

Phenomenons of the medieval time

2. Life in the medieval city

- A) From the earliest time, in Europe, *culture, education and art* are closely connected to the development of the **cities and towns** and their *wealthiness*. Across former Roman empire (western, southern Europe), there were many cities, some of them set up by Romans, or even Greeks. Some of them were administrative centers of provinces, some were important as trade points, some as ports. During violent 5th and 6th many of them became depopulated and even ruined.

Name the oldest cities in Europe:

Name the oldest cities in Slovakia:

Picture: reconstruction of a Roman city, Colonia Ulpia in Germany



- B) Romans built their cities under a certain scheme and, as you can see above, it was strictly organized, with a **central square** (forum) with the public buildings, and *rectangular network of streets*. Two main streets were South – North, and West-East oriented, crossing the main square. Some cities preserved such structure, some were lost, and later discovered by archeologists, under modern cities. Offcourse such structure depended on geomorfological conditions. The similar structure was used also in new cities built, later in the Middle Ages.(see the picture below)



Map of medieval Žilina, still visible are the fields around the city, main roads from the city and some marshes near the river Váh.

Locate on the map :

Cardinal points, main square, gates, parish church

C) **Medieval cities** of course needed more protection, there was not strong roman army anymore, so cities built massive walls, in order to stop possible invaders. Then there were **churches**, or **cathedrals** and later on, even **monasteries**, unthinkable for the spiritual life of the citizens.



Example of a huge medieval gate



Carcassonne, preserved its medieval character until now



a medieval city

D) Cities in the Middle Ages had a special position, due to their importance, as places of **trade** and **crafts**, they stayed out of the medieval hierarchy, and most of the cities were **subordinated** directly only to a **king** (they even provided soldiers for the king's wars). There were many benefits from cities, in return kings **granted** different kind of **privileges**, in order to provide safer, or better living conditions in the cities.

Name some privileges, given to your closest city:

.....

Name some of the benefits from the cities:

.....



E) Life in the medieval city was not easy. Craftmen were organized in **guilds**, under strict rules, none could violate. There were not **any sewerage** system, in many cities even a **drinkable** water was a big problem. Lack of hygiene caused many epidemics, especially those of the **plague**, dangerous illness, killing millions all over the Europe. The administration of the city had many **competences**, including **judicial** power among its citizens. But as it was elected by inhabitants of the city, it remains last connection to the ancient democracy.

Find out the most important guilds in the closest city:

.....

F) Many cities became very rich, especially in Italy, where they were, maybe the most independent from the power of kings, in comparison with those in the rest of Europe. Together with **their wealth**, they became powerful, and played an important **role on the international scene**. e.g.:

.....

G) From the 11th century, many Italian cities created their own schools, in order to provide better **legal** protection of their own interests. It was a beginning of the first **universities**. The very first **faculties** were those of **law** and later **medicine**.

Find out the years of the establishing following universities:

- 1) Bologna
- 2) Paris
- 3) Oxford
- 4) Padova
- 5) Prague
- 6) Krakow
- 7) Salamanca
- 8) Cambridge