingly, Reichsburg was favored for its strategic spot on the Rhine. Reichsburg had natural protection on multiple sides and access to abundant natural resources. Natural resources such as timber and stone were used in construction, while the rivers and their tributaries provided fish for food and sale, as well as water for crops and livestock. In addition, these rivers and tributaries around Reichsburg served as trade routes. Reichsburg had

access to the shipping trade transiting the Rhine as well as access to several overland routes. Overland routes included the “old road from Wiesbaden”¹⁵, which goes through the *Mühlenbach* Valley to meet the Rhine, and several old Roman roads. These factors made Reichsburg, and coincidentally Marksburg, a strategic spot from which key trade routes in the area could be controlled. Despite these advantages and the high traffic recorded in the area as early as the eighth century, most settlements in the region were neither impressive nor economically important. Marksburg, and the town of Braubach, took centuries to develop into an economically important hub on the Middle Rhine.

¹¹ Archeological Study, Castle Hainhausen. “Gerhard I von Eppstein”. March 2, 2016. European Castle Institute.

¹² Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

¹³ Grazhdankin, A. S. (2011). *The Role of the River Rhine in the Formation of Spatial Structure of the Economy of European Countries (1st Century BC to 19th Century AD)*. Saint Petersburg: Herzen State Pedagogical University.

¹⁴ Archeological Study, Castle Hainhausen. “Gerhard I von Eppstein”. March 2, 2016. European Castle Institute.

¹⁵ Geschichte und Chronik der Marksburg. *Kurz dargestellt: die Besitzer und eine taballarische Chronik eine langen Geschichte*. March 11, 2016. Web.

During the five centuries that the Freeman of Braubach held Reichsburg, several small states emerged along the Middle Rhine. The Lothringian dukes who ruled during the tenth and eleventh centuries were particularly weak and “unable to control the political development of the Rhineland”, which created power vacuum that “favored the independent rise of both ecclesiastical institutions and local dynasties”¹⁶. In the Middle Rhine, the Archbishoprics of Mainz, Trier and Cologne became incredibly powerful. Due to Marksburg location just south of the Lahn River, Marksburg became caught between the archsees of Mainz and Cologne. South of the Lahn, including Marksburg, nobles were tied to Mainz while north of the Lahn was controlled by Cologne¹⁷. “Lesser noble families”¹⁸ in the region took advantage of the failing noble houses and began renaming themselves after their familial seats and began pursuing territorial expansionist policies. With wealth and power being concentrated in a relatively small number of families, the divisions of land and powers led to strong regional kingdoms. These states were constantly at war with each other, and at times, with the king/emperor. It is important to note that kings were elected by imperial princes and then crowned emperor by the Pope. Many kings never made the trip to Italy, due to a multitude of reasons, and therefore were not technically emperors. Several times throughout the Middle Ages the Empire was divided between two kings who fought each other for absolute control.

As more land was accrued by the elite, less was controlled by the Germanic King. Additionally, due to the late adoption of primogeniture, inter-family feuding was common. Lands were often split between sons, and holdings becoming smaller and smaller. By the twelfth century, the region consisted mostly of petty states, passing back and forth within and between families, creating complex economic, political and social relations. By the twelfth century, the number of powerful families had declined dramatically. It is “estimated that there were hardly more than two hundred noble families in the Rhineland” whom held most *allods*¹⁹. Over the following centuries, a pattern of familial loyalty and empowerment emerged, solidifying the great families of Europe. From the eleventh to fifteenth centuries, on which this paper focuses, Marksburg was held by two of the greatest families in central Europe. The Eppsteins and Katzenelnbogens faced significantly different constraints in their administration of Marksburg, and implemented vastly different policies under their respective rules.

Despite these different approaches, both families had a common goal: to make Marksburg as profitable as possible. Like all investors, the Eppsteins and Katzenelnbogens wanted Marksburg and the town of Braubach to be a source of income. Both the castle and town needed to support themselves; to provide protection, make improvements and to fund the personal ambitions of their owner. Marksburg functioned as an economic and administrative center during the middle ages, shaping the towns and regions around it. However, this is where the similarities end. The Eppsteins and Katzenelnbogens had different ideas of how to run Marksburg, and this was reflected in the villages and towns in the area. Many of Marksburg’s satellite settlements went through drastic alterations, reflecting the changes implemented by the lords.

¹⁶ Rothhoff, Guido. (1953). Studien zur Geschichte des Reichsguts in Niederlothringen und Friesland während der sächsisch-salischen Kaiserzeit. Rheinisches Archiv 44. Bonn. pp. 56-57.

¹⁷ Gordon Rotondo-McCord, Jonathan. (1991). *The Allod in the Medieval Rhineland*. Yale. 1991. p. 142.

¹⁸ Schmid, Karl. (1983). Gebetsgedenken und adliges Selbstverständnis im Mittelalter: Ausgewählte Beiträge. Sigmaringen. Chapter 2, n. 64.g

¹⁹ Droege, Georg. (1961). “Pfalzgrafschaft, Grafschaften und allodiale Herrschaften zwischen Maas und Rhein in salisch-staufischer Zeit.” Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter 26, pp. 1-21.

This paper is specifically interested in the different economic conditions faced by each family, including outside influences on their decisions such as changing political systems, weather, historical and social events. This paper does not attempt to statistically analyze the effects of the policies each family chose, but rather to provide a narrative as to why the families implemented the policies they did.



Figure 4: Map of the fourth division of Europe²⁰. Depicts increasing division in the Empire.

²⁰ Bax, B. (1894). *German Society at the Close of the Middle Ages: The Evolution of German Society*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.

The Eppsteins



Family Background

Towards the end of the twelfth century, the Eppsteins did not yet exist. Marksburg was largely undeveloped and held by the Noble Freemen until 1135 when the Archbishop of Mainz received the town and land surrounding Braubach²¹. The shift of land from Freemen to dukes, counts, earls and archbishops characterized much of the twelfth century, followed by a period of territorialization in which imperial princes and ecclesiastical institutions continually built their power throughout the Middle Rhine²². This region exhibits an increasing influence from the Archbishop of Cologne, which reached its peak around 1180 as Archbishop Philip von Heinsberg aggressively acquired *allodium* holdings in the surrounding area²³. Despite this, the region of Braubach remained under the Archbishop of Mainz's control.

Sometime between 1180-1183, the Archbishop of Mainz gave the land to his relative, Gerhard III of Hainhausen²⁴. This action demonstrates quite effectively the complexity and fluidity of law in the Middle Ages²⁵. Braubach belonged to three different lords and houses all at one time. The Archbishop of Mainz had full *Landrecht* to the area, but the lands remained a fief under Ludwig von Wittelsbach, the Count Palatine²⁶. This implies a secondary agreement between the Archbishop of Mainz and Ludwig von Wittelsbach, making the transfer of Braubach to Gerhard III von Hainhausen a tertiary agreement. While the exact conditions of the transfer are unknown it is likely that the Lords of Hainhausen received Braubach as a part of a *Lehnrecht* (property rights pertaining to feudal holdings) agreement. Using *Lehnrecht*, the Archbishop could provide a legal basis upon which to reclaim the holdings if his relatives support proved unreliable. Furthermore, this transfer demonstrates the coexistence of *Landrecht* and *Lehnrecht*, illustrating how allodial holdings and the feudal system could be intertwined.

Gerhard III von Hainhausen, was a descendent of the Maingaugrafen dynasty, a remnant from the time of Charlemagne. The family was first mentioned in the mid-eighth century and had built up significant clout by the twelfth century. In 1182, the Lord of Hainhausen received lands in the area around Mainz²⁷ and started expanding their territorial powers. In 1183, soon after receiving the land around Braubach, Gerhard III purchased a separate castle called Homburg, made it his principal seat and renamed it castle Eppstein. Gerhard III adopted the name as well, officially calling himself Gerhard I von Eppstein²⁸. The newly-named Eppstein line brought with it significant political clout- they held several titles including Duke of Carinthia, had previously married into the Ottonian line of emperors, and even had an Empress of the Holy Roman Empire in the family²⁹. Like all dynasties, the Eppsteins continually added lands, grants and castles to

²¹ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. "Fraconia, Nobility". Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

²² Engels, Odilo. (1989). *Die Staufer*. 4th Edition. Stuttgart. pp. 105-107.

²³ Gordon Rotondo-McCord, Jonathan. (1991). *The Allod in the Medieval Rhineland*. Yale. 1991. p.138.

²⁴ Rohde-Reith, Monika. Magistrat der Stadt- und Burgmuseum Eppstein. Interviewed by author. Email interview. December 13, 2015.

²⁵ Gordon Rotondo-McCord, Jonathan. (1991). *The Allod in the Medieval Rhineland*. Yale. 1991.

²⁶ Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.gr5af-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.ndt.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

²⁷ Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.ndt.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

²⁸ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. "Fraconia, Nobility". Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

²⁹ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. "Fraconia, Nobility". Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

their possessions while performing diplomatic works for both secular and ecclesiastical lords to increase their power and position. By the end of their rule at Marksburg, the Eppsteins held lands from Mainz, to Wied, ad Holland³⁰. The Lords of Eppstein held Marksburg until 1283, when Gottfried III von Eppstein-Braubach sold it to his son in law, the Count of Katzenelnbogen.

The Beginning of the End: The Manorial System

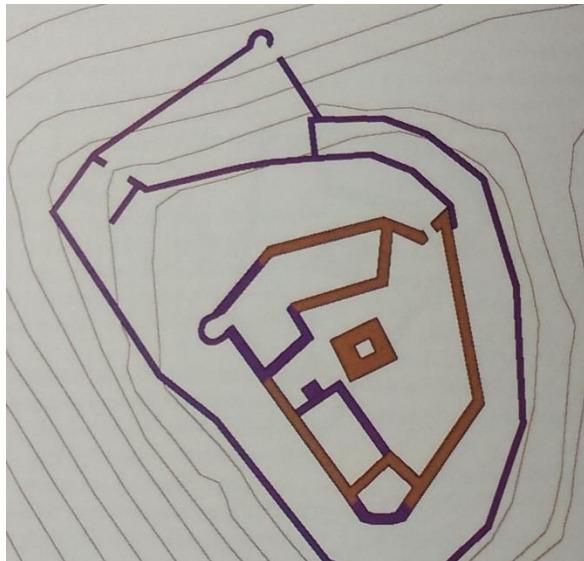


Figure 5: Brown outline of triangular structure built by the Eppsteins.

When Gerhard I von Eppstein received Marksburg, he started building. The Eppsteiner, another name for the Lord of Eppstein, expanded the existing keep and built a triangular, Romanesque Palace that was typical of the Stauffer era³¹. Although this addition was first mentioned in 1231, the construction is dated to earlier in the thirteenth century. Then in 1220, the Lord of Eppstein completed and filled in the moat surrounding Braubach, which is the oldest Frankfurter moat. A fort which had previously provided only minor protection was now an imposing structure. In 1237, Gerhard von Eppstein II built the free-standing tower shown in the middle of the structure in the photo to the right. The tower was three stories tall, and served as a residential building. Figure 7 to the left is a sketch of Marksburg, with the brown outline

being built under the Eppsteins³².

Gerhard I von Eppstein invested significant resources in modifying Marksburg. The additions were necessary, as Gerhard I used the castle to protect his economic interests and to control trade routes in the area. In addition to Marksburg's new function, economic pressures led to changes in the land management system that largely reshaped the economic, social and political spheres. As illustrated in numerous charters between the Archbishop of Cologne and his followers, lands were becoming increasingly territorialized along geographic terms and less reliant on feudal relationships³³. This change represented one of the biggest shifts under the Eppsteins: the beginning of the dissolution of the manorial system, which led to the beginning of urbanization. The manorial system, also known as feudalism, followed a tradition which dated back to the Germanic Tribes, in which lands were granted to men in exchange for fealty and service³⁴. The feudal system in Germany was strongest during the twelfth and thirteenth

³⁰ Mohr, Werner. *Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen*. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

³¹ Hiecke, Robert. *Die Marksburg*. Muenchen, 1954. Print. Accessed November 28, 2015. Print.

³² Deutsche Burgenvereinigung e.V. (DBV). (n.d.). *Marksburg und Philippsburg*. Kienberg: F&W Mediencenter.

³³ Gordon Rotondo-McCord, Jonathan. (1991). *The Allod in the Medieval Rhineland*. Yale. 1991. p. 144.

³⁴ Northrup, Clark (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of World Trade: From Ancient Times to the Present*. Hanseatic League. (2013). London, United Kingdom: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://0-search.credoreference.com.library.uark.edu/content/entry/sharpewt/hanse>.

centuries, at the time in which the Eppsteins held Marksburg. The strength of the system was largely due to Charles Martel, who “confiscated the lands of the Church, and parceled them out among his nobles”³⁵. This land grab was an effort to rebalance the constant power struggle between the secular and ecclesiastic lords.

This system worked for a time, allowing kings to delegate supervision of lands and citizens while retaining a large portion of power and loyalty from their vassals. However, the system slowly spiraled out of control as lords with large holdings began to delegate portions of their lands to lesser lords and knights in return for their promises of fealty, creating “*secondary allods*”³⁶. These knights then did the same thing, dividing holdings further. This was compounded by divisions in many families, leading to many small kingdoms. During the Middle Ages, the Rhineland “was characterized by extensive *allodial* holdings”³⁷ which is why “the establishment throughout the kingdom of a network of feudal lordships was impossible”³⁸. While strong feudal lordships were not possible, the local families were able to consolidate large amounts of power.

Furthermore, the original intent of dividing up lands, to decrease the power of the bishops only lasted for a small amount of time. In many instances lands returned to the church as the holders also swore their fealty to the bishops in the hopes of securing spots in heaven, or avoiding local taxes. While it did succeed in reducing the total sum of lands held by spiritual nobles, re-granting the lands did very little to strengthen the power of the king. Nobles pursued their own interests, and the continued subdivision of the lands made it increasingly difficult for the king to enforce policies and demands. Many nobles also formed alliances with each other and the bishops to acquire economic, political and social importance. The Eppsteins and engaged in these behaviors in their dynasty building efforts. Doing so enabled the Eppsteins to join military forces, create economic unions and to strategize with other households against common enemies. Continuing the feudal system down to the lowest rungs, land holders would give families plots of land in return for rent, labor and produce or often a combination of all three. Small numbers of free men also rented land from nobles but had no duty to provide labor or service to the family.

Typically, German villagers shared common pastures and fields, which were divided up in allotments of thirty acres per family³⁹. Plots were often assigned randomly, resulting in each family having several parcels of land which did not adjoin each other; this caused difficulties in coordinating ploughing, sowing, and harvesting crops as people had to be weary of damaging others’ crops⁴⁰. This system of dividing holdings up into small plots significantly reduced the productivity of the land. Having multiple families managing small sections of the same holdings led to numerous inefficiencies in both production and management. Frustration with the system led to a restructuring of the agriculture system. To create a more effective design, settlements began forming around a single, “long central street” and each family’s “allotment ran backward in a long strip”, often double the size of the former allotment⁴¹.

With the new system in place settlements expanded and production boomed. Bumper crops would have provided a large economic incentive for the Eppsteins to invest in agricultural

³⁵ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

³⁶ Ebner, Herwig. (1969). *Das freie Eigen: Ein Beitrag zur Verfassungsgeschichte des Mittelalters*. Aus Forschung und Kunst 2. Klagenfurt.p. 43-57.

³⁷ Gordon Rotondo-McCord, Jonathan. (1991). *The Allod in the Medieval Rhineland*. Yale. 1991. Abstract, p. 1.

³⁸ Barraclough, Geoffrey. (1984). *The Origins of Modern Germany*. 2nd Edition. Oxford P. 86.

³⁹ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

⁴⁰ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

⁴¹ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

production. In turn, continuing good environmental conditions led to healthy crops and an expanding population. This trend continued for several years. Crop production peaked during the thirteenth century, and saw little yield increase until the eighteenth century⁴². However, one of the largest threats to the people of Braubach and Marksburg was their reliance on agriculture. Due to the lack of diversification in industry, families faced a high-risk tradeoff between feast and famine. The period, while overall positive for agricultural production, was punctuated by several famines. Under the Eppsteins, most of the people were dependent on growing grapes or raising sheep for their income. A bad year for agricultural production led to wide spread famine. Without good crops, families did not have the surplus to barter with or sell at the market to supplement their subsistence living. Along with famine often came inflation, further lowering quality of life and reducing purchasing power. During times of famine, nobles who relied on income and labor from serfs for a large portion of their income were disadvantaged. Weather volatility and unreliable agricultural production led to increasing pressure on nobles to diversify their revenue sources. Many lords received rents from their tenants in kind, and nobles had little to no control over the goods which they were paid in. Lords did not always want or need what they received and exchanging the goods for others in a second transaction took significant time and effort. The difficulty of coincidence of wants in numerous small transactions demonstrated how inefficient the prevailing system of bartering was.

Additionally, nobles faced these same constraints over large areas of the empire. Nobles were often granted lands sporadically and ended up with lands spread across numerous regions in the empire. Controlling lands in far-flung places, nobles could not possibly oversee all their holdings personally. To form a more cohesive management system, a hierarchy was developed. The highest level were the duchies (Dukes and Duchesses), followed by marches (Marquis and Marquises), and lastly local counts (Counts and Countesses). Each of these nobles had promised allegiance to those above them, and were given numerous responsibilities. Their duties included “managing estates, collecting taxes and dues, and presiding over courts”⁴³. One of the primary roles in managing estates was to increase productivity, reduce inefficiencies and help administer lands held under their patrons. However, due to the nature of the feudal system, these nobles often ended up only loosely connected to their overlords and their powers went largely unchecked. Despite the lack of loyalty that many nobles showed, they were almost always actively pursuing their own interests. One of the largest problems these men faced was the barter economy.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were something of an economic boom spurred by agricultural gains and population growth. Furthermore, increasing production and agricultural surpluses allowed the first vestiges of specialization to appear in local economies. The increasing local specialization was complemented by the rise in volume of international trade along the Rhine. There is evidence of long-lived trade from the Middle Rhine to numerous parts of the world. During these two centuries, the international trade on the Rhine expanded dramatically. Luxury goods brought from abroad gave owners prestige, which soon became an important part of maintaining social and political status. However, the majority of estates still relied on bartering, which hindered the noble’s ability to engage in trade. As the volume and distance of trade increased, the bartering system became more and more cumbersome. Long distance trade made bartering harder- the main goods produced in the region, such as cattle and crops, were

⁴² Campbell, Bruce M. S.; M. Overton (1993). "A New Perspective on Medieval and Early Modern Agriculture: Six Centuries of Norfolk Farming, c.1250-c.1850". *Past and Present*. 141: 38–105.

⁴³ Rady, M. (2000). *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*. Springer. p. 114.

likely to spoil or become ill during transport. These goods required ample storage area and animals needed to be cared for.

With higher transportation costs and longer lead times, merchants increasingly demanded money over bartering. Traders wanted to use a universally accepted form of payment, which meant silver, gold and other precious metals. These monies would retain their value, could be easily stored and transported, and carried little risk. This posed a large problem for the nobles whose primary source of income came from their tenants. Nobles sought to increase their incomes in the easiest way possible-by demanding higher payments from their tenants. To offset higher spending, nobles drained the serfs of most of their own resources. Rent prices went up, the amount of goods demanded in payment increased, and overall quality of life for the lower classes decreased significantly. Before, serfs could sell excess produce, animals, and their byproducts at local markets to provide a source of income. Now, costs were so high that there were no surplus goods to take to the market. Due to decreasing standards of living and increasing dissatisfaction among serfs, a portion of Europe's population started moving to urban areas-seeking to be free from overlords and exorbitant costs.

The people who migrated to urban areas where they could be "free", either commercialize their trade or learn a new one. Serfs who remained in a city for a year and a day without their lords looking for them, were automatically granted their freedom. And although cities also had rents, leases and costs, they were much lower and more stable than those under nobles. Although the initial population movement was relatively small, this population loss in the agrarian structure made life more difficult for those serfs who remained. The remaining serfs had an increased burden per capita, as nobles expected a set amount of income which was now spread across fewer tax payers. This initial movement of people to urban areas, while it did not upheave all of society, began undermining the established manorial system. The trend of abandonment by serfs, and consequently higher rents per household, became cyclical. To combat the growing trend of urbanization, princes and kings passed laws to discourage migration and strengthen royal rights.

In 1220 Heinrich von Staufen VII passed the *Confoederatio cum principibus ecclesiasticis*⁴⁴, a set of laws regarding "custom, mints, markets, castles and fortifications in favor of the spiritual princes"⁴⁵, to help prevent urbanization. A decade later, Emperor Friedrich of Staufen II passed the *Statutum in favorem principum* to strengthen the powers of secular princes⁴⁶. These laws granted minting and tolling rights to secular and religious princes, while excluding towns and cities from the same favor. Without mints to create money or the ability to collect tolls, urban centers could not easily gain funds to finance their growth or protect their citizens. While these motions helped slow down the migration of people to towns and cities, they did not have long-lasting effects. Urbanization continued, and lords found themselves facing a new type of competitor in the form of towns. Towns proved to be powerful allies and daunting enemies. Lords were sometimes able to manipulate towns in order to increase their own fortunes. For example, Archbishop Siegfried von Eppstein III freed the city of Mainz in 1244 in order to

⁴⁴ Zippelius, Reinhold (2006). *Kleine deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 7th. ed. Munich.

⁴⁵ Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.ndt.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

⁴⁶ Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.ndt.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

increase his own popularity among the citizens⁴⁷. As time passed, towns and cities became increasingly important for nobles to control, ally with or destroy. As the nobles found themselves unable to completely stem the flow of people from the countryside into the cities, the old ways of collecting rents and paying leases became less effective, and nobles began looking for other sources of revenue to support their estates.

New Revenue Streams

While lords lost the potential revenue from their vassals, they did not suffer total losses due to urban migration. Overlords were able to consolidate plots which had been deserted into larger holdings. This enabled more efficient land management, and many estates slowly started shifting towards market-oriented production. With better production methods, lords became the primary source of agricultural goods, replacing small market surpluses typically brought by serfs. As land management began shifting from subsistence farming to cash cropping, it was complemented by technological advances such as iron bladed plows and water mills, which further spurred the productivity and efficiency of large holdings. Agricultural production became one of the largest sources of income for many estates along the Middle Rhine. Additionally, the displacement of serfs led to a boom of towns and cities during the thirteenth century. This migration of people provided a concentrated source of labor which had not been available previously. The resettlement of people from rural to semi-urban and urban communities fueled the growth of trade. In the Middle Rhine, many towns became export-oriented, tapping larger potential profits abroad. Furthermore, the growth of the town itself allowed for the development of urban serfdom.

Marksburg, with the surrounding town of Braubach, benefitted from both the shifting agrarian structure and the resulting movement of people. The Eppsteins took advantage of abandoned fields and expanded their cattle rearing, sheep farming and wine making, which the lands around Marksburg are particularly suited⁴⁸. The Eppsteins invested large amounts

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Jobs</i>
<i>Food</i>	Butchers, Bakers
<i>Wool</i>	Weavers, Dyers, Shearers
<i>Consumer</i>	Tailors, Cobblers, Glass works
<i>Hospitality</i>	Inns

of their resources into these industries. Economic decisions, especially those based on agriculture, were high risk. During the period under the Eppsteins, wealth was largely concentrated in land whose productivity was influenced by patterns of warfare, weather and uncontrollable acts of nature or God. Through livestock, the Eppsteins were able to produce goods such as cheese, milk, meat, hides, and other animal byproducts. Sheep were particularly valuable, and a large wool industry developed along the Middle Rhine. In addition to husbandry, the Eppsteins also produced wine. Vineyards, which were often limited to only ecclesiastical institutions, were highly profitable. Many nobles sponsored or allowed monasteries to be built on their land to produce wine. Entry barriers included the limited number of institutions which could produce wine. Additionally, many ecclesiastical institutions were exempt from paying tolls and in some case taxes, giving them a competitive advantage. The Eppsteins presence in the

⁴⁷ Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

⁴⁸ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

great abbeys and monasteries within the Middle Rhine may have given them an advantage in being granted rights to wine production and industry knowledge.

Due to the wide selection of wines on the market, the unpredictability of weather and unreliable crops, there was significant potential for differentiating wine varieties. The high level of information asymmetry made it profitable to work through a “broker who is an expert in product quality” creating a role for “product quality certifications in consumable products”⁴⁹. Despite Cologne having “one of the largest wholesale wine markets in the region”⁵⁰, there was a notable lack of “centralized spot markets”⁵¹ for wine during the Middle Ages. A partial explanation for this could be that competition between wine brokers prevented information sharing⁵², while a portion can be contributed to the fact that in certain towns there were regulations forbidding more than two brokers from working together⁵³.

The Lord of Eppstein was able to gain some economies of scope. The Eppsteiner used the manure from his livestock as fertilizer in the vineyards. Produced in large quantities, wool and wine created the base of the export industry around Braubach. A large number of those people who migrated to Braubach and other towns ended up working in these industries. In Braubach, the majority of the population was either directly or indirectly employed by or supporting the Eppsteins in either viticulture or wool production. Additionally, many of the smaller industries in the region specialized in meeting the needs of the farming and wine industries⁵⁴. The Eppsteins also invested in the mining industry. Reichsburg, upon which Marksburg sits, is rich with silver and lead. In 1220, the Lord of Eppstein Gotfried I requested and was granted the mineral rights to the lands in the surrounding area⁵⁵. Although the deposits under Reichsburg had been mined for many centuries, the limited technology of medieval extraction methods meant that the majority of the minerals remained unexploited. What little Braubach and the Eppsteins did manage to extract, was more than likely traded to the mints in the area for coin production, and used to make weapons or other metal based goods.

In addition to husbandry, viticulture and mining, there were several smaller industries including fishing, craft making, and transportation in Braubach. All of the new industries, and the scales they achieved, would not have been possible without the displacement of the serfs. Their influx into the towns and cities flooded the labor market. Many people took up trade, which increased competition and specialization. Those who did not engage in smaller businesses often worked in the fields or mines for the Lords of Eppstein. With the number of people moving to urban areas, as well as specialization, the number of households producing their own food declined drastically. Most arid land along the Middle Rhine was given over to vineyards or grazing, leaving little room for food production. Most foodstuffs in Braubach were imported, making trade an important part of everyday life for many people. Food could not be transported over long distances and continued to form the basis of local trade in the area. In addition to

⁴⁹ Boerner, L. (2016). *Medieval Market Making Brokerage Regulations in Central Western Europe, ca 1250-1700*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.

⁵⁰ Herborn, Wolfgang und Klaus Militzer. (1980). *Der Kölner Weinhandel*, Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag.

⁵¹ Boerner, L. (2016). *Medieval Market Making Brokerage Regulations in Central Western Europe, ca 1250-1700*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.

⁵² Boerner, L. (2016). *Medieval Market Making Brokerage Regulations in Central Western Europe, ca 1250-1700*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.

⁵³ Heijder, M., 1979. *Amsterdam, korenschuur van Europa: historische schets van de Amsterdamse graanhandel*. Amsterdam: Stadsdrukkerij van Amsterdam.

⁵⁴ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

⁵⁵ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

developing new lines of supplies, urban centers, which were largely independent of the Lords, began developing their own economies and political systems. These developments increased the need for an economy independent of coincidence of wants—meaning stricter regulations on currency and minting were needed.

Trade

Throughout history, trade has undergone many expansions and declines. Leading up to and under the rule of the Eppsteins, trade on the Rhine continued to grow in volume and distance. While there is little evidence of market convergence at the time of the Eppsteins, trade was far reaching and diverse. It ranged from local to regional to international levels, and was excessively complicated. Already in the tenth century, there were “a fair number of towns” in the Middle Rhine region⁵⁶. These towns were engaging in “foreign trade with Normandy and Flanders”, exporting goods such as “glass and domestic utensils”⁵⁷. The majority of long-distance transactions occurred at fairs. Fairs were a vital part in foreign, regional and local trade. They served to reduce transaction costs and allowed for economies of scale in terms of centralizing buyers and sellers for a certain breadth of time⁵⁸.

At fairs, German merchants were known for “woven fabrics, leather, weapons, armor, metallurgy, horses and other commodities”⁵⁹. The presence of merchants from the Middle Rhine at fairs has long been established before the tenth century. This pre-existing trade grew significantly with the emergence of contracts during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Contracts stimulated commercial development, helping merchants and cities to make, govern, and enforce their own arrangements⁶⁰. As merchants and cities gained powers in their own rights, the power of nobles diminished. The organization of towns and cities “favored the growth of capital”, and it was “only by trade in the towns, that capital could be accumulated”⁶¹. As such, “merchants became the driving force behind the growth and the wealth of cities and an early form of capitalism started to emerge”⁶². As merchants accumulated power and wealth, many expanded the geographical range in which they operated. This expansion and influence could be seen in the numerous trade agreements made between towns and cities of the empire with their foreign counterparts. German cities like Cologne, and eventually the whole of the empire, had agreements that granted them favored status in foreign trading towns and markets. In addition to basic protections such as “freedom from wreckage law, unimpeded trade with both natives and

⁵⁶ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

⁵⁷ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

⁵⁸ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. . Oxford.

⁵⁹ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

⁶⁰ Budde, P. (2016). *Trade in the Middle Ages*. Retrieved from Paul Budde History: <http://paulbuddehistory.com/europe/trade-in-the-middle-ages/>

⁶¹ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

⁶² Budde, P. (2016). *Trade in the Middle Ages*. Retrieved from Paul Budde History: <http://paulbuddehistory.com/europe/trade-in-the-middle-ages/>



Figure 6: Economic centers and trade routes from tenth-fifteenth centuries. The red dot represents Marksburg.

foreigners, right of residence and settlement, and equality with the domestic population in the courts”⁶³, Germans were also granted tax exemptions and protections against piracy.

During this period, many cities along the Rhine joined together to form a trade union, as depicted in Figure 8. Figure 8 also shows the fairs surrounding Marksburg (the red dot)⁶⁴. The closest was Koblenz, followed by Mainz and Bonn. It is highly probable that traders from Braubach engaged in selling wares at these fairs. While at home (or at domestic fairs), German traders naturally had an advantage over foreign traders. However, German merchants also secured significant trade advantages abroad through favorable agreements with other trade unions and governments.

These concessions led to the resentment of German traders by local populations and their foreign competitors. In several instances the German rights were ignored, leading to economic warfare. Boycotting markets and fairs in the respective towns and cities where their rights were ignored was a common form of “coercion frequently employed”⁶⁵ by merchants. In addition to international trade, German merchants from the Middle Rhine also interacted on regional and local levels. Interestingly, these lower levels of trade were just as, if not more complicated, than long ranging international trade. One of the

factors which made trade difficult was the patchwork of existing kingdoms, principalities, and states which all had their own regulations regarding trade. Between the Royal Fiscs, enoffed holdings, ecclesiastical lands, cities and districts, the landscape was also smattered with a

⁶³ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

⁶⁴ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

⁶⁵ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

number of independent rulers who operated with “virtual autonomy”⁶⁶. Despite many of these kingdoms being united under the Holy Roman Empire, the powerful regional nobles often operated autonomously, pursuing their own political and economic policies and interests. This created a jumble of nations and complex networks of intertwined lands, societies and economies.

In the two centuries between 1100 and 1300, a large number of settlements sprung up throughout the Empire. Many of these new settlements were in the Middle Rhine region, and formed around existing castles, or castles being constructed⁶⁷. This boom in towns increased competition between towns, and may have led to increased competition among merchants and artisans as more people took up trade. Furthermore, this complex geography meant that trade occurring over small distances could be regional or international trade. For the Eppsteins, moving their goods to Cologne or Bonn, the largest trading points in the area, meant engaging in international trade. Although located no more than 40 kilometers apart on the Rhine, the goods would pass through two different kingdoms in each direction to reach each respective market. In the absence of standardized laws on trade, each kingdom had its own regulations regarding goods, taxes and many even had their own currencies. Furthermore, two of these regions were held by episcopal princes who answered only to the Pope and not to the emperor. To take their goods to market, the Eppsteins would have had to have paid taxes and fees in each region they passed through, as well as exchanging money in each kingdom which had its own. This made it important for the Eppsteins to control the region as much as possible. By controlling both archsees and the secular lands in between, the Eppsteins could gain significant trade advantages in the Middle Rhine. The lords could exempt their family members or merchants, traveling to lands under their control, from paying taxes or tolls. This provided cost savings and made it more appealing to merchants to travel through the area. For those who did not have these advantages, expenses and lead time could quickly add up even over relatively short distances, as any and all who could tried to profit from collecting tolls and taxes along the Rhine. These fees discouraged many locals from engaging in longer-ranging trade, and as costs mounted, even discouraged many long-distance traders.

Prior to the thirteenth century, local trade relied on “a limited radius of exchange”⁶⁸. This radius, was the furthest that a person could walk to a market, participate, and then return home for the evening. Often for smaller towns with only local markets, this radius estimates a maximum distance of four hours each direction⁶⁹. With the shift to export-oriented production, and the goals of both the towns and lords to increase exports and imports, many towns like Braubach continued to rely on this limited radius of exchange due to the costs associated with transporting goods across multiple territories. However Braubach, because of its location on many major trade routes including the Rhine, had a much larger radius of exchange. Marksburg

⁶⁶ Rich, E. E., et al., eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: Rise of Towns: Burgus and Burgensis*. . 1st ed. Vol 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Cambridge Histories Online. Web. 11 March 2016.

⁶⁷ Rich, E. E., et al., eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: Rise of Towns: Burgus and Burgensis*. . 1st ed. Vol 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Cambridge Histories Online. Web. 11 March 2016.

⁶⁸ Rich, E. E., et al., eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: Rise of Towns: Burgus and Burgensis*. . 1st ed. Vol 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Cambridge Histories Online. Web. 11 March 2016.

⁶⁹ Rich, E. E., et al., eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: Rise of Towns: Burgus and Burgensis*. . 1st ed. Vol 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Cambridge Histories Online. Web. 11 March 2016.

had easy access to Cologne in the north, the largest city and center for trade during this period, and Mainz in the south. Additionally, Boppard, an imperial city for many centuries which acted as a base for royalty, was also within easy reach. This made it possible for people living in Braubach to trade in several major cities in the area on a regular basis. Not surprisingly, while nobles wanted to generate as much revenue as possible from patrolling trade routes, they also wanted to increase the volume of trade and their access to a variety of goods. These two goals were often in conflict with one another; the number of tolls and the number of merchants using the trade routes was negatively correlated, meaning that the number of tolls on the Rhine needed to be kept in check to keep trade flowing. To maintain the flow of trade, tolls could only be established with permission from the emperor. Nobles, cities and institutions all competed with each other in order to be granted rights to control and collect tolls.

Tolling

Castles like Marksburg, which were situated on both land and water trade routes with access to shipping on the Rhine, had a distinct advantage. As roads and waterways were the only two options open to merchants during the thirteenth century, the Eppsteins could easily charge travelers tolls in return for safe passage through the section that they controlled. Tolls came in many forms; they could be charged in coin, as a portion of the cargo, or force merchants to participate in the local markets. These tolls gave nobles access to a variety of goods destined for larger markets. However, the biggest “cash cow” and the most contested, were tolls on the Rhine. Considered the most important shipping route in Central Europe, the Rhine River allowed for travel from the mouth of the river inland, using the main river and its many tributaries. For long distance trade wanting to access inland Europe, there was no good alternative to the Rhine. From the Rhine, merchants could access Southern and Southeastern Europe all the way to the North Sea.

Many nobles, like the Eppsteins, attempted to take advantage of this by establishing tolls. Trade on the Rhine moved a much higher volume of goods than land routes, and large numbers of cargo carriers meant nobles had a higher profit margin on river tolls. Between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the number of tolls on the Rhine went from 19 to 35, and are estimated to have eaten 60% of profits from shipments⁷⁰. Despite the heavy taxes on goods transiting the Rhine, merchants could recoup some of their losses by stopping and participating in markets and fairs in the 28 towns along the Rhine. However, numerous tolls and other obstacles discouraged many traders from using the Rhine in favor of land routes. Several trade routes developed that were a combination of both land and water routes—avoiding the heavily tolled areas. Due to the technology and infrastructure available, multi-modal transport was a logistical burden but proved to be a viable alternative for protecting profits. To encourage the use of the trade routes, many lords, towns and cities invested in defense. Safety was especially a concern in the Middle Rhine region, where threats arising from territorial feuds were common.

Furthermore, ships transiting the Rhine carried larger volumes of goods. It was easier for lords to charge passing merchants and cargo carriers tolls based on volume shipments, which created much higher profits than tolls on roads. Although the Eppsteins controlled portions of trade routes on land, it was much harder to maintain control of them in comparison to tolling stations along the Rhine. They faced more competition from other organizations such as towns

⁷⁰ Berry, C. (2009). *Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multilevel Government*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

and cities wanting to profit directly or indirectly from trade along land routes. Roads were the main source of competition for traffic on the Rhine. Roads—infrastructure left from the times of the Romans—were used for both short and long distance travel. Near Braubach, there were several major roads. One connected Cologne with Frankfurt, used for international trade, one that connected Braubach to Lorch used primarily for local trade known as the *High Straße*, and a third major route known as the *Rheinweg* which connected the Rhine-Lahn area with the *Limburger* basin and St. Goar in addition to several smaller roads going through the area⁷¹.

For example, the towns of Braubach and Lorch joined together to build a defensive dike along the trade route connecting them, called *Ranseler Straße*⁷². The two towns also “forbade the collection of tolls” along the road, to encourage trade⁷³. *Ranseler Straße* was mostly regional trade and would have produced only small amounts of revenue in tolls. Although forbidding tolls meant losing revenue, it encouraged trade, travel and interactions between the two towns. Without fees for using roads, more people traversed them increasing the amount of and variety of goods the people of Braubach had access to, and more taxes collected from the transactions that occurred in the local market.

Markets

Another revenue stream for both lords, cities and towns were markets. Markets could be incredibly profitable for whomever hosted them—lords, towns, and cities applied for markets, in the hopes of being able to keep a portion of the taxes collected. Markets were one of the most sought after privileges—depending on the scale, they could draw local, regional and international traders. In larger towns and cities, markets increased the access to a variety of goods, and if they were large enough, they could even bring in luxury goods from abroad. One of the largest developments among markets during the eleventh and twelfth centuries was the continued growth in long distance trade. The Holy Wars, or Crusades, from 1095-1291 led to a large exchange of goods, ideas and people within Europe. Spanning the timeline of the rule of the Lords of Eppstein at Marksburg, the Crusades brought an “increase of commerce all over Europe”⁷⁴. Goods from the Orient ended up all over Germany, often transiting major trade routes such as the Rhine.

In addition to trade with the East, the Middle Rhine was engaged in local, regional and intercontinental trade. Near Marksburg, the city of Cologne developed into a large economic hub, with its own *Gildhalle*, or tradehouse, in London. Cologne carried many rights and favoured trade positions with England, Denmark and Sweden during the twelfth century⁷⁵. As part of these conditions, and to encourage extensive trading, merchants were granted protections on certain routes. Known as “Market Peace,” merchants were guaranteed safe travels, with reduced tolls or exemptions, as well as “market rights and privileges”⁷⁶. The success of many markets and fairs can be linked to the ability of the hosts to provide safe passage and ensure fair trading. Specific markets were known as being best for certain goods, often granting favorable trade privileges to

⁷¹ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

⁷² Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

⁷³ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

⁷⁴ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

⁷⁵ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

⁷⁶ Budde, P. (2016). *Trade in the Middle Ages*. Retrieved from Paul Budde History: <http://paulbuddehistory.com/europe/trade-in-the-middle-ages/>.

a few guilds or merchants. The reduction or exemption from tolls helped lower the cost of transport, further incentivizing merchants to participate in markets.

The more merchants which participated, the wider the variety of goods and the higher the number of taxable transactions. To ensure maximum profits from these markets, hosts began implementing regulations to help oversee transactions. Laws forbade conducting business at night to keep people from evading taxes, and tried to keep the majority of transactions in a centralized area that could be supervised. Like most lords, one of the first things the Lords of Eppstein did was petition for the right to host a local market at Marksburg. The Lords of Eppstein were entitled to a portion of the taxes collected at the market, providing a strong incentive to encourage as much business in their domain as possible. However, most goods at this time were still limited to within a relatively small radius of exchange. Despite the advantages of being located on the Rhine, which decreased transportation costs and time, the variety of goods at these markets was unremarkable. The market was used largely to conduct craft trades, with some trading in commodities such as grain, wine and wood. With market-, tolling-, and mining rights, along with developing large wool and wine industries, the Lords of Eppstein had created several new revenue streams. During this time the Eppsteins had continued to build their wealth and amass power in the Middle Rhine region. Considered to be one of the “great regional nobles” the Lords of Eppstein went largely unchecked and often had virtual autonomy over their demesnes, answering only to the emperor⁷⁷.

The Interregnum

Towards the end of the Lords of Eppsteins rule over Marksburg, the Empire entered a period known as the “Interregnum” from 1250-1273 in which there was no king strong enough to keep the great regional nobles in check. During this period nobles expanded their powers as much as possible, infringing on the rights which were typically held only by the emperor. One of the most common things that nobles did were implement economic policies that helped increase their revenue at the expense of trade and the lower classes. In 1252, Gotfried II von Eppstein, established an illegal toll at Marksburg on the Rhine to supplement his income. This was a widespread practice among nobles; numerous illegal tolls popped up, official toll stations increased their prices, and pirating became common. The Lords of Eppsteins, like many others, engaged in this illicit activity. Termed Robber Barons, they established their own tolls, raised taxes and fees, and confiscated goods. Many of these lords already controlled fortified castles along the Rhine, and used them as a base. At Marksburg, Herr von Eppstein started collecting additional duties on “salt, cereals and wine” without authorization⁷⁸. Robber barons stole cargo, and in some cases, took the ships as well⁷⁹.

As a result of the Robber Barons, trade on the Rhine suffered significantly. Cities and towns who relied on trade lost considerable revenue; guilds, associations and merchants travelling between cities also suffered substantial profit losses. In response, the *Rheinischer Bund*, or Rhine League, was formed. Founded by the cities of Mainz and Worms to protect trade on the Middle Rhine, the League soon swelled to around 100 participating cities. Allied to William of Holland,

⁷⁷ Rich, E. E., et al., eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: Rise of Towns: Burgus and Burgensis*. . 1st ed. Vol 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Cambridge Histories Online. Web. 11 March 2016.

⁷⁸ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

⁷⁹ Roy Gardner, N. G. (2002). Tolling th Rhine in 1254: Complementary Monopoly Revisited.

the League was supposed to protect its members from “violence and unjust tolls”⁸⁰. Organized in a “military” style with its own fleet of ships at its disposal, the League had the backing of both ecclesiastical princes and secular nobles wanting to protect their economic interests. All three of the major Archbishops in the region, the Count Palatinate and many lesser nobles also provided backing for the group. During the three-year existence of the League they disbanded ten “Robber Barons” including Herr von Eppstein. Richard of Cornwall specifically challenged the toll at Braubach, at the Diet of Worms. To stop these robbers, the League sieged their castles until the barons were forced to surrender. Despite some early successes, including besieging the Lord of Eppstein in Marksburg, most of their progress was only temporary; several of their sieges failed, weakening their own resources. Coupled with waning power, the Diet of Worms in 1269 led to demise of the league. Many historians speculate that the final break was the beginning of the War of Succession that politically split the members of the League⁸¹. When the Interregnum ended in 1273 order was slowly restored to the Empire. In the same year, King Rudolf von Habsburg declared all tolls not previously granted before the Interregnum invalid⁸². Large sanctions were imposed on those nobles who had overstepped their bounds during the Interregnum.

Increasing Competition

As part of the punishment for their behavior during the Interregnum, King Rudolf von Habsburg elevated the town of Braubach to the status of a free city in 1276. This removed Braubach from the authority of the Eppsteins, and allowed it to govern itself. In return, the town had to swear allegiance to the king and pay an annual fee to retain its status. The Eppsteins could no longer collect a portion of the taxes or regulate Braubach. This gave the town significant freedoms, adding another competitor for social standing, political and economic power.

Ecclesiastical Competition

The Lords of Eppstein already faced significant competition from ecclesiastical princes, economically, socially and politically. Like the subkings, pastoral princes were entitled to their own palaces, chapel, chancery, treasury and minting⁸³. These princes ruled over Bishoprics which had large amounts of autonomy. In the area where Marksburg is located, there were three main Bishoprics: Mainz, Trier and Cologne; often vying with each other for power. They each had large amounts of social, political and economic power, representing a large threat to many nobles. Socially, bishops had a large influence on daily life and therefore many nobles relied on their approval to retain the support from the lower classes. With a large emphasis on divine rights, a unique relationship developed between the secular and religious elites. The secular lords gave donations to the religious lords to ensure religious backing behind their rule. This created a

⁸⁰ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

⁸¹ Roy Gardner, N. G. (2002). Tolling th Rhine in 1254: Complementary Monopoly Revisited.

⁸² Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

⁸³ Rich, E. E., et al., eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: Rise of Towns: Burgus and Burgensis*. 1st ed. Vol 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Cambridge Histories Online. Web. 11 March 2016.

cycle of alternating powers—kings and nobles gave land, goods, money and constructed projects for the church in return for blessings and the backing of their secular rule.

While the short-term goal of these donations was to foster relations within the church, many families aimed to control the institutions themselves. Gifting lands and money gave lords influence over the monasteries, but not direct control. Many families, like the Eppsteins, attempted to gain control over the bishoprics by installing family members in the highest positions within each abbey. Churches, which were constantly receiving donations from all levels of society, represented a number of profitable ventures. Having control and access to religious coffers and backing provided the secular branches of the family security in wealth and position. The Eppsteins, who already had a large influence within the church, were adept at controlling their interests from multiple angles. From early on there are records of the Eppsteins controlling Fulda, the Archbishoprics, and smaller communities, while other family members were constantly out conquering other territories. During their reign over Marksburg, the Lords of Eppstein had three different family members become Archbishops. Furthermore, these bishops were split between two of the three dioceses in the region. The Eppsteins were able to control the Archbishop of Mainz for the majority of the thirteenth century, and even briefly held the Archbishop of Trier, as well. During this period, the “seats in the Mainz chapter became hereditary” further strengthening the Eppstein’s hold on the church⁸⁴. By spreading their power across multiple spheres, the Lords of Eppstein helped align and protect the families’ religious and secular interests.

This division of power within the family brought Marksburg into an even more prominent position. With powerful nobles, spiritual and laymen in the family, Marksburg became a prominent location during elections. Situated close to the Electoral Palace, the Rhenish Electors “stayed, schemed and planned”⁸⁵ from Marksburg. During Imperial Elections, Marksburg would have been a place of intrigue. The family would have hosted and attended feasts, been visited by princes and contenders for the crown, as well as by ambassadors and their dignitaries⁸⁶. All of this, however, would have been in addition to the schemes the Lord of Eppstein had himself, for influencing the empire. The Eppsteins acquired numerous castles, counties and rights to many bailiwicks. Together, the family created one of the most impressive holdings in the region.

Politically, religious houses presented a large challenge to secular lords. With the support of the mostly uneducated masses, the church had significant clout in the face of any political challenges posed by secular lords. They also had the advantage of being able to negotiate political treaties between different parties, often benefiting themselves in the agreement. Another political benefit was the ability to trade in favors and to enoff their own lands. Lastly, many donations were given to the church for dual purposes. In addition to the belief that these donations would secure a place for the donor in heaven, it also prevented secular rivals from gaining power. Land, or children who would generally be valuable through marriage, were often given to the church not for altruistic reasons, but to prevent their wealth from going to another noble. Economically, religious institutions were hard to compete with. The emperor and noble elite all sought to curry favor with the religious houses. Many of these nobles granted the

⁸⁴ Medieval Lands: Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

⁸⁵ Horn, W.O. (1872). *The Rhine: History and Legends of its Castles, Abbeys, Monasteries and Towns*. Weisbaden. J. Niedner.

⁸⁶ Horn, W.O. (1872). *The Rhine: History and Legends of its Castles, Abbeys, Monasteries and Towns*. Weisbaden. J. Niedner.

church rights to tax, toll, hold fairs and markets, and exemptions to tolls and taxes. As the power of bishops continued to grow, they were granted control of minting money and often given exclusive rights to produce wine within certain regions. The clergy maximized these powers, increasingly becoming a threat to the secular lords. Often religious and secular interests were in conflict, leading to power struggles between the two. The more power that the church had, the less the kings and nobles had.

With three of the most powerful Archbishops surrounding them, the Lords of Eppstein were threatened on multiple economic fronts. Having invested a large amount of resources into wine production, Marksburg was constantly competing with the bishoprics. Granted exemption from tolls and taxes, the bishoprics had a price advantage. Furthermore, many of the workers were members of the order, giving the church a cost advantage as well. Additionally, the Archbishops' abuse of their minting abilities created numerous problems for the Lords of Eppstein. Located between two of the largest mints, the Lords of Eppstein, residents of Braubach, and travelers constantly had to exchange money. Devaluation, recalling and reissuing of the currency led to a lack of trust in money and increased reliance on bartering. Faced by ecclesiastical power on multiple sides, secular lords were constantly battling to retain their position, wealth and economic privileges. With the movement of serfs to cities, lords now faced the growing power of towns and cities. During the thirteenth century, the substantial increase in the numbers of free towns, cities and districts as well as the construction of many new towns and castles led to an increasingly complex division of power within the Holy Roman Empire.

Competition from Towns, Cities and Districts

As the manorial system weakened, towns, cities and districts only became stronger. With the increasing growth of urban populations and wealth, the elite classes faced increasing competition. In addition to the competition among secular lords and between secular and religious lords, now, nobles faced the growing powers of the masses. As towns, cities and districts became hubs of trade their social, political and economic power continued to accumulate. One of the strongest opponents of these nobles were the guilds. Guilds were the evolution of the old town councils, which emerged into a new organization with a head and an advising committee. These new councils were responsible for “improvement between commercial centers, scales, weights and codes of commercial usage”⁸⁷. One of the largest roles that the guilds had were obtaining favorable trade positions for their towns and cities. They accomplished this by negotiating “monopolies of trade in certain branches” and by forming “sub-guilds in far-off places”⁸⁸.

By forming sub-guilds in “far-off places”, guilds could ensure their merchants and travelers of a welcome in the town. Ideally, they would be able to secure monopoly agreements which helped merchants guarantee a demand for their goods and protection if needed. Many members of guilds often shipped goods together, over land and water, as a form of insurance. With various territorial disputes, the factors of cost and time, as well as the unknown of travel—insuring goods over long distances was virtually impossible until guilds emerged. There was a high risk associated with moving goods, people and valuables without established laws and recourses for complaints—the further the distance, the higher the risk. Trade organizations tried to minimize

⁸⁷ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

⁸⁸ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

these risks by establishing trading agreements which ensured their economic and political rights in foreign territory. Eventually guilds took on larger roles, expanding into a “regular oligarchy” with members in the “chief positions in the city council”⁸⁹. These members were wealthy and influential in daily town life. As the merchant class grew in wealth and prestige, their desire to be free from any overlord grew with it.

This merchant class developed, often gaining more wealth than the landed nobles who still largely relied on serfs for their income. Urban centers helped create a middle class and contributed many artisans and merchants to the upper rungs of society. In addition to the economic and government roles that the guilds were involved in, they also functioned in a social capacity for their members. Guilds “took a name, chose a patron saint, and arranged festivals and banquets”⁹⁰. These figures and guilds gained economic, political and social importance, posing another threat to nobles. With their new-found import, the previously voiceless members of society now had increasing control over their own lives. By installing members of guilds into town and city councils the organizations could be assured of someone representing their interests. Organizations implemented strict regulations on their members and goods to exert some of their own economic policies. As trade continued to boom, towns and their merchants received larger profits. In free towns, the profits of the markets went to the town council and ideally back into the town.

Free cities, or those only beholden to the emperor, were a great source of contention among nobles. Allied only to the emperor and their own economic interests, “nobility and prelates were their natural enemies”⁹¹. Cities, towns and guilds did not hesitate to engage in warfare with nobles and robbers. However, the argument went both ways. Towns provided constant “asylum” for peasants or others fleeing lords, and often only sought to protect their own rights⁹². Towns constantly challenged nobles, foreign entities and each other in a quest for economic and political influence. As the populations of towns began to grow, a new organization was needed. As Braubach experienced a large population influx, like in many other cities, a form of urban serfdom was created. Fees were collected from tenants, similar to the old system, but were put towards town finances. This “urban tenure”⁹³ removed any obligation from people to provide labor or a portion of their profits to the town. These fees covered the costs of retaining the town status and military fortifications such as walls and dikes. The urban rent rates were fixed, and due to the constant devaluation of money, became cheaper and cheaper⁹⁴. As town living became more affordable, with residents retaining higher rates of disposable income, a growing artisan class started to form. In the now independent town of Braubach, citizens became increasingly wealthy and influential. They tried to divert revenue from the lords into their own coffers, rebelled against laws and regulations, and fought to be independent from all over lords.

⁸⁹ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

⁹⁰ Henderson, E. F. (1894). *A History of Germany in the Middle Ages*. London: Bell.

⁹¹ Hallam, H. (1870). *View of the State of Europe During the Middle Ages*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

⁹² Hallam, H. (1870). *View of the State of Europe During the Middle Ages*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

⁹³ Rich, E. E., et al., eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: Rise of Towns: Burgus and Burgensis*. . 1st ed. Vol 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Cambridge Histories Online. Web. 11 March 2016.

⁹⁴ Rich, E. E., et al., eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: Rise of Towns: Burgus and Burgensis*. . 1st ed. Vol 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Cambridge Histories Online. Web. 11 March 2016.

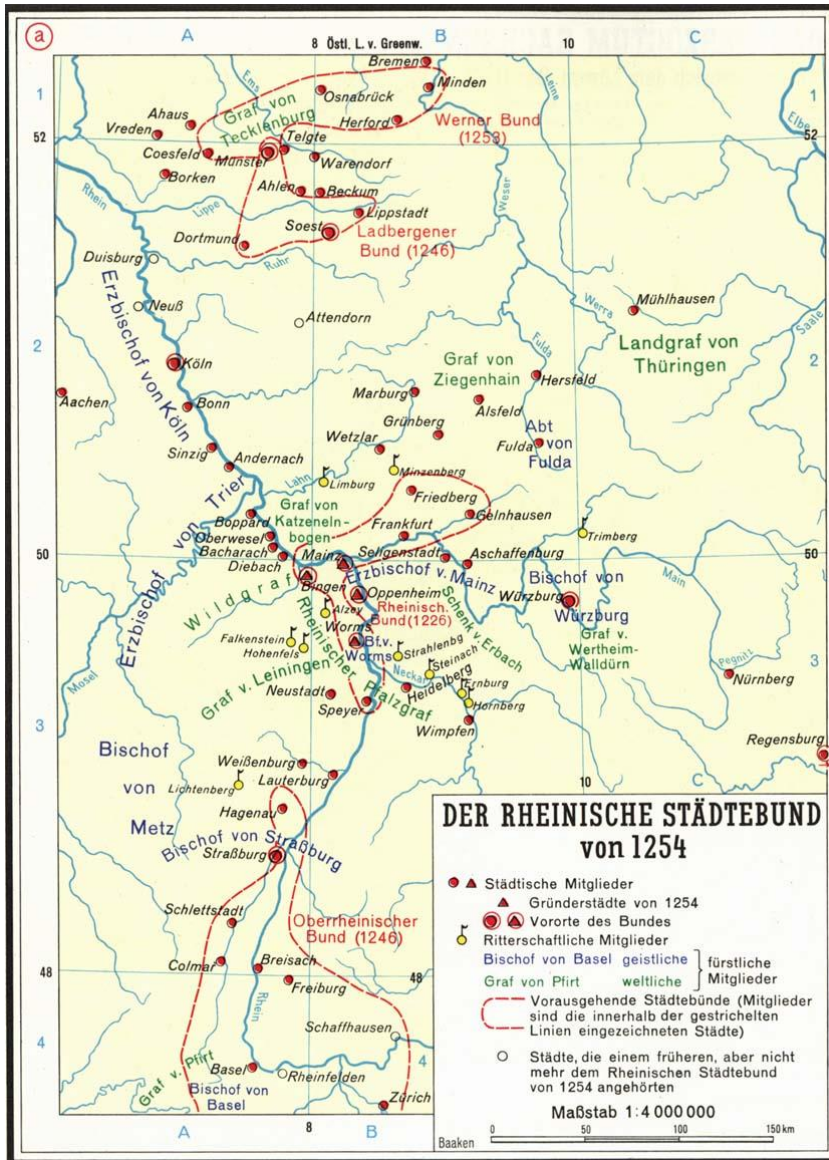


Figure 7: Cities and Staedtebunds in the Middle Rhine.

Economically, towns and cities attempted to build coalitions between themselves to combine influence. They also established favorable trade relations with influential nobles and bishoprics. In the middle of the twelfth century, the imperial cities of Frankfurt, Friedberg, Gelnhausen and Wetzlar joined together to form the *Wetterauer Städtebund*⁹⁵. Organizations such as the *Wetterauer Städtebund* worked together to protect their collective economic and political rights from encroaching nobles. *Städtebunds* often included trade agreements between member cities. Members also joined military forces in case of attack and negotiated bilateral agreements with other *Städtebunds*, lords and nobles. Figure 9 to the left shows the existing *Städtebunds* outlined in red in 1254⁹⁶. Many groups granted concessions and rights to these groups, as they represented large numbers of people of all skills and trades. This ensured both cooperation between the interests and reciprocal concessions when needed.

However, the upper classes attempted to maintain some powers, which led to many conflicts between parties, with rights granted, revoked and reinstated as the lower classes rebelled.

The emergence of free towns, cities and districts created complex social, political and economic relationships at all levels of society. However, much like their approach to gaining power within ecclesiastical institutions, many lords managed to retain control of towns, cities and districts by installing family members in the top council and mayoral positions. Deal making

⁹⁵ Mohr, Werner. *Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen*. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.ndt.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

⁹⁶ Great Historical World Atlas, 2nd part: Middle Ages, Munich, 1979, p. 70. 1979 and 2009 by Bayerischer Schulbuch Verlag, Munich.

was not confined to nobles and towns, but led to multiple agreements for trade and support between towns themselves. Thus, a system of reciprocal agreements arose between towns, cities, trade groups, episcopal sees and nobles. These agreements further diminished the power held by kings and nobles. With numerous entities pursuing their own social, political and economic interests, it became imperative to replace the bartering economy with a more efficient market.

The Rise of the Money Economy

As social, political and economic structures became more complex, the need for increased regulation and standardization of currency became apparent. Additionally, regional and international trade grew steadily throughout the thirteenth century, increasing the demand for a money economy. With trade stretching over longer distances in higher volumes of goods, the need for increased regulation was clear. Despite numerous regulations such as standardized weights and measures, laws on speculation, prices, hoarding and usury implemented under Charlemagne remained in place, money was largely unregulated.

Money

At the time that the Eppsteins held Marksburg, there were over 200 mints throughout the Empire, primarily controlled by monastic institution⁹⁷. Many historians pinpoint the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as being the pivotal point for developing a money economy. Many of the mints were ecclesiastical—not under royal control—were not required to use the same weights and measures. These institutions often had the rights to print their own currencies and were largely unregulated. Exempt from secular control, many of these mints ran schemes of calling in and reissuing coins. By releasing new prints on a regular basis, mints could use different sets of measures, and release new money with less metal content than the initial value, making large amounts of money on each production. Some bishoprics reissued coins every few years, and often people could expect to receive only $\frac{3}{4}$ of the metal value back in the new coinage⁹⁸. However, despite the lack of regulations on minting, institutions were very strict on monitoring currency use within their districts. Money was often bound by geographic ties to different districts—forcing travelers to exchange their currency as they went—which was relatively well policed⁹⁹.

Consequently, areas located between different mints, like Marksburg which is between Cologne and Mainz, were constantly in fluctuation over currency. At times, they had both types of coins in circulation complicating transactions. Furthermore, there was no guarantee that the coins would be equal, or that they would hold their value for any length of time. Traveling in either direction meant that money would have to be exchanged and customers faced a high risk of devaluation through impure coins and dishonest minting. This created a large problem for many people—a money based economy was more efficient, but money was not a reliable unit of

⁹⁷ Barrow, J. (1990). German Cathedrals and the Monetary Economy in the Twelfth Century. *Journal of Medieval History*.

⁹⁸ Barrow, J. (1990). German Cathedrals and the Monetary Economy in the Twelfth Century. *Journal of Medieval History*.

⁹⁹ Barrow, J. (1990). German Cathedrals and the Monetary Economy in the Twelfth Century. *Journal of Medieval History*.

account or store of value. Nobles, cities and towns wanted to promote trade, but those in charge of monetary policy discouraged it by constantly devaluing currencies and requiring exchanges. An unreliable money base discouraged the use of coins and long distance trade. Unable to rely on most currencies in circulation, which often had a very limited area of legitimacy, markets and fairs would specify which currencies would be accepted and set the rates of exchanges for traders. Interestingly, records from the Champagne fairs indicate that long distance traders and merchants from Germany defaulted to the pound sterling in international markets¹⁰⁰.

Using a standard set by Charlemagne, yet largely ignored while minting money, a pound sterling was equivalent to “240 pence, the penny having the weight of 32 grains of wheat”¹⁰¹, or “one gros tournois to three pence sterling”¹⁰². While this was the common measurement for those engaged in international trade, who had to rely on coins for ease of business, the majority of the population had little faith in the money economy. Most people continued to trade in kind, retaining a level of a barter economy. By bartering, they dodged fees on converting currency, and avoided potential loss on arbitrage in exchange or coin issues. The constant devaluation and abuse of minting led to a natural resistance of the larger population from switching to a money economy. This in turn meant that nobles had to continue receiving goods in kind, keeping the repetitive, inefficient cycle going. Nobles then had to look for more creative methods to generate cash revenue.

Territorial Expansion

The Eppsteins, like many of the lords in the Middle Rhine during the thirteenth century, sought to consolidate their power throughout the region. During their tenure at Marksburg, the Lords of Eppstein engaged in at least ten transactions in which they bought portions of castles and villages¹⁰³. This is consistent with reports of a growing property market during the twelve-hundreds. Increasing property transactions indicate efforts among “noble families to consolidate their allodial” holdings¹⁰⁴. This was a strategy employed by many nobles whose holdings were spread throughout the Empire. Nobles traded and sold properties to create larger, contiguous holdings, over which they could exert more power and more easily administer. This practice was encouraged in multiple ways. In the lands around Cologne, *Landrecht* had begun to replace feudal relationships, which was already collapsing¹⁰⁵.

Families took great care to ensure their continued holding of lands. Land was of strategic import and used in political maneuvering. Interestingly, there are records of lands that were

¹⁰⁰ Fynn-Paul, J. (2006). Civic Debt, Civic Taxes, and Urban Unrest: A Catalan Key to Interpreting the Late Fourteenth-Century European Crisis. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 119-145).

¹⁰¹ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁰² Nicholas, D. (2003). Commercial Credit and Central Place Function in 13th Century Ypres. In D. Nicholas, *Urban Europe, 1100-1700*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁰³ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

¹⁰⁴ Gordon Rotondo-McCord, Jonathan. (1991). *The Allod in the Medieval Rhineland*. Yale. 1991. p. 241-242.

¹⁰⁵ Droege, Georg. (1960). “Lehnrecht und Landrecht am Niederrhein und das Problem der Territorialbildung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert.” *Aus Geschichte und Landeskunde, Forschungen und Darstellungen: Franz Steinbach zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet*, pp. 278-307. Bonn.

“clearly part of the royal fisc” being recording as allods of different families¹⁰⁶. Nobles wanted to distinguish their allodial holdings from their enoffed holdings, and when possible, convert enoffed holdings into allodial ones. By having absolute property rights over land nobles strengthened both their political and economic power. This trend is reflected in the evolution of allodium holdings—which could now include purchased properties¹⁰⁷. The Eppsteins records show that during the time that the Eppsteins controlled Marksburg, they acquired investments and ownership is at least ten castles throughout the Middle Rhine¹⁰⁸.

Several of these acquisitions were from the ecclesiastical side of the family. Despite the religious and secular lords constantly fighting each other for power, the Eppsteins were able to significantly expand their power as both sides of the family acquired lands. As their territory grew, the Eppsteins began building castles to establish their power in different regions. Just north of Marksburg sits the Lahn River, used as a dividing boundary between the regional ecclesiastical lords. In 1226, Sigfried III von Eppstein the Archbishop of Mainz, built Lahneck Castle to establish control over his territory and the Lahn River. Gaining control of this tributary to the Rhine helped consolidate the Eppsteins power in the Middle Rhine.

Marksburg at the End of the Eppsteins

At the end of the rule of the Eppsteins, Marksburg had changed significantly. Previously a rough, wood-constructed fort established by the Noble Freeman of Braubach, Marksburg was now a palatial residence. The economic focus the Eppsteins initiated led to large wool, wine and mining industries. Although people specialized in all types of trade and crafts, many locals were employed in businesses related in some way to supporting these industries. After initially focusing on making Marksburg and Braubach as profitable as possible, the Eppsteins returned their resources to dynasty building through both secular and ecclesiastical domination, marriages and alliances. The Eppsteins largely ignored opportunities for trade after establishing their main industries of wool and wine. Using all the resources they had, the Eppsteins focused on territorial expansion. With backing from the spiritual leaders in the family, they acquired numerous castles, counties and rights to many bailiwicks. Together, the family created one of the most impressive holdings in the region.

On a campaign in 1281, the Lords of Eppstein attacked and destroyed the castle of Rheinsberg. As a punishment, the family was fined 1,000 marks¹⁰⁹. Focused on conquering other lands, and financing the costs of war, the Lord of Eppstein sold Marksburg to Count Eberhard II of Katzenelnbogen in 1283¹¹⁰. The sale included the castle, the customs toll on the Rhine, and all of the rights that he had retained in the town of Braubach. It should be noted that although it is widely confirmed that Braubach was a free city, multiple records include the town of Braubach as part of the transaction between the Lord of Eppstein and Count of Katzenelnbogen. By the mid to late 1200s the Holy Roman Empire was no longer stratified between two classes of nobles

¹⁰⁶ Droege, Georg. (1961). “Pfalzgrafschaft, Grafschaften und allodiale Herrschaften zwischen Maas und Rhein in salisch-staufischer Zeit.” *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 26, pp. 1-21.

¹⁰⁷ Goerz, Adam. (1872). *Mittelrheinische Regesten oder chronologische Zusammenstellung des Quellenmaterials für die Geschichte der Territorien der beiden Regierungsbezirke Koblenz und Trier*. Vol. 1, p. 509-1152. Koblenz.

¹⁰⁸ Medieval Lands: Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fracia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

¹⁰⁹ Medieval Lands: Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fracia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

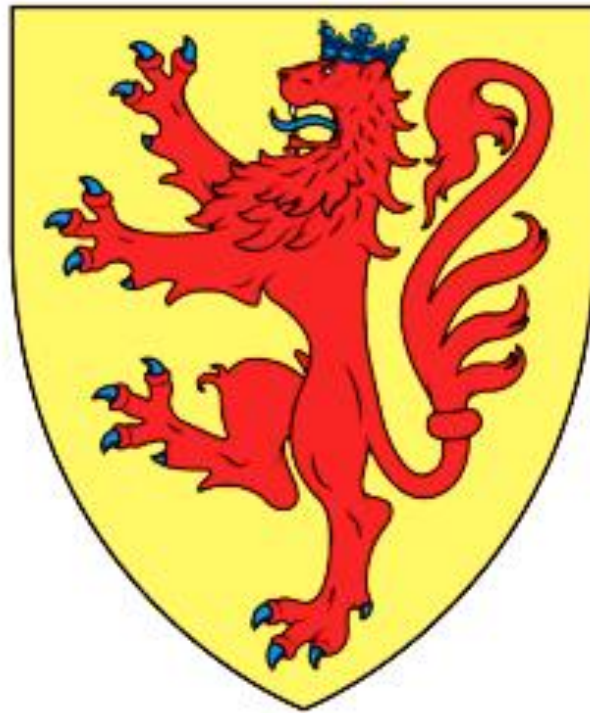
¹¹⁰ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fracia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

and peasants. As towns grew, wealthy merchants and artisans emerged, leading to a growing upper class and the emergence of a middle class. With over 300 districts, numerous nobles, ecclesiastics, towns, cities and trade organizations competing for power, the power of the emperor was severely reduced. They and nobles, both secular and religious, granted concessions and rights to towns, cities and guilds to acquire access to goods and economic centers. Most of the upper classes by this time had re-organized their holdings into producing a few key products—and had to trade for all other items.

With much of the population no longer beholden to lords in the feudal system, nobles had much less control. To secure influence over the churches, cities, towns and trade organizations, nobles attempted to install members of their families into the groups. Installing family members, who could advocate their interests and keep them up to date on developments, was the most common way for nobles to gain a hold in realms out of their sphere of control. Although Marksburg was no longer held directly under the Eppsteins, the two lines were well-connected through multiple marriages and alliances. The Count of Katzenelnbogen who bought the castle, was the son in law of the Lord of Eppstein. By selling Marksburg to a family member, the Eppsteiner received a much-needed influx of capital to help finance war campaigns while ensuring that the property stayed within the original family¹¹¹.

¹¹¹ Medieval Lands: Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fracia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

The Katzenelnbogens



Family Background

Like the Lords of Eppstein, the Lords of Katzenelnbogen were a relatively new lineage. The future Counts of Katzenelnbogen, although descendants of the Stauffer imperial family, started out as lowly “middle vassals” to the Archbishop of Cologne, Freidrich I of Schwarzenburg. The Archbishop gave the family their first significant bequest of lands, including serfs and vineyards, in 1102¹¹². However, the family did not take the Katzenelnbogen for several decades. Many historians believe that the first Lord of Katzenelnbogen was previously known as Graf von Staleck until 1138, when King Konrad III bestowed the country of Kraichgau on him¹¹³. The Katzenelnbogen exploited familial ties with Konrad III, advancing the families’ political and economic standings. One of the first things the Katzenelnbogens did was expand their holdings along the Rhine. By 1142, only four years after gaining their initial title, the Katzenelnbogen also became the Rhenish Palatinate, controlling numerous castles and ecclesiastical institutions¹¹⁴. A decade later, the family also controlled the Lorraine Palatinate, solidifying control of vast areas of land. In addition to building their power rapidly, the Katzenelnbogens were well connected throughout Europe. Descendants of Henry I, the Katzenelnbogen lineage was intertwined with many other royal lineages throughout Europe, and were noted relations of Frederick Barbosa¹¹⁵. Through constant expansion, political and economic endeavors, the Katzenelnbogen lineage became one of, if not the most, important lineages along the Middle Rhine. Producing multiple kings and queens, the family maintained vast powers throughout Europe.

The Making of an Empire

Like the Eppsteins, the Katzenelnbogens were largely focused on territorial expansion during their first years in power. In addition to acquiring the Rhenish and Lorrain Palatinates, the family gained economic power via the St. Goar duties in 1219¹¹⁶. Politically, the Katzenelnbogens formed many alliances via marriage with important land owners along the Middle Rhine. On a higher level, a large portion of the family served the king on diplomatic missions, forming and cementing ties with nobility and significant people across all of Europe, the Middle East and the Orient¹¹⁷. The Katzenelnbogens became a significant influence in terms of political power and one of the largest land holders. Additionally, with the lands and titles came many economic privileges, and other rights such as taxation along the Rhine were granted to the family via the Emperor. To protect their political and economic interests, the Katzenelnbogens built numerous castles to establish a daunting presence in the lands under their

¹¹² Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fracia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

¹¹³ Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Revised and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

¹¹⁴ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittel Rhein vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

¹¹⁵ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fracia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

¹¹⁶ Goar, T. I. (n.d.). *Rheinfels Castle*. Retrieved from St. Goar: <http://www.st-goar.de/734-1-geschichte-burg-rheinfels-1.html>

¹¹⁷ Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Revised and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

control. In 1245, the Count of Katzenelnbogen built a castle to protect his tax collectors¹¹⁸. Taxes and tolls represented a large portion of the Katzenelnbogen's income.

This fealty to the Empire lasted the Katzenelnbogens well until the Interregnum, when like the Eppsteins, the Katzenelnbogens began openly pursuing their own interests. During the Interregnum, which began in 1250, there was no official emperor. As tolls could only be granted by the emperor, each had to be reconfirmed when power changed hands. This put the Katzenelnbogens' control of the St. Goar toll at risk. However, without a strong emperor in place to keep the powerful regional nobles in check, many lords began setting up their own tolls along the Rhine or expanding the powers of the tolls they legally held. The Count of Katzenelnbogen, who already legally held, but who may have feared losing the St. Goar toll on the Rhine, began operating as a "Robber Baron". Like the Lord of Eppstein, the Count of Katzenelnbogen began pirating along the Rhine. Similar to other nobles, the Katzenelnbogen exploited all opportunities to exercise their power and generate income. This quickly brought them to the attention of the Rheinischer Bund, which laid siege to, but failed to rout, the Katzenelnbogen twice¹¹⁹. This was just one form of opportunism that arose during the Interregnum, as territorial lords misused their powers unhindered by any challenges.

Another prime example of lords misusing their power during the Interregnum were the alliances formed between the large noble families. Normally these alliances would have been blocked by the emperor, for fear that the families would be able to unite and challenge his power. One such alliance was the marriage between the Eppstein and Katzenelnbogen lines in 1268. Without the emperor to veto any such action, the two families united, which would significantly alter the power structure of the Middle Rhine. Created with the future in mind, the ramifications of this alliance did not become apparent until after the Interregnum had ended. In September 1273, Rudolph of Habsburg was elected King of the Romans, effectively ending the Interregnum. To challenge the nobles, King Rudolph implemented the Peace Toll of 1280. The Peace Toll removed most tolls temporarily from the Rhine, to remove infighting among territorial lords over rights to the customs. Toll had always been one of the most profitable sources of revenue in the Middle Rhine region and were highly contested. Furthermore, the Toll helped encourage higher levels of trade, which had been down due to high tolls and safety concerns along the Rhine.

Back at Marksburg, not much had changed. For several decades, the property remained with the Eppsteins. This all changed when the Lord of Eppstein sold Marksburg, Braubach, and the customs to his son in law, Count Eberhard II of Katzenelnbogen. With Marksburg now in his possession, the Lord of Katzenelnbogen controlled the Middle Rhine from Taunus to Lahn, to Einrichs including the whole left bank of the Rhine between St. Goar and Rheinfels¹²⁰. Controlling such a large portion of the Middle Rhine gave the Count of Katzenelnbogen a large amount of influence and power. It provided safe access to large markets such as Mainz, Koblenz, and Cologne. It also created favorable tolling conditions for the Katzenelnbogen. By controlling several of the tolls on the Rhine, the Lord of Katzenelnbogen could exempt shipments going to and from his lands from the tolls he controlled. This encouraged merchants to stop in ports and cities controlled by the Count of Katzenelnbogen, participate in markets under the Counts control, and made shipping terms more favorable for local merchants and guilds.

¹¹⁸ Goar, S. (n.d.). *More of the Rhine Wine Villages Part Two*. Sankt Goarhausen.

¹¹⁹ Roy Gardner, N. G. (2002). Tolling th Rhine in 1254: Complementary Monopoly Revisited.

¹²⁰ Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Reviessd and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

Marksburg

With such favorable trade conditions, the Counts of Katzenelnbogen strategically transformed Marksburg from a defense station into an economic hub for transportation and trade. In addition to retaining its toll collection, Marksburg was used as an administrative center and as a residence. The tolls brought the Lord of Katzenelnbogen large amounts of income, and a large portion of the Middle Rhine fell under Marksburg administrative control. To fulfill its new role on the Middle Rhine, Marksburg was significantly altered. At the beginning of the reign of the Katzenelnbogens, Count Eberhard II invested heavily in the land and castle. The family continually remodeled and modified Marksburg while investing in tolling, transportation and mining. No longer functioning solely as a military outpost to protect economic interests as it had under the Eppsteins, the Katzenelnbogen expanded the castle. The additions, such as new residential areas, towers and expanded walls reflected Marksburg new role. Figure 10 illustrates the additions made by the Katzenelnbogens in purple¹²¹. Around the year 1300, the Burgmann at Braubach began building a separate castle in the town itself¹²². Today, no remains of this structure exist. The only evidence is a relic at the church in Braubach¹²³. In the same year, Mainz was recorded as having 20,000 residents.



Figure 8: expansions in purple to existing castle of Marksburg in the fourteenth century completed by the Katzenelnbogens.

With continued emphasis on mining and agriculture and new ventures in trade and transportation, the surrounding lands experienced vast changes under the Katzenelnbogens. The local industries evolved with the castle's economic policies, constantly affecting the surrounding populations. These economic policies were also affected by major occurrences throughout the period, such as the decline of the wool industry, the rise of the Hanseatic League, the Black Plague and large amounts of social unrest.

Revenue Streams

Trade

Under the Eppsteins, the industry around Marksburg was largely focused on the production of wool and wine. However, with increased stability brought back after the Interregnum and the Peace Toll, trade along the Rhine increased significantly, including “signs

¹²¹ Deutsche Burgenvereinigung e.V. (DBV). (n.d.). *Marksburg und Philippsburg*. Kienberg: F&W Mediencenter.

¹²² Mohr, Werner. *Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen*. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

¹²³ Mohr, Werner. *Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen*. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

of a rising volume of exchange and grater exchange of bulk goods”¹²⁴. The ability to exert “physical control over landed goods” became a source of competition among many of the towns along the Rhine¹²⁵. The Counts of Katzenelnbogen, unlike the Eppsteins, invested heavily in trade and benefited greatly from Marksburg’s proximity to Cologne. Cologne was the furthest inland sea vessels went, at which point the goods were moved to river boats and over land routes. The Middle Rhine quickly became a large trans-shipment point, providing access via the Rhine and its smaller tributaries, as well as via land routes, to inner Europe. The trade house in London, established during the twelfth century, represented merchant interests, and was extended to all German merchants during the thirteenth century¹²⁶. With the proximity of Marksburg to Cologne, and the influence of the Count of Katzenelnbogen, merchants and guilds from Marksburg would have had access to numerous international markets.

Another advantageous development for the Lords of Katzenelnbogen was the formation of the Hanseatic League during the late thirteenth century¹²⁷. During the 1280s, Rhineland merchants joined with the Knights of the Teutonic order and the Lübeck-Hamburg merchants to form the Hanseatic League¹²⁸. By allying themselves, these individual organizations were able to take advantage of pre-existing conditions each organization had achieved alone, improving trading conditions for themselves at little cost. The Hanseatic League, like several other organizations which emerged during this period, was primarily a facilitator of international trade¹²⁹. The goal of the league was to remove trade barriers, secure favorable trade agreements and to promote its merchant members. The Hanseatic League was the largest such organization for over a century, ranging from the North Sea, to the Isles, and the base of the Rhine. Its members had already penetrated and established their presence in markets ranging from Russia to England, to the Mediterranean and to Asia. The Hanseatic League peaked during the middle of the fourteenth century, with organized trade, protections and monopolies throughout the areas under its control¹³⁰. With outposts in England, Norway, Flanders and Russia, it proved very profitable for merchants to join the League¹³¹.

The protections granted by the League and the stability of the Middle Rhine led to increases in regional and international trade transiting the Rhine. As the volume of trade increased, the area along the Middle Rhine became an integral part in regional and international trade. For a long time, Cologne was the leading member of the Hanse¹³². With territory under the Count of Katzenelnbogen extending as far east as Oberschwaben and as far south as Zurich, the

¹²⁴ Unger, R. W. (2006). Thresholds for Market Integration in the Low Countries and England in teh Fifteenth Century. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe : Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 349-382).

¹²⁵ Gordon Rotondo-McCord, Jonathan. (1991). *The Allod in the Medieval Rhineland*. Yale. 1991. Abstract, p. 2.

¹²⁶ Hoelschner, G. (n.d.). *A Guide to the Rhine*. Colonge: Hoursch & Beehstedt.

¹²⁷ Hanseatic League. (2016). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://0-academic.eb.com.library.uark.edu /levels/collegiate/article/39167>.

¹²⁸ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirkschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

¹²⁹ Feudalism. (2013). In C. Clark Northrup (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of world trade: From ancient times to the present*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

¹³⁰ Hanseatic League. (2016). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://0-academic.eb.com.library.uark.edu /levels/collegiate/article/39167>.

¹³¹ Feudalism. (2013). In C. Clark Northrup (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of world trade: From ancient times to the present*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

¹³² Hoelschner, G. (n.d.). *A Guide to the Rhine*. Colonge: Hoursch & Beehstedt.

Lords of Katzenelnbogen had “considerable influence on the largest West European traffic line of the late Middle Ages”¹³³.

Tolling, Mining, and Agriculture

While the Eppsteins income came primarily from agriculture, the Katzenelnbogens relied more on trade. A portion of both family’s income came from tolling, but the Katzenelnbogens pursued trade advantages more aggressively than the Eppsteins. Throughout their reign at Marksburg, the Lords of Katzenelnbogen were constantly reaffirming and expanding their tolling rights. In 1300, Graf Wilhelm von Katzenelnbogen became involved in the Rhenish Toll War, opposing King Albrecht von Habsburg¹³⁴. Very little is known about the toll war, but the tolls belonging to the Lord of Katzenelnbogen remained within his possession. In 1301, The Katzenelnbogener was forbidden from increasing the toll by King Albrecht, but granted the mining rights for lead and silver, within a one mile area of Marksburg¹³⁵. The Lords of Katzenelnbogen had begun petitioning for the mining rights in 1283. Despite the wait, the Katzenelnbogens were more effective at mining than the Eppsteins, and mining represented a significant portion of their income from Marksburg. However, when the Katzenelnbogens first started mining on Reichsburg, gold was “fourteen times more expensive than silver”¹³⁶. The value of silver did not stabilize until well into the second decade in the fourteenth century.

Additionally, “the end of the thirteenth century saw an end to the increase of the agriculture expansion”¹³⁷. The agricultural expansion and land reform that marked the Eppsteins rule largely stagnated during the first half of the fourteenth century. After a warm period between the mid-1280s and about 1310, Europe experienced a “prolonged cold snap between 1315 and 1330”¹³⁸. Additionally, prolonged rains in the areas north of the Middle Rhine led to intensive flooding, preventing farming¹³⁹. Followed by massive crop failures, high death tolls among both people and livestock, and increases in the price of food stuffs, quality of life suffered significantly. For Marksburg, and the Lords of Katzenelnbogen, the poor farming conditions took a large toll. Without being able to produce grapes for wine or sustain their livestock, the two largest industries of wine and wool were decimated. Furthermore, the Middle Rhine’s reliance on importing food made settlements like Marksburg and Braubach particularly vulnerable to famine and supply chain disruption. These conditions were not helped by the start of the Hundred Years’ War in 1337. Trade in both directions was hindered by the war between France and England, two

¹³³ Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Revised and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

¹³⁴ Mohr, Werner. *Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen*. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldemant.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

¹³⁵ Mohr, Werner. *Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen*. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldemant.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

¹³⁶ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

¹³⁷ Budde, P. (2016). *Trade in the Middle Ages*. Retrieved from Paul Budde History: <http://paulbuddehistory.com/europe/trade-in-the-middle-ages/>

¹³⁸ Budde, P. (2016). Retrieved from Climate Change, Floods, Famine and the Black Death: <http://paulbuddehistory.com/europe/the-great-death/>

¹³⁹ Budde, P. (2016). Retrieved from Climate Change, Floods, Famine and the Black Death: <http://paulbuddehistory.com/europe/the-great-death/>

of the region's largest trading partners. With poor agricultural conditions and a decrease in trade with France and England, the Lords of Katzenelnbogen began to shift the focus of their economic policies. Needing to generate income, the Count of Katzenelnbogen emphasized economic policies centered on trade and transportation. Most likely focused around Cologne, as a leading Hanse member, the Katzenelnbogens largely ignored agricultural developments until the mid-fourteenth century. The Lord of Katzenelnbogen focused on reaping gains from trade and the Hanseatic League until the arrival of the Black Death further reduced the profitability of trade in addition to agriculture. With a weakened population from malnutrition, poor hygiene and wide-spread death, the villages, towns and cities of the Middle Rhine became a breeding ground for the Plague.

The Black Death

It is estimated that at least 10% of the population in urban areas like Braubach died from the Great Famine around 1315, with higher rates among the rural population, which at the time accounted for 95% of Europe's population. As the climate continued to change, farming conditions across Europe evolved as well. Previously farmable land became useless, and agricultural output decreased. Grain became so scarce that King Ludwig of Wittelsbach IV forbade beer brewing in 1317¹⁴⁰. Relying even more heavily on trade, the Middle Rhine served as a cross point between north-south and east-west trade routes. Constant contact with travelers and traders from faraway lands, poor hygiene and an already weakened population led to several outbreaks of the plague starting around the mid-fourteenth century. With the average town losing between 50-80% of its population, it is estimated that overall a third of Europeans died. The area experienced a further six outbreaks following the first wave, leading to over 60% mortality rate during the fourteenth century. By 1400, Mainz had only 4,000 residents¹⁴¹. On what remained a largely agrarian society, the Plague brought on numerous economic changes.

The high mortality rate of the Black Death decreased the available labor pool, and labor shortages were rampant. In some instances, records show nominal wages increased by 40% and 60%¹⁴². However, the effects of increasing wages meant that prices soon followed. With less dependents per household, the per capita supply of gold and silver increased¹⁴³. This in turn created a situation where high inflation outpaced wage increases, often leaving laborers worse off in terms of real wages. The impact on nobles was no less significant. The Plague hit several important revenue streams for nobles who relied largely on agricultural production and serf labor. Climate change made previously fertile land unproductive. Consequently, harvests were poor and landowners could no longer rely on surpluses from their land as a significant source of income. Furthermore, the amount of land needed to produce the necessary amounts of food to support the population after the Black Death was only a portion of what pre-plague populations

¹⁴⁰ Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

¹⁴¹ Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

¹⁴² Routt, D. (2008). "The Economic Impact of the Black Death". Net Encyclopedia.

¹⁴³ Routt, D. (2008). "The Economic Impact of the Black Death". Net Encyclopedia.

required. This allowed settlements to contract as workers abandoned fields and lands which underperformed. In some areas settlements disappeared altogether as people migrated to more fertile lands. It is estimated that in the area around Marksburg, one third of the settlements disappeared as populations contracted and/or migrated¹⁴⁴. The decreasing population presented multiple problems for lords. The death toll severely reduced the number of tenants paying rents and contributing to the family coffers. Depopulation meant a loss of tax income for many lords. This presented a massive problem, as many nobles had banked on future tax income to pay off large debts¹⁴⁵.

Many nobles had underestimated the risk that disease posed to the population, and believed that growth would continue at a steady rate unhindered. Assuming continued population growth and steady tax income, supplemented by agricultural surpluses, nobles took on many debt-financed obligations which they could no longer afford. To meet their obligations nobles needed to collect the originally projected sums from a now much smaller population. Thus, taxes per capita sky rocketed. Higher taxes on an already strained population increased discontentment and further decreased quality of life. With few survivors per family, unproductive land and high taxes, there were few incentives for serfs to remain in any one area. Cutting their losses, many travelled looking for work on more favorable terms. Landowners who already faced a severe labor shortage ended up with even more fields laying fallow, further decreasing their income. The labor shortage and increased mobility of rural workers helped the lower class gain some power. While the first emergence of towns had put a crack in the manorial system, the Plague led to its death.

Final Collapse of the Manorial System

Although the feudal system had started to evolve under the Eppsteins, serf-based land management did not collapse until well into the Katzenelnbogens' reign. The Black Death was a major contributing factor which shifted power from the landowners to the laborers. The huge labor shortage resulting from the population decline enabled workers to demand better conditions and pay, for less work. Many serfs were able to travel to and work for lords who offered the most concessions, or to move to the cities to find work. Cities which had grown and prospered in the thirteenth century, were now faced by many of the same problems nobles were. Many had debt obligations which they could no longer afford, had lost a large percent of their population and no longer had the skilled laborers necessary to maintain levels of trade. The latter half of the fourteenth century saw huge losses in production, on average about 25%, due to "labor shortages and resource depletion"¹⁴⁶. Numerous cities began trying to attract rural populations to replace the laborers they lost. Cities and associations took advantage of discontent in the country side to offer migrants favorable tax and rent terms, in the hope of attracting them to the city. This led to complex initiatives aimed at encouraging growth while trying to protect the existing workers.

¹⁴⁴ Routt, D. (2008). "The Economic Impact of the Black Death". Net Encyclopedia.

¹⁴⁵ Fynn-Paul, J. (2006). Civic Debt, Civic Taxes, and Urban Unrest: A Catalan Key to Interpreting the Late Fourteenth-Century European Crisis. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 119-145).

¹⁴⁶ Unger, R. W. (2006). Thresholds for Market Integration in the Low Countries and England in the Fifteenth Century. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe : Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 349-382).

For instance, while cities overall wanted to increase their numbers to collect the necessary amount of taxes, guilds and trade associations no longer accepted as many members. While cities were implementing expansionist policies to attract workers, guilds were implementing policies aimed at protecting their remaining members¹⁴⁷. With Europe's deceased population came a natural decrease in the amount of transactions occurring. To maintain income levels, guilds could not allow the same number of members as they had before the plague. To decrease competition between members, new members were refused; promotion within the organization was strictly controlled; and women were removed from organizations across all of Europe¹⁴⁸. In addition to a reduced number of transactions, merchants were now faced with sudden imbalances between supply and demand each time a wave of the Plague came through. Along with each wave came population loss, creating gluts on the market. Prices on goods were lowered until markets reached new equilibrium levels. With such decimation, often only the healthiest members of the households in the prime of their lives survived, leading to increased wealth per capita. This in turn led to higher amounts of disposable income, which led to an increase in purchases of luxury goods, despite overall population declines¹⁴⁹. With lower prices and increased wealth, the quality of life for the lowest rungs of society continued to improve. Laborers previously tied to lands and lords no longer felt obliged to remain, and moved to areas where they could benefit the most.

Urbanization

The period after the Plague, roughly 1350-1400, saw significant growth in urban areas. Cities connected along heavily used trade routes were quicker to recover, and across Europe urbanization increased by 3-5%¹⁵⁰. While some numbers did move into established towns, a larger portion of the urbanization resulted in the "emergence of new urban centers"¹⁵¹. A portion of this increasing urbanization can be attributed to Engel's Law. Survivors had higher levels of wealth and higher wages. However, the amount of money spent on food remained roughly the same. Therefore, a portion of this extra money went towards paying for goods few could previously afford. The increasing demand for manufactured goods played a large role in the growth of many cities¹⁵².

In the Middle Rhine towards the end of the 14th century, about half of the villages had been abandoned¹⁵³. While many towns, which had not been abandoned but saw a steep population decline, did not recover their pre-plague populations for several centuries, most urban centers had begun to recover from the immediate shocks of the Black Death by the end of the

¹⁴⁷ Routt, D. (2008). "The Economic Impact of the Black Death". Net Encyclopedia.

¹⁴⁸ Routt, D. (2008). "The Economic Impact of the Black Death". Net Encyclopedia.

¹⁴⁹ Routt, D. (2008). "The Economic Impact of the Black Death". Net Encyclopedia.

¹⁵⁰ Jedwab, J. a. (2016). *Bones, Bacteria and Break Points: The Heterogenous Spatial Effects of the Black Death and Long-Run Growth*. Mason.

¹⁵¹ Jedwab, J. a. (2016). *Bones, Bacteria and Break Points: The Heterogenous Spatial Effects of the Black Death and Long-Run Growth*. Mason.

¹⁵² Voigtländer, N., & Voth, H.-J. (2012). The Three Horsemen of Riches: Plague, War, and Urbanization in Early Modern Europe. *Review of Economic Studies*.

¹⁵³ Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema.ndt.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

century. Cities such as Cologne, and others in the Hanseatic League recovered faster, leading historians to link recovery time to the proximity of towns to trading networks¹⁵⁴. With higher demand for consumer goods and the return to higher levels of trade, transportation systems faced increasing usage. This proved to be beneficial for those who controlled the tolling stations, like the Count of Katzenelnbogen. To make their ports as profitable as possible, nobles began investing in the transportation sectors. Despite efforts to increase the ease of trade, communication problems, heavy tolls, protectionist market policies and poorly protected and maintained roads remained an issue¹⁵⁵. One of the largest improvements in trade, however, were modifications to shipping cranes.

Many areas along the Middle Rhine became trans-shipment points, using new and improved versions of the previously stationary harbor cranes. The slewing crane and floating crane both appeared during the fourteenth century^{156;157}. Enhanced flexibility and rotation were major strides in the transportation sector. These advancements coincided with the innovations of river ships, helping increase trade in and the development of towns and cities along the smaller tributaries of the Rhine. Other innovations in transport came in the form of ship building. Mast cranes, the closest known one to Marksburg being in Cologne, were used to attach masts to ships¹⁵⁸. As urban centers grew and innovations tried to ease the challenges of transportation, changes were reflected across all of society. The latter half of the fourteenth century can also be characterized by high levels of “persistent urban unrest”¹⁵⁹. Although now largely free of the strict feudal systems, many urban dwellers lacked access to capital. Throughout the fourteenth century towns were some of the largest lenders. Many of the loans had interest rates at 50%, and those in power benefited disproportionately¹⁶⁰.

Along with the development of urban centers came the division of city dwellers into two classes: those with money and those without. Much of those in the lower class were discontent with the visible widening of the wealth gap. Furthermore, religious unrest due to the Plague fed into this resentment. There were numerous peasant revolts and uprisings in the 1370s and 1380s¹⁶¹. In the Middle Rhine area, the prevailing economic and religious unrest was further ignited by internal power struggles between cities, lords and the emperor. As they had done numerous times in the past, towns and cities began banding together. Despite the passing of the Golden Bull in 1356, which only allowed federations to form for the sole purpose of protecting the peace, numerous organizations of towns and cities existed for economic, political and social

¹⁵⁴ Jedwab, J. a. (2016). *Bones, Bacteria and Break Points: The Heterogenous Spatial Effects of the Black Death and Long-Run Growth*. Mason.

¹⁵⁵ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *A Book of History: A History of All Nations with 8000 Illustrations, Volume 9*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁵⁶ Matheus, M. (1996). "Mittelalterliche Hafenkranne", in Lindgren, Uta, *Europäische Technik im Mittelalter. 800 bis 1400. Tradition und Innovation (4th ed.)*. Berlin: Mann Verlag.

¹⁵⁷ Matthies, A. (1992). Medieval Treadwheels. Artists' Views of Building Construction. *Technology and Culture*, pp. 510-547.

¹⁵⁸ Matheus, M. (1996). "Mittelalterliche Hafenkranne", in Lindgren, Uta, *Europäische Technik im Mittelalter. 800 bis 1400. Tradition und Innovation (4th ed.)*. Berlin: Mann Verlag.

¹⁵⁹ Fynn-Paul, J. (2006). Civic Debt, Civic Taxes, and Urban Unrest: A Catalan Key to Interpreting the Late Fourteenth-Century European Crisis. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 119-145).

¹⁶⁰ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁶¹ Hickey. (2016). *Late Middle Ages: Crisis and Recovery*. Bloomsberg University.

reasons. These unions often worked in cycles, constantly being created, terminated and resurrected. Federations arose often during times of adversity, as entities such as towns and cities sought to protect their economic and political rights.

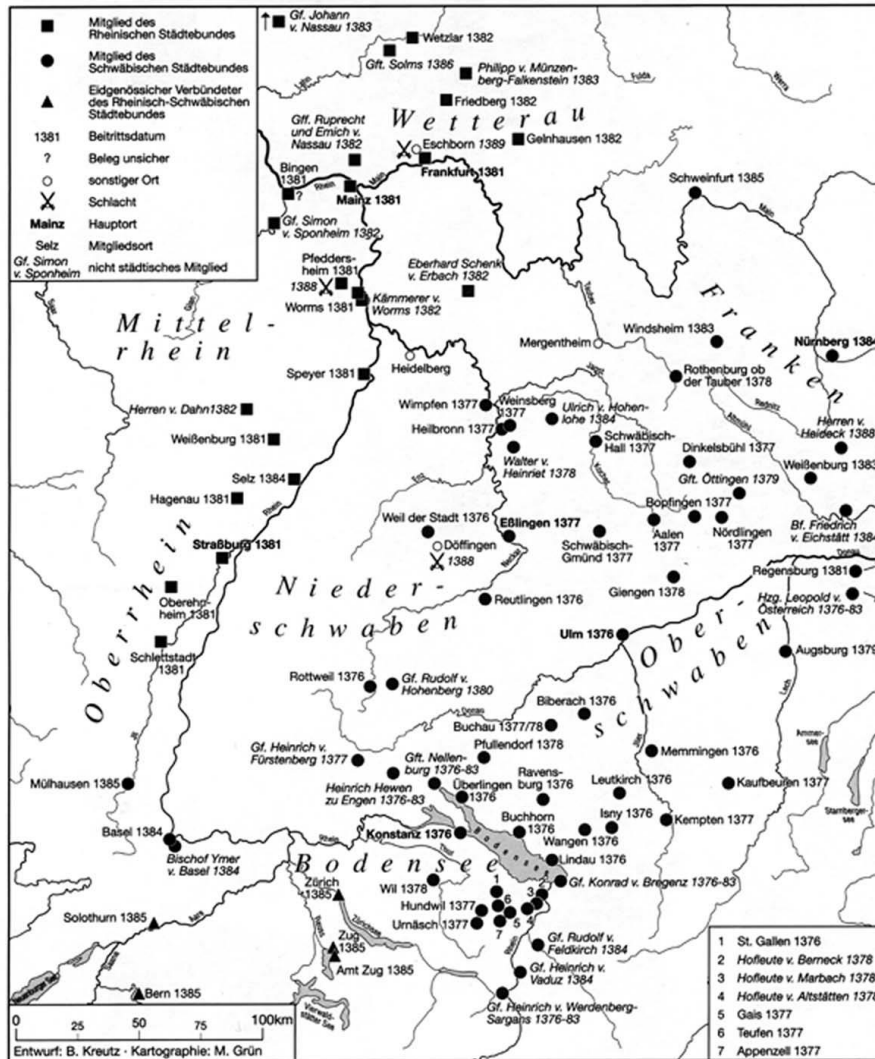


Figure 9: Rhenish-Swabian League

In 1381, many of the cities which had participated in the *Rheinischer Bund*, rebanded together to form der *Rheinischer Städtebund*, or the Rhenish League of Cities. Early on, the Rhenish League joined forces with the Swabian League, to form der *Süddeutscher Städtebund*, a military consortium of southern German towns and cities, shown in Figure 11¹⁶². These organizations were often in direct opposition to nobles like the Count of Katzenelnbogen. Nobles and King Wenzel tried to disband the federation, but failed in 1383¹⁶³. Afterwards, the organization received “de-facto recognition in 1384”¹⁶⁴. During the year 1383, the Count of Katzenelnbogen acquired

many properties, castles, towns and villages¹⁶⁵. These lands and Marksburg would have been surrounded by the southern league. Strong confederations of cities which could raise their own armies and often had access to greater sources of capital than nobles prevented further territorial expansion of the great lords. These foundations often challenged nobles and won in terms of economic and political rights.

¹⁶² Bernhard Kreutz, *Rheinische Städtebund (13th / 14th century)*, published on 06.07.2009. Historical Lexicon of Bavaria, URL: <[http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Rheinische Städtebünde](http://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Rheinische_Städtebünde)>.

¹⁶³ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁶⁴ Scott, T. (2012). *The City-State in Europe, 1000-1600: Hinterland, Territory, Region*. Oxford.

¹⁶⁵ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fracia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

Money

After a count of two hundred plus mints throughout the empire under the Eppsteins, the number more than tripled to six hundred plus mints around the year 1300. Many towns used a specific currency which had little value in other areas. Travelers and traders were constantly exchanging money. This acted as a huge hindrance to trade, and less trade meant less taxes, which meant less income for those who hosted markets. To encourage trade, many regions formed currency unions. Having several larger regions using a single currency helped bring legitimacy to the money economy. In the Middle Rhine, the Rhenish florin became the first widely traded currency which held its value and was accepted in multiple markets¹⁶⁶. This, however, did not solve all the inefficiencies. In 1325 King John ordered the minting of Bohemian florins to replace the “light silver coinage”¹⁶⁷. The Bohemian florin was larger and better suited “for trade purposes”; indeed, the Bohemian florin soon became “internationally important”¹⁶⁸. The golden florin, in particular, became important in wholesale trading¹⁶⁹. However, full acceptance of a money economy did not occur until the late-fourteenth century. The two largest obstacles were the lack of legitimacy currencies had the further away from their origin they were, and the constant devaluation of money. The first was addressed via a convention of the four Rhenish electors¹⁷⁰ in 1386, where the electors gave legitimacy to the coins, which “became universally recognized”¹⁷¹. Lastly, the issue of devaluation was solved by the florin, which “kept a fixed ratio of value to silver”¹⁷². The electors and the *Rhenish Pfalzgraf* created the Rhenish Coin Association in 1386, in an effort to stabilize the currency further¹⁷³.

Coincidentally, in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, gold and silver prices across Europe rose steadily. In 1375 gold “rose only on the European markets, and silver prices rose ever upwards”¹⁷⁴. While the consequences of increasing gold prices led to a crisis in the fifteenth century, families like the Katzenelnbogen who had significant silver mines benefitted from the rising price of silver. Higher income from mines increased the family’s liquidity and purchasing power. Additionally, the family started experimenting with selling municipal bonds in 1382¹⁷⁵.

¹⁶⁶ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁶⁷ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁶⁸ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁶⁹ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁷⁰ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁷¹ Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁷² Flinders, W. O. (1914). *The Book of History: A History of All Nations With Over 8000 Illustrations, Volume 10*. New York: The Educational Book Co.

¹⁷³ Mohr, Werner. Chronik Rhein-Main mit Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Offenbach, Darmstadt, Friedberg, Hanau, Bad Homburg mit soziokulturellen Hintergründen. <http://www.graf-von-katzenelnbogen.de/zeittafeldema ndt.html>. Accessed March 1, 2017. Web.

¹⁷⁴ Unger, R. W. (2006). Thresholds for Market Integration in the Low Countries and England in the Fifteenth Century. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe : Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 349-382).

¹⁷⁵ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

Trade and Market Integration

At the beginning of the Count of Katzenelnbogen's rule at Marksburg, business was good. High levels of trade occurred on both the water and land routes, allowing the Lord of Katzenelnbogen to claim income from tolls and taxes. Other sources of income for the family included silver mining on Marksburg and selling agriculture surpluses in markets such as Oberwesel¹⁷⁶. The largest commercial activities in the region around Marksburg were "wine, grain, fur and wood"¹⁷⁷. This remained so for three or four decades, until 1313. One of the largest industries in the Middle Rhine, the wool industry, began to go into decline.

Once the leading industry in the Middle Rhine, wool was traded at all levels. While demand remained roughly the same locally and regionally, international exports were hit the hardest. The largest market for wool was England, which had been working for some time to develop their own wool industries¹⁷⁸. 1313 is the first year in which exports to England declined, taking a large toll on the local population that relied on wool exports for their livelihood. With an already struggling economy, this area was hit hard by the crop failures and famine from 1315-1318. As the four largest industries in the region were all agricultural and land based, the impact of the climate change and changing trade flows had an unprecedented effect on the economy. Poor weather meant no crops, grapes or grain, with which to make wine or other food stuffs for man or animal. Continuous floods and famine depleted forests of sellable wood and animals to hunt. Faced with depletion of all the main sectors of the economy, trade was stunted. Luckily, the Lord of Katzenelnbogen could still rely on the fact that he controlled two of the three toll stations along the Rhine.

In addition to the one that came with Marksburg and the Boppard customs, the Count of Katzenelnbogen received rights to the Bacharach customs in 1315. While trade was depressed, the Count of Katzenelnbogen increased the duties to be paid for transiting trade routes under his control, while exempting his own goods from such tolls. Records show that the Count charged a rate of "2 tournosen per cartload of wine, or of equivalent values of commercial goods"¹⁷⁹. Not one to let the chance for extra income to pass by, the Count of Katzenelnbogen put his diplomatic experience to use to supplement his income. In 1321, he was paid 12,000 marks for his work with the Delegation of Kings¹⁸⁰. As conditions worsened, commercial activity came to a standstill as little to no surplus existed to take to the market and families returned to subsistence methods to survive. As the population began evening out to what the land could now support, trade began to resume. In 1330, records show that the Lord of Katzenelnbogen made 2,000 pounds at the St. Goar toll on the Rhine¹⁸¹. In addition to income from tolls, the Katzenelnbogen also hosted multiple fairs and festivals, receiving taxes from transactions.

This emphasis on local trade was further underlined by the difficulties which constantly reappeared in international trade. The Hanseatic League was constantly at odds with English

¹⁷⁶ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

¹⁷⁷ Boerner, L. (2016). *Medieval Market Making Brokerage Regulations in Central Western Europe, ca 1250-1700*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.

¹⁷⁸ Nicholas, D. (2003). Commercial Credit and Centrl Place Function in 13th Century Ypres. In D. Nicholas, *Urban Europe, 1100-1700*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁷⁹ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. "Fraconia, Nobility". Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

¹⁸⁰ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

¹⁸¹ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittelrhine vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

merchants, leading to trade wars between the two. Throughout the decade, merchants “demanded higher import duties and export taxes” on the Hanse¹⁸². A new treaty was established in 1338, which helped revive trade by “limiting rights of extraterritoriality and restraint on trade taxes”¹⁸³. As trade was reviving, life looked good, until the first wave of the Plague hit, sweeping across the Rhine from 1347-1351. Fear of disease and illness prevented many merchants from making trips, population loss suppressed trade and reductions in price with high inflation provided little incentive for merchants. Consequently, markets contracted in size. With a loss of income from long distance traders and depressed revenue from trade tolls, the Katzenelnbogens began trying to increase the amount of local and regional trade. They hosted several festivals and fairs, had city and market rights granted to them¹⁸⁴. However, it appears that the Plague had little impact on the Lord of Katzenelnbogen.

One of the possible explanations for this is the reliance of the Middle Rhine on regional trade. The Rhenish cities largest trading partners were each other, followed by England¹⁸⁵. As long distance trade contracted, but discretionary spending increased, this could have led to a small boom in local and regional trade. During the Plague Years, the Katzenelnbogen continued to build castles, which would have been increasingly difficult in the face of large labor shortages, increasing wages and worker concessions. The Middle Rhine area was hit by multiple waves of the Plague during the mid to late fourteenth century. The constantly fluctuating population wreaked havoc on food prices, wages, and rents. In 1367, grain prices in Frankfurt were at an unprecedented high when suddenly half of the population disappeared¹⁸⁶. This depopulation was followed quickly by price erosion¹⁸⁷. This cycle repeated itself several times throughout the late fourteenth century, creating numerous problems for producers.

Innovations in Commerce

Although the Katzenelnbogens did not let the Plague hinder their ambitions, commerce was significantly altered. Facing a new competitive environment, artisans and merchants began bypassing the guilds. Two of the largest innovations in trade were the “putting-out” and “factory” systems¹⁸⁸. Around Marksburg, the putting out system was particularly popular¹⁸⁹. Merchants and artisans began competing instead of cooperating. Ignoring quality standards, quotas, educational and civic standards, these new economic arrangements were one of the first forms of proto-capitalism. Slowly, power began shifting again. This time, the guilds suffered at the hands of enterprising merchants. This change in economic organization was complemented by further advancements in money regulation and transportation. The standardization of coinage in 1386 went a long way to helping revive trade in the Middle Rhine. Additionally, as Europe began to

¹⁸² Conybeare, J. (1985). Trade Wars: A Comparative Study of Anglo-Hanse, Franco-Italian, and Hawley-Smoot. *World Politics*, 142-147.

¹⁸³ Conybeare, J. (1985). Trade Wars: A Comparative Study of Anglo-Hanse, Franco-Italian, and Hawley-Smoot. *World Politics*, 142-147.

¹⁸⁴ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittel Rhein vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

¹⁸⁵ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. . Oxford.

¹⁸⁶ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

¹⁸⁷ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web

¹⁸⁸ Nelson, L. (2016). The Rise of Capitalism and the Decline of Guilds. In L. Nelson, *Lectures in Medieval History*. Lawrence: University of Kansas.

¹⁸⁹ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. . Oxford.

recover from the Plague, overland trade routes reemerged and shipping improvements helped trade rebound during the second half of the fourteenth century. Near Marksburg, which had both land and water routes, trade picked up significantly. Innovation in river vessels helped increase trade among the Rhine's tributaries. "Changes in smaller ships, vessels used in coastal and river transport" had a large impact on "the organization of markets and town size"¹⁹⁰. Trade levels were further improved by the wide spread adoption of currency unions. In 1386, the Archbishops of Mainz, Trier and Cologne formed a "coinage union to stabilize currency"¹⁹¹.

Improvements in river ships would have decreased transportation costs for local and regional trade. Coin unions would have driven down costs associated with exchanging currencies. Furthermore, unions instilled more trust from the public in coins and the money economy, decreasing the level of bartering. The decreasing transportation cost and wider use of coin are likely to be key reasons for the "increasing market integration" which occurred throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries¹⁹². Historians often use price convergence and correlation to test the level of market integration¹⁹³. The strongest evidence of market integration in the Middle Rhine region is the appearance of regional grain markets; this was a large shift in markets where grain had typically been an extremely localized commodity¹⁹⁴. Another key measurement used is the reliance of markets on goods from far-away areas¹⁹⁵. As trade strengthened along the Middle Rhine, the Count of Katzenelnbogen did little to alter their revenue streams. They maintained market and city rights, continued to host fairs and festivals, and made large amounts of their income from taxes and tolls. The largest change during this period was the emergence of many different iron works.

The Lord of Katzenelnbogen organized the mining of silver from Reichsburg. This would have been sold to mints in the past, and now to iron works. In 1387, ninety-seven different iron works were recorded in the area¹⁹⁶. This could have affected the count by either providing ample buyers for his silver, or devaluing it via the implication that with so many iron works the market would have been flooded with silver. Either way, there would have either been significant production or price pressure on the Katzenelnbogens. Inventions like suction pumps used for mining made it easier for them to extract silver from Reichsburg. Combined inventions like power-driven bellows and rolling mills substantially changed iron production. While the Lords of Katzenelnbogen experienced little changes in sources of revenue, the makeup of the goods transiting their territories altered considerably. "Metal and glass industries were growing, and

¹⁹⁰ Unger, R. W. (2006). Thresholds for Market Integration in the Low Countries and England in the Fifteenth Century. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe : Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 349-382).

¹⁹¹ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. "Fracia, Nobility". Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

¹⁹² Unger, R. W. (2006). Thresholds for Market Integration in the Low Countries and England in the Fifteenth Century. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe : Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 349-382).

¹⁹³ Unger, R. W. (2006). Thresholds for Market Integration in the Low Countries and England in the Fifteenth Century. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe : Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 349-382).

¹⁹⁴ Unger, R. W. (2006). Thresholds for Market Integration in the Low Countries and England in the Fifteenth Century. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe : Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 349-382).

¹⁹⁵ Unger, R. W. (2006). Thresholds for Market Integration in the Low Countries and England in the Fifteenth Century. In L. Armstrong, *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe : Essays in Honour of John H.A. Munro* (pp. 349-382).

¹⁹⁶ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. "Fracia, Nobility". Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

linen” began replacing wool¹⁹⁷. Watermills were constantly being improved, affecting the grain, timber and wool industries¹⁹⁸.

Despite the famines, plagues and economic changes throughout the 1300s, the Katzenelnbogens thrived. The Katzenelnbogens built or bought portions of at least twenty-one castles, with authority extended as far away as Luxemburg and Lichtenstein¹⁹⁹. Furthermore, in 1380 the Count of Katzenelnbogen inherited all the lands of the Count Palatinate of the Rhine²⁰⁰. Following in 1395, the Lord of Katzenelnbogen was appointed the Governor of Luxemburg²⁰¹. By the turn of the fifteenth century, the Katzenelnbogen family was a force to be reckoned with. Having built a large empire, the Count divided his lands into 24 districts and wineries, centered around a large administration center at Rheinfels²⁰².

Trade at the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century

The growth of fairs and revival of trade towards the end of the fourteenth century led to stronger trade relations between Rhenish cities, Antwerp and Frankfurt²⁰³. In 1394, 117 cities were represented at the Frankfurt Fair²⁰⁴. Trade to the south, with land also under the Katzenelnbogen’s control, was strengthened in 1380 when the King of Luxemburg abolished all tariffs to promote trade²⁰⁵. Along with the reemergence of trade came stricter regulations. Guilds began to lose power, which they tried to counter through implementing new regulations. They made guild membership mandatory for citizens of towns and required that money exchanges had to occur at banks²⁰⁶. These new regulations were meant to build up the guilds, instill confidence in money and encourage trade. Furthermore, the increasing demand for manufactured goods led to innovations in production and “long distance trade led to diversification and specialization”²⁰⁷ in towns and cities. Despite declines in demand for Rhenish wool, the wool industry revived and once again became a central industry to the Middle Rhine. Cologne served as a major production and distribution center for regional producers²⁰⁸. Several documents illustrate that while exports to England were decreasing, the wool trade within the Middle Rhine region recovered quite well. There is evidence of significant trade between Rhenish cities, although it is unlikely that increased consumption in this region alone compensated for the loss of English business.

New Revenue Streams and the Bullion Famine

The Lord of Katzenelnbogen had numerous sources of revenue. In addition to revenues from tolls, trade and taxes, the Count of Katzenelnbogen also acted as a diplomat. In 1407, King Ruprecht visited Marksburg and several of the Counts of Katzenelnbogens served as royal

¹⁹⁷ Newman, P. B. (2001). *Daily Life in the Middle Ages*. McFarland.

¹⁹⁸ Newman, P. B. (2001). *Daily Life in the Middle Ages*. McFarland.

¹⁹⁹ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittel Rhein vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

²⁰⁰ Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittel Rhein vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

²⁰¹ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

²⁰² Volk, O. (1987). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft am Mittel Rhein vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert*.

²⁰³ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. Oxford.

²⁰⁴ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

²⁰⁵ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

²⁰⁶ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fraconia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

²⁰⁷ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. Oxford.

²⁰⁸ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. Oxford.

emissaries and ambassadors abroad²⁰⁹. Each of these roles was generally rewarded by either money, lands or titles. In 1408, Count Johann von Katzenelnbogen IV instituted the first general land tax, charging all residents of lands under his control for water and pasture use for 10 pfenning²¹⁰. As the first tax of its kind, it is unknown how effective it was. It did however serve its purpose of bringing the Count of Katzenelnbogen additional income. On top of this, the Counts of Katzenelnbogen began receiving large amounts of money through marriage. In 1422, the Lord of Katzenelnbogen Count Philip the Elder married Anne of Württemberg, receiving 32,000 guilders²¹¹. Traditionally the Miss Tax was only 4,000 guilders²¹². Receiving a large sum such as a dowry contributed nicely to the Count of Katzenelnbogen's liquidity and prestige. The Lord of Katzenelnbogen was perhaps better insulated from losses due to the freeze in 1431, which caused significant agricultural damage. On top of the poor harvest and lost agricultural revenue, 1430 marked the beginning of the Bullion Famine.

In the last part of the Katzenelnbogen's rule, silver and gold became quite scarce throughout Europe. Many factors contributed to this "famine". One of the largest was the use of precious metals to pay for luxury goods imported from the Far East. With few exports, Europe did not earn much of its metals back. However, Marksburg and the Katzenelnbogens were hit worse by the silver crisis. With limited mining technology at the time, many mines became inactive. Several mints in the area closed. Cologne and the surrounding regions which relied on it, like Marksburg and Braubach, were hit particularly hard by coin shortages and economic crises. Cologne, which served as one of most important international centers for deposit banking was subjected to numerous "panics and runs" on their financial institutions²¹³. Reduced financial stability, silver and iron production, would have led to tenuous situations for many lords and merchants.

Yet, the Count of Katzenelnbogen remained well off during the crisis. Not one to shirk the trend of growing dowries, the Count of Katzenelnbogen engaged his daughter, the Countess Anna in 1446 for the County of Hessen and 52,000 guilders²¹⁴. This is an astonishing amount, considering the previously accepted bride prices and the depressed income the Count of Katzenelnbogen would have been receiving due to the silver crisis. Philip the Elder also used his wealth to increase his holdings. The Lord of Katzenelnbogen purchased "co-ownership of the county Diez", "the Taunus foothills" and "joint possession of Limburg"²¹⁵. In addition to the "famine" of money, another wave of the Plague swept through the region in 1448. This caused more economic problems with another bout of labor shortages and swings in the market. Five years later, in 1453, a volcano in Korea erupted, causing "two years of volcanic winter and crop failures"²¹⁶. However, by 1450 the Count of Katzenelnbogen had acquired "large areas of land, considerable cash income, constantly in liquid funds and superior financial position"²¹⁷. This continued wealth in the face of numerous economic issues was likely due to the tolls and taxes the Count collected from trade transiting the Rhine.

²⁰⁹ Deutsche Burgenvereinigung e.V. (DBV). (n.d.). *Marksburg und Philippsburg*. Kienberg: F&W Mediocenter.

²¹⁰ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. "Fraconia, Nobility". Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

²¹¹ Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Revised and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

²¹² Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Revised and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

²¹³ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. Oxford.

²¹⁴ Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Revised and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

²¹⁵ Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Revised and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

²¹⁶ Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Revised and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

²¹⁷ Demandt, K. (1972). *Geschichte des Landes Hessen, 2nd Revised and Expanded Edition*. Kassel: Baerenreiter.

Increasing Growth of Trade

Around the middle of the fifteenth century, market ships began making daily journeys between nearby centers of commerce. Once such example is the ship which commuted daily between Mainz and Frankfurt²¹⁸. For other markets, such as those closer to Marksburg, trade became increasingly intertwined. The use of overland routes expanded, and the Middle Rhine's trade with "northern Italy, southern Germany, the Low Countries, Lyon and Castile" grew²¹⁹. Inventions in the last half of the 1450s led to a revival in silver mining, creating a "boom" in 1460²²⁰. The great "famine" was over, and money was once again abundant. In 1466, the currency union between Mainz, Trier and Cologne was expanded to include the Netherlands²²¹. The international adoption of the Rhenish Florin indicates a large amount of trade between the Middle Rhine and the Netherlands, such that it made economic sense to use a single currency across the area. For exporters and importers of goods, like the Katzenelnbogens, the adoption of one currency would have reduced transaction costs on international trade. Wine accounted for a minimum of "25%"²²² of total shipments on the Rhine.

To the south, most exports from the Middle Rhine in addition to wine were "wood, charcoal, steel and iron, wheat and stone"²²³. To the north, the Middle Rhine sent "salt, cheese and fish"²²⁴. Despite the growing volume of trade on the Rhine, merchants still faced forced dockings. Any goods transiting the Rhine via Cologne were forced to make a "port of call"²²⁵. Cologne, which was the largest market within easy reach of Marksburg, was most likely the intended destination for a significant portion of the goods coming out of Marksburg and Braubach. However, for the few elite merchants and nobles sending goods abroad, such as the Lord of Katzenelnbogen, these compulsory dockings increased lead time and decreased profits. Despite this, trade continued to grow rapidly, complimented by the complete dismantling of the feudal system.

The Beginning of the End

Towards the end of the reign of the Lords of Katzenelnbogen at Marksburg, the prominent use of the assault cannon made castles and fortifications irrelevant²²⁶. This put the final death knoll in what remained of the feudal system. No longer was it sensible to build immense structures for defense when metal balls could blast through them—and no longer did

²¹⁸ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. "Fracia, Nobility". Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

²¹⁹ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. "Fracia, Nobility". Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

²²⁰ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. Oxford.

²²¹ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. Oxford.

²²² Weststrate, J. (2001). Laat-veertiende-eeuwse Gelderse Riviertolrekeningen als Bron vor Economisch-Historisch Onderzoek. In J. Weststrate, *Jaarboek vor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis* (pp. 222-258).

²²³ Weststrate, J. (2006). *Shifting markets and institutional change: wine trade on the river Rhine, c. 1380-1560*. Helsinki: Leiden University.

²²⁴ Weststrate, J. (2006). *Shifting markets and institutional change: wine trade on the river Rhine, c. 1380-1560*. Helsinki: Leiden University.

²²⁵ Weststrate, J. (2006). *Shifting markets and institutional change: wine trade on the river Rhine, c. 1380-1560*. Helsinki: Leiden University.

²²⁶ Oidiu-Sorin, C. (2011). ASPECTS OF THE MARITIME TRANSPORT EVOLUTION DURING THE MIDDLE AGES. *Universitaet Maritime Constanta Analele*, pp. 25-27.

the lower classes seek protection behind now useless walls. Citadels and fortifications were destroyed by modern warfare technologies and abandoned in favor of more palatial, central residences. Consequently, taxes were relaxed, “especially the local customs fees”, “resulting in the growth of international commercial exchanges”²²⁷. People who previously paid for protection now had more capital on hand and trade boomed. The Counts of Katzenelnbogen controlled Marksburg until 1479, when the last male heir died and it passed to Anna Landgraves of Hesse through marriage²²⁸. However, the line of Hessen is a result from a break within the Katzenelnbogen family centuries earlier, meaning that it remained within the same family overall.

²²⁷ Oidiu-Sorin, C. (2011). ASPECTS OF THE MARITIME TRANSPORT EVOLUTION DURING THE MIDDLE AGES. *Universitaet Maritime Constanta Analele*, pp. 25-27.

²²⁸ Medieval Lands; Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. “Fracia, Nobility”. Accessed October 15, 2015. Web.

In Conclusion

During their respective times controlling Marksburg, the Eppsteins and Katzenelnbogens faced significantly different constraints in terms of the political, social and economic conditions. As a result, each family implemented vastly different policies under their respective rules. Despite these different approaches, both families had a common goal: to make Marksburg as profitable as possible. Faced with these different conditions, including the influence of outside events on their decisions, the Eppsteins and Katzenelnbogens implemented significantly different policies. Despite these different approaches, both families had a common goal: to make Marksburg as profitable as possible. Driven by their desire to continually consolidate their power throughout the Middle Rhine, both families continually altered Marksburg and pursued territorial expansion. Both families used Marksburg as a source of income, primarily from the toll on the Rhine, and then through mining rights and the town of Braubach. The toll on the Rhine contributed a large portion of both family's income from Marksburg, which proved to be a reliable source for income during famines, plague years, and during economic recessions. Both families had a large role in shaping the surrounding economy. As each family emphasized different economic activities—agriculture and then trade, respectively—the local community's economies reflected the changes.

While the Eppsteins controlled Marksburg, during the from the late twelfth to late thirteenth century, feudalism was at its peak. This had significant ramifications for the Eppsteins and limited their ability to implement agricultural land reforms. With land held in multiple sub-agreements, it was difficult to consolidate holdings plots into larger fields. Under the Eppsteins, both the feudal and *allodial* systems coexisted and mingled. Weak duchies in Middle Rhine allowed for the lesser nobles to evolve into powerful families. The Eppsteins attempted to acquire as much political and economic power as possible. During the majority of their time ruling Marksburg, agriculture was a good investment. This was especially true for the first few decades after receiving Marksburg. Bumper crops and limited technological advancements in other areas probably influenced the Eppsteins decision to invest heavily in agriculture. The economic system at the time also emphasized land as a form of productive capital. With cooperative weather, land proved to be a good investment for the Eppsteins.

These bumper crops led to a population boom, providing a surplus of labor. Additionally, the agricultural inventions of the time made land increasingly productive. The Eppsteins invested heavily in the wool industry and in wine making. These two industries were profitable for different reasons. Sheep rearing allowed economies of scope through animal byproducts including dairy, meat and textiles. Wine making, due to high entry barriers, was highly profitable. With a lack of transparency and a monopoly granted to monastic institutions and to whom the monasteries willed, wine proved a good investment during good crop years. The Eppsteins were also able to gain economies across the two industries by using the sheep manure to fertilize their vineyards. Wool and wine became the basis for exports around Marksburg. The Eppsteins also invested in mining silver from Reichsburg, the hill upon which Marksburg sits. The locals naturally became largely dependent upon these three industries, and even the smaller industries in the area mostly functioned in support of the larger endeavors. This exposed

Marksburg and Braubach to a high risk of famine during years with poor harvests. The period under the Eppsteins was punctuated by several famines, followed by inflation.

This risk was reinforced through the lack of diversification on the part of the Eppsteins. The records used in this research show a lack of investment in trade. This may or may not be accurate, as very few records from the thirteenth century survived intact. However, it is known that the use of contracts expanded widely during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, promoting trade. At the same time, and likely partially due to the use of contracts, the volume of international trade along the Rhine was increasing. From the records available, the Eppsteins sought to gain revenues from trade by operating a tolling station on the Rhine from Marksburg. Controlling the trade routes, via water and land, along the Middle Rhine provided the Eppsteins with a source of income strategic economic and political advantages. Controlling trade, including the movement of people and landed goods, provided high returns in the forms of taxes and tolls. Throughout their rule, the number of tolls on the Rhine was a constant problem.

Conflicts arose between nobles as they each tried to set up their own tolling stations. A high number of tolls also decreased the number of merchants willing to travel the Rhine. Merchants attempting to avoid paying tolls, or to minimize the tolls paid, led to the renewal of overland trade routes. This did not particularly hurt the Eppsteins or trade around Marksburg, as several of the overland routes were also under their control. Traders sought to find the cheapest way possible to move their products, leading to a boom in transshipment points along the Rhine and its tributaries. As trade was increasing, so was the need for a money economy. Nobles received most of their income in kind under the feudal system with only a small portion of their tenants paying quit rent fees. Using money would reduce many of the inefficiencies in the medieval economy. The Eppsteins, like most nobles, strove to implement policies which would speed up the transition from a barter to a money economy. The Eppsteins also sought economic influence through fairs and markets. Those with enough power, like the Eppsteins, could receive the right to host markets and fairs, collecting additional income in the form of sales taxes. Fairs and markets reduced transaction costs and helped improve regulation and transparency in trade. By implementing policies only allowing transactions to occur in a central area during stated times the Eppsteins could better monitor and enforce tax collection.

In addition to securing as many sources of income as possible, the Eppsteins used numerous methods to acquire political and economic power. One of the most strategic moves they made was gaining control of the regional Archbishoprics. This helped consolidate the family's holding along the Middle Rhine and gave the family representation in the two powerful spheres that existed at the time- secular and ecclesiastical. Both types of lords could grant each other (and others) concessions from the tolls they possessed along the Rhine and use their combined power to influence decisions within the empire. A second method the Eppsteins used was the acquisition of allodial lands to build up large holdings to which they had full property rights. There were several transactions between the two sides of the family and numerous transactions with outside parties to acquire a significant portion of the Middle Rhine. By the time the Eppsteins sold Marksburg, they controlled a significant portion of the empire.

Events such as the Holy Wars during the eleventh – thirteenth centuries contributed to the growing consumer demand for foreign goods. Foreign goods were much more expensive and often luxury items. Nobles such as the Eppsteins wanted to ensure access to these goods and needed to increase their income to afford them. Still relying largely on the feudal system, nobles increased rents and dues from their serfs. After numerous increases, the quality of life for the majority had decreased significantly. Discontented, the lower classes began moving to towns and cities. The beginning of urbanization also heralded the ending of the manorial system. During the Eppsteins reign over Marksburg, an estimated five percent of the population of rural Europe migrated to cities. While this shift was nothing compared to what the Katzenelnbogens saw, it did have many social, political and economic implications for the Eppsteins. Socially and politically, towns, cities and guilds became a new type of competitor which nobles had not faced before. Early on it became clear that towns and cities could become incredibly powerful. In an effort to limit their potential, Heinrich von Staufen VII and Friedrich von Staufen II passed laws favoring spiritual and lay princes over cities and towns. Despite this, towns and cities became powerful in their own rights. Towns and cities banded together to check nobles' powers, even going so far as to forcefully challenge territorial expansion. Nobles who were concerned with diligently protecting their rights soon found themselves having to grant concessions to these groups. The Eppsteins ended up freeing at least one city in a political move, and granted other towns and cities increasing autonomy. Economically, the beginning of urbanization brought a new opportunity for land holders. Eppsteins began consolidating some of their holdings moving towards market oriented production.

Towards the end of their rule at Marksburg, the empire entered the Interregnum. During this period, the Eppsteins took advantage of the lack of an emperor as much as possible. The family expanded their power by engaging in deals which would have normally been forbidden. This includes dynasty building with other powerful families such as the Katzenelnbogens, and implementing illegal tolls. At Marksburg, the Eppsteins began illegally collecting additional taxes on consumer goods. While this raised the taxes the family collected, the widespread practice depressed the trade along the Rhine. When an emperor did finally emerge after almost a quarter of a century, rebel nobles were severely punished. In 1276, Braubach was freed from the Eppsteins control and in 1280 King Rudolph implemented the Peace Toll in order to revive trade and check the nobles' powers. In 1283, the Eppsteiner sold Marksburg to the Count of Katzenelnbogen.

The Katzenelnbogens faced many of the same constraints for the first three decades they controlled Marksburg, before they drastically changed. The first thirty years were marked by the continued good harvests that the Eppsteins experienced. The continued use of local currencies prevented major gains in trade, although the volume throughout the region continued to increase. The Katzenelnbogens also continued mining silver on Reichsburg, like the Eppsteins had. However, in 1315 a long lasting cold snap began, causing extremely poor agricultural conditions. Approximately 10% of the population around Marksburg died, created a labor shortage. The cold snap lasted until 1330, decimating the wool and wine industries based at Marksburg. This period of agricultural depression likely influenced the Katzenelnbogens to look for other ways to profit from Marksburg. The Katzenelnbogens aggressively pursued trade, and strategically transformed

Marksburg into an economic hub for transportation and trade. The Katzenelnbogens shifted their focus from agriculture to trade and transportation infrastructure supporting the trade already transiting the Rhine.

Meanwhile in 1325, Bohemian florins became the standard for international trade moving the medieval economy closer to a fully monetary system. Like the Eppsteins, the Katzenelnbogens faced numerous problems inefficiencies in a barter economy. The rise of Hanseatic League complimented the Katzenelnbogens policy shift in several ways. Cologne, a Hanse city and major trading city in the area, was within easy reach from Marksburg. Merchants and lords engaging in trade like the Katzenelnbogens gained economies of scale from joining the Hanse through the established network of trading cities. Furthermore, German merchant had some of the most favorable trading agreements throughout Europe. The resulting increase in trade, especially over long distances, helped speed up the adoption of a universal currency.

In the middle of the fourteenth century, the Plague struck. While the Eppsteins occasionally faced famines, they did not experience anything on this scale while controlling Marksburg. An estimated 50-80% of the population around Marksburg died, leading to a major restricting of the economy. Wages increased at an unprecedented rate followed by prices, creating an overall negative affect on real wages. However, wealth per capita increased as the high death toll significantly decreased the number of people familial wealth was spread across. The increase in wages reflected the labor shortages resulting from the high mortality rate; under the Eppsteins, there was often a labor surplus. Labor shortages resulted in a drop of 25% in productivity and market fluctuation between supply and demand. This process occurred each time a wave of the Plague swept through the region, creating new market equilibria. With high death rates and unproductive land, a major migration occurred from rural to urban centers. A third of the settlements in the Middle Rhine disappeared during Plague years, and rates of urbanization increased drastically.

The redistributed wealth also increased demand for manufactured goods, leading to more urbanization. By the late fourteenth century the percent of abandoned settlements rose to roughly 50%. Most settlements never recovered. Those that did can trace their recovery to their proximity to larger cities and trade routes. This would have boded well for the population of Marksburg and Braubach, being in an area with several major trade routes, with large cities to both the North and South. New inventions in cranes and river ships helped revive trade along the Rhine and its tributaries, speeding up the recovery of several towns. As cities and towns once again gained powers, nobles and the emperor sought ways to keep them from becoming too powerful.

In 1356, the Golden Bull was signed which forbade federations of any organizations for any reason except preserving the peace. This was aimed at cities who had been forming trading blocs to increase negotiating powers and create favorable trading relations with each other. The presence of large regional trading organizations along the Rhine may have played a role in insulating the Middle Rhine from feeling the negative effects of the Plague as deeply as other areas. Sustained regional trade would have dulled the effects of the depression in international trade, while increasing prices for silver helped offset the loss in income. Additionally, the Katzenelnbogens were very resourceful when it came to creating new revenue sources. In the

1380's the Katzenelnbogens began selling municipal bonds in the different cities and towns they owned. 1380 also saw the abolition of all tariffs in Luxembourg as one of the measures implemented to help revive trade after the Plague. However, the economy was still reluctant to completely switch to currency. In 1386, the Archbishops around Marksburg formed the Rhenish Coin Association to provide legitimacy to currency. This served the needs of all nobles, and helped allay concerns among the general population about the validity of money.

Other events, such as improvements in shipping technology, helped drive down the costs of transportation. The revival of river trade and overland routes led to increasing market integration throughout the fourteenth century along the Middle Rhine. Additionally, metal and glass industries were growing and replacing the wool industry in the region. The migration of people into cities also increased the levels of diversification and specialization in the economy. Towards the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Katzenelnbogens played a large diplomatic role for the emperor. The family received significant compensation for their efforts, supplementing their other sources of income. Other sources of income included implemented a new tax and lucrative marriage agreements. The Katzenelnbogens were the first to implement a general land tax for water and pasture usage. The Count of Katzenelnbogen also married a wealthy heiress, receiving eight times the normal dowry. This helped the Lords of Katzenelnbogen maintain their liquidity when the silver market crashed during the Bullion Famine from 1430-1460. Mining came to a halt for roughly thirty years until new inventions allowed for deeper extraction. However, despite this temporary lapse in income, the Lords of Katzenelnbogen were not poorly off. During the mid-fifteenth century, the Count of Katzenelnbogen bought up large tracts of land expanded their territory as much as possible. Along with this, was another bout of the plague and crop failure due to a volcanic eruption in Asia. It is observable that as agricultural production continued to prove unreliable, trade became increasingly important. Around this time, a ship began making daily journeys between the major markets in the region, and trade began rapidly expanding again around 1460, until Marksburg was inherited by the *Landgraf* of Hesse through marriage in 1479.

While the two families were both engaged in tolling and mining, agriculture made up a significant portion of the Eppsteins income while trade contributed more to the Katzenelnbogens. This is largely due to changes in agricultural conditions and weather events. As the little ice age began, the land around Marksburg was less productive and agricultural production suffered. This made trade a more appealing investment to the Katzenelnbogens who benefited from the emergence of large trading blocs like the Hanseatic League. Additionally, each family faced a different set of social constraints. The Katzenelnbogens faced an ever-increasing movement of people to urban centers. While the Eppsteins saw five percent of the population move into cities and towns, at the time the Katzenelnbogens lost Marksburg, "20-25 percent of the German population lived in cities and towns"²²⁹. With this migration of people came the dissolution of the manorial system—something which would have been unimaginable under the Eppsteins.

Both families were rather adept at conquering or buying territory, and were actively engaged in the property market. However, the Lords of Eppstein were much more effective in gaining power across multiple spectrums including both secular and ecclesiastical lines.

²²⁹ Oxford. (n.d.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History: Human capital - Mongolia*. Oxford.

However, due to the differences in migration patterns, the Katzenelnbogens faced stiffer competition from cities and towns than the Eppstein did. Both families experienced booms and busts in trade, but the cycles under the Katzenelnbogens were more expansive. The Katzenelnbogens were more directly engaged in trade and therefore more sensitive to business cycles. The Katzenelnbogens also faced outside events such as the Plague which significantly restructured the market in favor of labor and cities. Outside events like the Plague, and their direct and indirect consequences, impacted how both families made decisions. Each family faced a different set of options due to the limitations of their times and the political structure under which they operated. Yet both families strove to make Marksburg as profitable as possible and had significant impact on the local communities through their actions.

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