

AFONSINA

III

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**CRAFTS AND
CRAFTSMEN
IN THE MIDDLE
AGES**

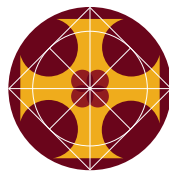


MUNICÍPIO DE
GUIMARÃES

AFONSINA

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Crafts and craftsmen in the Middle Ages in Portugal

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Abstract

This study aims to present a global perspective on the Crafts and Craftsmen in Portugal in the 14th and 15th centuries, focusing on the forms of organization and characteristics of these activities and those who carried them out, especially in their economic and social dimension. This study begins by clarifying issues of vocabulary and concepts relating to the historical context under analysis; it then seeks to characterize the forms and modalities of organization of the productive structure of the crafts and the organization of labour, highlighting the heterogeneity and variety of situations found in the different crafts and productive sectors. As an example, the case of the leather tanning sector is explored in greater depth. Next, the question of the forms and rules of location in the urban and peri-urban space of the different activities of the trades is addressed, before analyzing and characterizing the forms of regulation of the trades' activities. Finally, I present the distinctive elements of the possible notion of collective identity of medieval craftsmen, or part of them, from their own, but also from the point of view of the elites and urban authorities.

Keywords Crafts and craftsmen, Portugal in the Middle Ages, Medieval industry and crafts, Urban space in the 14th and 15th centuries, Medieval economy and society.

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1. Concepts and vocabulary

This paper on the Crafts and Craftsmen in the 14th and 15th centuries in Portugal aims to present an overall picture of the conditions and characteristics of these activities, especially in their economic and social dimensions. Let us start by clarifying the medieval concepts of Crafts and Craftsmen, which roughly correspond to what we call today industry and handicrafts or artisans, i.e., essentially non-rural manufacturing activities, which may or may not have included the commercial dimension of direct sales to the final consumer.

The most abundant designations in Portuguese during this period were the following, often used as synonyms:

- *mester* and *mesteiral*; from Latin *ministerium*, *ii*, (trade/craft, service) and *minister*;
- *ofício* and *oficial*;
- *mechanical arts*.

The terms *ofício* (public charge or craft) and *oficial* (public officer or craftsman) were particularly polysemic, and could also mean public office, among other possible meanings. The fact that the term *ofício* can be synonymous with craft/trade, but also with public office, is very significant, especially if we look at its etymological roots. In both senses, it responded to a common need or common good, and was often subject to some control and sometimes licensing by the public authorities, particularly the municipal ones (DEGRASSI, 1996: 121–125; MELO, 2009: 135–138).

But what then characterized a *mesteiral* (craftsman) and a *mester* (craft/trade)? *Mester* can be defined as a specialized non-rural activity, industrial or artisan, which could include a commercial dimension of selling to the final consumer; or, on the contrary, it could be part of a more complex production chain whose production was not destined for the final consumer. But it always involved a specialization of work, sometimes quite marked. The *mesteres* were mainly concentrated in urban centers and their outskirts, although they could also exist elsewhere. Their growing importance resulted from the development of the social division of labour — i.e., specialization — in the medieval society and economy of the 14th and 15th centuries.

How were craftsmen perceived in medieval society? In order to answer this question, we must schematically recall some of the various ways of classifying and naming the parts that made up medieval society, paying particular attention to the classifications, concepts, statutes, vocabulary and meanings used in coeval documents (MELO e RIBEIRO, 2014: 111–118):

- The traditional model of the *three orders, states or functions*, based on the principle of trifunctionality, made up of *oradores* (*oratores* or those who pray), *defensores* (*defenders* or

those who fight), and *mantenedores/laboratores* (labourers or those who work), later preferentially referred to, respectively, as *clergy*, *nobility* and *people*. In this model, the craftsmen were obviously included in the order of *people*, or *mantenedores*. However, in many respects, this interpretative system was no longer adequate to describe the society of the 13th to 15th centuries, although it continued to be used for centuries from a statutory and political perspective.

- Thus, as early as the 15th century, alternative theoretical models for describing social organization emerged. One of the most famous examples is undoubtedly the *five states* implemented by King Duarte in his book *Leal Conselheiro* (DUARTE, 1998: Chap. IV, p. 26). In this model, after the *oratores* and the *defensores*, the *people* appear divided into three groups: farmers and fishermen; men of the laws of writing, civil service and administration; and *those who use of certain approved arts and crafts* (DUARTE, 1998: Chap. IV, p. 26).

However, documentary analysis also shows that within the cities and towns the *popular* elements (i.e., those who were not noblemen or clergymen) could be divided into three large groups:

- the *maiores* (higher-status people)
- the *meiões* (medium-status people);
- the *miúdos* (lower-status people).

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In general, the craftsmen were included in the medium-status people. Alternatively, *ordinary urban commoners* were divided into just two groups: those of higher status (*os maiores*) and those of lower status (*os miúdos*). In this case, the craftsmen generally fell into the latter group (SOUSA, 1993: 391–423; MELO e RIBEIRO, 2014: 111–118).

These considerations are important if we want to understand how craftsmen were seen in medieval society: as an medium socio-economic group, belonging to the order of the *laboratores* or *people*.

It is also important to clarify two other concepts — industry and artisan. Based on the definition proposed by Philippe Braunstein, industry should be understood as standardized, large-scale production using specialized labour, aiming for technological innovation and access to a more or less distant market, as well as seeking a return on investment. This could often imply the availability of capital investment, thus distinguishing it from artisanry, which was also a manufacturing activity but distinct from or even contrary to these premises. In this sense, artisanry and industry could exist simultaneously in so-called pre-industrial societies (i.e., before the period known as the Industrial Revolution, which began at the end of the 18th century).

In various historical contexts, such as the 14th to 16th centuries, industry and artisanry existed simultaneously, but both were designated as crafts (*mesteres* in portuguese). This distinction between industry and artisans did not exist in Medieval and Early Modern times. Sometimes, the two possibilities of industry and crafts can be found simultaneously, albeit distinctly, in the same sector and in the same places and time periods. Take the example of construction or shipbuilding. The construction of a large cathedral required a large, specialized workforce with different levels of expertise; management was centralized, and there was standardization of materials, methods and techniques, thus falling under the modern

concept of industry; in turn, any other type of ordinary, small-scale construction work could fall under the modern concept of artisanry. Hence the idea that it would be preferable to call them craftsmen (*mesteirais*), which was the term used at that time, since these differences between the concepts of industry and artisans are mainly the result of historiographical and economic concerns and concepts from the 20th and 21st centuries and not from the Middle Ages itself. However, it was deemed relevant to mention these issues here, considering the strong historiographical legacy on these subjects, even though it has largely been overcome today (BRAUNSTEIN, 2003: 93–111; PAGES e VERNA, 2022: 243–264; MARQUES, 1985: 301–304).

Finally, before moving on to the next matter, a few preliminary considerations should be made. Regarding this sector of crafts and craftsmen, there is great diversity between municipalities, but also within each municipality among different crafts. The role of craftsmen in society and the urban economy, as well as the relative importance of each craft or production sector, varied greatly.

There were also significant developments and transformations in some municipalities over the period under study here. But there were also trends and common elements among the different municipalities. Thus, in the following pages we will try to present an overview of the crafts in Portugal in the 14th and 15th centuries, based predominantly on the realities of the main Portuguese urban municipalities — for which there are a greater number of sources —, in particular Porto, Lisbon and Évora, but also Loulé, Santarém, Coimbra, Braga and Guimarães. However, this attempt at outlining an overview does not imply neglecting the great and frequent variability that existed between urban centers.

2. Forms and modalities of organizing the production structure

Variety and heterogeneity

Regarding the practices, realities and ways of organizing the productive structure of the crafts, let us start by highlighting the broad range of possible situations, since it varied from craft to craft, but also even within the same craft, and among different towns. In fact, while in some cases the craftsmen not only produced but also sold the finished product to the end consumer, as was the case with shoemakers, in other cases the craft corresponds to a specific function or activity within a more complex and structured production chain, as was the case with weavers and dyers in the textile sector, or leather tanners, whose product (tanned hides) was the raw material for the various leather crafts, which would often be placed on the regional and international markets for these sectors.

In summary, the wide range of situations found in crafts regarded mainly the following aspects (BRAUNSTEIN, 2003: 93–111, 2007: 11–23; PAGES e VERNA, 2022: 243–264; MARQUES, 1985: 301–304, 2010: 163–184; MELO, 2018a: 23–37, 2009: 251–281):

- Small or large scale;
- Complex and structured production chain, or the opposite;
- Artisan or industrial activity;
- Different insertions in the productive/industrial sector;
- Various forms of work organization and production structure;
- Different forms and amounts of capital investment, and different relative importance of internal and external capital to the craft;

- Multiplicity of crafts, indicating different levels of specialization: shoemaker, cowhide shoemaker, cordovan shoemaker; mason; carpenter; shipwright; tanner.

Likewise, labour carried out within the framework of the crafts comprised different types or categories (MELO, 2018a: 23–37, 2009: 251–281), viz:

- Specialized labour, i.e., craftsmen (often distinguishing master / official, among others);
- Apprenticeship (apprentice);
- Undifferentiated or unskilled work (day labourers; or *jornaleiros*; and others as *braceiros*, *cabaneiros*, *ganha-dinheiros*.);
- Work done by women and children would have been quite frequent, especially regarding undifferentiated work, although it is rarely recorded in written documents.

The forms of remuneration and the corresponding labour relationship could also vary greatly:

- Waged labour (journeymen, generally paid per unit of time: day/week/month);
- Work without explicit remuneration (workshop owner, family members, dependents);
- Work paid per task (per piece or amount of goods produced).

66 Finally, it should be noted that the well-known internal division of each craft into *master* / *official* / *apprentice* did not always exist. This division often corresponded to a model that was not the only one, nor perhaps the dominant one, until the end of the Middle Ages. The polysemic term *master* did not necessarily correspond to a specific status, but above all to a prestigious designation associated with a recognized expertise of quality or else of seniority and reputation in the respective craft or art. For example, a mason or carpenter could be the master (i.e., the person in charge) of a particular construction site, whereas in another one he could just be an official or regular craftsman (mason or carpenter) (*Livro das Posturas Antigas*, p. 230). Thus, in general terms, this is not yet a fixed status, although there were some exceptions. It was not until the transition from the 15th to the 16th century that the term *master* became a more generalized status/position, as a result of both the prevalence of the more institutionalized model of craft guilds and the generalization of the examination system for full access to a given craft. However, until the end of the 15th century, this model was still rare and would probably only prevail from the 16th century onwards. It is therefore important to understand, above all, the hierarchy of labour and the structure of productive organization, which could vary from craft to craft or from sector to sector (BERNARDI, 2009: 23–123; MELO, 2009: 160–163, 261–163; BRAUNSTEIN, 2003: 405–414).

Main productive sectors of medieval trades

Despite the large number and diversity of crafts, such as shoemakers, butchers, masons, and many others, denoting variety and successive levels of specialization, grouping them by productive sectors helps considerably in their analysis and understanding. Thus, among the main crafts we can highlight the following due to their economic importance, number of craftsmen involved and systematic presence in most towns and cities (MELO, 2009: 217–357; MARQUES, 1987: 115–122; MELO, CAMPOS e SEQUEIRA, 2021: I–III):

Productive sectors	Trades / Crafts
Construction	Masons, carpenters and others
Shipbuilding	Naval carpenters, caulkers, rope makers and others
Textiles and tailors	Countless crafts: from female spinners and weavers to dyers and shearers, among others; In fact, tailors are not included in the textile sector, although they use textiles products as raw materials.
Food sector – bread	Millers, bakers, bread hagglers
Food sector – meat	Butchers
Food sector – fish	Fishermen, fishmongeresses (women who sold the fish)
Leather	Tanning; shoemakers and other leather crafts (sheath makers, saddlers, etc.)
Metals	Mining and metallurgy; blacksmiths, horseshoers, gunsmiths, armorers, and others
Precious metals	Silversmiths and goldsmiths; minters
Cooperage	Coopers

Within each sector, the organizational models of each craft can vary enormously, and sometimes we find different forms of organization of productive activity in the same craft, as mentioned above in the case of construction. Other studies on this book show precisely this through the analysis of some specific sectors and crafts, such as textiles and meat supply, or a global view of the crafts in Guimarães. See also the article by Ricardo Córdova, which presents a very in-depth study of the technical dimension of medieval leather production.

As an example, we present below a business model of the leather production sector in Portugal in the 14th and 15th centuries, reconstructed mainly from documentary data regarding Évora and Guimarães.

Tanning or leather production (tanneries)

In the 14th and 15th centuries in Portugal there was a model — among other possible ones — for the organization of leather production that was characterized by a structure that only existed for as long as it was needed, i.e., a productive organization that begins and ends with each tanning enterprise, which we will characterize in its broad outlines below.

Organization model of the leather tanning production structure:

Shoemakers and merchants (and possibly other actors) took on the role of businessmen or tanning entrepreneurs, investing the necessary capital and owning the goods throughout the process. To this end, they set up an *empresa* or enterprise that lasted only as long as the tanning process took place and which was wound up at the end of this cycle, and could then be set up again when it was necessary to tan hides again. They invested all the necessary capital and bought the raw materials (*green* or *raw hides*, often bought from butchers, who in some places, such as Porto, were banned from tanning hides) and the products needed to process the hides into leather, namely lime and mordants, such as sumac; they hired labour for as long as necessary (apparently paid per day), both specialized labour, comprising tanners and leather beaters, as well as unskilled labour (although presumably with their own specific tools); they rented the necessary physical structures, such as *pelames* (tanks) and

tinas (vats), for as long as necessary; and in the end they owned the final product, the hides. These *empresarios* or entrepreneurs — almost always shoemakers or merchants — could then sell these hides or place them on the regional, national or international markets; or they could make them available for direct use as raw materials for their own crafts, especially in the case of shoemakers (which does not mean that they also put some of the hides they produced on the market) (MELO, 2021b: 84–95).

This model of productive organization implied the existence of other groups of players who derived dividends and income from the tanning operations, albeit indirectly. These were the landlords and tenants of tanning structures and equipment, such as *pelames* (tanks) and *tanarias* (tanneries), who rented them out for as long as necessary for tanning activities, usually for short periods of weeks or even months. In the case of Guimarães, the Shoemakers' Guild and the Collegiate Church of Oliveira stand out as the major owners of *pelames* and other tanning equipment in the Couros area. Curiously enough, tanners and other tannery workers — i.e., craftsmen specializing in leather production —, unlike other sectors, appear as secondary actors in a production process that they generally did not control and was mainly controlled by shoemakers and merchants (MELO, 2021b: 84–95).

In addition, this was one of the activities that required very specific physical structures, some of them fixed and of a certain size, such as stone tanks in the open air (*pelames*), but also vats, *tinhalhas* (small vats), pits, boilers (to heat water), alum stones, some existing inside houses suitable for that purpose, usually on the ground floor to facilitate the drainage of used water, others in the open air (MELO, 2021b: 84–95); (on the technical process of medieval leather production, cf. CÓRDOBA DE LA LLAVE [2002: 297–303] and an article by the same author in this publication).

According to the above, these structures generally constituted a specific business in themselves — i.e., a form of management of physical structures by the respective landlords and tenants, who normally rented them out for as long as necessary (days, weeks or months) to the teams formed specifically for each leather production process or order. This is another specific feature of leather production that stands out as unique compared to most other sectors, since the tanning craftsmen did not own the production structures.

This medieval reality would continue in part over the following centuries, and traces of it abound in Guimarães, especially in the toponymy of medieval origin, sometimes dating back to the 12th century, which is still preserved today. Paradigmatic and well-known examples are the Couros area and the Couros river, as well as the multiple *pelames* and *tanarias* that existed in this area (according to medieval documents), and of which there are still important material remains today.



Fig. 1. Stone tanning tanks or *pelames* – Couros area, Guimarães (photo, 21st century).



Fig. 2. [Map] Of Guimarães, s.d. [ca. 1562–1570], anon., scale 100 fathoms (1:1100, approx.), 83,4x154 cm, handwritten and colored on paper, Fundação Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil (Rio de Janeiro), Cartoteca: Mappas do Reino de Portugal e suas conquistas collegidos por Diogo Barbosa Machado.



Fig. 3. Couros area and *pelames* (stone tanks): detail of the 1570 Plan of Guimarães.

As can be seen in Figures 2 and 3 of the famous 1570 map of the town of Guimarães, this area of Couros was located in a peripheral, extramural area of the medieval town, although very close to it, for the sake of convenience. This resulted from a general tendency observed in some crafts sectors, such as leather production, to preferentially choose a location on the outskirts of the urban center due to the intense pollution of water, soil and air (the nauseating smells) that this activity entailed, thus being diverted from the town center. On the other hand, tanning was governed by certain technical requirements in terms of location, which demanded proximity to a watercourse and physical structures such as tanning tanks, although not too far from the town, as this was where the raw material were obtained and where the final products — the tanned hides — were sold, both for use by craftsmen, such as shoemakers, who used the leather as a raw material, and for export to the regional or international markets.

3. Location and production structures

There was in fact some variability regarding the location and distribution of the different crafts in the urban and peri-urban space of each city or town: certain crafts were preferentially located in more central areas, while others were concentrated in more peripheral spaces. While some crafts tended to concentrate in places close to others who practiced the same or different sectors, others tended to be more dispersed. We find different levels on a scale or gradation between two opposite poles: on the one hand, dispersion and on the other one concentration of crafts activities in space and various intermediate situations between them. In short, for each craft and each sector of activity within each urban and peri-urban space there were different situations:

- Single concentration in space;
- Concentration in multiple locations or multi-concentration;
- Non-exclusive concentration, i.e., it could coexist with dispersion;
- Great dispersion (MELO, 2018b: 337–357; RIBEIRO, 2020: 383–400).

In some streets in the city center there was often a concentration of many different crafts. These streets were often named after a particular craft, such as Shoemakers Street, which did not necessarily mean that a single craft was concentrated there — on the contrary, several different crafts were often located there (ANDRADE, 2003: 83–96; MELO, 2018b: 337–357; FERREIRA, 2010: 236 and ss., 479–489).

The level of concentration or dispersion of productive structures could derive from multiple causes of different natures, some imposed and compulsory by regulation and others resulting from conditions that were not formally imposed, but which could derive from social or technical constraints, or as a result of simple chance and individual preferences. Below is a summary of the different reasons for this concentration or dispersion of crafts (MELO, 2018b: 340–354):

a) Imposition through laws or regulations predicated upon various reasons, namely fiscal considerations; interests of different authorities and jurisdictional powers; public health; urban planning considerations, among others — for example, the production of hides and the slaughter of animals and sale of meat.

b) For technical reasons or due to constraints in the production structure (concentrated manufacturing vs *dessiminata* [dispersed] manufacturing) — for example, leather production, the case of rope makers, among others.

c) Economic and social factors, such as simple natural attraction, gregarious feelings or other similar reasons, such as individual choices — for example, the tendency for some sectors to concentrate in just one or specific places in the urban space, with no legal imposition to do so, but only because it was a privileged space for certain activities that considered it

advantageous to be close to other craftsmen of the same craft for reasons of competitiveness or commercial location, as well as self-control and mutual supervision within the same craft, as was the case with shoemakers or blacksmiths.

d) As a result of urban development and the characteristics and transformations of the different urban areas and suburbs — for example, the opening and construction of prestigious "new streets", where certain craft activities could be attracted or prohibited, in this case because they were considered to be of little prestige or unpleasant due to pollution (noise, visual, olfactory) resulting from them, as was the case with blacksmiths.

4. Regulation of trades

The practices and activities of the various crafts were subject to variable regulation. Some crafts and sectors were widely regulated on several issues, but others were loosely regulated only in a few aspects.

Origin / authorship of the regulations.

Let us start by distinguishing the source of these regulations and establish different types of regulations on the activities of the crafts. From an early stage, the activities of the craftsmen were controlled by the authorities, especially regarding the most sensitive and important aspects and sectors. The regulation and control of the crafts could emanate from different powers, authorities and origins, mostly at the local level and particularly of municipal origin (MELO, 2021a: 273–285).

In terms of their origin / authorship and type, these regulations could be:

- Municipal;
- Feudal;
- Ecclesiastical;
- Created by the craftsmen themselves (self-regulation, with or without formal organization);
- From tradition or *ancient* custom (generally oral in its earliest versions);
- Royal (quite often of a more general scope).

The vast majority of these regulations were of local enforcement, although sometimes with a general royal framework, albeit very generic. As the vast majority of the regulations were local in nature, our analysis will also have to be local, so that we can subsequently find similarities and differences between the crafts ordinances in the different areas. It is above all the municipal and urban areas — including the peri-urban and contiguous areas — that constitute the scales of observation par excellence (MELO, 2021a: 273–285; VIANA, 2012: 121–122).

In short, most of the ordinances were probably of municipal origin, and may or may not have included some pre-existing oral customs, and the feudal or royal regulations in general also had a local scope of application.

Finally, some rules could derive from the custom and oral practices of the craftsmen themselves. But apart from the rules that left some direct or indirect mark on the written record, there were others that we will probably never know about, because they were never written (MELO, 2021a: 273–285; SOUSA, 1994: 166–173).

Another important issue that should be addressed has to do with the participation or non-participation of craftsmen or their representatives in the drafting of these regulations, whether in the whole process or just in part.

Particularly in the case of municipal regulations relating to various specific aspects of crafts activities, such as prices and wages, we often find craftsmen taking part in these municipal decisions, from the end of the 14th century and throughout the 15th century.

This was the case whether or not there was some formal organization of crafts (MELO e RIBEIRO, 2014: 113–115; MELO, 2021a: 273–285; MARTINS, 2021: 16–28). The second important issue is the characterization of the context: the scarcity, of formal or institutional professional organizations of crafts, of the corporation or guild type, until the end of the 15th century. In Portugal, this type of association did not exist before the 16th century, although some exceptions are known from the late 15th century. In fact, between the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, there was a significant development in this regard. Formal organized guilds only appeared from the end of the 15th century (Lisbon) and especially in the 16th century, although there were already crafts confraternities (*confrarias*) in various cities (Lisbon, Porto, Guimarães, among others), some of them since the 14th century, although with an increase from the last quarter of the 15th century onwards (MELO, 2021a: 273–285, 2013: 149–170, 2012: 289–299, 2018a: 23–37).

The framework for regulating, supervising and controlling the crafts was not the same for everyone, especially given the diversity of regulation and control situations that existed among the various crafts, since some were heavily regulated in various elements, while others were subject to reduced regulation. In addition, the regulated aspects could also vary greatly among crafts. In general terms, regulation could include various aspects, although in different ways for each craft.

In short, the regulation of craft activities could cover the following aspects, but almost no craft was subject to simultaneous regulation in all these aspects (MELO, 2018a: 30–35):

- Prices and wages;
- Weights and measures;
- Quality control of products and goods (butchers, for example);
- Stamp confirming the quality of products (goldsmiths; coopers, among others);
- Ensuring access to raw materials to all craftsmen of each trade (coopers, among others);
- Obligation of craftsmen to ensure mandatory minimum quantities of goods (butchers);
- Payment of fees and rights to different authorities (municipal, feudal, royal) related to the exercise of the craft;
- Location of activities: obligation / prohibition of the places where some crafts were practiced (butchers, tanners, fishmongers, among others);
- Licensing or access to the craft: control of the craftsmen authorized to practice certain crafts (butchers, bakers, among others) by the municipal authorities.

5. Collective identity of crafts and craftsmen

Finally, I offer some thoughts on the possible existence of a collective identity of the craftsmen from different perspectives: identity of the craftsmen of each craft (shoemakers, blacksmiths, butchers, etc.) and even, in some cases, of sub-specialties within the same craft (such as the case of cordovan shoemakers and cowhide shoemakers, for example); identity of all the craftsmen, from the various crafts, in each town or village. As Armindo de Sousa pointed out, at a national level, in the Portuguese Kingdom as a whole, I do not think there was any such group identity (see his valuable observations and analysis in SOUSA, 1993: 412–423).

It is also useful to distinguish between the craftsmen own perspective and the views of other sectors of society on them (external perceptions). However, there are few documents in which the voice or perspective of the craftsmen is directly expressed, and we are therefore much more informed about the perspective of the elites, in particular the *good men* of the

municipalities, about craftsmen.

But although it seems quite complex to define this type of identity and it is clearly beyond the scope of this study, nevertheless I can try to highlight the elements of identity that were generally associated with craftsmen in medieval society, especially through the written documentary records that have survived to this day.

Thus, it is preferable to try to present attributes of the social identity of craftsmen that were recognized by medieval society — attributes that valued them and differentiated them from other social sectors and groups (among others, see Jacques le Goff [1993 and 1999: 1137–1149], and Armindo de Sousa [1993: 412–423, 465–473]), as follows:

- Specific technical skills;
- Long apprenticeship period (several years);
- Distinction between *the best* and *the not so good*, i.e., distinction between the most reputable craftsmen of each craft, in terms of quality, which corresponded to differences in pay or wages;

- The ability to transform reality, i.e., to produce something new (*opus/opera*). The result is what is produced and is the element that was most valued; and *labor*, in the sense of the work or physical effort needed to achieve the product, was less valued by society in general. The association between *labor* and *dolor* (i.e., between work and pain, in the sense of physical effort in itself) makes labour in itself not to be valued in the dominant medieval ideologies, as it was associated with the consequences of the original sin. The good produced, on the other hand, was valued, because through it the craftsmen could, albeit fleetingly, draw closer to God, who does work (*opera*), albeit through different means and of different nature, of course;

- The idea of the indispensability of craftsmen: the need for a desirable or ideal number of craftsmen in each town or city, neither too many nor too few. In any case, it was considered the presence of craftsmen as essential for life in society, for all its strata or social groups and their respective needs.

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