

# Medieval Clothing and Textiles

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# *Biffes, Tiretaines, and Aumonières: The Role of Paris in the International Textile Markets of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*

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Historians of Western medieval textiles tend to emphasize two major centers of production in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: the Low Countries and Northern Italy. From the twelfth century until the first quarter of the fourteenth, the towns of Flanders, Artois, Brabant, and Champagne dominated international markets in the production of luxury and middle-level wool cloth.<sup>1</sup> By the twelfth century, luxury silks from the Northern Italian town of Lucca were being sold at the Champagne fairs of Northern France. By the early fourteenth century, Lucchese silks dominated the northern aristocratic market for silks, and Lucca had been joined by three other Italian silk-weaving towns—Venice, Genoa, and Bologna. By the thirteenth century, Italian woolens and cottons were also being sold internationally.<sup>2</sup>

While historians have acknowledged that Paris—the largest city in Western Europe—also had a cloth industry and that it played a major role in the emergence of the tapestry-weaving industry at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the full extent and the unusual range of Parisian textile production has generally been ignored. By the second half of the thirteenth century, Paris was at the top of the field in the production and export of middle-level woolens called *biffes*; it had a very significant linen industry with an international market; and it had a small but significant silk

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- 1 For a good discussion of the output and markets of these towns, as well as those of Normandy, Paris, and the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis, see Patrick Chorley, "The Cloth Exports of Flanders and Northern France During the Thirteenth Century: A Luxury Trade?" *Economic History Review*, new series 40 (1987): 349–79.
- 2 On Northern Italian silk-making towns, see Florence Elder De Roover, "Lucchese Silks," *Ciba Review* 80 (June 1950): 2902–30; Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Luca Molà, Reinhold C. Mueller, and Claudio Zanier, eds., *La seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento* (Venice: Marsilio, 2000). On cotton, see Maureen F. Mazzaoui, *The Italian Cotton Industry in the Later Middle Ages, 1100–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). On wool, see Hidetoshi Hoshino, *L'arte della lana in Firenze nel basso Medioevo: Il commercio della lana e il mercato dei panni fiorentini nei secoli XIII–XV* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1980).

industry, which, by the early fourteenth century, was selling cloth to the royal courts of England and France. Along with Arras, Paris dominated the tapestry industry in the first half of the fourteenth century, and it was also well known for its small luxury textile items, such as silk almspurses and silk belts.

The purpose of this article is to bring together the evidence for the market of Parisian textiles in order to demonstrate just how significant Paris was as a textile center during the second half of the thirteenth and the first four decades of the fourteenth centuries. I focus on this period because the sources are too scant before the middle of the thirteenth century, and most of the Parisian textile industries suffered a radical decline with the onset of the Hundred Years' War, which began in 1337. Sources for this discussion include a broad array of published materials as well as an examination of the unpublished royal wardrobe accounts of England and the household accounts of the count and countess of Artois, which cover the period 1302 to 1329.

## WOOLENS

In terms of their market, Parisian woolens have received perhaps more attention than any of the other Parisian textiles. In an important doctoral thesis, Roger Gourmelon argued convincingly from street name evidence and residential patterns in the Parisian tax assessments of the late thirteenth century that the Parisian wool industry predated the mid-twelfth century.<sup>3</sup> Building on this evidence, Jean-François Belhoste has suggested that the Parisian wool industry must have originated in the eleventh century, when the introduction of the horizontal loom stimulated the rise of all of the great northern European centers of textile production.<sup>4</sup>

By the mid-thirteenth century, Paris was known for its *biffes*, which were mid-level woolens. Indeed, Parisian *biffes* were the earliest to be specified in Genoese contracts, in 1239, and they were the most frequently mentioned *biffes* in those contracts.<sup>5</sup> Parisian *biffes*, along with those of its suburb Saint-Denis and of the Champagne town of Provins, dominated the international market for this type of cloth in the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>6</sup> We find Parisian *biffes* in thirteenth-century records from Aragon, Castile, Portugal, Genoa, Venice, Florence, Siena, Marseilles, and Provins, and in early-fourteenth-century records from Grasse. These fabrics were bought by large aristocratic households for servants' clothing, and by more modest knights and demoiselles for their own use.<sup>7</sup>

3 Roger Gourmelon, "L'industrie et le commerce des draps à Paris du XIIIe au XVIe siècle" (doctoral thesis, Ecole des Chartes, 1950; available at Paris: Archives Nationales, 76 Mi 10), 34-36.

4 Jean-François Belhoste, "Paris, Grand centre drapier au moyen âge," in *Fédération des Sociétés historiques et archéologiques de Paris et de l'Île-de-France: Mémoires* 51 (2000): 42-44.

5 Chorley, "Cloth Exports," 365.

6 *Ibid.*, 366. Provins, it should be noted, produced luxury cloth, *biffes*, and a variety of other cloths (359).

7 *Ibid.*, 351, 352, 355-58.

The Parisian tax assessment from 1300 lists 360 wool weavers. Through a comparison of names in the 1299 and 1300 tax lists, Gourmelon estimated that there were about 400 master wool weavers in Paris.<sup>8</sup> Parisian *biffes* were 38 Champagne ells (or 47 Flemish ells) in length.<sup>9</sup> According to John Munro, the average late medieval Flemish weaver produced 840 Flemish ells (equivalent to about 679 Champagne ells or 640 yards) each year.<sup>10</sup> Assuming that the production rate of Parisian weavers was about the same, its 400 weaving workshops produced around 7,150 pieces of cloth each year. This was slightly less than one-fifth the total output of ells in Provins, which at its height in the 1270s is believed to have produced about 50,000 pieces annually, each of which was 28 Champagne ells in length; and it was slightly more than one-fourth the output of ells in Chalons, which produced about 36,000 pieces that were 30 Champagne ells in length.<sup>11</sup> At its height, Provins must have had nearly 2,100 weaving workshops, and Chalons must have had around 1,600.

With 400 master weavers, each of whom needed a worker to work beside him at the broadloom, and all of the other workers needed to turn raw wool into finished cloth (the most important being fullers and dyers), Paris' wool industry would have employed at least 1,700 people, in Gourmelon's estimation.<sup>12</sup> The number of Parisian wool workers would have been even larger if all of the wool had been combed and spun in Paris, but apparently a substantial amount of wool arrived in Paris already spun.<sup>13</sup>

#### TIRETAINE

Most historians of cloth production in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries have ignored the wool products of an important suburb of Paris, Saint-Marcel, which was situated outside the southeastern walls of the *rive gauche*, along the stream known as the Bièvre, which facilitated dyeing and fulling.<sup>14</sup> It is difficult to determine just how large this industry was.

The most important textile product of Saint-Marcel was called *tiretaine*. Most textile historians have assumed that *tiretaine* was a low-priced, low-status, lightweight cloth made with a warp of linen and a weft of wool.<sup>15</sup> Evidence from royal and aristocratic account books suggests, however, that we need to rethink the value, the

8 Gourmelon, "L'industrie," 37-39.

9 Chorley, "Cloth Exports," 355.

10 John Munro, "Textile Technology," in *The Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York: Scribner, 1988), 11:704.

11 Chorley, "Cloth Exports," 355, 366.

12 Belhoste, "Paris, Grand centre drapier," 36-37.

13 Gourmelon, "L'industrie," 56.

14 Belhoste ("Paris, Grand centre drapier," 47) mentions that it was a center of cloth dyeing in the early fourteenth century.

15 Félix Bourquelot, *Études sur les foires de Champagne, sur la nature, l'étendue et les règles du commerce qui s'y faisait aux XIIe, XIIIe, et XIVe siècles*, Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres de l'Institut Impérial de France, ser. 2, vol. 5, pts. 1-2 (1865; repr., Le Portulan: Le Manoir de Saint-Pierre-de-Salerno, 1970), 1:239; Hoshino,

status, and, in some instances, the fiber of *tiretaine*. An ordinance of the *tiretainiers* of Saint-Marcel, probably dating from the late thirteenth century, indicates that *tiretaine* was indeed frequently made with linen and wool.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, evidence from household accounts indicates that this was indeed a lightweight cloth, suitable for use as summer clothing, and almost always lined with some sort of silk; I have found only one example of an outfit made of *tiretaine* and lined with fur.<sup>17</sup> In 1304 and 1315, Countess Mahaut of Artois wore *tiretaine* on Pentecost, the day that she presented her livery of summer clothing to her retainers.<sup>18</sup> Mahaut, and her father before her, made most of their purchases of *tiretaine* during the summer months.<sup>19</sup> It seems, however, that *tiretaine* was not always made with linen and wool. On one occasion, Mahaut of Artois's account book mentions a purchase of twenty-six ounces of *tiretaine sur soie*, suggesting that in this one instance either the fabric was made entirely of silk or it had a warp of silk rather than linen.<sup>20</sup> Silk cloth was almost always sold by the ounce rather than by length.

Evidence in a number of sources suggests that there was a broad range of prices for *tiretaines*. Mahaut of Artois paid between four and twenty-four sous per ell for *tiretaines* of differing qualities. Both the lowest-priced and the highest-priced *tiretaines* in her accounts were from Florence.<sup>21</sup> Sources also indicate that *tiretaine* was sometimes dyed with kermes, the extremely expensive dye that was used to dye the most luxurious of all medieval woolens, scarlet. In 1268, buyers for the English king who were shopping in Paris bought two *tiretaines* dyed with kermes;<sup>22</sup> in 1328, the inventory of

*L'arte della lana*, 83, 126-27. C. Leber repeated the dominant definition, but admitted that some fabrics identified by this name must have been of luxury quality. Leber, comp., *Collection des meilleurs dissertations, notices et traités particuliers relatifs à l'histoire de France* (Paris: G.-A. Dentu, 1838), 19:79.

16 Geneviève Souchal, "Études sur la tapisserie Parisienne: Règlements et technique des tapissiers sarrasinois, hautellissiers et nostrez (vers 1260-vers 1350)," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 123 (1965): 91-92.

17 Silk linings: Archives Départementales de Pas-de-Calais, ser. A (henceforth, Pas-de-Calais A), 199, 96v (household account of Countess of Artois, 1304); 270, 19r (household account of Countess of Artois, 1310); 334, 24r (household account of Countess of Artois, 1315, transcribed by Véronique Gérard and others, untitled thesis on the Court of Mahaut of Artois, *Mémoire de maîtrise*, Université de Nanterre, 1971, vol. 2, available for consultation in the Salle Diplomatique, Institut de recherche et histoire des textes, Paris); "Compte du bailliage d'Artois" (1304-5), in *Documents et extraits divers concernant l'histoire de l'art dans la Flandre, l'Artois et le Hainaut avant le xve siècle*, ed. C. Dehaisnes (Lille: Impr. L. Danel, 1886), 161; "inventaire et vente après décès des biens de la reine Clémence de Hongrie, veuve de Louis le Hutin, 1328," in *Nouveau recueil de comptes de l'Argenterie des rois de France*, ed. L. Douët-D'Arcq (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1874), 70-71 (four "robes" of *tiretaine* of Saint-Marcel, lined with taffetas, cendal, and tartar). Fur lining: "[Testament de] Blanche, fille du roi de Sicile et femme de Robert, fils aîné du comte de Flandres," in Dehaisnes, *Documents*, 63.

18 Pas-de-Calais A 199, 94v; A 334, 24r.

19 Pas-de-Calais A 162, 43r; A 199, 96v; A 270, 16v; A 334, 28v (transcribed by Gérard et al., vol. 2); A 374, 28v, 29r (transcribed by Gérard et al., 3:154, 155).

20 Pas-de-Calais A 270, 19r.

21 Pas-de-Calais A 199, 96v (24 sous/ell, 1304); A 270, 16v (4 sous/ell, 1310).

22 Samuel Lysons, "Copy of a Roll of Purchases Made for the Tournament of Windsor Park, in the sixth Year of Edward the First," *Archaeologia* 17 (1814): 309.

goods belonging to Clemence of Hungary, the deceased widow of the French King Louis X, included an outfit of black *tiretaine* of Saint-Marcel, which was also dyed with kermes.<sup>23</sup>

The higher-priced *tiretaines* were almost always worn by royalty or by the highest members of the aristocracy, rather than by servants or retainers, who always wore cloth of lesser quality than that worn by their employers. In 1269, Blanche, the daughter of the King of Sicily and wife of the eldest son of the Count of Flanders, bequeathed to a woman named Vivien *ma reube de tiretaine* ("my outfit of *tiretaine*"), which was lined with miniver (*menu vair*), one of the most prized furs in the Middle Ages.<sup>24</sup> On Pentecost in 1304, Mahaut of Artois wore an outfit of *tiretaine* for which the fabric alone cost £28.<sup>25</sup> Mahaut wore *tiretaine* again in 1306 and 1315, and in 1326 she wore *tiretaine* of Saint-Marcel.<sup>26</sup> In 1306 and 1315 she also purchased *tiretaine* for her son Robert—in the latter case, it was *tiretaine* of Saint-Marcel, which he and his companions wore to the feast of the king's coronation.<sup>27</sup> In 1328, when the French Queen Clemence of Hungary died, four of her thirty-five garments were made of *tiretaine* of Saint-Marcel. They were all dyed in different colors.<sup>28</sup> Sometime between 1335 and 1342, the French king's wardrober bought a coat lined with *tiretaine* for the king.<sup>29</sup> It seems, then, that some *tiretaines* were considered luxury cloth.

The Parisian tax assessments indicate that there were at least two weavers of *tiretaine* working in the suburb of Saint-Marcel by 1292.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, in the sources I have examined, *tiretaine* that was produced in Saint-Marcel is not mentioned before 1315. Up until then, the most frequently mentioned place of origin for high-quality *tiretaine* was Florence. Florentine *tiretaine* is mentioned in the 1294 accounts of the countess of Flanders, in the 1302 inventory of goods of Raoul of Nesle, the Constable of France, and in the 1304 and 1310 accounts of Mahaut of Artois.<sup>31</sup> I have found no mention of Florentine *tiretaines* in Northern French households after 1314. However, we learn from the account books of Mahaut of Artois that several Florentine drapers who had settled in Saint-Marcel were now producing and marketing *tiretaines*. Twice in 1315 and twice in 1326, Mahaut bought *tiretaine* of Saint-Marcel from "Berthmien Cresseten" or "Berthelot Castanis" (apparently the same person); and two times in

23 "Inventaire et vente après décès," 70.

24 "[Testament de] Blanche," 63.

25 Pas-de-Calais A 199, 94v.

26 Pas-de-Calais A 222, 26r; A 334, 24r (transcribed by Gérard et al., vol. 2); A 458, 24r.

27 Pas-de-Calais A 222, 26r; A 334, 28v (transcribed by Gérard et al., vol. 2).

28 "Inventaire et vente après décès," 70-71.

29 Leber, *Collection des meilleurs dissertations*, 19:79.

30 Hercule Gérard, ed., *Paris sous Philippe-le-Bel d'après des documents originaux et notamment d'après un manuscrit contenant "Le Rôle de la Taille" imposée sur les habitants de Paris en 1292*, reproduced with a new introduction and index by Caroline Bourlet and Lucie Fossier (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1991), 176.

31 "Recettes et dépenses faites par Jacques le receveur pour l'hotel de madame la comtesse de Flandre," in Dehaisnes, *Documents*, 85; "Inventaire des biens de feu Raoul de Nesle, connétable de France," in Dehaisnes, *Documents*, 137; Pas-de-Calais A 199, 96v; A 270, 16v.

1319 she bought *tiretaine* of Saint-Marcel from "Jacques Faves" (or Feves).<sup>32</sup> In 1317 she had paid this same Jacques Faves £216 to dye eleven white *camelins* and one *drap fin* of Brussels with kermes.<sup>33</sup> Berthmien Cresseten and Jacques Faves were two of four Florentines—the brothers "Jaquinus Quercitanus" and "Berthelinus Quercitanus" (Latin for Berthmien Cresseten), "Jacobus Fava" (Latin for Jacques Faves) and "Colinus Usimbardus"—who had settled in Saint-Marcel sometime before 1317, when the French king granted them the rights and privileges of French townsmen (*burgenses nostros et regni nostri Francie facimus*).<sup>34</sup> Berthmien was already residing there in 1292.<sup>35</sup>

It thus seems clear that the high-quality *tiretaines* that came to be associated with the Parisian suburb of Saint-Marcel had their origins in the earlier *tiretaines* of Florence, and that sometime around 1314 the *tiretaines* of Saint-Marcel began to supplant Florentine *tiretaines* in Northern aristocratic courts. It is also clear that the Italian draper/dyers of Saint-Marcel were using kermes as well as other dyes. We can thus infer that they were at the top of the economic hierarchy in their profession. The one Parisian dyer who had the right to use kermes in 1313 was one of the two most wealthy dyers in the tax assessment of that year.<sup>36</sup>

Textile production in Saint-Marcel may have suffered in the second half of the fourteenth century, due to the ravages of the Hundred Years' War. When it was reestablished, in the mid-fifteenth century, the patterns resembled those of the early fourteenth century: The men who founded the new industry were Italian draper/dyers—the well-known Gobelins and Canayes. Once again, moreover, they used kermes.<sup>37</sup>

## LINENS

At the end of the thirteenth century, the linen industry of Paris was apparently smaller than the wool industry in terms of numbers of weavers, but it already played a major role in supplying the most important royal and aristocratic households of northern Europe, and its size may have grown toward the end of the fourth decade of the fourteenth century, as the wool and silk industries began to decline. The tax assessments of the years 1296–1300 reveal an average of twenty-four linen weavers per year, half of whom were women.<sup>38</sup>

32 Pas-de-Calais A 334, 28v (transcribed by Gérard et al., vol. 2); A 374, 28v, 29r (transcribed by Gérard et al., 3:154, 155); A 458, 24r, 30v.

33 Jules-Marie Richard, *Une petite-nièce de Saint Louis: Mahaut, comtesse d'Artois et de Bourgogne (1302–1329)* (Paris: H. Champion, 1887), 396. *Drap fin* is "fine cloth." *Camelin* was a type of wool cloth, of varying quality; see Bourquelot, *Études*, 262–66.

34 Jules Marie Édouard Viard, ed., *Documents Parisiens du règne de Philippe VI de Valois (1328–1350)* (Paris: H. Champion, 1899), 1:104–5.

35 Géraud, *Paris sous Philippe-le-Bel*, 176.

36 Belhoste, "Paris, Grand centre drapier," 36.

37 *Ibid.*, 47.

38 Janice Archer, "Working Women in Thirteenth-Century Paris" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1995), 252. I am including *tisserand de linge*, *tisserand de toile*, and *telier* in this total.

Parisian linens—especially bed linens, altar cloths, and veils, but also linen cloth used in various items of clothing—were highly prized by the English royal court throughout the fourteenth century and by the Papal court during its entire stay in Avignon (1307–1417), most especially during the years 1317–32 and 1342–60.<sup>39</sup> The Countess of Artois also made most of her linen purchases in Paris, and a good proportion of those purchases were probably Parisian linens.<sup>40</sup>

A single purchase record for the English royal court for the year 1301–2 shows the king's household purchasing 832 ells of Parisian *mappa* (napery—i.e., table linens and altar cloths).<sup>41</sup> A purchase record from 1303–4 reveals the same household purchasing 878 ells of Parisian *mappa* as well as 22 *tuallii* (toweling, altar cloths, or head coverings) from Paris.<sup>42</sup> By the 1320s and 1330s, when we can get a global picture of the English kings' annual purchases from the Great Wardrobe accounts, the English royal household was purchasing annually well over 1,000 ells of Parisian *mappa*, several hundred to over 1,000 ells of Parisian *tela* (linen cloth), and several hundred ells of long and short Parisian *manuterga* (fine linen towels).<sup>43</sup>

Quantities purchased as well as price hierarchies in the English royal accounts indicate that at the beginning of the century, Paris was a major supplier of *mappa*, but that the royal household was willing to pay more for *mappa* from Dinant, and occasionally for English linen. In 1301–2 and 1303–4, the English king's buyers paid between 6.6d. and 10d. per ell for Parisian *mappa*, between 5d. and 14d. for *mappa* from Dinant, and, on one occasion, 13d. for some unspecified English *mappa*.<sup>44</sup>

By the 1320s and 1330s, however, Paris had clearly established itself with the English royal household as the most prized producer of both *mappa* and *manuterga*, with slightly less expensive products from Rouen filling out the demand.<sup>45</sup> In 1323–24, the English royal household paid 10d. for each ell of Parisian *mappa* and between 7d. and 8d. for that from Rouen.<sup>46</sup> In 1331–32, the same household paid between 12d. and 14d. for each ell of Parisian *mappa*, and 10d. for that from Rouen.<sup>47</sup>

39 Anne Sutton, "Some Aspects of the Linen Trade c. 1130s to 1500, and the Part Played by the Mercers of London," *Textile History* 30 (1999): 157, 165, 166; Robert Delort, "Note sur les achats de draps et d'étoffes effectués par la chambre apostolique des papes d'Avignon (1316–1417)," *École française de Rome, Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 74 (1962): 232.

40 I have examined most of the surviving Artois household accounts from 1300–1328: Pas-de-Calais A 162, A 178, A 199, A 222, A 261, A 263, A 270, A 280, A 293, A 298, A 448, A 458, A 470, A 474. For the following accounts, I examined the transcriptions of Gérard et al.: A 316, A 329, A 334, A 351, A 361, A 368, A 374, A 378, A 386, A 396, A 403.

41 London, National Archives, E 101/359/18.

42 London, National Archives, E 101/366/4.

43 In 1333, for instance, the Great Wardrobe account records purchases of 1,509 ells of *mappa* of Paris, 930 ells of long *manuterga* of Paris, 169 pieces of short *manuterga* of Paris, 135 ells of *mappa* of Rouen, 1,080 ells of *tela* from Reims, 1,399¾ ells of *tela* from Paris, and 1,513 ells of English *tela*. London, National Archives, E 361/9, rot. 13.

44 London, National Archives, E 101/359/18; E 101/366/4.

45 See note 43.

46 London, National Archives, E 101/379/12.

47 London, National Archives, E 101/386/5.



In the area of linen cloth (*tela*), Reims was at the top of the status hierarchy in terms of price, with Parisian linen coming in second, and English linens coming in third (see table 4.1). Quantities of linen cloth from Reims, Paris, and England were often about equal in the Great Wardrobe Accounts. In 1333–34, for instance, the Great Wardrobe account records purchases of 1,080 ells of *tela* from Reims, 1,399<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ells of *tela* from Paris, and 1,513 ells of English *tela*.<sup>48</sup>

## TAPESTRIES AND FURNISHINGS

Historians of medieval tapestries agree that, along with Arras, Paris played a major role in the emergence of commercial tapestry weaving in Western Europe in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.<sup>49</sup> However, they do not agree in their interpretations of the evidence concerning the evolution of tapestry-weaving techniques in that early period. By the fifteenth century—the period for which most of the physical evidence survives—two techniques had emerged: that using the *haute lisse*, or vertical loom, and that using the *basse lisse*, or horizontal loom. The most prized tapestries were those made on a *haute lisse* loom. With both loom types, tapestry weavers worked with several shuttles, each carrying a wool yarn of a different color, and they passed each shuttle only as far as its color was needed, rather than sending a single shuttle from selvage to selvage, as is the case with conventional weaving. The warp yarn provided the strength of the material, but it was not visible once the tapestry was completed.<sup>50</sup>

Guild statutes from Paris from the 1260s highlight two distinct techniques for producing *tapis*, but the distinctions between the two do not seem to correspond to the distinctions between the later *basse lisse* and *haute lisse* techniques for tapestries. One of the thirteenth-century guilds consisted of *tapissiers de tapiz sarrasinois* (“makers of Saracen *tapis*”); a second consisted of *tapissier(s) de tapis nostrez* (“makers of our *tapis*,” meaning, apparently, native French *tapis*).<sup>51</sup> The word *tapis* was used to describe any textile that was employed for furnishings, wall hangings, or upholstery; thus it is

48 London, National Archives, E 361/9, rot. 13.

49 J. Lestocquoy, *Deux siècles de l'histoire de la tapisserie (1300–1500)*, Paris, Arras, Lille, Tournai, Bruxelles (Arras: Commission départementale des monuments historiques du Pas-de-Calais, 1978), 12–17; Adolfo Salvatore Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 63–65. Cavallo argues that Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, Lille, Louvain, Valenciennes, and London were also centers of tapestry-making in the fourteenth century, but for the period before the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War in 1337 he cites evidence for only Ghent and Brussels, and that evidence does not give any indication of the extent of the tapestry industry in those two towns. Tapestry-makers were also active in Germany in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but they were not working within an organized commercial industry (73–74).

50 Anna G. Bennett, “Tapestry, Art of,” in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 11:593–94.

51 René de Lespinasse and François Bonnardot, eds., *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris, XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1879), 102, 106 (titres 51 and 52). On the meaning of *nostrez*, see Souchal, “Études sur la tapisserie,” 38–39.

Table 4.1: Pennies/ell for *tela* (linen cloth) purchased by the English royal household, 1323-35

Place of origin	1323-24	1325-26	1329-30	1331-32	1334-35
Reims	9-10	7½-15	12-16	12-18	24-30
Paris	4-5	6-10	5½-12	8-12	8-12
England	3½	3½		4-7	4-5
Strailp (locale uncertain)	4				
Leg <sup>3</sup> (probably Liège)		7½-8			

Sources: London, National Archives, E 101/379/12; E 101/381/9; E 101/384/6; E 101/386/5; E 101/387/13.

not clear that either of these guilds made tapestries. Geneviève Souchal has argued that the term *tapiz sarrasinois* referred to a technique known as knotted pile (used both then and now in Oriental carpets),<sup>52</sup> and that the term *tapiz nostrez* referred to furnishing fabrics that were woven in the conventional way, with a single shuttle that passed from one selvage to the other.<sup>53</sup> However, other textile historians maintain that the evidence is too scanty for us to recover the precise meanings of these two terms.<sup>54</sup> The fact that one of the Parisian techniques was identified with the Muslims finds a parallel in Germany, where tapestries were known as “heathen’s work” (*Heidnischwerk*).<sup>55</sup> The earliest surviving woven tapestries from Germany date from the eleventh century; the earliest knotted-pile tapestry, from the mid-twelfth century.<sup>56</sup>

A set of revisions to the statutes of the makers of *tapiz sarrasinois*, which dates from around 1290, indicates that by then a new group of tapestry makers had arisen or arrived in Paris, perhaps from Arras. An accord between the two groups, drawn up in 1303, reveals that the new tapestry makers were using the *haute lisse* technique.<sup>57</sup> This is the earliest piece of written evidence from anywhere in Europe for the emergence of the *haute lisse* technique. A purchase order from the household of Mahaut of Artois, dated 1313, is our earliest mention of a *haute lisse* tapestry.<sup>58</sup> It indicates that by then *haute lisse* tapestries were being made not only in Paris, but also in Arras.

As historians have already noted, the household account books and administrative records of Mahaut of Artois indicate that in the first three decades of the fourteenth century, tapestries and furnishing fabrics were sold, and probably produced, in both Paris and Arras. Only in the case of a few of Mahaut’s purchases in Arras, however,

52 Rosamond Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 73-74.

53 Souchal, “Études sur la tapisserie,” 37-39, 69.

54 Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries*, 63.

55 Laura Weigert, *Weaving Sacred Stories: French Choir Tapestries and the Performance of Clerical Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 7.

56 Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries*, 73.

57 Souchal, “Études sur la tapisserie,” 52, 59-63, 73-79.

58 Lestocquoy, *Deux siècles*, 15.

can we point definitively to the *haute lisse* technique.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, given the evidence from 1303, it seems reasonable to assume that a number of Mahaut's Parisian purchases were *haute lisse* tapestries produced in Paris.

An entry in the records of the French royal household provides us with slightly less ambiguous evidence for the production of tapestries in Paris during the first three decades of the fourteenth century. In 1316, the household purchased from Jehan *le tapissier*, in preparation for the royal coronation the following January, ten vermilion *tapis* decorated with parrots bearing the French arms, butterflies bearing the arms of Burgundy, and trefoils (*treffles*). We can be sure that these *tapis* were tapestries rather than embroidered furnishings, since an order for a similarly decorated embroidered bedroom set was placed with a different supplier at the same time (see p. 85).<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, there is no way for us to determine if the technique involved was a patterned tapestry weave (either *haute lisse* or *basse lisse*) or knotted pile; nor do we know whether or not the technique was associated with *tapiz sarrasinois*.

Records from the English royal household indicate that in the last decades of the thirteenth century and the first decades of the fourteenth, Parisian *tapis* were gaining an international reputation. The household of the English king purchased eight *tapetae* of unknown technique in Paris in 1278,<sup>61</sup> and by the 1330s Parisian *tapetae* had their own rubric in the English royal household accounts. Again, though, the references are too vague for us to distinguish techniques, except to say that in some cases the textiles in question were decorated.<sup>62</sup> Papal records from Avignon also point to numerous purchases of Parisian *tapis*.<sup>63</sup>

## SILK TEXTILES

Our earliest evidence for the silk industry in Paris comes from the collection of guild statutes known as the *Livre des métiers*, which was first compiled sometime in the 1260s. Modern editions of those statutes indicate that there were six guilds associated with the production of silk: two guilds of silk spinners (one using large spindles, the other using small spindles); a guild of makers of silk and linen ribbon; and three different guilds of weavers: makers of silk *tissu* (cloth); makers of *drap de soie* (another term for silk cloth—the difference from *tissu* is not clear), *veluau* (velvet), and *boursserie en lice* (woven purses); and weavers of *queuvrechiers de soie* (silk head coverings).<sup>64</sup> In

59 On the purchase evidence concerning *tapis* purchased in Paris and Arras in the Artois records, see Richard, *Une petite-niece*, 212–19. Lestocquoy (*Deux siècles*, 7–17) has drawn on Richard's discussion, but with less precision and some errors.

60 "Le premier compte de Geoffroi de Fleuri argentier du roi Philippe le Long pour les six derniers mois de l'année 1316," in *Comptes de l'argenterie des rois de France au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. L. Douët-D'Arcq (Paris: J. Renouard, 1851), 59–61.

61 Lyons, "Copy of a Roll of Purchases," 308.

62 London, National Archives, E 101/384/6; E 101/386/5.

63 Delort, "Note sur les achats," 232.

64 Lespinasse and Bonnardot, *Livre des métiers*, 66, 68, 70, 74, 76, 83 (titres 34, 35, 36, 38, 40, 44).

the statutes for the makers of silk *tissu* and for the weavers of silk head coverings, the nouns for the artisans who practiced the craft (*ouvrières de tissuz; tesserandes de soie*) are all in the feminine—thus the working assumption is that most workers who were subject to these statutes were women. The statutes for the makers of *drap de soie*, velvet, and woven purses, by contrast, assumed a male membership. The Parisian tax assessments of the 1290s reveal a preponderance of women silk weavers: The assessments include an average of ninety-seven silk weavers per year, of whom only seven were men. Another two men were identified as makers of velvet; no women were identified as makers of velvet.<sup>65</sup>

Caroline Bourlet, who is working on a dissertation on the artisans of Paris, has suggested that only three of the six silk guilds—the two spinners' guilds and that of the ribbon makers—existed at the time that the *Livre des métiers* was first compiled. The other three, which constitute the solid evidence for the weaving of silk cloth in Paris, are later additions, probably dating to the 1290s.<sup>66</sup> An even later statute, from 1324, suggests that Paris was producing brocades of silk and gold thread.<sup>67</sup>

Even with a starting date of the 1290s rather than the 1260s, the presence of a silk-weaving industry in Paris was significant. Only four Italian towns are known to have preceded Paris in developing silk industries on more than a modest scale. Moreover, the statute for makers of silk *drap* and velvet constitutes our earliest written evidence for the production of velvet anywhere in Western Europe. The earliest reference to velvet production in Lucca dates from 1311.<sup>68</sup> Of course, regulations do not always point to actual practice. Thus, it is extremely significant that the Parisian tax assessments from the 1290s include weavers of both silk and velvet.

Drawing on the archeological evidence of a garment of woolen velvet, in which King Philip I of France was buried in 1108, and on a reference to the production of woolen velvet in Tournai in 1380, Sophie Desrosiers, who was the first scholar to highlight the significance of Paris' early velvet production, has expressed a "small doubt" as to whether the velvet that was produced in Paris in the 1290s was made of silk. She finds further reason to entertain this doubt in statute 32 (a later addition to the original statutes) of the guild of the makers of luxuriously decorated saddles, which seemed to place velvet and basan, an inferior type of leather, on an equal level.<sup>69</sup>

65 Archer, *Working Women*, 252. I have counted *fabricant de draps de soie, ouvriere de soie, fabricante de tissu*, and *fabricant de velours*, but not *carier de soie*, since these weavers produced small items, such as handkerchiefs. For the argument that *ouvriere de soie* meant "silk-weaver," see Archer, *Working Women*, 116–17.

66 Caroline Bourlet, "Labour Policy in Thirteenth and Beginning of Fourteenth Century Paris" (paper presentation, International Medieval Congress, Leeds, England, July 2003). Bourlet is currently preparing this paper for publication.

67 "Lettres du prévot de Paris honologuant les statuts des merciers," in *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. René de Lespinasse (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1892), 2:245.

68 Sophie Desrosiers, "Sur l'origine d'un tissu qui à participé à la fortune de Venise: le velours de soie," in Molà, Mueller, and Zanier, *La seta in Italia*, 33, 44–45.

69 Desrosiers, "Sur l'origine," 42–45; Lespinasse and Bonnardot, *Livre des métiers*, 172 (titre 78, statute 32).

My own reading of the evidence favors a hypothesis that the velvets being produced in Paris in the 1290s were indeed made of silk. The velvet makers were grouped in a single guild with makers of *drap de soie*, and indeed the only fiber mentioned in the statutes for that guild is silk. As for statute 32 of the guild of makers of luxurious saddles, the text of that statute reads, “Nulz ne puet faire selle de basenne et de veluau” (“no one may make saddles of basan and velvet”). I interpret this to mean that saddlemakers were prohibited from using the two materials together on the same saddle, but not from otherwise employing those materials. Indeed, the use of basan under certain circumstances is assumed in a number of the individual statutes for the same guild.<sup>70</sup> We also know from account books that luxurious saddles were frequently decorated with velvet; in 1292, for instance, Count Robert of Artois commissioned a saddle that was to be decorated with his own coat of arms and velvet of silk (*veluau de soie*; this is apparently the earliest Western European reference to velvet in which the fiber—silk—is clearly identified).<sup>71</sup> Thus it seems that the prohibition in the statute for the Parisian saddlemakers was intended to keep the two materials separate, probably because it was thought that velvet, a luxurious textile, should not be mixed with a leather that was not considered luxurious.

Despite the solid evidence for a silk industry in late-thirteenth-century Paris, many textile historians and historians of costume continue to ignore its existence, perhaps because the evidence for the actual consumption of Parisian silks is scant.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, in the available printed sources to which textile historians regularly turn, there is only one solid example of silk cloth that was produced in Paris: in January 1317, on the occasion of her entry into Reims for her coronation and that of the king, Queen Jeanne of Burgundy wore a cape of cloth of gold made in Paris.<sup>73</sup>

Unpublished material in the English royal wardrobe accounts provides further evidence for the production of Parisian silk, and for its export in small amounts to England. Each year from 1324 to 1333, the English royal household purchased one or two pieces of Parisian silk.<sup>74</sup> At least half of the time, the Parisian silks had their own rubric in the margins of the accounts.<sup>75</sup> On those occasions when the length of the pieces is specified, they were short—thirteen and a half or fourteen and a half ells in length.<sup>76</sup> Over half of the descriptions indicate that the Parisian silk was striped

70 Lespinasse and Bonnardot, *Livre des métiers*, 169, 172 (titre 78, statutes 11 and 32). The mention of acceptable use of basan in statute 32 comes from the last phrase of the sentence that begins with the prohibition concerning the mixing of basan and velvet. It reads: “et ne puet border sellerie neuve de clous d'estain se [elle] n'est de basenne” (“and may not make borders of pewter nails on new saddles if the saddles are not made of basan”).

71 Richard, *Une petite-nièce*, 126–27, citing Pas-de-Calais A 132.

72 See, for example, Françoise Piponnier and Perrine Mane, *Dress in the Middle Ages* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 20. They assert that silk weaving did not begin in France until the fifteenth century.

73 “Pour 3 draps d'or de Paris, ouvrez ... pour faire une chappe à la royne, qu'elle ot à l'entree de Rains.” “Premier compte de Geoffroi de Fleuri,” 57.

74 London, National Archives, E 361/3, rot. 2, 3, 5, 9, 19, 22v; E 361/9, rot. 3, 5, 6, 10.

75 London, National Archives, E 361/3, rot. 2, 5, 9; E 361/9, rot. 3, 5.

76 London, National Archives, E 361/3 rot. 2, 5, 9.

(*radiatus*).<sup>77</sup> While the English accounts do not indicate that the Parisian silk contained gold or that it was a figured silk, the grouping of the Parisian silks with other silks that contained gold or with figured silks suggests that it may have been either figured, woven with gold thread, or both.<sup>78</sup>

### EMBROIDERY

Embroidery was another major source of employment and luxury consumer goods in Paris of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. A set of statutes from the very end of the thirteenth century, which includes a list of all of the members of the guild at that time, indicates that there were ninety-four embroiderers in Paris, seventy-nine of whom were women.<sup>79</sup> Evidence from the French royal household accounts indicates that the local luxury market went a long way in keeping Parisian embroiderers employed. In 1316, for instance, the royal household commissioned three embroidered bedroom sets (*chambres*) for the upcoming royal coronation. One of those *chambres*—that of the queen—was supplied by Gauthier of Poullegny, whose business included both fulfilling orders for embroidered pieces and selling silk, linen, and other mercery items. The queen's *chambre* was to be made of velvet embroidered in gold with 1,321 parrots emblazoned with the arms of France and 661 butterflies bearing the queen's arms—those of Burgundy—on their wings. Interspersed among the gold parrots and butterflies were 7,000 trefoils embroidered in silver. The total outlay for this single bedroom set was over £902.<sup>80</sup>

Church inventories from Paris indicate that wealthy ecclesiastical institutions also fed the demand for embroidery, either through direct commissions or through gifts from aristocratic and royal households to those institutions. The 1342 inventory for the Paris church of Saint-Martin des Champs includes numerous embroidered liturgical vestments and furnishings. One alb and parament set was embroidered in gold with images from the life of St. Martin; another parament was embroidered with fleurs-de-lis and St. Martin on his horse; another alb was embroidered in gold with a man fighting a lion and two men on horseback; a cape was embroidered in silver with images of the Virgin; a bishop's miter was embroidered with images of the Nativity.<sup>81</sup>

77 London, National Archives, E 361/3, rot. 2, 3, 19, 22v; E 361/9, rot. 5, 6, 10.

78 London, National Archives, E 361/3, rot. 5: The Parisian silk is paired with *panni de Tars'*, right after *panni de turkie* and *Aresta*. Rot. 9: The rubric includes velvet, samite, *camoca*, *tars'* and Parisian silk. Rot. 22v: The Parisian silk is listed just after *panni ad aurum de Turke* and just before *panni ad aurum diaspiment'*.

79 G. B. Depping, ed., *Réglemens sur les arts et métiers de Paris rédigés au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Impr. de Crapelet, 1837), 379–82.

80 "Premier compte de Geoffroi de Fleuri," 59–60. For Gauthier of Poullegny's activities as a merchant of mercery items, see Pas-de-Calais A 334, 28v (transcribed by Gérard et al., vol. 2).

81 L'Abbé Lebeuf, *Histoire de la ville et de tout le diocèse de Paris*, ed. Hippolyte Cocheris (Paris: A. Durand, 1867), 2:327–30.

Surviving embroidered French liturgical vestments in Sweden and France give us an idea of what these liturgical garments might have looked like. A cope completed in 1274 that apparently belonged to Archbishop Fulk of Uppsala, and is still in the cathedral there, has thirty-nine medallions embroidered with representations of martyrs in gold and silk on red silk.<sup>82</sup> A late-thirteenth-century cope from the abbey of Montiéramey in Champagne, which may originally have been a chasuble, has fifty embroidered quadrilobes, each enclosing a representation of a martyr, a scene from the life of a saint, or a scene from the New Testament.<sup>83</sup> Five contemporary fragments of a liturgical vestment, also from Montiéramey, have scenes from the lives of saints and the passion cycle. A vestment in the treasury of the basilica in Saint-Maximin in Provence, thought to have belonged to St. Louis of Toulouse and dating from the first quarter of the fourteenth century, has medallions containing scenes from the life of the Virgin and from the New Testament.<sup>84</sup>

Royalty, powerful aristocrats, and wealthy ecclesiastical institutions were not the only consumers of embroidery in Paris. In 1326, the Parisian bourgeois confraternity of the Pilgrims to St. James of Compostella paid to have numerous liturgical furnishings embroidered with scallops, the symbol of the pilgrimage to Compostella. A few years later they ordered altar frontals and custodials, which were also to be *coquillier*, or covered with scallops (*coquilles de St. Jacques*).<sup>85</sup>

Evidence from household account books and notarial registers also indicates that Parisian embroideries were commissioned for consumption outside of Paris. In 1299, Clément *le brodeur*, of Paris, delivered an embroidered vestment for the chapel of the Count of Artois.<sup>86</sup> In 1302, in preparation for a military campaign in Flanders, the count of Artois ordered embroidered saddles and outfits for his horses. The provenance of most of the embroideries is not specified, but the account does mention a beaver cape embroidered with gold and silk, which he bought in Paris.<sup>87</sup> We know as well that Mahaut of Artois placed a number of embroidery commissions with Étienne Chevalier, a Parisian embroiderer. One of those was for a set of sacerdotal vestments and liturgical furnishings for the Dominican house of Thieulloye, which she had founded. Another was for ornaments for the church of Théroouanne. Étienne

82 Agnes Branting and Andreas Lindblom, *Medieval Embroideries and Textiles in Sweden* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1932), 89–93, pl. 125–28; Agnes Geijer, *Textile Treasures of Uppsala Cathedral From Eight Centuries* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), 23–25, pl. 4–5; Regula Schorta, “Tissus et broderies,” in *L’art au temps des rois maudits: Philippe le Bel et ses fils, 1285–1328* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1998), 248.

83 Schorta, “Tissus et broderies,” 249; Odile Brel-Bordaz, *Broderies d’ornements liturgiques xiii–xv s.* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1982), 130–39, figs. 2–9; Pauline Johnstone, *High Fashion in the Church: The Place of Church Vestments in the History of Art From the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2002), 52.

84 Schorta, “Tissus et broderies,” 249; Brel-Bordaz, *Broderies*, 141–47, figs. 10–16; Johnstone, *High Fashion*, 52.

85 H. Bordier, “La confrérie des pèlerins de Saint-Jacques et ses archives,” part 2, *Mémoires de la Société de l’histoire de Paris et de l’Île-de-France* (1876): 357.

86 Branting and Lindblom, *Medieval Embroideries*, 93.

87 Richard, *Une petite-nièce*, 387.

also supplied an embroidered outfit for Mahaut's grandson, consisting of a coat, mantle, hood, and a sword sheath embroidered with silk and pearls.<sup>88</sup>

### SMALL MERCERY GOODS

Paris was also known for its small luxurious textile items, especially silk almspurse and belts. A set of statutes from the very end of the thirteenth century lists 124 *faiseuses d'aumonières sarrazinoises* ("makers of Saracen almspurse"), all of whom were women.<sup>89</sup> Almspurse were small cloth purses that were worn on the exterior of garments, hanging from a belt. Some were made of velvet, some were embroidered with silk and gold thread, and some were made with a tapestry weave of silk and gold thread. Many of the embroidered ones depicted scenes from courtly life, including encounters between lovers.<sup>90</sup>

The statutes for the makers of Saracen almspurse do not indicate why these particular purses were associated with the Muslims. We know that the members of this guild used silk and gold thread, suggesting that the purses were either embroidered or tapestry-woven. Because there were precedents for silk and gold tapestry weaving in early-thirteenth-century Muslim Spain, some textile historians have suggested that Saracen almspurse were those using the tapestry weave.<sup>91</sup> This conjecture makes sense, given the fact that one of the early tapestry guilds in Paris made "Saracen *tapis*" (see p. 80). It is also possible that the Crusaders encountered a similar kind of luxurious purse in the Middle East: The Persian *kiseh*, for instance, was a small bag usually made of silk and worn on a belt or girdle.<sup>92</sup>

Household account books, vernacular literature, and manuscript illuminations indicate that members of the aristocracy made frequent purchases of almspurse, which thus provided an important source of employment.<sup>93</sup> Like silk belts, which were both embroidered and worked with enamels and precious metals, almspurse figured prominently in the late medieval gift economy. On the day of Queen Jeanne of Burgundy's coronation in 1317, twelve embroidered purses, six embroidered

88 *Ibid.*, 89, 205, 207.

89 Depping, *Règlements sur les arts*, 382–86.

90 For published examples, see Marie Schuette and Sigrid Müller-Christensen, *A Pictorial History of Embroidery* (New York: Praeger, 1964), pl. 214–18, XI, 221–22, and Hans Wentzel, "Almosentasche," in *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, ed. O. Schmitt (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1937), 1:393–401. For discussion and an example of a French, possibly Parisian, almspurse in silk and gold tapestry-weave, see Rebecca Martin, *Textiles in Daily Life in the Middle Ages* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art in cooperation with Indiana University Press, 1985), 27. For references to velvet purses, see below at note 94.

91 Martin, *Textiles in Daily Life*, 27; Wadsworth Atheneum, *2000 Years of Tapestry Weaving: A Loan Exhibition* (Hartford and Baltimore, c. 1951), cat. nos. 65–67, 32–33, pl. 5.

92 "Kiseh," *Lughat-nama (Dictionnaire encyclopédique) fondé par Ali Akbar Dehkhodâ, sous la direction de Mohammad Mo'in* (Tehran: Université de Téhéran, 1946–), vol. xi, 16602. Many thanks to Sarah-Grace Heller for forwarding this reference from her colleague Richard Davis.

93 Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Marie-Thérèse Lorcin, *Le quotidien au temps des fabliaux: Textes, images, objets* (Paris: Picard, 2003), 14, 42, 173, 224, 266–68, 274, 278–79.



velvet purses, six embroidered samite purses, sixteen other purses, and four belts embroidered with pearls were delivered to the queen.<sup>94</sup> She probably gave most of these items away as gifts. In November 1313, Countess Mahaut of Artois gave away nineteen alms purses and three belts during a visit from her daughter Blanche, who had married into the royal family.<sup>95</sup> She had made a similar distribution of purses and belts in 1307, and did so again in 1310 during a visit from the queen of Navarre, the Countess of Blois, the Countess of Namur, and Blanche of Brittany, the widow of Philip of Artois.<sup>96</sup> In 1319, Mahaut gave a purse embroidered with pearls and a silk belt trimmed with gilded silver to the niece of the provost of Aire (one of the towns in the county of Artois), on the occasion of the young woman's marriage.<sup>97</sup>

Aristocrats and royals were not the only ones to thrive on a gift economy that frequently involved small luxurious purses and belts. In 1324, the Parisian Confraternity of the Pilgrims of St. James paid for two *aumonières* and one embroidered purse, which they gave to men who were handling a petition from the confraternity to the pope in Avignon. Since the situation probably called for bribes, one wonders what the confraternity placed inside those purses!<sup>98</sup>

Museum curators often assume that the surviving alms purses of this period were created in Paris. Account book evidence certainly suggests that Paris was a major supplier of these luxury items. The description of two packs of goods that were confiscated from two merchants in Aix-en-Provence in 1343 includes goods from a number of places, but all of the silk purses—seventeen dozen silk and gold ones and one dozen small silk and gold ones—were from Paris.<sup>99</sup> Mercery of Parisian origin was also found as far afield as Naples: A record from there from 1305 includes a green silk belt embroidered with rosettes of pearls and gold, “of Paris work” (*de opere parisiensi*).<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, it is quite possible that other towns were producing embroidered silk alms purses as well. Mahaut of Artois purchased most of her alms purses in Paris, but she purchased some of them in Arras and Saint-Omer.<sup>101</sup> The notarial accounts of the Boni brothers of Montauban from 1340–60 include one silk purse from Paris and one “fine purse” from England.<sup>102</sup>

94 “Premier compte de Geoffroi de Fleuri,” 66.

95 Pas-de-Calais A 316, 5v, 14v.

96 Richard, *Une petite-nièce*, 200.

97 Pas-de-Calais A 374, 22v (transcribed by Gérard et al., 3:142).

98 Bordier, “Confrérie,” part 1, *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France* (1875): 200.

99 J. Billioud, “Le roi des merciers du comté de provence aux XIVe et XVe siècles,” *Bulletin philologique et historique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1922–23): 58–59.

100 Riccardo Beverè, “Vestimenti e gioielli in uso nelle province napoletane dal xii al xvi secolo,” *Archivio storico per le province napoletane* 22 (1897): 320.

101 Paris: Pas-de-Calais A 263, 18r; A 270, 25v; A 316, 20r (transcribed by Gérard et al., vol. 2); A 329, 22r (transcribed by Gérard et al., vol. 2). Arras: A 263, 18r; A 316, 14v. Saint-Omer: A 298, 15r.

102 Édouard Forestié, *Les livres de comptes des Frères Bonis, marchands montalbanais du XIVe siècle* (Paris: H. Champion, 1893), 2:437, 184. Silk purses of unspecified provenance: 1:65, 116, 174, 241; 2:22, 26, 60, 75, 272, 275, 284.

## *The Role of Paris in Textile Markets*

In the late thirteenth century and the first three decades of the fourteenth, Parisian textiles of an enormous variety fed the demands of royalty, popes, aristocrats, bourgeois consumers, and servants from London to Naples. It seems clear that Paris was indeed a major textile producer. My preliminary research into Northern French and English household account books and the available published records suggests that there is still much to be discovered about the quality and nature of its products and the extent of its market.