

ants greater self-sufficiency: the same plot of land provided both bread and wine. Despite the thinning of the population, however, the underlying pattern of landownership barely changed. The *estimo* of 1415 reveals that about half of the agricultural land was held by a small group of big owners, representing only a small percentual decline since before the plague, while the percentage held by small farmers had only increased by a small margin. Half the population owned less than the minimum cultivable area necessary for subsistence. The large estates were leased out in parcels to tenant farmers in return for rent in cash or produce, and the performance of labor services.

The majority of Turin's population would have been composed of small farmers and agricultural laborers, who would have left to till their fields during the daytime, returning at night to their houses within the protective perimeter of the city walls. A smaller proportion of the population was made up of craftsmen and women, mainly engaged in the textile trades. In the fourteenth century Turin became a center for the production of inexpensive woolen cloth destined for the regional market, but not designed to compete with more costly high-grade textiles imported from Flanders or Milan. The production and sale of Turinese cloth was controlled by a number of local merchants, some of whom grew rich from their activities. They contracted out the work to different categories of craftspeople, who were not organized in guilds. Weaving was done by individual artisans, male or female, in their homes. The dyers (along with the practitioners of other "noxious" trades) practiced their craft in the suburbs, as the law required, in order not to pollute the city's water-supply. Finishing the cloth was also conducted in the suburbs, at a fulling-mill (or mills) powered by water-wheels driven by the flow of water along canals diverted from the fast-flowing river Dora. Turin's council paid close attention to the woolen textile industry, for maintaining the quality of its products was a matter of honor for the city as a whole. The city Statutes promulgated in 1360 devoted considerable space to prescribing the methods to be used in manufacturing the cloth, and the standards of quality to be observed.

In the dire economic conditions of the late fourteenth century Turin's production of woolen cloth began to decline. The city council cast about for ways to revive it, but with little success. The city fathers also made efforts to foster other crafts, to compensate for the fall in the woolen textile trade, and to combat the general malaise that was afflicting the city's economy. To this end they encouraged craftsmen to establish themselves in the city by offering them bounties and tax-exemptions. Their efforts were facilitated by the ready availability of wa-