

TRADE AND PROSPERITY, WAR AND POVERTY

An archaeological and historical investigation into Southampton's French Quarter

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Southampton was one of England's leading medieval ports, with its trade in commodities such as wine, wool and cloth making it among the most prosperous and cosmopolitan towns in the country during the 13th and 15th centuries. From the late Saxon period, the heart of the city lay between two streets, English Street and French Street, an area known as the 'French Quarter'. A major new investigation of this area revealed an impressive series of medieval buildings with vaulted cellars, containing rare and exotic finds. The most significant building, Polymond's Hall, was home to notable residents such as the Venetian Consul in the 15th century, and the poet and hymn writer Isaac Watts in the 18th century.

This book uses new evidence from the extensive excavations, along with in-depth analysis of the documentary records, to revisit many ongoing debates on the origins and development of Southampton. It shows how the medieval tenements evolved from late Saxon urban estates, and how the dynamics of international trade and diplomacy shaped the changing fortunes of the city.



Recording the medieval vaults

