

LUCKY JIM

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Let's admit it, gentlemen, what brought us to this club and what holds us still is the sheer self-indulgence of it all. There is of course the food and drink, highlighted by shrimp mounds with cigar/Armagnac chasers, not to mention the grand cru Bordeaux of the sesquicentennial feast. Even on the most ordinary of nights, we are never without a decent wedge of cheese, good beer and macaroons, which are surely among the things that Mr. Johnson considered the comforts of civilization. Yet our most intoxicating indulgence, so precious that we divide it into a hundred portions to be shared out like century-old scotch across two years of Mondays, is the chance to stand behind this podium. Oh, we pretend it is work and groan aloud when our name appears again on the rota. But we are like the crafty distance runner who limps to the starting line complaining of injuries and poor training, only to break out hard and fast at the starter's gun, running strongly for the finish line. What could be rarer than the chance to address a goodly audience, not dependent upon you for a grade, a cure, an opinion, a solution, or salvation; who just might, in that moment between

waking and sleeping, be interested in what you have to say?

Yet even at our most self indulgent, we all too seldom permit ourselves to discuss our daily work in our various professions. Exceptions spring to mind of course: Jack McDonough's remarkable paper about helping to apprehend a murderer by recognizing a bite wound, or Robin Loudon's wonderful reminiscence of six months' doctoring in remote Newfoundland, from which he was delivered only by bluffing through a weak hand of poker. But these seem to me the exceptions that prove the rule, for they were first and foremost cracking good stories that stand out and above the routine course of professional life. So tonight, I will indulge myself as few have indulged before by using my hundredth portion to discuss the practice of history in general, and of medieval history, my specialty, in particular.

Beyond sheer self indulgence, I chose tonight to speak of my profession, initially because a Literary Club member once asked me to do so, though he no doubt neither remembers this nor should he take responsibility for the results. Moreover, there has been much about historians in the media in the recent past, from the recklessly prolific Stephen Ambrose, the careless Doris Kearns Goodwin, to that foolish inventor of personal history, Joseph J. Ellis. All of these historians, it seems to me, represent worrisome trends in the profession and reveal the very real human weaknesses of those who write our history. Last and perhaps least, is the fact that I am putting the final touches to a book on the history of the Flemish city of Bruges in the fourteenth century, a work that has required seventeen years of research and writing to complete. In preparing to bid farewell to this long-time companion, I wanted to reflect on the long period of gestation and creation that brought the book into being.

Yet there are questions to answer, no doubt first in your minds - Why Medieval history? There is much to be said against it, as Kingsley Amis did so memorably in his first novel, Lucky Jim:

"Those who professed themselves unable to believe in the reality of human progress ought to cheer themselves up. . .by a short study of the Middle Ages. The hydrogen bomb, the South African Government, Chiang Kai-shek, Senator McCarthy himself, would then seem a light price to pay for no longer being in the Middle Ages. Had people ever been as nasty, as self-indulgent, as dull, as miserable, as cocksure, as bad at art, as dismally ludicrous or as wrong as they'd been in the Middle Age. . .?"

Amis could never pass up a good sneer, and yet I still marvel occasionally at how it is that an American boy from Silicon Valley now writes medieval Flemish history. Of course I showed great talent in looking backwards even as a boy, given my electrical Engineer father, classmates by the name of Jobs and Wozniak, even summer employment in the electronics industry - I shall never forget the free doughnuts at Hewlett Packard. And yet none of the work or promise of the electronics age interested me much, so I packed up and moved to the Midwest for graduate school. That was twenty-five years ago and I can truthfully say I have never regretted the choice, nor been bored for a moment. So my only defense of the oft-maligned Middle Ages is that for me they are infinitely interesting and have proven the remedy for my great fear of boredom.

The book contract describes the final product due for delivery in mid-summer, 2002: a completed manuscript of no more than 150,000 words in length, spread across nine chapters, with twenty-five hundred footnotes, twenty tables, maps and other figures as well as twenty black and white photographs. I am still fighting with the editor over the title, but it will probably be, Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism, 1280-1390.

I have chosen the dust jacket illustration - one of the earliest views of the Bruges skyline painted in the late fifteenth-century by an anonymous Flemish master. There is still much to do before the deadline. I am completing revisions and some additions to the text, as well as obtaining permission to use photographs and maps. Once the manuscript is delivered, it will go to a copy editor with whom I will quarrel over style and usage. I'm still not sure whether the Cambridge Press will require British English spelling and punctuation or not. Once past the copy editor, a first set of proofs will arrive from which I will make the Index, something I insist on doing myself even if it is very dull work. If all goes according to schedule, by mid 2003 a printing firm probably located in Sri Lanka will deliver between five and seven hundred hardbound copies for sale at an estimated price of \$75 each. I have rights to 5 percent of this sum for the first five hundred copies sold, rising to 10 percent for all additional copies. I hold out great hope for the sale of the movie rights, however, for I would receive 75 percent of the contracted price. But if the past is any guide, the vast majority of copies will end up on the shelves of the world's research libraries, and after five years or so the book will probably exist only in a ghostly, electronic form. My total profits are unlikely to exceed \$50.

So clearly I do not write to get rich, which is something I have in common with most academic authors. The specialized historical monograph rarely sells more than a thousand copies, and monographs all too frequently occupy remainder tables and clearance sales advertisements. And yet sweet lady profit can cast her charms on academic historians. Stephen Ambrose, for example, was respected but little read by the history-consuming public before his 1994 book about D-Day. This transformed him into a machine-like producer of a series of bestsellers. He now commands seven-figure advances for books he completes in less than two years, with virtually all the research performed by his five grown children, none of whom hold a history Ph.D. In

essence, Ambrose and Company has moved beyond mere books into films, since Tom Hanks used them as consultants in the making of "Saving Private Ryan" followed by the filming of "Band of Brothers" by HBO based on Ambrose's 2001 book of the same name. The Ambrose clan has even begun a travel division, offering guided tours of European battlefields with expert commentary as part of the package.

To his credit Ambrose publicly admits that he has become a storyteller, although his claim that he has done so for his readers' sake sounds disingenuous. His lack of critical involvement with his sources has also resulted in numerous instances of unacknowledged copying of other historians' work. Even though I believe his claims that there was no intent to plagiarize and that the works he raided are mentioned in the footnotes, I am troubled by his refusal to see that he is still trying to have it both ways: to be taken seriously as a historian while performing as a teller of tales to an audience that wants to read about heroic deeds on the battlefield or frontier. Moreover, I believe that he is dead wrong in his implication that readable history cannot be reliable history.

My purpose tonight is not to praise or condemn historians, but to describe the creative process that results in a work of history. There is astoundingly little written on the subject, however, for historians, a remarkably noisy group ordinarily, seem to fall silent when it comes to the inner workings of their scholarship. There is no general study to my knowledge of how historians come upon a subject, how it develops through years of research and writing, and what relationship the final product bears to the original conception. There are exceptions to this general rule of silence, my favorite being Edward Gibbon's tale of the genesis of his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. In his autobiography, Gibbon tells of his own Grand Tour of the continent as a young man, a custom of many eighteenth and nineteenth century Englishmen of means. In most cases these extended trips were one

long debauch, but for Gibbon his visit to Rome decided the course of his life. As he tells it, he was seated among the ruins of the Roman forum, contemplating the vanished glories of Rome when the sound of Gregorian chant reached his ears, issuing from the Vespers service of the Franciscan monastery on the Capitoline hill. This juxtaposition of pagan and Christian Rome brought an epiphany in which Gibbon saw the entire scope of his multi-volume work in an instant. All that remained was twenty years of research and writing to make the vision a reality.

I think Gibbon remains the greatest medieval historian in the English language, but I find this story incredible. I suspect that it was an invention for the benefit of the soirées he loved to attend, for he was quite a party animal and a fixture of the London social scene of his day. As in the case of Joseph Ellis, he may have come to believe the story himself despite its inherent implausibility. Yet in my experience Gibbon is correct to stress the importance of imagination in the writing of history, for any historical work is an act of disciplined imagination. The necessary corollary to this was expressed in that marvelous spoof of British history, 1066 and All That: "History isn't what you thought, it's what you can remember." In other words, historical knowledge is created in the communication between writer and reader, in order for one imagined world to be shared by many. In this there is both art and science - art in the arrangement of words to summon images and stir the imagination; science in making use of the materials left by the past in accord with accepted techniques of interpretation, and giving the reader enough information to check these things for himself if he chooses.

The discipline required of the medieval historian can be severe. A good knowledge of six languages was required to do the research in primary and secondary sources for my book. Medieval systems of handwriting and abbreviation also had to be mastered to make sense

of the documents; and wide reading was necessary in the extant historical literature on medieval Flanders, published in Dutch, French, German and occasionally English. There is above and beyond all these technical skills a more subtle ability crucial to the medievalist - the capacity to use the barest scraps and fragments of evidence to reconstruct a vanished whole. It is no accident that medieval historians were avidly recruited by the wartime OSS and its successor the CIA as intelligence analysts. Several of these draftees abandoned history and remained with the CIA, and at least one, the great Princeton medieval historian, Joseph Strayer, served as a weekend spy for several decades after his ostensible return to academia.

The laboratory for most medievalists, the place where their skills are put to the test and imaginations shaped, is the archive. But unlike the scientist's lab, historians do not own the raw materials of their research, they can only visit them, and for the historian of Europe living in America this requires frequent and sometime lengthy visits abroad. These are expensive and require careful planning, which is often difficult at a distance. As a result, many Americans arrive in Europe with well-drawn plans for their research, and they tend to regard the archives as the mines from which they will extract their data. This is very much the way I worked in my first book, and I was fortunate then to find adequate materials. But too often we visitors from far away are frustrated by the fact that medieval people did not keep or preserve the kinds of records we historians want to study. I know of many projects either abandoned or reformulated under the harsh discipline of the archives.

I had resolved to approach this Bruges book differently, however. For instead of going to the archives with an idea, I planned to simply read all the surviving fourteenth-century documentary sources of Bruges, trusting that my imagination would fashion a project in the process. Bruges was a fitting site, for nearly all the archival material I required was

preserved in one or another of the six archives in the city that I was eventually to visit. I was acquainted with many of these from my doctoral dissertation work, and though I knew many of them were difficult, being poorly inventoried and organized, as a whole they were congenial places to work. So for five of the six summers between 1985 and 1990, I journeyed to Bruges for six weeks of intensive work among dusty parchments and paper registers.

Every archive is a world unto itself, composed of materials that by sheer accident and happenstance have escaped the human instinct to destroy or simply clean out. The modern archive is a direct and little esteemed result of the great Age of Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, one whose quite revolutionary ideas about the rights of man was that public records should be ordered and open for consultation by all. Ever since, governments have both complied with and obstructed this idea, including our own Mr. Bush, resulting in sometimes-curious compromises between the public's right to know and government's insistence on secrecy. Belgium has its own set of compromises, for when the forces of the French Revolution swept through what was then Habsburg territory, all documentary records from both church and state institutions were nationalized, and many collections were either confiscated or hidden away. Tragically, this sometimes led to destruction since parchment was an ideal material for musket cartridges or kindling. In other cases, particularly church archives, were dispersed and sold, or immured behind false walls until the revolutionary danger had passed. From the 1830s, the modern state of Belgium had to deal with this messy past by insisting in principle that all archives, even those belonging to the church, were public, but leaving the details of organization and access to the institution in possession of the surviving materials. In Bruges this has resulted in an eclectic and eccentric group of archives.

The State archive of Bruges is the largest and most forbidding of the city's repositories, for even though one of the archivists there is an old friend of mine from Ghent days, the place is effectively run by the fellows in charge of fetching documents. They are state employees whose position offers the job security of the pope, combined with a Joseph Stalin-like sympathy for the needs of researchers. One of these pygmy tyrants took an early and especial dislike of me, probably because I requested too many documents and complained when they weren't delivered in reasonable time. His punishment was to stand and glare at me as I worked in the reading room, and he also made sure that a number of my requests came back stamped "Lost" even if I had been using the materials only a few days before. Fortunately, I did not need to spend a great deal of time there. The other side of the coin is the City archive where both the chief and assistant archivist have become good friends and the staff treats me like visiting royalty. I was even allowed the distinct privilege of remaining after official closing time, working long into the evening thanks to the kindness of Noel Geirnaert, the city archivist. They also made it possible for me to have a large number of microfilms made of account books in their collection - more on these in a moment.

Despite the extremes of the congenial and uncongenial represented by these two archives, they are both variations of a type, the most direct descendants of the revolutionary impulse to organize and make accessible the records of the past. They are of course underfunded and poorly housed, even though they occupy historically significant buildings near the city center. But at least there are published or handwritten inventories of the archive materials, and the archivists hold advanced degrees in history and are much involved in research and writing about the medieval past. And most important for the visiting American, they offer photocopy and microfilm reproductions of documents. So at least one knows more or less what to expect. The other four archives I used

are of a quite different sort - irregular, eccentric, even bizarre in my experience, and always great fun to explore. None of these is adequately organized or inventoried; only one had a full time archivist during the time I worked there and their individual histories and makeup say much about the opportunities and challenges that I faced.

I will start with the bizarre and work to the eccentric. In medieval and early modern Bruges, religious foundations such as hospitals, almshouses, and parish-based food pantries provided health care and poor relief. After the French Revolution, all these were abolished or reorganized into state institutions, whose descendant is now known as the Public Commission for Social Welfare, roughly translated. The considerable archives of the previously autonomous foundations were combined and literally dumped in the tower room of a former sixteenth-century nunnery, which served as the commission's headquarters until the end of the 1980s. There was no archivist, and anyone desiring to use the collection was given a desk in the midst of the large open office of the city's welfare workers. In my case I was also given the key to the tower room so I wouldn't pester the personnel too much, and to complete the ideal, I was allowed access to a photocopies for which I paid ten cents a copy instead of the fifty cents to a dollar cost of copying at the State and City archives. I also became a witness to and occasional participant in the office politics that swirled around my desk.

For the most part this provided an amusing break from reading fourteenth-century charters and account books. Given that it was summer, most of the office conversations involved discussions of vacations, which is serious because in a country where virtually everyone is entitled to six-to eight-week vacation periods. I was also able to observe the prowling of the office wolf, who made shameless passes at most of the female secretaries. He was a nice fellow, however, and one Friday afternoon when there were only three of

us left in the office, he broke out a bottle of cognac, which the three of us shared while discussing vacation plans.

Moving from the sinful to the sacred took me to two archives housed in a convent and a monastery respectively. In a compromise typical of Belgium, these institutions had been allowed to keep their archives even after nationalization, if they allowed public access to them. Of course negotiating and arranging for visits required delicate diplomacy and a certain tolerance on my part. I will never forget the day I spent in the convent of the Potterie, which functions as a hospital in the Middle Ages, looking through their collection of fourteenth century documents. I was allowed the use of a room, but I worked under the gaze of the mother superior herself, who was worried no doubt about what I'd find in those six hundred year old documents. To pass the time, she chatted quite amiably with me, which only made it harder for me to concentrate on my work. Fortunately for both of us, there wasn't much of interest in the convent's collection.

The visit to the Bruges Carmelite monastery was a true time-machine experience, which took me from a busy city street through the monastic gates and into another world. The Bruges community occupies a seventeenth-century complex of buildings, and they are of the discalced or shoeless branch of the order. This means that a fairly stringent monastic discipline prevails with a pronounced emphasis on traditional customs extending even to the keeping of the archive. To my astonishment, their medieval manuscripts and documents were kept just bearing numbers and letters to aid in locating their contents. Medieval monks were fond of the pun on the Latin name for armoire, Armarium, which was much like arma, armarum of the knight, only the contents of the monkish armaria were far more potent than the sword.

I had come to consult a specific fifteenth-century cartulary, which is a book containing copies of charters. It was known only as the liber oblongus the oblong book, and at first the young monk who had shown me into the archive could not find it. I learned later that he had only recently been named archivist, succeeding one of the most senior monks, and fortunately for me this elderly man was still compos mentis enough to be asked about the book. He indicated that it was in the second armoire, second shelf towards the back and he was exactly right.

My favorite of all these odd, ecclesiastical archives is the archive of the Bishopric of Bruges, which used to be located in the west wing of the Episcopal palace itself. Gaining access to it required knocking at the main door, being scrutinized by the bishop's concierge and admitted. In the old days this might not be quite so easy, for as recently as the 1960s, a professor of mine at the University of Ghent, which unlike Louvain is not a Catholic university, had this door slammed in his faced by the archivist himself who refused to admit an atheist (which everyone from Ghent was presumed to be) to his archive. Fortunately for me, an Anglican schismatic, this archivist was long gone by the time I first knocked on the bishop's door.

In time, I became quite friendly with the concierge and he took great pride in showing me around some of the first floor rooms of the Episcopal residence. The main building was built as a seventeenth-century noble's house, and was full of beautiful furniture and original art. Most impressive of all was that it had escaped the defilement of modern renovation. Walking through the entry hall and turning right brought you eventually to a large staircase, and two floors up was the archive. In the 1970s and 1980s it was presided over by Canon Bauduin Janssens de Bisthoven, a charming and courtly man from one of the old noble families of Bruges. The furnishings and arrangement of the reading room were straight out of the nineteenth century, with a windup clock ticking the

time and most of the available light coming through the windows. Canon Janssens de Bisthoven and I became quite good friends, which was strange in retrospect because we had very little in common. He had spent most of his life in the church as a high school teacher, and I suspect the fact that he was a very minor functionary in the diocese rather than its head was a disappointment to his family. I also rather suspect that the bishop puts in the archives those either too old or too incapable of teaching any longer.

One thing we did have in common was that Dutch was a second language for us both, since as an aristocrat born before 1920, he had spoken only French at home and was educated at French-language schools. He was definitely one of those Flemish francophones who never mastered Dutch, speaking it always with a thick French accent and faulty syntax. Several former students of his told me a tragicomic story about Janssens de Bisthoven, and it still provoked howls of laughter twenty-five years after their schooldays. On this occasion, de Bisthoven was giving a history lecture to his class of high-school age boys at the St. Lodewijks School. I should explain that unlike French, Dutch has neuter nouns requiring a different article, as does German. This lecture must have been rich in these traps for the non-native speaker, for his students were tittering frequently as he talked. Gentleman that he was and is, de Bisthoven stopped and apologized, stating that he was "sometimes unsure of my gender."

It was in his archive that I made what turned out to be the decisive discovery in the evolution of the Bruges book, although I did not know it at the time. In the summer of 1986, I was systematically reading all the fourteenth-century charters from the church of Our Savior, when I came across a mention of someone I knew. The charter recorded the gift of a piece of property to the church that had once belonged to the Bruges money changer, William Ruweel, but had been given to the donor in the settlement of Ruweel's bankruptcy in 1370. Ruweel is a critical figure in one of the two important

books written about fourteenth-century Bruges, because an account book of his survives in the City archives. This allowed an earlier historian to piece together something about how the money changing business operated in this crucial period when Bruges was one of the financial capitals of Europe. But this document had not been mentioned in an earlier history, and I was anxious to pursue an additional clue about Ruweel's business.

This twenty-line charter took me back to the City archives, where among the collections of non-governmental provenance, in this case related to trade and bearing number 305, were the so-called merchant books. Ruweel's account book of 1369-70 along with those of his colleague and contemporary, Collard de Marke, are the oldest records of their kind to survive in northern Europe. They contain the accounts and financial activities of these two money changers in extraordinary detail from 1366-1370, but they are extraordinarily difficult to work with. You have to imagine six folio sized volumes, a third larger than a phone book, and almost as densely packed with names and numbers, expressed in Roman numerals of course. To the casual observer they make as much sense as looking through someone else's checkbook, for they were written purely to record the financial transactions of the money changer's customers and probably owe their survival to confiscation following their owner's bankruptcy.

To make a long story short, I did some work in the Ruweel ledger and was able thanks to it and other documents to piece together a much more complete picture of the nature and operation of his money exchange. I published the results of that bit of detective work in 1988 and by that time I was already at work deciphering both Ruweel and DeMarke's business records. Thanks to microfilm I spent many hours on the thousands of folio pages, and over time I was able to identify groups of customers and what certain sums and financial transfers represented. The more I learned of

this financial world the more dissatisfied I became with the standard history that drew from these records. Its author was a Belgian-American economic historian who was the first to take a serious look at these accounting records, and went on to write a book that argued that the reason for Bruges' dominance of the late-medieval international economy owed something to the advanced practices of the city's money changes, where he found the beginnings of modern deposit banking. But more important in his view was the presence of Italian companies in the city. These were run by Florentine, and Lucchese merchants who possessed advanced business techniques that were the key to putting Bruges at the economic center of the late-medieval world.

My key discoveries led me to reject this argument as oversimplified and misleading. For the central argument of my book is that Bruges became and remained an important financial center because it contained merchant colonies from all corners of Europe, particularly from the German Hanse, Britain and Italy, and succeeded in integrating all of them into a single commercial-financial system with Bruges as its hub. Using the computer network as an analogy, I argue that this Bruges-based system became much more powerful than the simple sum of its parts, since it gave merchants the ability to make deals and effect payments drawing on money and trade goods on deposit in Bruges itself. This was possible even if the deal in question was closed in London or Prussia. The key component of this network was the cooperative system of book transfers operated by the money changes and innkeepers of Bruges. The financial muscle gained as the masters of this network in turn gave particularly the innkeepers of Bruges a predominant role in the city's economic and political affairs. In short, Bruges became the first of a succession of European cities whose organizing principle and imperative became business finance and organization. Later, Antwerp, Amsterdam, London and New York developed their own variations on this theme.

This is a very short synopsis of an argument developed in the course of nine chapters and many hundreds of footnotes. As the product of a historian's imagination this picture of the past developed very slowly, only reaching a fully developed form after I completed a Fulbright fellowship to Belgium in 1994. In the intervening time I had written several articles incorporating some of my research and had also completed and published my first book. In the next five years I was only able to finish incomplete drafts of three chapters, yielding to the agreeable distractions of teaching, family life and coauthoring a book with Sid Hunt published in 1999. It had become clear to me by then that putting into writing the book I had imagined would require at least a year or more of full-time writing with distractions kept to a bare minimum.

One of the many ironies of academic life is that it is much easier to obtain money to support research in the humanities than to support writing. Regular academic leaves grant only six months every eight years. My own research trips had been largely financed by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Fulbright Commission of course, and our own Taft Memorial Fund. With the exception of the NEH, none of these made grants to allow time off from teaching to allow one to write. There are institutes that allow such freedom, chief among them the Advanced Institute at Princeton, the Center for Behavioral Studies at Stanford and the National Humanities Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The drawback to these was that they required a disruptive move of my entire household, and even in the best case none of them were financially feasible given differentials in the cost of living. The solution came in an advertisement from the Medieval Institute of the University of Notre Dame, offering a one-year fellowship to an advanced scholar in the area of medieval urban studies. It was a perfect fit, and I received the offer to come to Notre Dame for the academic year 1999-2000.

My wife and I debated the wisdom of a one-year move to Notre Dame. A colleague there, who was going to Princeton's Advanced Institute, offered to rent us her house. But the uncertainties of a school for my son and certainty of loneliness and boredom for my wife made commuting the final choice; so I embarked on an academic year of weekday exile in Indiana's far north country.

Exile and internment have been the making of many a work of history. The great French historian, Ferdinand Braudel completed his magnum opus, The Mediterranean and Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, while a prisoner of war in 1940-41. The founder of the University of Ghent school of medieval history, Henri Pirenne, wrote a history of Europe while imprisoned by the Germans in the First World War. In comparison, my studio apartment in postindustrial downtown South Bend and my office in Notre Dame's Hesburgh library, just around the corner from touchdown Jesus, were quite luxurious. I moved there with two trips of my Subaru wagon, loaded to the gunwales with nine filing boxes of notes, photocopies and microfilm, a computer with many megabytes of notes and drafts, and a minimum of household goods.

My duties at the Institute were light; all my friends on the faculty were on leave; my family was 250 miles distant, writing became inescapable. Long-distance writing is for me much like long-distance running - it requires an easy, yet constant pace with a daily goal that must be met at all costs. Mine was two good, single-spaced pages per day including footnotes. This might take me two or ten hours depending on how prepared I was to write, but I made it a point to stop when I had both reached my quota and knew where I wanted to begin the next day. I also decided to take on what seemed to be the hardest chapters first, rather than to write the book front to back, or to finish the three partially completed chapters. Thus early Fall found me driving through Indiana corn harvests and writing about the geography of fourteenth-century

Bruges. As stubbled rows became my scenery, I was at work on chapter 4, "Money and its Discontents", which analyzes the city's ingenious payment system. I remember deep winter and sunrises over snow-covered fields north of Kokomo, listening to Schubert's Winterreise, and writing chapter 8 "Women in the Market and the Market in Women," which explores the prominence of women in a number of markets, including commercial sex. As Spring came, I had completed a draft of chapter 9, "Towards a Burgundian Bruges," and was hard at work on chapter 5, "La Bourse et la vie," which argues that Bruges innkeepers had achieved an informal network of business services that would coalesce in the next century into the first European Bourse. When I finished my fellowship at Notre Dame, in May, 2000, I still had three chapters to complete.

With only two-thirds of a book, I was fortunate to have a regular academic leave scheduled for the two quarters after my return from Notre Dame. With this time to write, I was able to complete enough to send to Cambridge Press last summer. By Fall I had two positive reviews from their outside experts, and with them the offer to publish. At last the end was in sight, but with it came the realization of all that this book had required. The financial resources provided by a Notre Dame alumnus and Ohio taxpayers gave me the gift of the time necessary to complete the arduous task of translating imagination to the written page. Good and learned friends, like Sid Hunt, were willing to read rough drafts and provide vital corrections and connection with the reader, something too often lost amidst a writer's solitude. My wife and son granted me leave from my responsibilities as a husband and father, and shouldered the financial sacrifices imposed by fellowships that never cover the entire cost. In Belgium, good friends have provided free food and lodging, and unflagging interest and encouragement.

Am I then the Lucky Jim of my title? Good fortune has certainly been mine throughout the course of

research and writing. The list of those to whom I am indebted for their contribution to my work is so long that acknowledging all of them may push me past my 150,000 world limit. I only hope that they will consider my book on their bookshelves sufficient recompense for their kindnesses. In the end, Lucky Jim has discovered, as did St. Augustine long ago, that whatever good is found in his work is due to his friends; only the errors are his alone.
