The Grande Rebeine of Lyon (1529): The Making of an Early Modern Food Riot

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A Thesis
In the Department
of
History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements For the Degree of Master of Arts
(History) at Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

September 2023

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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Entitled: The Grande Rebeine of Lyon (1529): The Making of an Early Modern Food Riot

And submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for degree of

Master of Arts (History)

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Abstract

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Following a disastrous harvest, a food riot erupted in the city of Lyon in April 1529. The Grande Rebeine, as it was called, saw hundreds of ordinary Lyonnais gather to protest the handling of the grain crisis. However, the protest quickly turned into a riot as some participants decided to attack city hall, the nearby abbey, and the homes of wealthy residents, while most raided one of the city's granaries. After over a week of rioting, control of the city was finally regained, and Lyon's authorities began the process of bringing the rioters to justice. As was made clear in surviving documentation, the focus for city councillors and jurists was to differentiate between those who looted the granary out of necessity and those who looted the homes of rich men for personal gain. This was reflected in the types of punishments the accused received. By recording the processes against a variety of individuals believed to have been involved in the Rebeine of 1529, Lyon's civic authorities have given us the opportunity to explore a variety of themes concerning popular protest culture during the 1520s, especially as they relate to the identities of the participants, their motivations, and the place of protest in past non-democratic societies.

Acknowledgements

Without the patience, support, and generosity of so many individuals, this work simply would not exist. Accordingly, I would like to begin by thanking my supervisor Shannon McSheffrey, whose patience, wisdom, and continual support throughout my undergraduate and graduate studies has helped me navigate the world of academic research and given me the opportunity to explore any and all topics of interest along the way. Thank you for making the time to meet with me in person and virtually throughout the years to guide my research, but also to provide wisdom beyond what was required of your official role. For that I am forever grateful.

To the friends I have made at Concordia University, thank you for believing in me. I am grateful for all our gatherings, our discussions, and our shared journey. To Althea, Kyle, Jon, Ryan, David, and Eliot, thank you for being there well beyond our shared time at Concordia. To my family, thank you for your love and support throughout this process.

Finally, to my darling wife Krislia, thank you for your patience, your understanding, and your words of encouragement. Thank you for never once doubting me. You have been instrumental in this success story, and I cannot thank you enough for the unconditional love and support you have always provided.

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Abbreviations

ACL	Champier, Symphorien. *L'antiquité de la cité de Lyon, ensemble la rebeine ou rebellion du populaire contre les conseillers de la cité en 1529, et la hiérarchie de l'église métropolitaine, par Symphorien Champier*. Edited by Henri Georg, 1884.
BHL	Guigue, Marie-Claude, and Georges Guigue. *Bibliothèque historique du Lyonnais, mémoires, notes et documents pour servir à l'histoire de cette ancienne province et des provinces circonvoisines de Forez, Beaujolais, Bresse, Dombes et Bugey*. Vitte et Perrussel, 1886.

Part I: Introduction

In the year 1529, a series of riots erupted in the French city of Lyon following a disastrous grain harvest. La Grande Rebeine, or "Great Riot" or "Great Noise" as it became known, saw ordinary Lyonnais residents descend into the streets, take over buildings, loot homes and granaries, and demand that local rulers take their plight seriously. It was neither the first nor the last riot of its kind in the city. After all, a riot like this one had occurred nearly a hundred years prior (1436) and interestingly shares the diminutive version of the name, "La Petite Rebeine". In 1529, the contingent of rioters was large, with contemporary reports indicating more than a thousand people. The participants were mostly adult men, but the riot also included women and some adolescents. While initially successful in taking over much of the city core, the protesters were ultimately defeated by a small force of men-at-arms working on behalf of local authorities. Having re-established order within the city of Lyon after more than a week of turmoil, the so-called leaders of the Rebeine and those involved in the looting of wealthy homes were subsequently sought out, tried, and punished. According to records, at least four individuals were flogged, nine were banished (three of whom were sent to the King's Galleys), and at least six individuals were executed for their crimes. However, for most of the participants of the Grande Rebeine, this was not their experience. Most had not looted the homes of the wealthy, but instead had raided the local granary. As such, many were instead assessed fines or ordered to return what they had stolen. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the legal processes against them was their appearance before the justices so their involvement could be recorded and preserved within the city records – records that survive to this day, nearly five hundred years later.[1]

[1] Most of the records were printed in the nineteenth century in Marie-Claude Guigue and Georges Guigue, *Bibliothèque historique du Lyonnais, mémoires, notes et documents pour servir à l'histoire de cette ancienne province et des provinces circonvoisines de Forez, Beaujolais, Bresse, Dombes et Bugey*

In the introduction to the seminal *Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolts*, Justine Firnhaber-Baker declares that a revival of political history has emerged from recent studies on medieval revolts. She sees the field as having embarked on a major methodological departure from past approaches due to "thorough revisions" of our "understanding of state violence" and changes in the way historians "read the events that made up a rebellion and the sources that report them."[2] For decades, historians have viewed medieval insurrections in Europe as disruptions to everyday politics and as evidence of a powerless underclass living within extremely hierarchical societies. Originally believed to have been unusual occurrences, medieval revolts were often framed as simple yet infrequent manifestations of dissatisfaction with the status quo – and therefore in opposition to state politics by nature.[3] However, as Firnhaber-Baker and her colleagues have argued, the consensus among historians has shifted. Not only were medieval revolts proven to have been more frequent than previously believed,[4] they were also considered vital to the political health of cities and towns.[5] In other words, instead of framing popular protests as oppositional movements to state authority, many historians have rather adopted the idea that popular protests might best be understood as features of medieval politics. As such, popular protests might be more accurately viewed as expected outgrowths of restrictive systems of political participation, and therefore integral to the political process of the late medieval and early modern periods.

(Lyon: Vitte et Perrussel, 1886).

[2] Justine Firnhaber-Baker, ed., *The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolt*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 1.

[3] Firnhaber-Baker, *Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolt*, 3.

[4] Samuel Kline Cohn, *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200-1425: Italy, France, and Flanders* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006). Cohn's contributions to the field in terms of quantitative data certainly comes to mind here. His work is a good starting point for many interested in the field, even in spite of his reluctance to join in on this new way of seeing popular politics.

[5] For similar perspectives, see Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

This desire to frame riots as naturally oppositional to established or even rightful authority, however, does not spring out of nowhere. As highlighted by Firnhaber-Baker and others, contemporaries who historically reported on riots and rebellions themselves offered this perspective. The men of the secular and religious elite who chronicled the revolts wrote with a sense of moral superiority over the "rioting rabble." Complementary to these, civic records written by clerks served the interest of local rulers usually in performing post-hoc repressions. In either case, because these authors were themselves either high-status individuals or working for the local government, the rioters were seldom portrayed in a positive light. Despite evidence to the contrary, rioters were seldom seen as rational, intelligent, or even organised. By subscribing to the idea that riots were both frequent occurrences and natural extensions of the political framework of the day, however, we may be able to interpret the power dynamics within medieval politics more accurately. We may also be able to return some level of agency to the often-misrepresented rioters. In other words, when examining past riots, we "must take account of their actors' agency within their historically specific societies."[6] We must also recognise "that our access to those actors and societies is mediated – and often obscured – by the texts that report them."[7] Over the years, historians have become more familiar with the biases and tropes that are typically found within surviving records – especially regarding popular protests. With renewed interest in revisiting the social and political history of late medieval and early modern protest movements, it is my plan to explore the Grande Rebeine of Lyon of 1529 and frame this event within this new methodological framework.

[6] Firnhaber-Baker, 1.
[7] Firnhaber-Baker, 1.

Why Look at the Grande Rebeine of 1529?

To this day, the Grande Rebeine[8] of Lyon of 1529 remains chiefly a tangential consideration for many historians – often overshadowed by the tumultuous 1560s[9] or interest in the rapid growth of Lyon's influential sixteenth-century print industry.[10] As such, many contributions to the historiography on the Rebeine of 1529 have largely been limited in focus. At times, some historians questioned whether the Rebeine ought to be seen as precursor to the events of the 1560s, and therefore a part of the broader French reformation.[11] However, most have strictly presented this event as one of many examples of public disorder in fifteenth-century French cities – therefore exploring the riot in relation to poverty, delinquency, and inequality.[12] In brief, few have recently addressed the subject as an independent research topic – a surprising reality given the wealth of information available to us. Thanks to eye-witness accounts published in various chronicles, as well as the availability of legal documentation surrounding the Rebeine found

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[8] "Rebeine": a word meaning "revolt", "riot" or "noise" – similar to the word "bruit". Alternative spellings include: Rebeine, Rebeyne, Ribeyne, Rebaine, etc. For more on the history of the word, see the footnotes in Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays by Natalie Zemon Davis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 8.

[9] The idea that the Rebeine might be understood as a precursor to the tumultuous 1560s by experts of the French Reformation is somewhat misleading. Henri Hauser appears to be the first to have suggested this link (H. Hauser, "Étude critique sur la Rebeine de Lyon, 1529," *Revue historique* 61 (1896): 304–5.) In essence, Hauser agreed with part of Champier's claim that the rioters were connected in some way to heresy. Supporting this position, Hauser emphasised the reliability of Champier, Champier's use of religious language, and his (Hauser's) own assumption that the civic records purposefully omitted information to appear more in control so as to avoid Crown or inquisitorial interference. Since then, historians have distanced themselves from the notion that the French Reformation had anything to do with the Rebeine of 1529, but thanks to Hauser, this needed to be made explicit. For example, when discussing the history of rioting in Lyon, Natalie Zemon-Davis highlighted how none of the 113 participants of the Rebeine that she had observed in the records expressed any connection with "protestant heresy" (Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, 8–9). Others have since looked at the Rebeine primarily as either a simple economic revolt or a political one (ex: Charléty, Fédou, Gonthier, etc.) Because I share this viewpoint, the French Reformation will not reappear within this text. For more information on these debates, see Denis Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu: la violence au temps des troubles de religion, vers 1525-vers 1610* (Paris: Editions Champ Vallon, 2005), 61–64.

[10] Zemon-Davis and others do mention the Rebeine, but often in passing within their footnotes.

[11] Hauser, "Étude critique sur la Rebeine de Lyon, 1529."

[12] See René Fédou, "Le Cycle Médiéval Des Révoltes Lyonnaises," *Cahiers d'histoire* 18 (1973): 233–47 and Nicole Gonthier, *Délinquance, justice et société dans le Lyonnais médiéval: de la fin du XIIIe siècle au début du XVIe siècle* (Paris: Editions Arguments, 1993).

within Lyon's own city archives, we are reminded that the Rebeine has much in common with the tradition of late medieval and early modern protest. However, we can also occasionally discern how it struggles to stay within those thematic boundaries.

Like all riots and rebellions, the Rebeine of 1529 shared certain themes with prior and future riots. However, food shortages had not been a major focus of riots over the previous late medieval centuries, especially following the Black Death, when demographic collapse made food insecurity less of a problem. But right around the 1520s, a rising population coupled with poor harvests made grain shortages in the cities a significant problem. This is not the only such food riot; for instance, there was a cluster of them in England during 1527-1532.[13] Another way in which the Rebeine differs from previous riots is the gender distribution and age distribution of the rioters: a notable difference suggesting that the Rebeine had much more in common with early modern bread riots than late medieval insurrections, which were typically more explicitly concerned with power structures, and therefore were dominated by mid- to high-status adult men, with few women or youths participating. The Rebeine therefore was probably an early example of a phenomenon that would eventually dominate European protest culture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

As a protest initially fuelled by economic woes in which blame was primarily directed at a political class judged unqualified to solve this crisis, the Grande Rebeine brings into focus the dynamic between the residents of Lyon and their local rulers at the city council; this was a dynamic that on the surface appears dialogic, but upon closer inspection remains extremely one-sided. Take for example the so-called General Assembly, an event meant to give a voice to the populace, typically held five or six times a year to deal with serious issues such as taxation,

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[13] Buchanan Sharp, *Famine and Scarcity in Late Medieval and Early Modern England: The Regulation of Grain Marketing, 1256–1631* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 197–200.

defense during war, the functioning of institutions, city works, commerce, and special events.[14] According to Caroline Fargeix, even this type of event was entirely controlled by the council; they welcomed only certain representatives, ran according to the council's procedures, and were often misrecorded by the council's secretaries to minimise the contributions and concerns of non-council individuals.[15] This was not a space for open debate between ordinary people and their twelve councillors; ordinary people and local rulers did not hold the same kind of power in the political arena. This is why when an urgent need arose, such as a grain shortage, ordinary people used what was available to them: organised gatherings, placards, petitions, and rumours were all aimed at generating a response from their local officials – which they received. Rioting was one of the only effective channels of communication available between ruler and ruled, and while the people of Lyon had limited access to formal power structures, they had more agency in certain matters than we might otherwise imagine – especially when united in large numbers.[16]

As for the phenomenon of rioting and rebelling, it is important to keep in mind that these are complex occurrences. A protest is rarely (if ever) strictly political, social, or economic, but it can feature grievances that a majority of protestors share. Individuals gather for or against change because there is security and power in numbers, but this does not mean that everyone is engaging in protest for the same reasons. Obviously, some considerations were more widespread than others, and in the case of Lyon's Rebeine, the issue of grain scarcity was certainly on everyone's mind. However, the perceived managerial incompetence of the councillors concerning the matter of food prices or grain reserves may not have been shared by

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[14] Caroline Fargeix, "La reconnaissance des délibérations lors des assemblées lyonnaises du xve siècle dans les registres consulaires : un problème politique," in *L'espace public au Moyen Âge*, Le Noeud Gordien (Paris cedex 14: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011), 219–27 (Paragraph 2 & 5), https://www.cairn.info/l-espace-public-au-moyen-age--9782130573579-p-219.htm.
[15] Fargeix, "La reconnaissance", paragraph 8.
[16] Patrick Lantschner, "Revolts and the Political Order of Cities in the Late Middle Ages," *Past & Present*, no. 225 (2014): 4.

everyone. Not every Lyonnais attributed blame to the councillors or assigned the same meaning to the Rebeine.

Some participants subscribed to the idea that hoarding bakers were responsible for outrageous food prices; others criticised the ways in which grain reserves were organised and controlled, or how the scarcity situation was handled overall.[17] It is possible that some protestors interpreted the criticisms levied at local rulers as rallying cries for further challenges to the existing political structure. Perhaps the Rebeine expressed a yearning for a greater political voice among the voiceless within a growing city. Or perhaps the Rebeine reflected a more general dissatisfaction with societal inequalities which went beyond the mandate of the local council. Regardless of the motivations for the Rebeine, public protest provided an outlet and an opportunity for many participants to vent their frustrations. The Grande Rebeine of Lyon, as described in surviving documents, provides insight into the many kinds of people who chose to participate and their motivations for joining. This includes those who partook in the planning of the rising, those who saw an opportunity to join more spontaneously, as well as those who paid the ultimate price for questioning the all-important illusion of power and justice.

By analysing how this riot came about and who was involved in it, and by juxtaposing this information with the ways in which the authorities handled the crisis and ultimately dispensed justice, we get a better understanding of the complexities of politics in Lyon during the 1520s and the role that popular protest occupied therein. In short, the main aim of this thesis is to assess the existing documentation with regards to the identity of the rioters, explore how they expressed their grievances through their actions, and consider how the civic records and other documents

[17] Guigue, Marie-Claude, and Georges Guigue. *Bibliothèque historique du Lyonnais, mémoires, notes et documents pour servir à l'histoire de cette ancienne province et des provinces circonvoisines de Forez, Beaujolais, Bresse, Dombes et Bugey*. Vitte et Perrussel, 1886, 234.

framed and interpreted the participants and the riot itself. My analysis shows that this riot was both a political condemnation of the way local rulers handled economic crises and an expression of a much deeper dissatisfaction with the lack of agency afforded to the common Lyonnais citizen in political matters. In the second half of this thesis, I will explore the economics of repression – that is, I will explore the ways in which the commonness of popular protest as an outgrowth of limited political opportunities ultimately created a world in which the repression of social disorder was built into the economy and the very fabric of society.

A Note on the Sources

Before digging into the historical context for the Rebeine and the city of Lyon, a clarification on the primary sources is in order. For this project, I rely primarily on two different sets of sources. Chief among them are the civic records of Lyon published in 1886 by Marie-Claude Guigues and Georges Guigues.[18] This edited collection of documents, called *Bibliothèque historique du Lyonnais, mémoires, notes et documents pour servir à l'histoire de cette ancienne province et des provinces circonvoisines de Forez, Beaujolais, Bresse, Dombes et Bugey*,[19] focuses on Lyonnais history from the thirteenth century to the sixteenth century. It includes a wide range of source types – such as correspondence, depositions, official event summaries, and proclamations – but most crucially a substantial set of records relating to the Rebeine of 1529. In addition to these invaluable primary documents, the Guigues' work also includes commentary, analysis, and their own summary of the events of the Rebeine – a summary which they crafted using both published and unpublished archival records. Unfortunately, I have not

[18] I will refer to this father and son duo as "the Guigues" from now on.
[19] Abbreviated to BHL going forward.

been able to access those unpublished archival records and so have used them as they are reproduced or referenced in the Guigues' volume.

The second substantial primary source used for this project is the chronicle of events by Symphorien Champier, titled *L'antiquité de la cité de Lyon, ensemble la rebeine ou rebellion du populaire contre les conseillers de la cité en 1529, et la hiérarchie de l'église métropolitaine*,[20] which was edited and republished in 1884 by Henri Georg. Champier was a physician whose home was among those looted during the Rebeine.[21] His account was written soon after the Rebeine, and in it Champier presents himself as the voice of reason – a kind of mediator between the protestors and the city council.[22] It is also important to note that Champier was closely linked with the city council at the time, and he ultimately became the leader of the council upon his return to the city in the 1530s.[23]

All in all, I am working with three versions of the events: the official records (including a contemporary summary of the Rebeine in the civic records) published by

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[20] Symphorien Champier, *L'antiquité de la cité de Lyon, ensemble la rebeine ou rebellion du populaire contre les conseillers de la cité en 1529, et la hiérarchie de l'église métropolitaine, par Symphorien Champier*, ed. Henri Georg, 1884.

[21] Guillaume Ramèze, *L'origine et antiquité de la cité de Lyon et l'histoire de Palanus : édition du ms. Paris, Arsenal, 5111*, ed. Giovanni Palumbo (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2011), 12–13. Symphorien Champier was also a prolific author who wrote a number of other "historical" works. However, much of his medical writings dealt with contemporary debates surrounding Galenic medicine. According to Richard Cooper, he has also written under the pseudonym Morein Pierrechamp (an anagram of his name). Sympohrien Champier was an early figure in the establishment of the Collège des Médecins de Lyon. He was also involved in civic politics in Lyon as of 1527.

[22] Symphorien Champier, *Petit Traicte de La Noblesse & Anciennete de La Ville de Lyon . Ensemble de La Rebeine Ou Rebellion Du Populaire de La Dicte Ville Contre Les Conseilliers de La Cyte et Notables Marchans a Cause Des Bledz : Faicte Ceste Presente Annee Mil Cinq Cens XXIX Ung Dymenche Jour Sainct Marc. Avec La Hiérarchie de Sainct Jehan de Lyon Eglise Metropolitaine et Primasse de France. Imprime Nouvellement a Paris*, 1529, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k993270v. Although this is the original printing, this came to my attention late and therefore I have relied on the nineteenth-century edition which will be abbreviated to ACL from now on.

[23] Richard Cooper, "Les dernières années de Symphorien Champier," *Réforme, Humanisme, Renaissance* 47, no. 1 (1998): 30. Following the Rebeine, Champier left Lyon "offusqué du manque de respect à son égard."

the Guiges; the unpublished archival sources quoted or paraphrased in the Guigues' own summary of the Rebeine; and finally Champier's own version and commentary. All three sets of sources come directly from individuals tied to the rulers in the region (whether councillor or clerk) and are framed to emphasise the civic elite's priorities rather than the motivations or agency of the accused. Even in the depositions of the accused, the documents of the prosecution served not only to record but to justify the actions of the city officials in their response to the riot. Our task therefore is to compare, contrast, contextualise, and read between the lines when necessary to emphasise rioter agency.

Figure 1: Portrait of Symphorien Champier, circa 1500. Found in “Étude biographique et bibliographique sur Symphorien Champier” by Paul Allut. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2023.

The City of Lyon

Figure 2: Map of the city of Lyon, circa 1550. Compiled and published by Maurille-Antoine Moithey during the eighteenth century. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2023.

Fueled by an expanding print industry, Lyon was a burgeoning city at the time of the Rebeine. When the revolt erupted on April 25th, 1529, Lyon had approximately 60,000 inhabitants, making it comparable in size with the city of London at the time.[24] However, it was not its size but rather its growth rate that has interested contemporary

[24] According to some estimates, London had a population somewhere between 56,000 and 70,000 in the late 1540s. Caroline M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 238.

and modern commentors alike. Lyon was said to have grown from roughly 20,000 inhabitants in the 1450s to a staggering 80,000 in the 1550s.[25] Conveniently situated at the confluence of the Rhône and Saône Rivers in France's south-east, the city of Lyon rapidly industrialised and attracted people and commerce from everywhere on the continent. This was observed by Symphorien Champier, who remarked that "[Lyon] fut faites une cité de plusieurs pieces et nations… là où habitent gens de toutes nations, comme italiens, florentins, genevoys, luquoys, alobroges, alemans, heispagnolz et autres nations [Lyon was a city made of many parts and nations… where people of all nations live, such as Italians, people from Florence, Genoa, Lucca, Gauls living between the Rhône and the Alps, Germans, Spaniards, and others]."[26]

Much like Lyon, other French cities such as Amiens and Tours had also rapidly industrialised around this time thanks to the development of their cloth and silk industries respectively. However, neither could match the dramatic demographic shift occurring in the city of Lyon. Historians have tried to explain this disparity and the consensus seems to have settled on an increase in immigration due to economic opportunities as the main factor in Lyon's rise. In his work entitled "Immigration et croissance au XVIe siècle: L'exemple de Lyon (1529-1563)," Richard Gascon attributes responsibility to the arrival of Italian merchant-bankers, the creation and expansion of fairs, and shifts in credit payment mechanisms between 1470 and 1520, for the

[25] R. J. Knecht, *French Renaissance Monarchy: Francis I and Henry II* (New York: Longman, 1984), 6. Out of interest, Knecht also remarks that the populations of Rouen, Bordeaux, and Toulouse went from the 20,000s in the 1450s to 60,000, 50,000, and 40,000 in the 1550s, respectively. If interested in maps of Lyon's urban development over the centuries or the social topography of the city around 1500, see Jacques Rossiaud, *Lyon 1250-1550: Réalités et imaginaires d'une métropole* (Paris: Champ Vallon, 2014), 15-17.

[26] ACL, 32. A "luquoy" refers to people from the city of Lucca, situated in modern-day Italy. An "alobroge" is an ancient term referring to Gallic people living in the region between the Rhône River and Geneva.

formation of an ideal environment for the growth of trade in the city of Lyon.[27] Reiterating these findings, R. J. Knecht, in *French Renaissance Monarchy: Francis I & Henry II*, remarked that "out of the 15,101 patients admitted to the Hôtel-Dieu in Lyon between 1520 and 1563, under 40 percent were natives of the city; the rest outsiders, mainly from neighbouring provinces,"[28] supporting Gascon's claim that Lyon's rapid population increase was primarily due to immigration.

This information is crucial to our understanding of the Rebeine. Not only is it interesting to know about the cosmopolitan nature of the city and the history of its population growth, but these ideas help us better understand the environment in which the Rebeine occurred (especially considering the sudden population expansion in Lyon, coupled with the inability of the food provision system to deal with the increased numbers during times of food insecurities and famines). The story of a riot is also the story of a city and its people, and there is no reason to believe that relations between the Lyonnais and immigrant residents were necessarily hostile. As was noted by W. Mark Ormrod and his colleagues when looking at instances of confrontation and violence in England between English and immigrant residents during the late medieval period, these were "limited to particular moments."[29] Lyon was likely similar in that regard; this does not mean that attitudes towards immigration to Lyon did not vary, nor that these views had no influence on the creation of contemporary narratives.[30] Outsiders in late medieval European cities were sometimes blamed for aggravating

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[27] Richard Gascon, "Immigration et croissance au XVI siècle: L'exemple de Lyon (1529-1563)," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 25, no. 4 (August 1970): 988–89.
[28] Knecht, *French Renaissance Monarchy*, 7. Apprenticeship contracts and marriage contracts also supplement this theory, but the hospital admissions provide strong evidence.
[29] W. Mark Ormrod, Bart Lambert, and Jonathan Mackman, *Immigrant England, 1300-1550* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2019), 249.
[30] Newcomers were not all from outside France and indeed were likely mostly from fairly nearby.

economic tension. Governmental records in England between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries for example showed a concern that economic opportunities for locals were sometimes lost to foreign workers.[31]

Additionally, chroniclers like Champier often attributed a disruption of social cohesion to external forces, whether by virtue of some inherent incompatibility with the values of their host city or by the more sinister claim that outsiders had intentionally and metaphorically poisoned the well. In some cases, the outsiders could be defined in religious terms as well as by place of origin; in trying to moralise the events of the Rebeine for example, Champier blamed some imagined Waldensian heretical group for contributing to the riot, claiming that

> depuis environ l'an mil cinq cens quatre, se vendoit le blé [à] vingt six solz, & si mouroit le peuple de fain par les rues, … le peuple de Lyon estoit paisible, sans murmuration aulcune; mais depuis la venue de ceste fausce secte nouvellement non trouvée mais renouvellée de ces mauldictz Vauldoys & Chaignartz [fainéants][32] venans de Septentrion [cardinal north], le peuple à prinse une élévation & malice en luy [Since about the year 1504, grain was sold at twenty-six sous, and even when people were dying in the streets the people of Lyon remained peaceful without a single murmur; but since the coming of the false sect of Valdensians and idlers coming from the north, the people have been afflicted with a greater malice within them].[33]

To Champier, Lyon's issues had worsened in recent years due to what he perceived as a revival of a past Waldensian sect. He was quick to complain about Lyon's increasingly cosmopolitan nature as well. In contrast to this, the rioters do not mention foreigners as

[31] Ormrod, Lambert, and Mackman, *Immigrant England, 1300-1550*, 33–35.
[32] Synonym of Chaignartz taken from Alain Mothu, "Les Antipodes Du 'Cymbalum Mundi,'" *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 76, no. 3 (2014): 547.
[33] ACL, 42-43. He thought that this was a revival of heretical sect from previous centuries.

a cause for the grain shortages, but they do eventually blame neighbouring cities for grain hoarding – ideas which manifested in rumours and conspiracy theories.

Contextualising the Rebeine

Of the roughly 60,000 inhabitants of the city, the official summary of the event from the council estimates that some 1,000 to 1,200 people met on April 25th, 1529 for what would eventually become the first of nine days of rioting.[34] Motivated by shared discontent, these rioters made it plain that they objected to the ways in which the local authorities were handling (or ignoring) the devastating grain crisis affecting the citizens of Lyon. Their grievances, made public through placards, have survived, and these surviving proclamations offer a glimpse into how these rioters understood the crisis and whom they deemed responsible for it.[35] For example, a published placard in the Guigues' work blames councillors, usurers, and *larrons* (thieves) for soaring grain prices – especially pointing to the inaction of the councillors and the grain hoarding measures in place at the granaries and various bakeries around the city. It proclaimed: "Ilz nous rongent de jour en jour, comme par vérité le voyez devant voz yeulz advenir la cherté dudit blé et autres denrées [They grind us day by day, the truth is laid out before your eyes in the increasing costliness of the grain and other provisions]."[36] The message was clear: the common poor simply could not afford the increasing price of grain, and as

[34] BHL, 258.
[35] ACL, 40, BHL 233. Also referred to as "tilletz" by Champier. In contemporary sixteenth-century English these were known as "posted bills" (a "bill" being a paper or parchment outlining a claim or grievance). According to Jelle Hæmers and Valerie Vrancken, "bill casting belonged to a pervasive political culture in which writing helped to spread criticism of governmental policies, both royal and urban." In the low countries for example, "burgher and peasant communities frequently used this medium to challenge decisions of rulers." Jelle Hæmers and Valerie Vrancken, "Libels in the City. Bill Casting in Fifteenth-Century Flanders and Brabant," *The Medieval Low Countries* 4 (2017): 167–68. For a famous French example, see "L'affaire des Placards" of 1534.
[36] BHL, 234.

such, the placard's authors[37] concluded that it was the councillors' responsibility to put things in order and make things right.[38]

Of course, placards were more than scathing public critiques of the local government. They also served as a call to arms – and interestingly for us, placards simultaneously provide evidence that a popular protest movement, even in Lyon during the 1520s, was a well-organised phenomenon. When the church bells rang at noon on the 25th of April, many of the citizens (participants or on-lookers) knew what was happening.[39] The riots caught few by surprise. Many would have known from placards or would have heard through rumours that the Place des Cordelliers was the rendez-vous point and that "Sunday after mid-day" was the meeting time.[40] The writing was literally on the wall, having appeared in high volume areas some eight days earlier. In addition to proposing a time and a place, this document also extended an invitation to all commoners who might want to support the movement to come out and join the protest for "the public good" and against "false usurers", or those who were said to have kept their granaries full to the detriment of others.[41]

Whether this was the primary method used to influence others to join is unknown, and it is difficult to assess its effectiveness. However, what we do know is that the placard published by the Guigues discloses how many supporters the movement claimed to have had by the time it went up: it asserted some four to five hundred men had already agreed to join their cause. Now, whether this was meant to exaggerate the

[37] As for the authors of said document, they are unknown since many of the protesters simply referred to themselves as "the poor", so this is how this specific placard was signed.
[38] Of course, this was what some of the rioters believed, but as we will see, many rioters joined in the chaos for different political or personal reasons.
[39] BHL, 263
[40] Why it seemed that the councillors were caught off guard will be discussed later in this thesis.
[41] BHL, 234.

threat or served a recruitment tactic to sway uncertain potential participants (through strength in numbers), we cannot truly know. But if we trust and compare both the Guigues' final approximation of participants (1,000 to 1,200 people) and the estimate of the placard (400 to 500 people), we notice at least a doubling of the total.

Naturally, this can be interpreted any number of ways: it could mean that the protest's organisers were very effective in spreading awareness through rumours or placards; it could also mean that enough people already agreed with the sentiment. It is also possible that some on-lookers saw an opportunity to fill their coffers, or that the hunger was so great that most simply had to join in the moment. In any case, what these numbers tell us, and more specifically, what this placard tells us, is that the grain issue was a serious concern. Whether the estimated 400 to 500 participants was accurate or not is not the point – the point is that several hundred people were ready to protest some eight days prior to the riots, and this placard is evidence that the rioting movement was preplanned, sophisticated, and organised.

Ultimately, this begs the question: was the Rebeine considered a large riot for its time and for a city of this size? As we know, this Rebeine bears the qualifier "Grande", and is therefore assumed to have been a large riot – it was the largest recorded protest in the city's history up to that point.[42] Judging by the city's population growth, this might not be surprising. Nevertheless, these numbers pale in comparison to the tens of thousands of people involved in the Jacquerie of 1358[43] or the estimated 40,000

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[42] Fédou, "Le Cycle Médiéval Des Révoltes Lyonnaises," 235. It seems that usage of the word "rebeine" to describe this revolt in 1529 might have been immediate and perhaps simply the common word for any kind of revolt or riot in this region. Champier's account mentions the word multiple times throughout. Some examples: "ceste mauldicte rebeine"; "Or, quant fut icelle rebeine"; "le jour d'icelle" Rebeine". ACL, 33, 53, & 62.

[43] Justine Firnhaber-Baker, "The Eponymous Jacquerie," in *The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolt*, ed. Justine Firnhaber-Baker and Dirk Schoenaers (New York: Routledge: Routledge,

participants in the English Pilgrimage of Grace (1534), which was a large-scale armed rebellion spanning multiple counties.[44] We can safely say that the Grande Rebeine was sizable, but nothing that would have garnered international attention. However, to offer some nuance, it must be noted that crowd estimates are unreliable and the tendency is to overestimate. I lean towards the conservative estimate of approximately a thousand participants.

News of the outbreak of a riot did however make its way to King Francis I of France (or at least his agents, who happened to be in neighbouring Savoy at the time). After receiving word from the council of Lyon requesting armed reinforcements, *le sieur* de Botière, working on behalf of the Crown (*prévôt de l'hôtel du roi*), appeared before the council and presented letters informing the Lyonnais of the Crown's intentions to help.[45] More specifically, according to the Guigues, de Botière offered the promise of reinforcements, including a potential extra 3,000 strong contingent of *Landsknecht* from the Burgundian steppes should the situation require them.[46] Reports of the Rebeine also made their way into the writings of an anonymous bourgeois Parisian, who recorded a brief entry concerning the event in 1529.[47] The Rebeine also likely became known outside Lyon through Symphorien Champier's own account published within a couple years of the riot (1529-1531), since he was keen to inform the world about the personal injustices he suffered as a wealthy resident in Lyon during the Rebeine.

2017), 56.
[44] R. W. Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 287.
[45] BHL, 247-48. Two letters are imbedded in the Guigues' summary of the events.
[46] BHL, 249.
[47] Ludovic Lalanne, ed., *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris Sous Le Règne de François Ier, 1515-1536* (Paris: J. Renouard, 1854), 384–85, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k64291834. For English translation see: Knecht, *French Renaissance Monarchy*, 107.

Since the Grande Rebeine of Lyon was a complicated affair that lasted several days, it involved a myriad of individuals targeting multiple people and multiple places. That said, certain moments stand out among the rest as having been either critical to the story or of interest to the city council.[48] These moments included the capture of city hall; the destruction and looting of valuable properties; the encounter at the local abbey; and the storming of the granary, called "*poix des farines*". Of these, we know far more about the incident at the granary and the looting of the houses simply because they involved more people and could more easily be described in the various testimonies given after the fact. As such, analysing these two events also represents the bulk of our task as they provide valuable data on the identity of the participants and their personal motivations.

The above does not mean that that the capture of city hall was not important – we simply do not know as much about those involved on the side of the rioters when it comes to this act. In contrast, the agents involved in the repression of the Rebeine are unsurprisingly far more visible within the sources. For example, we know far more about how Antoine de Varey, baron de Malleval and *sieur* Belmont, was tasked with retaking – besieging – the city hall on April 30th, 1529 with a force of roughly 120 to 200 men[49] than we do of any protestor not named Jean de Musy, the supposed leader of the Rebeine. Nevertheless, the capture of the city hall and the encounter at the local abbey – which I will also briefly cover – highlight themes common to the Rebeine overall, namely the difficulty of establishing order and the little resistance faced by the rioters

[48] In other words, since what we know about the story comes from those prosecuting the rioters, it is possible that these events were overrepresented or exaggerated.
[49] Guigue, 244, 288-289, and 369.

initially.

Another theme of interest relates to the local council's rather timid initial response to the riots. I previously mentioned how, when the Rebeine erupted, virtually no one from the commons was surprised according to testimonies and given the eight or so days of advertising and rumours. Despite this, the council seemed unaware of a plan to protest or failed to refer to any intelligence on the matter even though the protest targeted them specifically. It is possible that they deliberately ignored these warnings or thought the threat was exaggerated, although we cannot know for certain. What we do know is that the council's own official summary did mention their surprise at the occurrence of a riot:

> […] et le lendemain lundy XXVI^{e} de juing, furent mandez et assemblez en l'esglise et au lieu où se tient le conseil de mons^{r} l'arcevesque, ledit s^{r} gouverneur, mess^{rs} le vicaire dudit s^{r} arcevesque, lieutenant et procureur du Roy en ceste séneschaussée, gens de la justice ordinaire, les s^{rt} conseillers et aparans de ladite ville bien estonnez dudit affaire, et mesmement que le bruyt estoit par ladite ville que ledit populaire se vouloit rassembler pour continuer [and the next day, on Monday, 26th of June, a meeting in the church occurred, attended by the archbishop, the governor, the archbishop's vicar, the king's lieutenant from this bailiwick, justice members with permanent[50] positions, councillors and other wealthy members of the city very shocked by the affair, and at the same time the rioting carried on within the city by ordinary people keen to continue.][51]

Although this passage presents the council and all other authorities within Lyon as proactive by stating that they met while the riots were still happening, it also admits that

[50] As opposed to appointed or called-in: "Juge ordinaire, et non d'attribution, ce qui signifie qu'il connaît de toutes les matières qui ne sont pas expressément confiées à d'autres." Hervé Piant, *Une justice ordinaire: Justice civile et criminelle dans la prévôté royale de Vaucouleurs sous l'Ancien Régime* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006), 24.

[51] BHL, 261. This passage was more difficult to translate than most. As such, the translation may not be as direct as others found in this thesis.

they were caught by surprise by what was happening. Though they apparently met to discuss the matter quickly, it was not their efforts that first responded to the disturbance; we know that opposition to the rioters initially came from other residents of Lyon, not the authorities. Residents at various points pleaded with the rioters not to cause too much damage – a tactic which yielded mixed results. Opposition and resistance to the Rebeine from these other residents occupied a significant role in the civic records following the ordeal and were used as evidence during some prosecutions. As such, we will explore this aspect of the Rebeine in tandem with the repressions in the second half of this thesis.

Part II: The Participants

Perhaps more interesting than the estimated number of participants or their trajectory is the evidence of specific rioters we can identify by name, age, gender, or occupation. Unfortunately, as is often the case when working with pre-modern sources, only a fraction of the participants' names appears in extant documents. If the council's summary of the events is correct in their estimation that a little over 1,000 people participated in the first day of the riot, the 125 to 129 individuals who show up in the city's legal records constitute only about 10% of the rioting population. Furthermore, of those 125-129 potential lawbreakers, only a handful of participants feature prominently throughout the narrative – namely those that the state considered leaders of the riot and whose punishments were duly recorded. The typical recorded entry is brief and requires much inference. Nevertheless, there is much to gain in exploring what we know about the identities of these rioters so that we may better understand their motivations.

Gender

Gender is one of three demographic markers of relevance for this thesis, the other two being age and occupation. Typically, risings and riots during the Middle Ages featured primarily male participants, or as historian Samuel Cohn puts it: "women far from being the principal participants in late medieval popular protest were remarkable for their absence."[52] Of course, this does not mean that there were no exceptions,[53] nor that one cannot comment on the systemic exclusion of women in recorded documents. However,

[52] Samuel Cohn, "Women and Revolt," in *The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolt*, ed. Justine Firnhaber-Baker and Dirk Schoenaers (New York: Routledge: Routledge, 2017), 209.
[53] Cohn, "Women and Revolt", 209.

as Cohn highlights, women during the medieval period were "more often seen in risky and subversive collective activities that lay on the margins of what is generally considered to be popular protest," such as heretical movements or participating in the resistance to the military occupation of a city.[54] The Grande Rebeine of 1529, however, was neither of those – rather, it was a riot focused on food provision. Moreover, when compared to other similarly motivated riots during its time, the pattern of female participation becomes less and less of an outlier than Cohn suggests for earlier centuries. The fact that women were much more visible in the records of the Rebeine seems to support this idea that the Rebeine does not fit in the discussion concerning typically male-dominated protests primarily concerned with things such tax policies and political participation.[55] Moreover, this indicates that the Rebeine might instead be something novel – a new kind of protest that would be followed by many more like it.[56]

The issue of women's agency in popular protest has been and remains of vital interest to historians, especially given that women were often excluded from or underrepresented in written sources. The Grande Rebeine offers us another opportunity to examine this question with the goal of complementing the existing work done on this issue. However, before we begin, I must clarify what I mean by "examining women's

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[54] Cohn, "Women and Revolt", 209.
[55] Cohn's focus on so-called traditional medieval revolts rarely yielded higher numbers of women.
[56] Sharp, *Famine and Scarcity in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, 1. In the introduction, Sharp explains that the earliest food riots in England are thought to have begun during the 1520s, according to prevailing historical opinion. It is therefore reasonable to think that in France, a riot such as the Rebeine of 1529 ought to belong to this category of riots far more commonly associated to the modern period rather than those instances of popular disorder found during the Middle Ages. It is a truism of the modern period that riots related to subsistence (bread riots) became increasingly common. So too did women's participation in popular protests. The changing economic situation of the 1520s where food scarcity becomes a much more significant factor than during the period Cohn studies seems to explain the gender distribution disparities between his work and ours. This then raises questions about why that issue — food provision — was one that enabled and involved women's participation in protest, or to put it another way, their voices to be raised on a political matter (how the civic government regulated the provision of grain).

agency." As remarked by Martha Howell, in the last few decades, gender historians have often wrestled with this idea of "agency". At first, the common thought was that historians ought to examine women's agency in moments where the patriarchal structures of the time were reshaped or evaded by historical actors.[57] However, this trend shifted towards the latter half of the twentieth century when the historical consensus oscillated towards the idea that historical records, which had often excluded women, could somehow be corrected. In a sense, the idea was that women's agency could be read between the lines, thus making their invisibility visible. As such, the idea of women's agency no longer rested in the historian's ability to find moments in which women challenged patriarchal structures, but rather in the historian's ability to demonstrate just how important women were to their respective societies despite their exclusion from much of the written evidence.[58]

More recently, historians have been critical of both these approaches to women's history. Put simply, highlighting women's roles in society cannot account for everything that we call "agency", nor is it truly possible to remedy the omissions of past historical sources. We also cannot be expected to find moments of outright challenges to traditional roles in male-dominated societies everywhere we look. Expanding a traditional role is agency, and so is changing it, or rejecting it. Exercising agency looks different to everyone based on the uniqueness of the context and the individual. It is instead to be found in the process of negotiating with the existing structures of the world. As Howell elucidates: "it is those interactions that produce the possibility of

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[57] Martha Howell, "The Problem of Women's Agency in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe," in *Women and Gender in the Early Modern Low Countries, 1500-1750*, ed. Amanda Pipkin and Sarah Joan Moran (Boston: Brill, 2019), 21.
[58] Howell, "The Problem of Women's Agency", 22.

agency; they arise from the contradictions inherent in the structures that position people as historical actors."[59] In other words, it is the expectations put on women that compelled some to join the riots and others not to. As I will discuss in more detail below, the centrality of food provision as both a household issue and one of the most important functions of a civic government provided a point of connection between women and political protest. As such, crucial to our understanding of the women involved in the Grande Rebeine of Lyon in 1529 is the examination of the various forces that might entice someone to join, or to abstain from joining, a very public display of defiance.

Of the 125-129 people thought to be involved with the Grande Rebeine according to records, forty-three of them were women or girls. We know this based on the use of gendered adjectives or nouns, but also in the explicit mention of their position in the household in relation to the men in their respective families: they are often introduced as "wife of," "daughter of," or "widow of" someone. Perhaps counterintuitively, looking at first names is not always helpful. There are a number of unisex names in the records or names which are more commonly used by the opposite gender today, such as Claude or Anthoine. Although none of their occupations are listed – with the exception of Jane Delaye as an "*ambaleur*" (a packer) – most of the recorded women are wives or widows of artisans – winemakers, masons, fishermen, dye workers, etc. – rather than being accorded their own trade. Virtually all recorded women and girls were present at the *grenier du poix des farines* with the exception of three: Jane, whose last name was not recorded;[60] the wife of Françoys Naudron, whose first name was also not recorded;[61]

[59] Howell, 28.
[60] BHL, 267.
[61] BHL, 271.

and an unnamed woman who was accused of participating in the looting of the home of the wealthy merchant brothers Humbert and Henri Gimbre.[62] Though women evidently participated in the Rebeine in great number, it is interesting that not a single woman was charged with either sedition, rioting, or vandalism. Virtually all of them were accused of simply looting grain and were subsequently asked to return the grain or pay the equivalent in a fine.

Forty-three out of 125 or 129 is about a third of the participants present in the records. This much higher proportion of women participants than Cohn found in earlier riots is related to the issue motivating the rioters: grain provision. Women in Lyon, as elsewhere in Europe, were the de facto provisioners of the household (both in food acquisition and preparation). The issue of food insecurity and the stress associated with an inability to provide, as opposed to taxation or male forms of labour or political representation, were crucial factors in women's increased visibility during the Rebeine of 1529. For comparison, Buchanan Sharp makes a similar observation in the context of a food riot involving twelve women in Norwich during the summer of 1532 where he states that "the explanation for these protests in Norwich is simple, dire social conditions brought on by grain scarcity, poverty and unemployment."[63] However, as pointed out by Christian Liddy, we must also be careful not to view these disturbances as non-political – as though simple social issues and desperation were entirely different from rational politics – for this only reproduces our inability to see women as political agents. According to Liddy, the politics of everyday life in late medieval towns were intertwined

[62] BHL, 276. Introduced in Pierre Mosnier's deposition; what sentence she received for her crime is unclear.
[63] Sharp, 198.

with the town politics occurring in the public arena, especially since the latter "was inherently social, insofar as it was grounded in the material realities of home and residence, competing definitions of the household, and the reproductive capacity of the family."[64]

We know that grain emergencies were nothing new to the city. Similar shortages had indeed occurred in Lyon from 1481 to 1483 and from 1504 to 1505, and they would continue to play a role well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[65] However, neither of those earlier shortages seem to have resulted in an equivalent rising. Moreover, urban governments were seen to be responsible for ensuring the availability of basic grain provision – a notion that likely played a role in the frustrations surrounding the Rebeine. This went back to the high medieval period, so this was not something new, but it had not been a problem since the demographic collapse of the Black Death. To put this all into context, over the century and a half following the Black Death, food shortage had rarely been an issue, but the population growth and a decade of poor harvests during the 1520s brought the issue of scarcity to the fore.

If this is the first major rising relating to food insecurity, then women's participation is reasonably enough likely tied to that. Still, one third of the rioters remains an underrepresentation when the Rebeine is observed in its entirety. This is because the Rebeine was not only the looting of the granary, but also the taking of city hall, the storming of the local abbey, and most importantly, the looting of wealthy homes. Without

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[64] Christian Liddy, "The Household, the Citizen, and the City: Towards a Social History of Urban Politics in the Late Middle Ages," draft article, 6. My thanks for Professor Liddy for allowing me to read this article in advance of publication.

[65] William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9.

the provisioning aspect, it is possible that the Rebeine could have been much more similar to other well-known French revolts of the period. For example, although framed by contemporary narratives as more sudden and emotional than political,[66] the Jacquerie of 1358, which saw individuals target noblemen specifically, was above all a violent rising concerned with poor political leadership. With regards to its structure, Justine Firnhaber-Baker remarked that "details gleaned from remissions show that they had a hierarchical command structure governed by captains" and that the Jacques (the participants) looked "more like an army than a mob."[67] Given this information and the reason for this revolt, why should anyone expect to see more women appear in the Jacqueries' records?

Women were mostly excluded from the various rioting movements of the medieval period because these movements did not concern them – or at least they were told that this kind of politics did not concern them – and it is likely that some women had no concern for them. None of the women we know about during the Rebeine were involved in storming the city hall, for example. We also know that the kinds of protests centered around political representation or citizenship dominated the protest tradition of the period. To ask why women were absent from popular politics during much of the late Middle Ages is akin to asking why women were absent from priesthood at the time. It was so alien for women to occupy formal political roles outside inherited aristocratic or royal power due to their active and indeed increasing exclusion over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. So how could we blame women for not being

[66] Justine Firnhaber-Baker, "The Eponymous Jacquerie," in *The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolt*, ed. Justine Firnhaber-Baker and Dirk Schoenaers (New York: Routledge: Routledge, 2017), 57.
[67] Firnhaber-Baker, 62.

involved in an activity that typically focused entirely on the formal political sphere?

This formal political sphere was the realm of men, hence it was men who showed up when the time came to riot. It is not that women inexplicably got more involved in primarily male-led protest movements in this era, rather it was that the issues considered to be the province of women, such as food provision, became a more vexed political issue in the early sixteenth century. As a result, women used the same mechanisms subaltern men had used for centuries to express their political grievances when they were not able to have their voices heard through formal politics. The Grande Rebeine was not advocating for the removal of councillors, nor was it advocating for a different representative system; the protest was a critique of the current provisioners' failure to provide grain for the people of Lyon, and as such, women first got involved by being bound by a sense of duty as providers themselves, but also in political protest of those who prevented them from fulfilling their societal roles. Does this mean that the Rebeine of 1529 was the first in a long line of grain riots attended by growing numbers of women? Well, no, but it was an early manifestation of a phenomenon that would become more common in subsequent centuries.

A final point on the underrepresentation of women and the overrepresentation of men in traditional riots and rebellions of this era has to do with the perhaps unconscious systematic exclusion of women from legal records. Women were often of lesser concern to the authorities and the judicial system who did not view them as threats or could not fathom so many women getting involved in this kind of political activity. Although at first the number of women involved in the Rebeine seems surprisingly high, on further reflection it is explicable, and indeed it seems possible, that the records undercount the

number of women. Again, although women representing about third of participants is a much greater proportion when compared to the kinds of riots that had dominated the previous century and a half or so, the numbers seem less remarkable and surprising when one takes into account that the underlying issues animating the riot were different. It is also important to note that the authorities did not deem any women to be amongst the offenders they took seriously, as we will see when we consider the legal proceedings and punishments.

Youths

A similar theory can also be applied to adolescents, although this may again vary based on gender. In their official summary, the council acknowledged the presence of youths during the Rebeine when stating

> ledit menu peuple, povres mesnagers, serviteurs, femmes et enfans de quinze à vingt ans, se assemblèrent en la place desdits Courdelliers en gros nombre [the common people, poor households, servants, women and children of fifteen to twenty years of age, gathered in large numbers at the place des Cordelliers].[68]

Of the 125-129 in our records, we can infer with some certainty that around six participants were probably what we might call today adolescents, with one being younger than fifteen. In total, five are boys and one is a girl. This is presumably an undercounting, as the documents do not systematically indicate age.

[68] BHL, 258.

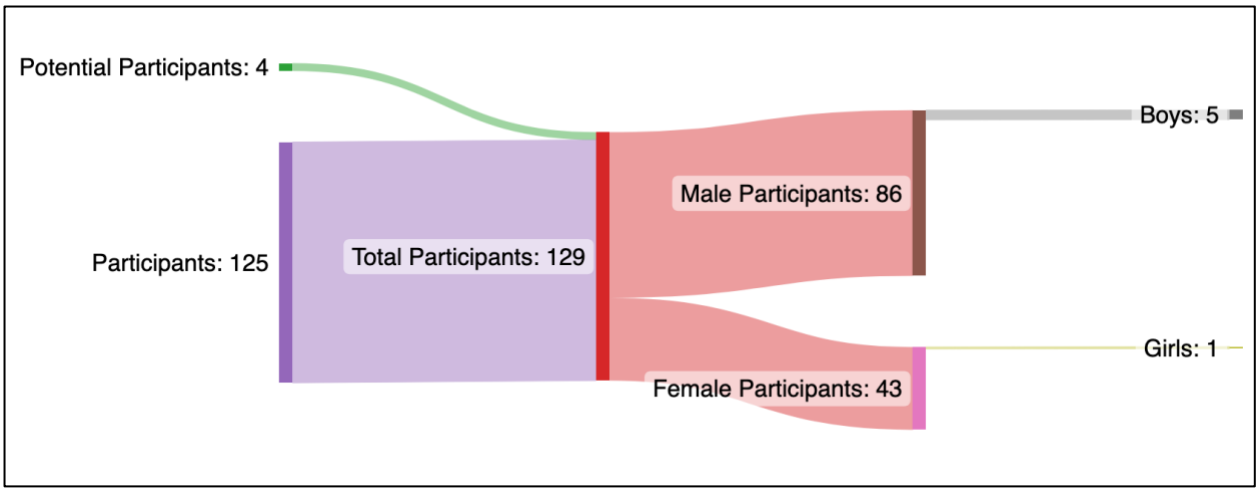

Figure 3: A visual representation of the participants based on gender and age.

Pierre Caron, a 15-year-old servant of one Anthoine Poynot, a local vinegar seller (*vinaigrier*), was one of those adolescent boys. Pierre made it into the records for having stolen one *bichet* (the usual measure for volumes of grain, about twenty litres)[69] from the granary, but also because he was supposedly present during two break-ins: at the house of Jehan des Vignes and the house of Symphorien Champier.[70] Interestingly, his deposition is preceded by that of his master, Anthoine Poynot, who essentially informed the authorities of his live-in servant's involvement in the events of the Rebeine. This is curious because the relationship between master and servant was typically a quasi-parental affair. Part of Anthoine's job was to ensure that Pierre behaved himself, and as such, he was not just denouncing his adolescent servant, but also confessing his lack of patriarchal control within his household. Alternatively, one could also view this confession as Anthoine's adherence to the civic duties of the head of a household, thus refusing to hide an offender in his house.[71] Apparently, after hearing the proclamations

[69] SB, "Les mesures à grains du XVIIIème siècle – Fédération des Moulins de France," April 1, 2010, https://fdmf.fr/les-mesures-a-grains-du-xviiieme-siecle/.
[70] BHL, 263.
[71] Lucie Laumonier, "Domestic Service in Late Medieval Languedoc: The Household and the Family," in

at the Place des Cordelliers on the opening day, Anthoine came home only to hear his Savoyard servant disclose that he had taken about two *bichets* of wheat from the city's granary. Anthoine testified Pierre had told him:

> Maistre j'ay apporté en ma chemise ce blé où il en pourroit avoir deux bichetz ou environ, que j'ay prins au grenier de la ville; j'ai veu que tout le monde en prenoit, j'en ay pris comme les autres [Master, I carried in my shirt the wheat, about two *bichets* or so, which I had taken from the city's granary; I saw that everyone was taking some, and so I took some like the others].[72]

Later on the day of Anthoine's deposition, the master returned to the tribunal, this time with his young servant. Then began Pierre's deposition, in which he clarified his statement about his involvement by confirming that he had indeed witnessed the looting at the Champier and de Vignes households, but that he himself did not join in on the destruction and theft, opting instead to sit and watch from afar with someone he knew and could name. As for the actors committing the crimes before him, Pierre remained rather vague, mentioning only that he could not recognise most of them. As for his taking of grain from the granary *du poix des farines*, he maintains that he only took around one *bichet*, which he promptly paid back.

The accounts of Pierre Caron and his Master, Anthoine Poynot, together form the longest entry with regards to any adolescent or child involved in the Rebeine that we know of. That said, there are other entries of interest, some which present young people attempting to navigate the legal system unscathed by offering questionable excuses. This was the case for Benoist Jaquet, the 12-year-old son of a masonry worker with the

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"We Are All Servants": The Diversity of Service in Premodern Europe (1000-1700), ed. Diane Wolfthal and Isabelle Cochelin (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2022), 335-336.

[72] BHL, 263.

same name. Benoist had taken roughly half a *bichet*, although declared that he was given the wheat by an unnamed woman who claimed she had already paid for it.[73]

Another 15-year-old adolescent boy, a shoemaker with no recorded last name, referred to only by the letter "J" (presumably being the first letter of his name), was also caught for having stolen wheat – although in contrast to the previous two was said to have taken only one "*coppe*" (or *coupe*, one-quarter of a *bichet*).[74] "J" had not yet used the stolen wheat by the time of his deposition on May 3rd, 1529, and so the young shoemaker simply returned what he had taken. A fourth adolescent in the records named Barthélemy Lieutenant, a 13-year-old who, like his peers, took roughly half a *bichet*, was also given the option to return the stolen wheat. In contrast to the others, however, this son of a winemaker had his mother Pernette Lieutenant return it for him.[75]

In contrast to the first four youths mentioned, the remaining two youths' ages were not recorded, adding the possibility that even younger children could have been involved in the Rebeine. The first to appear in the records is Benoist Buchillat, who is described as a young child and a beggar.[76] His brief entry highlights that a woman named Jane Auldinet offered him one *bichet* during the raid of the granary; Benoist said that she had told him she had paid for it. He also surrendered the wheat to the authorities. Again, this is a similar story (or excuse) to the one offered by Benoist Jaquet. It is entirely possible that someone did pay for his share, but as we will see, this explanation was used often by the accused; it does not seem very plausible that someone during the raid on the granary was distributing wheat they had previously

[73] BHL, 264.
[74] BHL, 267.
[75] BHL, 270.
[76] BHL, 266.

purchased, and so it may have been a tactic to shift blame onto others, passed from one accused to the next. Whether this tactic or other excuses like it were effective is unclear, though neither Benoist Jaquet's nor Benoist Buchillat's entries mention a sentence or fine.[77]

The second youth with missing information concerning her age was Pernette, daughter of Catherine Fay, wife of winemaker Pierre Fay; Pernette Fay did not appear in person but was represented by her mother, who returned the *coupe* of wheat Pernette had taken from the granary, much like Barthélemy Lieutnant's mother had done.[78] Interestingly, Pernette's missing age and need for representation does allow for speculation about just how young she was. Does having a parent speak for her in the records necessarily mean that she was a child? No, not necessarily, but it is very likely. Normally a girl over the age of about 14 would be living in someone else's house as a domestic servant and would thus be under an employer's governance, not a parent's. It is true that there are other examples within these records of husbands representing their wives, masters representing their servants, and parents representing their offspring, so this is not unusual. However, seeing how Pernette Fay acted alone in going to the granary, she was probably a child, and more precisely somewhere between 10 and 14.

These six examples of youth involvement in the Rebeine leave us with more questions than answers. For one, let me reiterate that of the 125-129 participants we have access to, I could only identify with some level of certainty these seven people as children, either because their ages were listed or through contextual clues. Many others

[77] See *The Punishments* section.
[78] BHL, 267.

of the remaining lawbreakers who were prosecuted, along with many unrecorded participants, may have been youths. In fact, it was typical of riots and disorder at this time for the participants to be primarily young men between the ages of 15 and 30 years old.[79] This means that the stories and ages of Pierre Caron, J, Benoist Jaquet, Bathélemy Lieutenant, Benoist Buchillat, and Pernette Fay were likely similar to those of many others.

There is also a second consideration besides the lack of explicit age-related information provided in the written sources, namely the difficulties in assessing what constituted adulthood in past societies and in their justice systems. In other words, to what extent were these youths considered responsible adults, if at all? And did their dependency on their parents or employers affect that understanding? For the six youths involved with grain theft, they received somewhat tame punishments and treated much less severely than in other circumstances, since theft was a serious crime which typically resulted in severe penalties, often death.[80] However, similarly lenient punishments were also given to the adults who were accused of committing comparable crimes that day. Since the youths were given similar punishments to adults, does that also mean they were viewed as adults? No, not necessarily. Judges were sometimes more lenient towards younger offenders, but in 1529 it seems that this leniency was simply extended to everyone who had looted the granary instead of the homes. Much like today, adulthood was defined at the time both socially and legally – those norms

[79] Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 94–100.
[80] Claude Gauvard, "La justice pénale du roi de France à la fin du Moyen Âge," in *Le pénal dans tous ses États : Justice, États et sociétés en Europe (xiie-xxe siècles)*, ed. Xavier Rousseaux and René Lévy, Collection générale (Bruxelles: Presses de l'Université Saint-Louis, 2019), 81–112 (Paragraph 7), http://books.openedition.org/pusl/19074.

were distinct and did not necessarily agree. As for distinguishing between adolescence and adulthood in the records, one of the reasons why it is so difficult to do so is precisely because a legal distinction did not exist, while social distinctions did.

Occupation

The third and final statistical marker worth looking at, apart from age and gender, is the occupation of the rioters – which also allows us to talk about economic status. As one might expect, a riot based mainly on a shortage of wheat affected primarily those already struggling to afford bread. As such, most occupations listed in our source are what we might consider of the lower status. These includes positions like labourers, masons, winemakers, bakers, shoemakers, carpenters, tanners, and soldiers, to name a few. Much like assessing the ages of rioters, the evidence is inconsistent on the matter of occupations, not to mention imprecise at times. Not everyone had their occupation listed, and unlike the English legal practice at this time,[81] the legal tradition in Lyon does not seem to make it a requirement – as far as I can tell – for anyone to be identified by their occupations. In addition to the information being irregular for men, for women marital status was almost always used instead of occupation, leaving women's work mostly documentarily invisible. Léonarde Tareau from our records had no listed occupation because she was identified as "Léonarde, femme de Jehan Tareau, taincturier [Léonarde, wife of Jehan Tareau, dye worker]."[82] Neither did "Jane, femme [de] J. Jourdan, pescheur, demourant en la Pescherie [Jane, wife of J. Jourdan,

[81] By the Statute of Additions of 1413, all men indicted for offences were to be identified by status or occupation. Edward Powell, *Kingship, Law, and Society: Criminal Justice in the Reign of Henry V* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 67.
[82] BHL, 273.

fisherman, who lives at the Fishery]."[83] However, this does not mean that women had no occupations of their own. This also does not mean that women were not involved in the work their husbands did. Nonetheless, what this means for us is that only a minority of the rioters – a few women and about half the men – are identified by their occupation.[84]

One interesting exception to this comes from the story of Pernette Barbière, who was described as a "fille" – presumably a sex worker. Unlike many others, Pernette Barbière did not participate in the looting of the granary (unless this fact is omitted). Instead, she appeared in the records for the more serious offense of having "semé parolle par la ville qu'il failloit tout tuer ces grox larrons de la ville [encouraged the rioters to kill the great thieves of the city],"[85] probably in reference to the councillors or grain hoarders who were seen to be profiting from the situation within the city. In other words, she was accused of having incited violence against the authorities. We know that she was imprisoned for this, but it is unclear what happened to her after that.

Of note from our list of occupations above are the bakers. It may seem like a contradiction at first to see bakers involved in the rioting, given that some rioters accused others with that very same occupation of grain hoarding and price fixing.[86] However, if we recognise that there were generally no qualifiers attached to the "baker" designation, we can quickly see how this might make sense. There was no distinction made between those who worked at a bakery and those who owned a bakery. No

[83] BHL, 277.
[84] Forty-two out of the eighty-two men that we know by name have an occupation listed, or their occupation can be inferred through contextual clues. Meanwhile, only three women have an occupation attached to their name; many entries have their husband's or their father's occupation listed instead.
[85] BHL, 421.
[86] BHL, 234.

matter if a baker was rich or poor, a baker was listed as a baker in our source – unless given the rare qualifier of "Master," which suggests that the man belonged to a higher economic bracket due to his position within a guild. Based on contextual clues, I think it is reasonable to assume that the rioters identified as bakers in our sources did not own bakeries of their own, or at least did not operate the most successful bakeries in town. What is interesting, however, is the fact that bakers appear on both sides of the Rebeine. This gives an additional dimension to the riots: not only were rioters looking for wheat for subsistence purposes, but those rioters who identified as bakers likely saw this issue intersect with their occupational livelihood. If a wealthy baker was hoarding all the available grain, how was the smaller baker supposed to work with no materials?

Likewise, the story of the *vignerons* or vintners echoes these themes. Nineteen out of the 125 to 129 participants were in some way related to the wine industry in Lyon. Listed as either a *vigneron*, a *vigneron*'s wife, or a *vigneron*'s child, rioters related to this industry made up the largest segment of the participating population. As such, a reasonable next step would be to figure out if this is in line with the general occupational distribution of the population of Lyon. Although known for its print industry in the second half the sixteenth century, Lyon most likely prioritised winemaking during the period in which the Rebeine occurred. Part of this reasoning can be extrapolated from the neighbouring city of Dijon where, as Mack Holt has calculated, about a quarter of the households were headed by *vignerons*.[87] Possibly, then, the number of rioters associated with winemaking was simply reflective of the proportion of the population involved in that trade.

[87] Mack P. Holt, *The Politics of Wine in Early Modern France: Religion and Popular Culture in Burgundy, 1477-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 100.

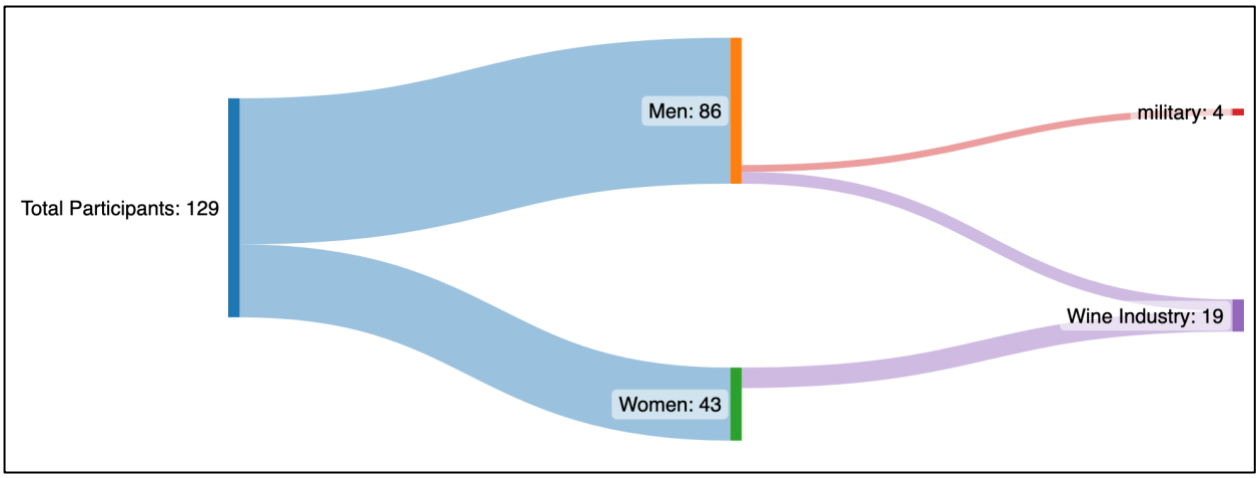

Figure 4: A visual representation of the participants with ties to military occupations or winemaking occupations based on gender.

There are also a few participants with occupations tied to the military. Thierry de Roche, for example, was described as an *artilleur* (gunner), and both Anthoine Pignard (possibly Anthoine Jucamoz) and Cristoffle Gille were listed as *arquebusier* (long gunner).[88] Interestingly, all of these individuals were involved in the looting of homes and received severe punishments. The same is true for Jean de Musy, accused of leading the Rebeine, who was described as a "*joeur d'espée*" (swordsman).[89] What this occupation entailed exactly is unclear, but it is interesting that a link existed between military experience and the attribution of leadership.

To conclude this section, let me summarise why it so important that we understand who it is that was involved on the side of the rebels during the Grande Rebeine of 1529. First, we must remember that popular protest during this era was one of the only available mechanisms offering a political voice to those who did not have one traditionally or legally. That said, masses of protesters often presented as much diversity of viewpoints as one can imagine, and it is not accurate to portray them as a

[88] BHL, 284.
[89] Or "joyeur d 'espée"; BHL, 278 & 284.

monolith. Secondly, in addition to this dilemma of diversity, is the issue of available sources. Rarely when studying the 1520s do we ever get the unfiltered written opinion of dissidents. We may have a surviving placard here and there or a petition from rebels in the form of a letter, but on the whole, we rarely have a good understanding of the various motives and motivations pushing citizens to protest. In our case, we have access to the court records of the Rebeine which provides us with identifiable cases, and sometimes if we are lucky, these court sessions include transcripts with the defendants' point of view as well. However, while we may assume that we are receiving "their side of the story", we must also be keenly aware that all of their responses were guided by the interrogator and the clerk recording their answer. In other words, we can never clearly see what those protestors who testified in court were truly thinking because of the layers in between that unfiltered truth and our understanding of it. What I have argued in this section is that if we examine the identities of those 125-129 questioned rioters, we can chip away at those layers. Based on these individuals' specific situations, we may elaborate on the various potential reasons why someone might want to join a protest movement in a relatively repressive society. Furthermore, I have argued that a person's place in the world, which we can determine based on their gender, their age, or their occupation, might also help us better understand who it was that participated, as well as the various barriers preventing us from accessing all the information available on such a topic. In other words, looking at gender, age, and occupation allows us to sketch out the various influential forces behind the thousands of decisions made by the myriad individuals involved in the Grande Rebeine of 1529.

Part III: The Politics & Economics of Repression

The Council of Lyon

Many of the protestors of the Grande Rebeine were critical of existing local power structures and aimed to temporarily destabilise them. At times, they even came close to engaging with local authorities directly. According to the council's official summary, the protestors-turned-rioters had after all taken over city hall and allegedly threatened the lives of one custodian named Jacques Coulaud and his family members.[90] They also managed to chase Pomponne de Trivulce,[91] the governor of Lyon, out of town, after which they stormed the abbey of Ile-Barbe, believing this was the location where many merchants kept their grain.[92] In that instance, the rioters challenged not only civic authorities but also religious ones. Yet while it appears that the rioters found success initially, this did not mean that the council of Lyon, the primary governing body in the city, lacked the tools or resources to deal with such an event. The following section is an exploration of the measures taken by the city council to suppress the Rebeine and its leaders. It is also a discussion about opposition to the movement more generally and the various reactions to this unfolding Rebeine.

To suppress dissent was one of the council's main functions. In contrast to the rioters who fomented unrest using church bells, placards, and petitions, local rulers instead relied on the courts, hired men-at-arms,[93] religious institutions, wealthy

[90] BHL, 259.
[91] Sometimes Pomponie, Pomponius, or Pomponio de Trivolce; BHL 261 & ACL, 73.
[92] ACL, 66.
[93] For a list of men-at-arms hired for the repressions, see BHL 364-367.

merchants, and wealthy artisans to suppress public disorder. Anyone else willing to earn at the expense of the protestors was also welcome. This meant that unless the rioters of this Rebeine could somehow muster more participants, weapons, wealth, and organise more effectively, the deck was firmly stacked against them. Order would again be restored in Lyon – it was only a matter of time.

Among those opposed to the Rebeine besides the councillors and ordinary people were certain other authority figures representing the church and the monarchy. Holding various positions and titles, they often worked in tandem with the councillors to bring peace and justice to the city – although the extent of their involvement is not always clear, nor is their relationship with the city council. As mentioned by Nicole Gonthier, Lyon had "une administration complexe où les offices semblent parfois faire double emploi [a complex administration where offices often appeared as duplicates]."[94] Echoing this sentiment, Timothy Watson described city affairs as a "maze of overlapping and protean jurisdictions."[95] The ambiguities of various governing roles and their respective jurisdictions were as unclear back then as they are to us today, hence the need for some to assert their power in disputed roles. Exploring some of these individuals and their roles has also proven difficult given the inconsistent use of language and the interchangeability of some terms and titles.

Take for example the recently mentioned Pomponne de Truvilce, Governor of Lyon. According to Jean Favier, the role of a governor, appointed by the crown, was primarily military; he oversaw administrative districts known as *bailliages* (most common

[94] Gonthier, *Délinquance, justice et société dans le Lyonnais médiéval*, 35.
[95] Timothy Watson, "Friends at Court: The Correspondence of the Lyon City Council, c. 1525-1575," *French History* 13, no. 3 (September 1, 1999): 281.

in the north of the kingdom) or *sénéchaussés* (most common in the south of the kingdom),[96] which were all dotted with their own garrisons led by a captain (always a nobleman) in charge of the defense of said *sénéchaussé* (sometimes a specific castle or city).[97] In certain cities however, some garrisons were so large that their captains eventually wore the title of governor of said city. Lyon was a large city, but it is unclear whether Pomponne became governor in this way. In most cases, a captain had to first be a marshal or admiral (i.e., from the military), but some could become captains as *Baillis* (bailiffs) or *Sénéchaux* (stewards), i.e., through administrative paths.[98] Confusingly, a governor was also sometimes referred to as "*Lieutenant Général du Roi*" in that he was the representative (*lieu-tenant*, or "taking the place") of the king in a military capacity. "*Capitaine Général*"[99] was another term used, although if we rely on Champier's narrative, the Governor Truvilce was cited as separate from the roles of lieutenant, justice, or king's envoy, the latter role belonging to Seigneur de Botière, described as the *prévôt* of the king's office, which I briefly introduced earlier.[100]

According to Jean Favier, by the second half of the fifteenth century, most of these positions (*Sénéchaux*, *Capitaine*, *Lieutenant Général*, etc.) became increasingly honorific titles – these were also salaried offices plagued by absentia.[101] Although used interchangeably over time and in different regions, he also points out that towards the end of the Middle Ages, a "*Lieutenant Général du Roi*" sat firmly above a governor in

[96] These are different in name only; Jean Favier, *Dictionnaire de la France médiévale* (Paris: Fayard, 1993), 109.
[97] Favier, *Dictionnaire de la France médiévale,* 202 & 464.
[98] Favier, 202.
[99] Favier, 202.
[100] ACL, 77.
[101] Favier, 109, 202, 464.

the hierarchy – though a governor could be promoted to the former.[102] As other offices did exist[103] and do appear in our source, the demonstrated complexity, malleability, and inconsistency of some of these roles and their hierarchies suggests that perhaps it is best to address titles of authority as they come up in various examples rather than dwell on detail.

In contrast, what is much clearer is the fact that in 1529, Lyon was primarily managed by a city council – a council which was typically composed of wealthy merchants and artisans, as was the case in virtually every other city in France. This council presided over a variety of everyday tasks which included policing, city planning, sanitation, the regulation of markets, the maintenance of local militias, and the city's overall financial obligations.[104] Perhaps most notably, the councillors themselves functioned as political middlemen between two main groups: the city dwellers (mercantile, artisanal, and lower-status Lyonnais) whose interests they were meant to defend and from whom they drew their power, and the higher authorities of church and state (such as the governor, bailli or archbishop) whose side they were technically meant to be on.[105] Undoubtedly, this was a delicate balancing act.

As a mediator between powerful institutions and various disenfranchised groups, this responsibility likely consumed a sizeable amount of a councillor's day. This is especially true during times of conflict, as rioters often accused councillors of incompetence even when facing realities outside of their control. During the Rebeine, it was the council of Lyon that received the brunt of the criticism. Knowing this, it was

[102] Favier, 464.
[103] Prévost, Marréchaux, etc.
[104] Watson, "Fiends at Court," 281.
[105] Watson, 281.

crucial for the council to act pragmatically once the riots started - and according to their own accounts at least, this is exactly what happened.

A municipal council had not always ruled in Lyon however. Lyon was annexed to the kingdom of France only in 1312; before that the archbishop had ruled. In 1320, following the king's confiscation of the archbishop's judicial powers eight years earlier, a city council was established by the Crown and accepted by the archbishop as the new ruling body.[106] However, it appears that the archbishop continued to play a role in Lyon's governance especially during difficult times.[107] We know for instance that the archbishop sat in some of the meetings concerning the Rebeine in 1529, but what exactly he did in there is not clear.[108]

The establishment of a city council meant a change from the previous ecclesiastical hold on the city as it offered a small group of men the possibility to rule the city, provided that they held the support of certain elected artisans and merchants known as "*maitres des métiers*".[109] At yearly general assemblies, these *maîtres* – whom Champier eloquently described during his time as "*Gens imbéciles d'entendement*" [people devoid of good sense][110] – in turn were responsible for voting in eleven or twelve men to serve as councillors. Technically, these councillors had term limits of

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[106] Gonthier, *Délinquance,* 37.
[107] Gonthier, *Délinquance,* 39.
[108] "The archbishop and the canon-counts argued continually with the municipal government over precedence, fiscal privileges, property rights, and their seigniorial prerogative of policing the city. Worse, they resented their exclusion from Lyon's political life. Although they were rich and powerful seigniors, the archbishop and canon-counts had little influence over the merchants who controlled the city government in the sixteenth century, and from time to time they found themselves barred from general assemblies of the city's privileged inhabitants. Even when they were not excluded from these assemblies, they often feared to attend, lest they and the rest of the clergy be forced to contribute to the city's coffers." Philip T. Hoffman, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon, 1500-1789* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 16.
[109] Rossiaud, *Lyon 1250-1550*, 327. This implies the move away from an ecclesiastical mode of organisation (parishes), towards something akin to a commune.
[110] ACL, 38.

roughly two years so as to avoid lifetime appointments, but, as observed by Caroline Fargeix, while this may have been successful initially, the gradual deterioration of this system over decades resulted in a dramatic shift towards nepotism.[111]

In fact, power was so concentrated in the decades leading up to the Rebeine that by 1514, every single sitting councillor had either been in power since 1490 or had at least one family member elected onto the council from that date.[112] As one might expect, this concentration of power solely in the hands of a few families within Lyon's social elite meant that others within the upper crest of Lyonnais society felt increasingly disenfranchised.

By the year 1515, the integrity of the council of Lyon was being challenged from within. Factional divides grew as more and more people were being excluded from assemblies and limited in what they could discuss. As the conflict reached a boiling point, a faction emerged. This faction, under the leadership of a certain Clément Mulat, demanded modifications be made to the way councillors were elected. Reminiscent of the ways in which the protestors often declared themselves "the city's poor" and the "defenders of the *bien publiq* (common good)", Mulat's faction positioned itself as the defenders of the city's artisans – although it is unlikely that any members of this faction actually belonged to that group.[113] These attempts to undermine the council's legitimacy between 1515-1521 are now referred as "*les querelles*" (the quarrels).[114] And although

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[111] Caroline Fargeix, "La querelle des artisans et des consuls : mémoire, pouvoir et conflit à Lyon au début du XVIe siècle," in *Le pouvoir municipal : de la fin du Moyen Âge à 1789*, ed. Philippe Hamon and Catherine Laurent, Histoire (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019), 253–68 (Paragraph 4), http://books.openedition.org/pur/127173.
[112] Fargeix, "La querelle", para. 13.
[113] Fargeix, "La querelle", para. 9.
[114] Champier does talk about certain elements which fueled the so-called "*querelles*", although he does not use the name or make distinctions between those political perturbances and the later Rebeine. The need to make upgrades to the city's ramparts and boulevards as imposed by the Crown, and the lack of

his demands for change were firmly rejected in July 1521 by King François' commissioner,[115] we can assume that some of these tensions remained by the time the Rebeine rolled around. It has even been suggested by A. Brassard that the Rebeine might have been an outgrowth of, or at least related to, the preceding *querelles*.[116] More recent contributions however, such as those from Fargeix, have not made similar claims.[117] I have also not come across anything confirming that these were related in any way.

Despite Champier's best effort to frame Lyon as a city which required additional royal attention due to its location on the fringes of the kingdom, its important waterways, and the dangers that come with hosting large fairs,[118] Lyon rather benefitted from greater freedoms than other cities and towns. It also carried its own burden of responsibility, however. Since it was so far removed from the centre of power geographically, the king could not personally oversee political matters in the region – this is what gave the council such power.[119] However, this also made it a target when things went awry. On the one hand, the councillors were concerned with local politics and preserving order by ensuring that powerful individuals (of similar social standing to their own) were content and making sure that the powerless had at least enough to eat to avoid unrest. On the other hand, it had to advocate for itself as a necessary political body in front of a king who often doubted the council's ability to govern, especially during troubled times. In other words, not only did the council have to mediate between

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funds was a source of frustration among the councillors it appears. ACL, 49-50.
[115] Fargeix, "La querelle", para. 46.
[116] A. Brassard, "La Querelle Des Consuls et Des Artisans à Lyon (1515-1521)," *Revue d'histoire de Lyon* 8 (1909): 42.
[117] Though not outright rejected, this notion is inferred.
[118] ACL, 28-29.
[119] Gonthier, *Délinquance, justice et société dans le Lyonnais médiéval*, 6–9.

the local rich and poor, it also had to balance local concerns with royal concerns – all the while advocating for its own survival.

To make matters worse regarding the burden of responsibility, despite experiencing significant economic growth during the early sixteenth century, Lyon lacked any powerful guilds to act as a counterbalance to its city council.[120] Again, while this was occasionally an advantage for the council, the side effect of not having a formally recognised opposition simply means that any and all criticisms were typically directed towards the decision-makers. What I want to emphasise here is that the political structure in Lyon around the time of the Rebeine was organised in a way where the burden of responsibility clearly fell on this one institution. In good times, this was undoubtedly convenient for these men of power; in bad times, this likely resulted in hasty decisions aimed towards political survival. It might also explain the Guigues' strong emphasis on the Council's initial surprise.[121] Since the council was the sole political body to criticise, attacks on the council's integrity were likely commonplace. Downplaying concerns regarding rumoured protests was probably common, even if the threat was imminent.

I bring forth these issues relating to infighting among the Lyonnais political class because I believe that they help us better understand our principal primary source – namely the recorded events of the Rebeine of 1529 as interpreted by the council of Lyon and its various agents. Because we have knowledge of the council's precarious

[120] Watson, "Friends at Court," 282.
[121] According to the Guigues, following the initial church bells, the looting of the rich homes, and the storming of the granary on the first day, the rioters ceased their activities for the night. Many of the city's wealthier residents took this relative calm as an opportunity to guard their homes and prepare for another wave of looting – some even decided to hide their valuables. Once the next day came, the "noise" returned to the city. This is when the council decided to act (BHL, 241).

position in the larger political structure of France, and because we understand that existing factional divides threatened not only the political survival of individual councillors but also that of the city council as an institution, we can predict that some of our archives amount to political theatre or political posturing. Constantly seeking the approval of its monarch and its populace, the council was likely to present a narrative whereby threats were embellished and its own responses appeared swift and just. Moreover, these documents were also more likely to portray non-participants as ordinary, even reasonable, victims of the Rebeine while painting the protesters as unreasonable rabble. This is why we must approach the city's records of the Rebeine cautiously.

Controlling the Narrative

According to Randolph C. Head in *Making Archives in Early Modern Europe*, "Western European rulers at all scales in this period [around 1500] sought to mobilize record-making and record-keeping as flexible tools of knowledge and power."[122] This was no different for Lyon's city council. While city records were primarily meant to keep tabs on the daily operations of government, it was also common for these to reference, engage with, or offer an opinion on major contemporary events – a familiar modern-day equivalent to this process might be the minutes of a work meeting. Likewise, while much of the surviving documentation in the Lyonnais civic records during the Rebeine discussed the logistics of bringing rioters to justice and the expenses that this process required, there was also a tendency to moralise the actions of certain rioters and

[122] Randolph C. Head, *Making Archives in Early Modern Europe: Proof, Information, and Political Record-Keeping, 1400–1700* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 119.

conversely to valorise those of the council.[123] The decision to include such comments (whether formal or informal) depended on the clerks who penned the documents, but they reveal some of the councillors' attitudes towards the Rebeine and its participants.

Another way to understand the council's view on the events of the Rebeine is through the exploration of what the councillors included and omitted from official documentation. Luckily for us, an official summary of the events of the Rebeine from the council does exist – it was published by the Guigues in a section called "*Relation des registres consulaires*".[124] Though concise, this five-page breakdown of the events of the Rebeine informs us about far more than the council's role in the affair. By juxtaposing this document with the wealth of knowledge that we have on the Rebeine of 1529 thanks to primary sources such as the account by the contemporary physician Symphorien Champier, archived letters between the council and various agents, the judicial records of prosecution, and context drawn from secondary sources, certain themes begin to emerge which help us understand what it was that councillors deemed important to include and exclude from the official records.

First, let us consider what is included in the official narrative, as this typically sets the tone. As a self-referential document, this summary of the events found in the civic records naturally depicts the council and its councillors favourably. Although there was mention of "plusieurs et diverses opinions" on how to best handle the situation, the council was nonetheless united and efficient in their response to the riots of 1529:

> On devoit faire justice forte et que lesdits apparans avec leurs serviteurs et domestiques se devoient tenir prestz en armes et faire quelque bendes de gens et leur donner quelques gages pour quelque temps, pour accompagner

[123] Fargeix, "La reconnaissance", 2.
[124] A document referenced numerous times so far in this thesis.

> justice à ce qu'elle se peust montrer et aller par la ville en force [We must remain strong and the wealthy with their domestic servants should ready themselves with arms and create bands of men and give them wages for a short time, to maintain justice until it is fully restored in this city by force].[125]

Again, it bears repeating that the goal of creating such a document was to control the narrative by elevating the image of the council while simultaneously demonising the rioters. Beyond narrating the council's own actions however, another focus of this summary was on the sequence of the rioters' advances, paying special attention to the looting of homes and to whom these belonged. The effect of mostly paying attention to the looting of homes is twofold: we know what the councillors thought were the most heinous crimes during the Rebeine, and a clear status separation emerges between the looters and the looted.

Looking at the omissions from the official summary, the most glaring one was perhaps the lack of acknowledgement of Lyon's historical struggles with factionalism. As mentioned, the opinions on how best to proceed were diverse, but this diversity of opinion was much more present in Champier's account.[126] Champier even believed that these lingering factional divisions contributed to the soaring price of grain which underpinned the rioting movement.[127] In the narrative presented to us by the council, there are no mentions of who had dissenting opinions within the council. It is even inferred that the wider public and on-lookers are made to agree with the opinions of the council, or the non-rioters at least. In short, it is implied in the official summary that uncertainty and disagreement among the councillors was minimal. Perhaps this was

[125] BHL, 262.
[126] ACL, 50-54.
[127] ACL, 49-50.

true, but the account presented by Champier, though boastful, suggests much more back and forth during conversations than the former.

Inclusions and omissions are not always necessarily intentional either. What the councillors knew or did not know about the events unfolding around them is difficult to answer not only due to the presence of patchy sources, but also because of the pervasiveness and power of rumours. It is entirely possible that no councillor had heard of the rumours supposedly circulating prior to the Rebeine or the first few placards. The council did eventually accuse and charge a *clerc* by the name of Symon Girard on January 16th, 1531 for making and putting up the placards that were used during the Rebeine,[128] but this was nearly a year after the events. To be fair, rumours were often a part of popular protest movements, but that does not mean that every whisper had merit. As expected, some of the rumours we know about were indeed ridiculous, and the records want us to be aware of this fact. Unlike Champier's belief that many of the rioters were Waldensians from the east (itself a rumour),[129] no such claims were made in the official summary of the Rebeine.

This is not to say that rumours did not appear elsewhere. Relying on the Guigues' archival research, take for example the reported rumour during the Rebeine that suggested that two large shipping vessels filled with grain originally destined for Lyon had instead been diverted further down river to Vienne, where the grain was subsequently sold at a lower price![130] As if the idea that transporting grain further and

[128] BHL, 419.
[129] Seeing how virtually everyone in the civic records whose place of residence was listed in Lyon, this remains a strange belief.
[130]The Guigues cite certain « Pièces justificatives » here, to which I do not have access, unfortunately. BHL, 240.

for less profit was not already difficult to believe, let us now add another layer to this story: the source cited by the Guigues reported that to keep the scheme a secret from everyone in Lyon, those responsible resorted to spreading manure over the goods so as to hide the ships' contents.[131] Of course, there is no way for us to know if this really occurred, but given how unlikely this rumour was, the point remains: not all information is good information, and not every rumour is worth chasing. This is especially true for a council with many other responsibilities. Nevertheless, we should still acknowledge that rumours were powerful tools regardless of their basis in fact. As was the case during the Rebeine, rumours such as the one mentioned could mobilise others to take to the streets, and even force political representatives to take refuge.[132] Additionally, these stories captured the sentiments of a seemingly considerable proportion of Lyon's residents. Those residents' sense of injustice was derived from the possibility that dark forces deprived the common people of what was rightfully theirs, not for the sake of profit, but simply to cause harm. If the councillors were indeed surprised by the Rebeine, as mentioned briefly in the summary, and as evidenced by their inability to resist the initial waves of lootings, that suggests a profound disconnect between the rulers and the ruled.[133]

Did the council react appropriately given what they knew? Of course, depending on who you ask, the answer to this question might differ. Despite Henri Hauser's claim in "Étude Critique sur la Rebeine de Lyon" that the councillors should have been aware of the threat, and that they should have been able to resist based on the idea that

[131] BHL, 240.
[132] BHL, 240.
[133] BHL, 261.

“l'organisation consulaire était célèbre par sa solidité, où chaque quartier avait sa malice [the council was well known for its strength, where all districts had its own militia]",[134] he was however right to point out that the governor of Lyon was chased out of the city by rioters armed with *harquebuses*, crossbows, and clubs. This suggests at least that the councillors and the governor were underprepared.[135] Missed rumours aside, the council did eventually have access to trustworthy sources of information, which aided in their retaking of the city and the prosecution of the accused.

Although caught off-guard initially, the council managed to regroup well, and eventually approached the situation as pragmatically as one could within their means. Facing public protest was somewhat expected for the life of a councillor in Lyon, and with their positions possibly on the line, it was the councillors’ job to spring to action. However, we must not confuse the pragmatism of the 1520s with modern capabilities. Yes, the council had tools to deal with the Rebeine, but most of these took time to implement, especially when the collaboration of others from different jurisdictions was required. Taking the city from the rioters, establishing order, reaching out for help from the king or neighbouring cities, communicating with the governor and the archbishop, capturing fugitives, hearing testimonies, imprisoning the accused, and executing some of them – these are the measures that the council could implement, but none of these initiatives were immediate. It is true that the civic records portrayed the councillors favourably, but I do not think that the criticism levelled at the political body from historians of the early twentieth century such as Hauser is necessarily deserved.[136]

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[134] Hauser, “Etude Critique”, 288.
[135] The governor should have been able to defend himself as the commander of the garrison; BHL, 261.
[136] Hauser, “Étude critique”, 288.

Interestingly, one of the greatest signs of the council's pragmatism was its interactions with the Crown, in particular exchanges regarding the possible need for reinforcements. However, though the Guigues present transcriptions of correspondence between the council and the king (which involved the governor), the council's own summary downplays that consultation. We know that the council pleaded for the authorisation of grain exchanges between Lyon and neighbouring Bourgogne, Dauphiné, Forez, and Auvergne – a request that I can only imagine was made out of fear that the city's granaries might actually run out of grain.[137] In their letters, the council even pleaded for the Crown to send a handful of town criers to announce that the price of the remaining grain in city reserves would be fixed at "seize sous le *bichet*."[138] Why the need for additional town criers when local ones could do this work is unclear. However, the declaration that the current reserves would sell at a fixed sixteen *sous* was a more reasonable price to the over twenty *sous* seen elsewhere, but this was still expensive according to Champier's own words:

> Ordinairement que le blé a cousté huyt ou dix solz le bichet, & dyent que, si ne passe dix solz, que c'est bon marché
> [Normally the wheat cost eight or ten *sous* per *bichet*, and it is said that if it does not go beyond ten *sous*, it is a good market price].[139]

The omission of these details from the short form official narrative seems rather strange, but a reasonable explanation for this might be that none of these requests made to the king were fulfilled in the end (not because the king was not able to provide grain and armed men, but because the Rebeine was resolved earlier than anticipated).

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[137] BHL, 262.
[138] BHL, 241; ACL, 66.
[139] ACL, 52.

As for the framing in the official summary of the residents opposed to the riots in contrast to rioters and their motivations, certain contradictions emerge. On the one hand, the record shows that grain was obviously a preoccupation for the rioters, as it was for the council, since it is on this matter that most actions are taken. At the same time, the council did not want to seem incompetent. As such, they made the argument that the grain reserves were not as low as claimed by their opponents – in contradiction to the previous statements about the available grain reserves in Lyon.[140] The council also argued based on the actions they witnessed, such as the looting of homes, that for some rioters, material gain was truly the motive behind the riots:

> Ils ne le faisaient par faute de blez ne de pain, car, comme dit est, ils ne serchoient pas les blez, mais les biens, marchandises et argent pour les pilher et disrober. [They are not doing this for lack of grain or bread, because, as said, they are not looking for grain, but rather goods, merchandise, and money to pillage and rob.][141]

This idea that the rioters were simply greedy and opportunistic was a sentiment shared by Champier as well. In reference to the looting of a merchant's home for example (he was probably thinking of his own looted home as well), Symphorien Champier disapprovingly remarked that "ces faulx pyrates terriens pillèrent toute la maison & prindrent tout son argent [these false land pirates pillaged the entire house and took all his money]" and that "leur intention n'estoit pour trouver blé, mais pour piller & disrober [their intention was never to find grain, but to rob and pillage]."[142]

Concerning the victims of the riots, the official summary does mention those whose properties were looted, those who had to flee their homes or workplaces, as well

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[140] BHL, 260.
[141] BHL, 260.
[142] This is by far my favourite description of the rioters; ACL, 61-62.

as Jehan Chastillon who lost his life after being hit by rock during the affair; it only gives the words of the custodian Jacques Collaud, which are quoted in the official narrative despite the availability of testimonies from others preserved in the civic records.[143] Again, the official summary is meant to be concise and only encompass certain aspects of the Rebeine, but I believe that the omission of certain actors was intentional – perhaps to minimise the role of royal officials in what should be the council's business.

To illustrate the possibility that the council might have intentionally downplayed royal involvement in the repression of the Rebeine (or the possibility that Champier was much more in favour of royal interventions),[144] consider the story of Lieutenant du Peyrat, a royal sergeant (therefore a military representative of the king) and how his involvement was mentioned by Symphorien Champier, while he otherwise only shows up in a handful of receipts in the records. As many political figures had done, du Peyrat had also taken refuge in the cloister of the Church of Saint-Jean once the Rebeine began.[145] According to Champier, du Peyrat apparently emerged from the cloister and attempted to reason with the crowd.[146] Given his authority (although not made explicit), he reassured them that there was enough grain in the city for all and that a fixed price of sixteen *sous* would apply everywhere. Skeptical, certain individuals allegedly cried out and insisted that the merchants were hoarding grain, and that the abbey on the Isle Barbe sat upon over three thousand "*charges de cheval*."[147] In reply, du Peyrat assured them that he would personally visit all granaries within the city, including the abbey, so

[143] "Messieurs, je suis perdu et affolé s'il se pert quelque chose, par quoy aiez de moy pitié".
[144] And the limits of relying solely on the official summary and a few receipts of money owed.
[145] According to the Guigues, l'église cathédrale de Saint-Jean was previously used as a sanctuary; BHL, 180.
[146] ACL, 65-67.
[147] I have not found a translation that matches this exactly; perhaps this refers to a cartload, or perhaps there is a generally acknowledged amount of grain that one horse can carry.

as to fulfil his promise that the price would remain as such.[148] Whether du Peyrat was simply buying time, searching to appease tensions, or whether he was genuine in his promise, his intervention in these affairs is what is important. The official summary, however, completely omits mention of this episode, perhaps because as remarked they did not want to acknowledge the role of a royal sergeant in what should be the city council's business.

Aside from du Peyrat's story, various other examples of individual agency are missing from the official summary but can be found in either Champier's work or compiled by the Guigues. These include comments by Symphorien Champier in council;[149] words levied at Jehan de Musy, the supposed leader of the Rebeine, by Champier's neighbour;[150] words from Jehan de Musy himself suggesting which home to target next;[151] the city secretary Pierre Gravier's wife, who decided to open her doors to the rioters twice so that she might avoid the looting of items instead of food;[152] and various rioters discussing rumours or informing others of the opportunity at the nearby granary. Perhaps the reason why so many of these stories of individual agency never made it into the official summary has to do with the need for brevity in official documentation. Some stories similar to these ones do show up in court testimony and correspondence, though this could have helped the council in their quest to paint the rioters as rabble and justify the Rebeine's repression by highlighting the intensity of the threat, such anecdotes did not suit their purpose. Much of what we need to explore and

[148] ACL, 66.
[149] ACL, 52-54.
[150] BHL, 236.
[151] BHL, 237.
[152] BHL, 239.

analyse the details of the Rebeine, therefore, can be gleaned from other types of sources found within the published archives by the Guigues.

The Arrest of Jean de Musy & the Price of Justice

On the last day of May 1529, twenty-seven men under the command of Humbert Coriaud[153] (the lieutenant of the provost of the *maréchaussé*) arrived in the town of Miribel, located roughly fifteen kilometres northeast of Lyon. With the approval of the Duke of Savoy,[154] Coriaud and his men had been tasked by the city council of Lyon to apprehend the apparent leader of the Rebeine, Jean de Musy, who had fled following the riot. We know this thanks to the existence of a city financial expense statement concerning the cost of de Musy's apprehension.[155] Interestingly, although Savoy was a separate jurisdiction, this did not yield any kind of political dispute. Rather, understanding and cooperation was promoted, as emphasised in a letter delivered to the city council by the duke's ambassador François Regnaud on May 18th, 1529:

> A noz très chers et bons amys les conseillers de la cité de Lyon… Au regard de l'excez et esmotion derrièrement fait à Lyon par le menu peuple, nous en sommes deplaisant et de ceulx qui se sont retirez rière nous, affin que vous congnoissez le désir qu'avons tousjours bien vivre et voysiner avecques vous, nous y avons pourveu, ainsi que vous entendrez plus au long par le maistre des requestes porteur de cestes , lequel y a prins beaucoup de la peyne, soy desmontrant fort affectionné à vous faire service, non seullement en cecy , mais en tous vous autres affaires, lequel vous prions sur ce croyre comme nous mesmes [To our dear good friends the councillors of the city of Lyon… concerning the recent excesses of emotions in Lyon by the common people, we are displeased by this and by those who have retreated behind us.[156] You know that our aims, which

[153] Sometimes written Hymbert, and sometimes written Coryau or Coreau.
[154] "En ensuyvant le bon plaisir et ordonnance…"; BHL, 371-372.
[155] Also written Jean de Muzy, Jehan de Muzi, or Jehan de Musy; BHL, 370-371.
[156] Probably in reference to fugitives who have since escaped to Savoy.

> have always been to live harmoniously near you and with you, have succeeded. Of this you will hear more from the [our?] Master of Requests who bears this letter, who has taken great lengths to show his willingness to serve you, not only in this matter, but on all other matters. We pray that you share this belief with us].[157]

By the third of June, the mission was successful, and Jean de Musy was returned to Lyon to face his crimes. For their work, Humbert and his men were rewarded and their expenses reimbursed. A request for funding made from the council to the city treasurer Charles de la Bussée shows that the price of locating, capturing, and processing this fugitive added up quickly. Coriaud and his men were reimbursed for the nights spent in Miribel, including the price of breakfast, supper, and drinks, which totaled three *livres* and six *sous tournois*. Additionally, Coriaud and his crew were reimbursed twenty *sous tournois* for the oats given to their horses. Six more *sous tournois* were needed for renting a horse on which the fugitive could travel. Finally, both Miribel's registrar and the local jailor were given ten *sous* each for unspecified services. All in all, five *livres* and seventeen *sous tournois* were set aside for Coriaud – payment that he confirmed was received as of June 11th, 1529.[158]

This interaction between the council and Coriaud was one of many exchanges which reflected the price of justice.[159] Though the efforts associated with Jean de Musy's arrest were more complex, the overall process was similar for others prosecuted for their roles in the riot. First, information was gathered about who was responsible. Then the task of retrieving the fugitive, if the suspect had fled, was delegated. Once

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[157] Published letter signed by Charles the Duke of Savoye; BHL, 253-254.
[158] BHL, 372.
[159] Even envoys from the Duke of Savoy were reimbursed for their travels and contributions; see BHL, 369.

caught, the fugitive was returned to Lyon and was usually placed in Roanne Prison. Finally, the individual was tried and punished accordingly. Parallel to the tradition of protest existed an equally complex tradition of repression – although we typically refer to this process as justice. To be clear, justice as we know it today is different from what it was during the 1520s and 1530s, especially regarding efficiency. However, much like today, the judges distinguished between those thought to be most responsible for inciting violence and those who were led by instigators. It is not necessarily contrary to justice to apportion blame unequally, as fault might also be greater or lesser. Jean de Musy was an instigator, and although not responsible for the 125-129 participants' actions, he was nevertheless important enough to receive the title of "*chief et cappitane*."[160]

Though the council paid for the services of Coriaud and his men-at-arms, the process and the expenses did not stop there – nor for that matter did the story of Jean de Musy. Charged and found guilty of sedition, de Musy was subsequently executed and hanged from the *pont de la Saone* on June 3rd – a symbol of justice done. But the process from the prison to the bridge is not something that the councillors themselves handled. First, a legal process occurred, then a judgement, and finally a sentence rendered based on de Musy's reported involvement in the Rebeine. In a letter dated June 20th, 1529, the councillors certified that the treasurer had indeed paid the following men for their work on the aforementioned process:

> Mess. Mathieu de Vauzelles, Anthoine Audoyn, Benoist Burbenon, Annemond Chalan et Pierre Morel, docteurs, la somme de dix livres, qu'est à chascun d 'eulx quarente solz, pour avoir esté acesseurs au jugement des procés de Anthoine Jucamo et Jehan Musy que ont esté condempnez à

[160] Also "accusé estre des principaulx aulteurs que feirent la sédition en ceste ville"; BHL, 279, 281, 370.

> estre panduz et exequutez [To Mess. Mathieu de Vauzelles, Anthoine Audoyn, Benoist Burbenon, Annemond Chalan et Pierre Morel, doctors, a total of ten *livres*, meaning forty *sous* each, for having assessed and judged during the process of Anthoine Jucamo et Jehan Musy, who were condemned to be hanged and executed].[161]

As evidenced by the quotation above, Jean de Musy was not the only rioter to suffer such a reprisal. The records mention five other men who were sentenced to death,[162] but it is unclear that this accounts for all those executed. As for the method, hanging was the preferred choicem with the bodies displayed on various bridges. What set most of these men apart from the great majority of protestors was their involvement in the looting of homes rather than the granary. Prior to Jean de Musy's arrest, witnesses were interrogated and their testimonies recorded as evidence of his responsibility during the Rebeine. In doing so, their depositions acted as evidence for de Musy's designation as "captain" of the revolt and justifications for the punishment he eventually received. Notably, five individuals provided a version of what they saw to the court clerk (*greffier*), a man named Antoine Piquet, who interrogated and examined them between May 8th and May 10th, 1529.

First was Antoinette Raillard, a fifty-year-old widow who happened to be at one of the looted homes during that fateful afternoon. She claimed that though Jean de Musy helped the looters break into the home, he then stood by as his "children and accomplices" raided the home,[163] appearing as though he was in command. This was a sentiment supported by forty-year-old Jean Rather (a baker and a neighbour), who

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[161] Payment for the judges. There were twenty *sous* in a livre, so each were receiving two *livres* in other words; BHL, 358.
[162] Jehan Mycollier, François Gauteron, Denys Astigot, Antoine de Jucamo, and Vidal Moillerat; BHL, 359, 379, and 418.
[163] BHL, 278-279.

surmised that “ilz entrèrent dedans ladicte maison la pluspart desd. assemblez et ledict Muzi demoura à l'huys, comme s'il eust esté chief et cappitaine, où il demoura jusques à ce que tout fust pilhé [the rioters entered said house where most assembled, meanwhile Jean de Musy remained outside as if he was the leader or capitain – there he remained until everything was pillaged].”[164] As for the third witness, thirty-year-old neighbour Pierre Guinet claimed that after everything was looted from the property of the Lièvre family, Jean de Musy subsequently suggested that they pay a visit to the house of Master Larens next – a command which they followed. Pierre Charverie, a nearby clerk observing from his window, was the fourth witness, and he also noted de Musy’s authority over the group – though he saw this occur after the looting of Champier’s home.[165] Finally, fifty-year-old Étiennette Chavette claimed that while she stood in awe and in fear as the rioters looted her home, she recognised de Musy as their captain and asked him whether he felt ashamed of his actions and the damage done.[166]

I would like to draw attention to the timeline so far and the speed at which a case was built against Jean de Musy, how quickly he was apprehended, and similarly, how rapidly his sentence and execution occurred. The Rebeine itself began on April 25th and ended near the end of that month; the evidence necessary to pursue and convict Jean de Musy as the leader of the movement was acquired and recorded roughly one week after that. Though it took almost a month to finally apprehend him in Miribel and bring him back to Lyon on May 31st, 1529,[167] he had been tried, sentenced, and executed by

[164] BHL, 279.
[165] BHL, 281.
[166] BHL, 280.
[167] BHL, 371.

June 3rd, 1529.[168] However, the speed of this process was not necessarily the norm, especially as some fugitives managed to escape the authorities for much longer, while some captured individuals seem to have remained in Roanne Prison for months. The latter was the case for Thierry de Roche – one of Jean de Musy's supposed accomplices[169] – whose stay at Roanne Prison from October 31st, 1529 to February 28th, 1530 required its own exchange of letters regarding the price of keeping someone jailed for that long:[170]

> Thierry de Roche artiller, chargé de l'un des sédicieulx, illec détenu, depuis le derrenier jour d'octobre derrenier passé jusques aujourduy, que sont environ six vingtz jours [Thierry de Roche, charged with sedition, was detained since the last day of last October until today, which is about 120 days].[171]

Unlike Jean de Musy however, Thierry was ultimately banished rather than executed. Interestingly, Thierry de Roche's story does not end there. On July 31st, 1531, in a letter detailing payments for clerk Antoine Piquet for his writings, he reappears because he is said to have violated the terms of his initial banishment, thus resulting in a perpetual ban from the region.[172]

The Punishments

Though some rioters were punished severely with executions and banishments, many others were treated much more leniently. For most of the 125-129 known participants, monetary fines were deemed sufficient as punishment. Some granary

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[168] BHL, 255.
[169] Beyond being named an accomplice of Jean de Musy for the crime of sedition, it is unclear what Thierry had actually done to deserve being held for so long, but not execution.
[170] BHL, 375.
[171] 120 days from 31st October is 28th February; BHL, 429.
[172] BHL, 381.

looters were even given the option simply to return the grain that they had stolen, assuming they had not used that grain by the time of their hearing, of course. Some returned flour; others, such as Benoiste Decolonges (the wife of a winemaker), even repaid their dues in bread, which they had presumably made with the stolen wheat.[173] Interestingly, some rioters avoided punishment by returning stolen items anonymously, but only because they had confessed to a priest, or because they had enlisted the priest to return the stolen goods on their behalf to avoid having to stand trial.[174] This is what Claude Chypier (the wife of a dyer) did when she paid a priest to return her stolen *coupe* of wheat. Unfortunately for her however, when the priest showed up to return the wheat, he was told to summon her before the judges – she could not escape the consequence.[175]

Perhaps, some of these anonymous rioters felt guilty about their actions, but not guilty enough to take full responsibility. Perhaps providing a testimony before judges and clerks was humiliating to some and they tried to avoid it altogether whenever possible. What is clear however is that in most cases the punishment fit the crime. Lighter sentences were given to impoverished grain looters, while heavier ones were imposed on instigators and those accused of property theft. For example, Jehan Mycollier d'Esguebelle and Denys Allemant (known as Astigot), who were "attainctz et convaincuz d 'avoir desrobé de nuyt par la ville gens, crocheté et desrobé plusieurs boticques [accused and convicted of having looted during the night people of the city, lock-picked and robbed many stores]",[176] were sentenced to be hanged on the gallows

[173] BHL, 268.
[174] BHL, 266 and 271.
[175] BHL, 271.
[176] BHL, 379.

on either ends of the Pont de Saonne.[177] Meanwhile, a man named Anthoine Late, said to have stolen more grain than any other individual from these records, was simply ordered to pay four *livre tournois* and sixteen *solz* for his six stolen *bichets* (equivalent to roughly 120 litres of grain!);[178] this came after claiming that he wanted to be punished.[179]

Criminal charges varied during the Rebeine, and these were mostly predicated on the accused's involvement in either the looting of grain or the looting of homes. Consequently, punishments required differentiation. It will be useful here to summarise the evidence; more detailed consideration of the different kinds of punishment will appear below. Of the 125-129 accused of participating in the Rebeine present in the published records by Guigues, we know that their punishments ranged from apology and monetary or material compensation to executions. They also included banishments, forced labour on "the king's galleys", floggings, and at least one *amende honorable* (a public procession of wrongdoers). Of the 125-129 individuals, we can confidently identify six executed individuals. It is possible that more individuals were hanged but their cases are not in surviving records. We also know from the published civic records that four individuals were whipped, two of whom were subsequently banished.[180] Another four individuals were also banished without a specific location, duty, or duration, and a further three individuals were banished to the king's galley (*en gallère*).

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[177] "A estre pareillement panduz aux deux potances aux deux boutz dud. pont de Saonne."; BHL, 379.
[178] Two men (Thomas Odinet and Guillaume Boilet) might have stolen for him. This detail is unclear; BHL, 276.
[179] "…et dict qu'il ne soit autrement, veult estre pugny." It appears that this is self-referential, but it could also be in relation to Thomas and Guillaume; BHL, 276.
[180] Cristoffe Gille, Nicholas Pochard, Symon Perret, and Simon le More. The latter two were also banished; BHL, 284, 417, 421.

This totals nine banishments.[181] Additionally, we know that two individuals were pilloried[182] while one person was given an *amende honorable*.[183]

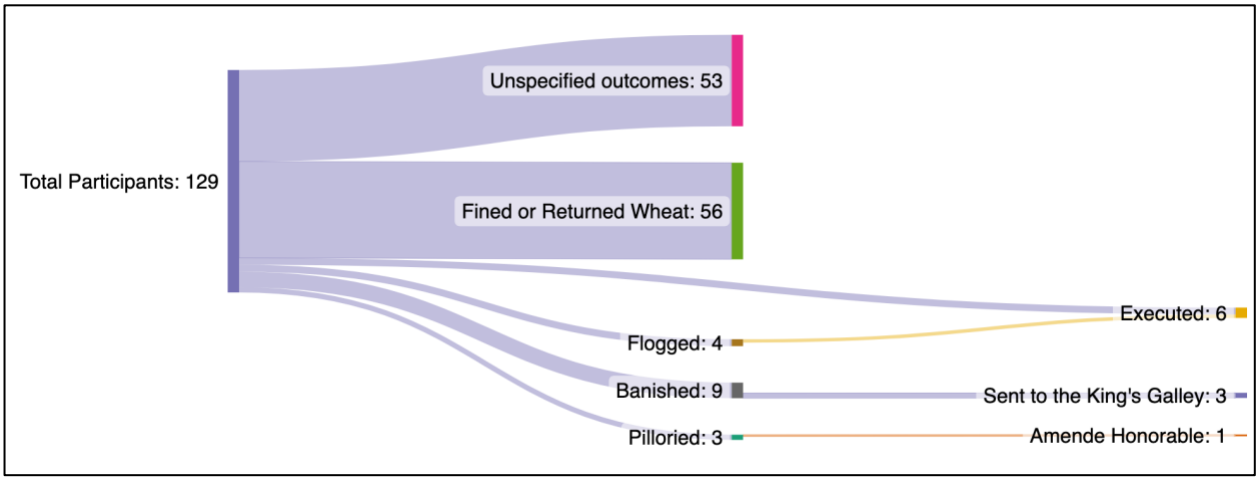

Figure 5: A visual representation of the participants and their assigned punishment.

The most intense punishments doled out after the Rebeine were executions. These were the most extreme forms of punishment available and mostly reserved for so-called leaders and more serious crimes. Of the 125-129 individuals, the six executed individuals include: Jehan Mycollier, François Gauteron, Denys Astigot, Antoine de Jucamo, Vidal Moillerat, and Jean de Musy. Of those six executed individuals, the corpses of four were then displayed on the Pont de la Saône for all to see.[184] Another was hanged at Puis Pelluz,[185] probably because a well was also a public place.

Different forms of executions were available to French authorities. Depending on your social status, you might be offered the "luxury" of a beheading rather than the standard hanging method for execution. The reason for that is that hangings (though

[181] BHL, 282 and 379.
[182] BHL, 422.
[183] BHL, 418.
[184] The case of Francois Gauteron; "A estre pendu et estranglé aux fourches dressées sur le pont de Saonne," BHL, 379.
[185] BHL, 359.

widespread) were seen as more humiliating than beheadings – without going into too much detail, death by the rope was neither guaranteed to be quick nor clean, thus not suited for persons of higher social status. That said, there is no evidence within the civic records of the Rebeine indicating that anyone was executed by any other means than the rope.[186] This is consistent with our exploration of the social status of most of the participants highlighted in the previous chapter.

Banishment, as evidence by the earlier story of Thierry de Roche, was a popular punishment option – though often inaccessible to lower status individuals. Nine individuals from the records were banished after the Rebeine; these included Thierry de Roche, Claude Boubenon (a butcher), Jehan Pelletier (a carpenter),[187] Louis D'Almesyn (a *clerc*),[188] Jehan Ogier de Mollon, Marc Camus de Langres,[189] Gorjon Poallier,[190] Symon Perret,[191] and Simon le More.[192] Of these three, Jehan Ogier, Marc Camus, and Claude Boubenon were additionally sent to the King's Galley – sentenced to maritime forced labour for sedition. Although most prominent during the reign of Louis XIV, this brutal punishment which forced the *Galérien* to row and serve on the king's galleys (for a set time or indefinitely) typically resulted in death and was reserved for individuals

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[186] Granting a beheading in place of hanging was an acknowledgement of the high status of the condemned person. Not only were the rioters likely of low status, but the officials also most definitely would not want to suggest that the wrongdoers were in fact elite. It would be very surprising if any were beheaded.
[187] BHL, 282.
[188] Mentioned by the Guigues, but Louis D'Almesyn does not appear anywhere in the published civic records; BHL, 257.
[189] BHL, 379; I must mention that two of these individuals received the so-called punishment of the King's Galley, although the word "*bany*" is used in both cases. Here, perhaps the word "*bany*" simply refers to "condemning." That said, I decided to categorise those "*bany en gallère*" as banished nonetheless. Claude Boubenon was recorded as having been banished to "*Gallée*" which is typically a Galley used for commercial purposes, which uses sails rather than rowers – see entry for "Galée, Galère" in Flavier's *Dictionnaire de la france medieval*, 441.
[190] BHL, 417.
[191] Whipped, and banished; BHL, 417.
[192] Whipped, and banished; BHL, 421.

deemed particularly dangerous for social order.[193]

Banishments became more common in the Lyonnais region following the Black Death in 1348 and increasingly so towards the end of the fifteenth century, according to Nicole Gonthier in *Le Châtiment du Crime au Moyen Age*. No definitive reason can explain this rise in popularity,[194] however it is possible that banishment was favoured over executions for the simple reason that it could be calibrated to the crime: the length could be adjusted and the location determined. There was the perception that banishment had a significant impact on someone's reputation, seeing that the exiled had to live with their punishment and be reminded daily. As such, this humiliating fate fit nicely between fines and the most severe, humiliating, and irrevocable punishment of execution. Banishment was also a low-cost option, and perhaps this is why it was preferred over executions during this period.[195] Consider the executioner Jean Jaquement's fee for hanging Jean de Musy and then disposing of his body: for an execution, he charged thirty *sous tournois* (plus the cost of the rope at six *sous tournois).* A banishment on the other hand cost only fifteen *sous tournois*.[196]

Although the civic records published by the Guigues do not offer a thorough description of the banishments which followed the Rebeine, much is known about this form of punishment. Banishments were a public spectacle with a brutal procession which typically caused severe bodily harm – this was not a gracious act of mercy. As stated in Nicole Gonthier's essay entitled "Les Bannis en Lyonnais à la fin du Moyen

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[193] Marc Vigié, *Les galériens du roi, 1661-1715* (Paris: Fayard, 1985), 15.
[194] Nicole Gonthier, *Le châtiment du crime au Moyen Âge : xiie-xvie siècles* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 111–72, paragraph 52, http://books.openedition.org/pur/8955.
[195] Gonthier, *Le châtiment du crime au Moyen Âge*, paragraph 51.
[196] BHL, 292.

Âge", "Il s'agit vraiment d'un supplice: une mise en scène compliquée vise à faire souffrir le banni dans son corps et dans son orgeil et à render la cérémonie interminable."[197] Indeed, after being paraded through the town with a rope around their neck, accompanied by sergeants and musicians broadcasting their deeds to all, and finally exiled usually in perpetuity,[198] the banished Lyonnais typically left town with nothing but the clothes on their backs and often a missing ear, hand, or foot (the ear being the preference in Lyon).[199] If that was not harsh enough, exposition during local fairs was also common, and thus a public display of justice to further reaffirm the power of local rulers and possibly a deterrent for further crimes.

Concerning the use of flogging or whipping as a punishment, Krista Kesselring states that "its low cost and ease of use probably also made it attractive to authorities."[200] According to our sources, the executioner in Lyon charged thirty *sous tournois* for such procedures, which is on par with the price for executions. However, flogging avoided the risk of botching an execution, resulting in having to face crowd retaliation[201] due to excess suffering. Both flogging and execution were public spectacles after all. From the Guigues' published records, only four individuals were sentenced to flogging. These were Nicholas Mochard,[202] Cristoffle Gille,[203] Symon

[197] Nicole Gonthier, "Les bannis en Lyonnais à la fin du Moyen Age," in *Les marginaux et les autres*, ed. Maurice Agulhon (Paris: Editions Imago, 1990), 40.
[198] This was the most common sentence; shorter exiles did occur based on the severity of the crimes.
[199] Gonthier, "Les bannis en Lyonnais à la fin du Moyen Age," 40.
[200] K. J. Kesselring, "Law, Status, and the Lash: Judicial Whipping in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 60, no. 3 (July 2021): 514.
[201] Joel F. Harrington, *The Faithful Executioner: Life and Death, Honor and Shame in the Turbulent Sixteenth Century* (New York: Picador, 2013), 236.
[202] "Fuete"; BHL, 282.
[203] "Acquebustier, serviteur dud. Grégoire des Champs, condempné avoir du foet"; BHL, 284.

Perret,[204] and Simon le More.[205]

We are also aware of one case of *amende honorable* linked to the Rebeine of 1529. Estiennette, a chambermaid of one Estienne Roillet, was handed this sentence.[206] This punishment entailed having the accused walk around town with a torch in their hands and a rope around their necks, all the while being accompanied by sergeants and town criers so that their identity and crimes could be broadcast to the world.[207] This ceremony was a very public form of punishment, and it was clearly designed to humiliate the accused in hopes that it might prompt reform. According to Gonthier, following the Rebeine of 1529, several other rebels were handed this kind of sentence. However, she also highlights how the details of the sentence varied. Of the three men she claims were given the *amende honorable,* one individual was banished and instructed to wear a rope around his neck for an entire year,[208] while another was instead dragged around town by a rope. Conversely, the third man's sentence did not include a rope, but rather it was made explicit that his humiliating ceremony occur in a specifically highly public location: city hall.[209]

Of note, Estienette was not only given the *amende honorable* according to the records. She was also "eschellée sur le pont", which translates literally to "laddered on the bridge". Perhaps one step lower on the spectrum of cruelty – but still physically uncomfortable and highly humiliating – was exposition. According to Gonthier, this is

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[204] Whipped, then banished; BHL, 417.
[205] Whipped, then banished; BHL, 421.
[206] Beyond being associated with the Rebeine, what she was accused of is unspecified; BHL, 418.
[207] Gonthier, *Le châtiment du crime au Moyen Âge*, paragraph 21.
[208] Interestingly, she is referencing Gorjon Pollalier here – a person I decided to include among the banished. This highlights how some of these types of punishments overlapped and sometimes many different punishments could be given to an accused. The *amende honorable* also has aspects that resemble the typical procession of a banishment.
[209] Gonthier, *Le châtiment du crime au Moyen Âge*, footnote 41.

what the ladder was for.[210] Another tool for this was the pillory, also known as the stocks. As the name suggests, exposition was the act of exposing the accused in a public place for everyone to see. This could be the punishment in itself or could mean that more punishments were to come for this individual – for instance, it often was the prelude to execution.[211] Sentenced to exposition on the pillory were a woman named Thivienne and a man named Benoist Monyer. Thivienne was sentenced to the pillory on the Pont de la Sâone for

> avoit prosféré parolles par la ville que messieurs les conseillers avoient envoyé gens sur les champs pour garder de venir blez en la ville [having uttered publicly that the councillors had sent men to the fields to block grain from coming to the city].[212]

Benoist Monyer, meanwhile, was pilloried for stealing grain overnight and bringing it to the mill:

> Monyer, lequel transportoit de nuyt de blez de la ville, lesquelz il sortoit soubz umbre de les mener au molyn, et pour lad. cause fut led. jour pillorisé sur le pont de Saonne [Monyer, who transported de city's grain by night, took them out secretly to bring them to the mill, and for this was pilloried on the bridge over the Saonne].[213]

Referred to sometimes as *gendarme*, it is unclear from this whether Benoist Monyer simply stole from the city's granary at night, or if he siphoned grain from the shipment that he was tasked to carry *for* the city at night.

Many others were also imprisoned for their suspected involvement pending legal process and later released – and while being jailed was not a punishment resulting

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[210] Gonthier, *Le châtiment du crime au Moyen Âge*, paragraph 25.
[211] Gonthier, *Le châtiment du crime au Moyen Âge*, paragraph 25.
[212] BHL, 421.
[213] BHL, 422.

from a sentence, it was undoubtedly unpleasant. One example was a man named Grégoire des Champs, who was supposedly released on the orders of the Governor,[214] and a man named Pierre Bonamy, who was released "pourveu qu'il promette soy représenter toutes et quantes foys comme par moy sera requis et à ce ne faictes faulte [so long as he promises to present himself as required without fault]".[215] Whether this meant that Pierre was guilty of anything is unclear.

It is also unclear whether some participants were able to be released based on their ability to make excuses or pin the blame on others. As was mentioned when discussing youth involvement, specifically Benoist Buchilla and Benoist Jaquet, these tactics were widespread. Take for example the case of Benoiste Fontanière, the wife of a *vigneron*, in what is probably one of the strangest entries within these records. During her deposition, she claimed to have received about two-thirds of a *bichet* from a valet:

> Benoiste, femme de Mathieu Fontanières, vigneron, près la porte Saint Marcel, a apporté environ les deux tiers d 'un bichet blé que luy fut baillé par ung varlet de Be[?]taud qui a esté exéquuté samedi dernier, auquel elle baiila XII d., et pour lad. cause dict que son mary en a esté mys en prison et eslargy p. mons. de Belmont. [Benoiste, wife of Mathieu Fontanière, winemaker, from near Gate St Marcel, brought approximately two-thirds of a *bichet*, which was given to her by a servant of Be[?]taud, who was executed last Saturday, for which she paid twelve *deniers*, and for the said cause, she said that her husband has been placed in prison and released by monsieur de Belmont].[216]

Although it seems that Benoiste here was able to simply repay the wheat, even though she claimed already to have paid twelve *deniers* for it, the same cannot be said for her

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[214] Perhaps of higher status because we are told that Christophe Gille (an "*aquebustier*") was his servant. It is unclear whether this refers to an infantryman who owns an *arquebus* or someone who makes them; BHL, 284.
[215] BHL, 283.
[216] BHL, 267.

husband, who was apparently imprisoned, nor for the valet who was executed, presumably for his involvement in the Rebeine. Although it is possible that she knew about the valet's death and therefore pinned the theft on an already deceased person, the judges at the tribunal probably shared the same skepticism we have when reading this scenario. It is possible that despite these excuses, the judges might also have been looking for reasons not to punish people, especially anyone who brought the grain back.

As for the remaining individuals present in these records, fifty-six of them were required to offer material (food, flour, or grain) or monetary compensations for stealing from the granary. For a great many of them, that process was the same: be summoned, identify yourself and the stolen items, then repayment of the stolen goods (usually on another day). Marye Belleville (wife of Jehan Belleville), for example, paid eight *sous* for the half *bichet* she had stolen.[217] The same was true for Marie Colongier, who had stolen an equal amount of grain and paid the same amount.[218] In some cases, because the wheat was already used, the defendants could pay by returning fresh bread or providing an equal amount of flour. For example, Jehan Jabolay, an *affaneur*[219] who stole two *bichets* of grain from the *poix des farines* granary, returned one *bichet* of flour and one loaf of bread.[220] The rest of those who appear in the records have either inconclusive or unspecified outcomes – although it might be reasonable to think that most also participated in one form or another of recompense (the more severe punishments tend to be more dutifully recorded).

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[217] BHL, 272.
[218] BHL, 269.
[219] Likely meaning an agricultural labourer specialized in planting and harvesting; this was a flexible occupation of modest revenues. Gonthier, *Délinquance, justice et société dans le Lyonnais médiéval*, 180.
[220] BHL, 267.

As is made evident, sentences varied depending on the crime. However, some sentences varied even when accused of similar actions. So how do we make sense of these disparate treatments? According to Hannele Klemettilä in her work *Epitomes of Evil*, "the strict hierarchy of the late medieval worldview and society was clearly reflected in the penal system and its punitive practices."[221] Moreover, "at that time it was thought normal and just that people were treated differently before the law, not only according to their deeds, but also according to their condition and status."[222] In short, if you were of higher status, you were likely treated differently from lower status individuals. However, if you were of middling status, you could run the risk of being identified as a leader – so this idea that different status resulted in different sentences was not a straightforward calculation. Additionally, status was determined by a combination of factors including wealth, occupation, lineage, reputation, age, gender, and so on, thus determining the right punishment was likely a challenge – that is, if the goal of this process was truly fairness. Of course, it is possible that you could be pardoned; this is something that was more common with higher status individuals, but it is unclear whether anyone from the Rebeine would fit this description.

Of the many individuals involved in the Rebeine, we know that those who suffered the most severe consequences were probably adult men, although their occupations did not necessarily single them out. Yes, their involvement in the looting of homes certainly set them apart, but it is nonetheless noteworthy that there is no evidence of women or youths being imprisoned, tortured, banished, or executed in the

[221] Hannele Klemettilä, *Epitomes of Evil: Representation of Executioners in Northern France and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 29.
[222] Klemettilä, *Epitomes of Evil*, 29.

aftermath of the Rebeine – the pillory and the *amende honorable* being the exceptions. Again, the evidence when it comes to the ages of the participants is rarely explicit, however it would seem consistent with contemporary notions which dictated that the political and the public spheres – spaces in which the Rebeine took place – were primarily thought of as male-dominated spaces. It is within this cultural logic that charges of sedition were overwhelmingly associated with men involved in the 1529 riots, whether accurately or not.

Concerning the often-gruesome nature of punishments during the Rebeine, their form and intensity were standard for the time. When discussing forms of "legitimate violence", it is often best to imagine banishments, floggings, and executions as theatrical performances. As Hannah Skoda puts it, they were "a gruesome performance in which executioner and condemned enacted scripted roles, where the crowd watched and sometimes became involved."[223] This was not yet a carceral penal system; long-term imprisonment was not a fiscally sustainable solution and the concept would not take hold in France for several more centuries,[224] hence the preference for banishment and executions. As is evidenced even by the case of Thiery de Roche, who probably spent the longest time at Roane Prison, his incarceration lasted months rather than years and it preceded determination of his sentence (banishment) rather than constituting punishment in itself.

According to Joel Harrington in *The Faithful Executioner,* "public executions, like corporal punishments, were meant to accomplish two goals: first to shock

[223] Hannah Skoda, *Medieval Violence: Physical Brutality in Northern France, 1270-1330* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 169.
[224] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 306.

spectators and, second, to reaffirm divine and temporal authority."[225] State sanctioned violence of this kind was, according to him, "a choreographed morality play."[226] From the court sentencing to the so-called "death procession", even the execution itself was part of a ritual designed to publicly humiliate the accused and attribute guilt. It was also an attempt to reinforce the authority of those in power. Everything we know about the repressions following the Rebeine aligns with this philosophy of public performativity. Clearly, the council of Lyon wanted to hold those responsible to account. But beyond affirming that criminal actions have consequences, they also wanted onlookers to recognise that the council was in charge, thus projecting the power that the council had assumed over city affairs by this point.

For most of the 125-129 participants of the Rebeine present in the published records by Guigues, execution was not their prescribed sentence – and for good reason. Despite theoretically establishing and reinforcing societal hierarchies, going overboard on public displays of suffering could sometimes backfire. As noted by Esther Cohen, this was especially true if the public deemed that a mistake in the judicial process had occurred, or if the public thought the authorities had the wrong man.[227] The punishments also had to consider the number of people involved and the broader context. It would be most unwise for local rulers to execute hundreds of rioters hailing from one small community. This can often explain the seemingly arbitrary nature by which a handful of so-called leaders are assigned blame. There really was no need to

[225] Harrington, *The Faithful Executioner*, 76.
[226] Harrington, 76.
[227] Esther Cohen, "Symbols of Culpability and the Universal Language of Justice: The Ritual of Public Executions in Late Medieval Europe," *History of European Ideas*, Special Issue: First International Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas, 11 (January 1, 1989): 408.

punish everyone so severely. To better understand why most were given a relatively mild punishment, we must also consider the goals of justice and punishment in sixteenth-century France.

Atonement & Deterrence

Punishments thus ranged from the most severe sentence of death to the simple return of stolen items. What was the prevailing theory behind these sentences? It is commonly suggested that punishments were designed to function primarily as opportunities for atonement, linked to Christian conceptions of penance for sin. In many cases, punishments often involved a degree of suffering. To justify this, it was commonplace to draw links between Jesus' crucifixion and the fate of condemned criminals.[228] Sins required purification, and it was through religious language and imagery that the people of Lyon would have understood justice at this time. This would have been the case even for lesser sentences such as those handed out to most of the Rebeine's participants. Interestingly, religious language is mostly absent from the available legal material on the Rebeine, though it is present in Symphorien Champier's more colourful account.[229] Sixteenth-century Catholic Christianity played a major role in how people understood and spoke about justice. This means that it is likely that the defendants and the authorities viewed the opportunity for the accused to right their wrongs through the lens of religious penitence.

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[228] Cohen, 409.

[229] For example, when writing about the judicial process of the Rebeine, Champier writes: "Dieu tout puissant est moult indigné quant les hommes délaissent les bons & élisent les maulvais [God all powerful, we are unworthy when men choose malice over goodness]." He also carefully recounts all the holy relics hosted at the Abbey of Ilse-Barbe, which contained grain reserves of interest to the rioters: "icelle abbaye, a plusieurs sainctes relicques, comme la saincte couppe, où le Rédempteur donnoit à boyre à ses disciples [in this abbey resides many holy relics such as the holy chalice from which the Redeemer gave to his disciple to drink]." ACL, 68, 79-80.

Now, whether penitence was the main motivating factor or not behind conceptions of justice does not mean that, on a more practical level, punishment of the wrongdoer through death, pain, and humiliation were not also goals of the processes and sentences. For those required to repay what they had stolen, for instance, the action and process of repayment itself probably outweighed the overall financial burden associated with refunding a few handfuls of stolen grain. After being accused of participating in the looting of the granaries, not only would an accused have to be summoned twice before the courts, which might be humiliating enough for some, but their names would also be recorded in the city archives – thus permanently branding them as delinquents. Ironically, this is also the reason we modern historians have access to those names.[230]

Supporting this claim that humiliation played a key role in determining sentences during the judicial process following the Rebeine is the simple fact that, as previously mentioned, some defendants tried their best to preserve their anonymity. Returning to the case of Claude Chypier – the wife of a dye worker who had stolen a *coupe* of wheat during the riots and subsequently recruited and paid her local priest to return the goods on her behalf – makes this clear. Unfortunately for her, the authorities managed to convince the priest that her presence was required and she was eventually summoned, and this is why we know her name.[231] Nevertheless, the fact that certain individuals went to great lengths to avoid the public acknowledgement of wrongdoing is telling of a justice system which, although might be predicated on Christian notions of penitence,

[230] I doubt that any of the defendants could imagine their record being so permanent that their names and actions recorded in the year 1529 would still somehow be read.
[231] BHL, 271.

very much operated with humiliation and deterrence in mind.

This ultimately begs the question: were these processes and punishments successful? If the goal was deterrence of further activity, then in the short term these were successful. But if the more common goal was atonement and punishment, then these are probably impossible to measure. How could we measure whether the punishments were punishing enough or whether they constituted sufficient atonement? Moreover, a major goal of all this was the demonstration and amplification of state power – meaning that determining whether the participants' sentences were just would require that we ignore some of the most extreme punishments which probably set out to make examples of so-called instigators and leaders of the Rebeine, such as Jean de Musy. More severe punishments were indeed the exception, not the rule, however they are equally part of the story of the Rebeine as the fate of most participants. The authorities investigating the Rebeine acknowledged the desperation of the people looking for food whenever possible – and they distinguished it from those who used the disturbance to commit more severe crimes of burglary and theft. This explains the disparities among rioters regarding their sentences, but this does not mean that the repression of the Rebeine was any more successful or just.

Conclusion

Perhaps the greatest evidence in favour of the frequency (or ubiquity) of revolts at the start of the sixteenth-century was very existence of systems ready to oppose them. In other words, why would anyone create mechanisms meant to fight protest movements if they did not also believe that they could threaten existing political structures? By exploring the Lyonnais civic records published by the Guigues and the colourful account of (eventual councillor) Symphorien Champier, this thesis has shown that an exploration of the traditional elements of popular protest culture during the 1520s must occur in tandem with an exploration of the judicial process, itself baked into the political, cultural, and even economic landscape of Lyon at the time. The business of repressions was a machine made of many often-obscured parts – from the carpenter who built the gallows for the executions to the judges who sentenced men to death. Likewise, a riot was made and sustained by the organisation, attitudes, and identity of its participants.

The Rebeine, which began because of crop failures and grain shortages, affected everyone in Lyon. However, since women were pre-established by society as provisioners in the household, they were particularly affected by these shortages. As a result, women made up a significant proportion of those involved in the looting of the city's granary according to the records. Meanwhile, men typically occupied formal political spheres and therefore vastly outnumbered women in their involvement of the looting of rich homes. Unbeknownst to the individuals involved, the decision to raid wealthy homes rather than the granary resulted in drastically different outcomes. For the more ambitious, opportunistic, or unruly, their actions meant a harsher punishment such

as a flogging, permanent banishment, or even death. Opting to restore peace, but also perhaps in order to keep it, the authorities gave most of the participants who looted the granary the opportunity to atone for their actions – albeit within a judicial process also designed to humiliate.

A special consideration goes out to the victims of the Rebeine and the very real sense of danger that many of them must have felt amidst those eight chaotic days. It is often easy to forget that despite happening so long ago, events such as riots and protests have tangible impacts on individual lives and their communities – much like riots today. Beyond the testimonies featured at the trial of Jean de Musy, little is known about the thoughts and feelings of nearby non-participants. Their stories, likely deemed of lesser importance than the voices of those crafting the narrative and the actions of the accused, are unsurprisingly difficult to find in the records, whether in favour or opposed to the Rebeine.

Similarly, what we might call the “mundane” also suffers from this. Quotidian exchanges and actions are by default not noteworthy, but transactions are, and this is where most of what we know about the banal comes from. For example, on January 18th, 1530, ten months after the start of the Rebeine, the council recorded a seven-page expense report detailing the various food expenditures that they (the councillors) and their guests had tallied up until that point. This extensive grocery list, which included items such as eggs, fruits, butter, bread, and rabbit and their respective prices was described as such by its authors:

> Rolle et parties de despence de bouche faicte par mess. les conseilliers de ceste ville de Lyon et avec eulx les notables esleuz pour coadjucteurs au consulat, laquelle despence a esté faicte par plusieurs foys pour desjuner, disner de

> plusieurs jours, depuis le XXVe d'avril MVC vingt-neuf, tant en l'ostel commun, Roanne que autre part où ilz s'assembloient et assistoient journellement pour donner ordre aux gros affaires de lad . ville, soit pour faire assemblér mess. les gouverneurs, gens de justice, pour donner ordre à prendre et faire emprisonner ceulx qui feisrent l'esmotion et saccagement en cested . ville le XXVe d 'avril, pour donner ordre en l'affaire des blez que autrement. [Part of the expenses of food by the councillors of this city of Lyon along with those appointed to assist the council. A group who expensed multiple times for breakfast and dinner for several days since April 25th, 1529, as much in the city hall, as at Roanne [Prison] and other places where they have assembled and assisted in the daily task of creating order of the important affairs of this city. This includes assembling the governors or men of justice to organise for the apprehension and imprisonment of those who rioted and looted our city on April 25th, and direct affairs relating to grain.][232]

Beyond being my favourite passage, this final document relating to the Rebeine of 1529 featured in the Guigues' *Bibliothèque historique du Lyonnais* presents an interesting juxtaposition when we consider that this document concerned with how to feed the council sits next to records of executions. It is also a reminder that without the existence of civic records to preserve correspondences, testimonies, judicial records, and even mundane receipts, no competing perspective to the narrative presented by Symphorien Champier on the Rebeine of 1529 might have existed. The opinion of one man (and a victim of the Rebeine) could have been the only existing proof that a riot involving hundreds if not thousands of individuals over several days and its repression lasting two more years had even occurred nearly half a millennia ago. Had that been the case, the complexities of such an event, but also the stories and agency of so many individuals whether a man, a woman, a youth, rich, poor, powerful, powerless, ashamed, opportunistic, absolved, whipped, publicly shamed, banished, or even executed, might

[232] BHL, 433.

have been forgotten to time. For that, I am grateful.

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