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978-0-521-19376-4 - From Artisan to Worker: Guilds, the French State, and the Organization of Labor, 1776-1821

Michael P. Fitzsimmons

Excerpt

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Introduction

Some of the work that has long been recognized as among the most innovative scholarship on the French Revolution centered on workers, particularly their politicization.¹ Paradoxically, however, as Haim Burstin noted some years ago, there is a lack of a history of work during the French Revolution.² Although Burstin himself has done as much as anyone to address this void, his observation is as valid now as it was then.³

The subject of work during the Revolution, of course, is large and multifaceted, but this study has as its focal point the organization of labor – more specifically, the issue of guilds and the Revolution. Guilds, or corporations, as they were also known, and the terms will be used synonymously, were abolished in 1791, destroying a structure of work that had been in place for centuries. Although they were never brought back in any comprehensive fashion, they remained the object of a vigorous and prolonged debate, with the advantages and disadvantages of their reestablishment considered. Their abolition was perceived by many as misguided, a view shared in some cases by deputies and administrators; others argued, more strongly, that their destruction had been a mistake and advocated for their restoration.

One reason that the debate on whether or not to restore guilds, which continued for decades, has attracted little attention may be due to the thematic focal points utilized by historians of French labor for the centuries flanking the Revolution and Empire. For understandable reasons, analyses of the

¹ Chief among these would be Albert Soboul, *Les Sans-culottes parisiens en l'an II: Mouvement populaire et gouvernement révolutionnaire, 2 juin 1793–9 thermidor an II* (Paris: Librairie Clavreuil, 1958); George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959); Kåre D. Tønnesson, *La Défaite des sans-culottes: Mouvement populaire et réaction bourgeoise de l'an III* (Oslo: Presses universitaires d'Oslo, 1959).

² Haim Burstin, "Problems of Work during the Terror," in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture: The Terror*, Keith Michael Baker, ed., (Oxford: Pergamon, 1994), p. 271.

³ Haim Burstin, *Le Faubourg Saint-Marcel à l'époque révolutionnaire: Structure économique et composition sociale* (Paris: Société des Etudes Robespierriennes, 1983); Haim Burstin, *Une Révolution à l'oeuvre: Le faubourg Saint-Marcel (1789–1794)* (Paris: Champ Vallon, 2005).

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eighteenth century concentrate on guilds, abolished in 1791 – the title of the most recent examination of the topic, *La Fin des corporations*, exemplifies this approach.⁴ The issues that these studies engage end with the early period of the Revolution.

By the time of the Restoration, Paris had hundreds of thousands of workers; although no reliable number is available, a scholar of the period believed that an early 1823 figure of 244,000 workers, out of a total population of approximately 730,000–750,000, was credible.⁵ This large, undifferentiated mass of workers forms the basis for most explorations of French labor history during the first half of the nineteenth century, focusing on what Louis Chevalier termed “the laboring and dangerous classes,” a volatile element whose frustrations erupted during the June days in 1848.⁶ Again, for equally understandable reasons, for studies with a nineteenth-century focus, the Restoration period, when concentrations of workers beyond such traditional locales as the *faubourg* Saint-Antoine or *faubourg* Saint-Marcel became more pronounced, is generally the point of departure.⁷ In sum, for one important span of French labor history, the beginning of the Revolution marks the end, whereas for another significant period, the end of the Napoleonic Empire has generally marked the beginning. As yet, there is not, as Burstin broadly noted, any bridge between them.⁸

⁴ Steven L. Kaplan, *La Fin des corporations* (Paris: Fayard, 2001). Some earlier examples, listed chronologically, include Etienne Martin Saint-Léon, *Histoire des corporations de métiers, depuis leurs origines jusqu'à leur suppression en 1791*, 3rd edition, (Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1922); François Olivier-Martin, *L'Organisation corporative de la France d'ancien régime* (Paris: Sirey, 1938); Emile Coornaert, *Les Corporations en France avant 1789* (Paris: Les Editions ouvrières, 1941); Michael Sonenscher, *The Hatters of Eighteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); Bernard Gallinato, *Les Corporations à Bordeaux à la fin de l'Ancien Régime: Vie et mort d'un mode d'organisation du travail* (Bordeaux: Presses universitaires de Bordeaux, 1992).

⁵ Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, “Les Ouvriers d'industrie à Paris sous la Restauration,” *Bulletin de la Société d'histoire moderne* 14 (1976), p. 26.

⁶ Louis Chevalier, *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses à Paris pendant la première moitié du XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1958).

⁷ Katherine A. Lynch, *Family, Class, and Ideology in Early Industrial France: Social Policy and the Working Class Family, 1825–1848* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); outside of Paris, the Restoration starting point is equally apparent in Elinor Accampo, *Industrialization, Family Life, and Class Relations: Saint-Chamond, 1815–1914* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989).

⁸ There is the fine study of Raymonde Monnier, *Le Faubourg Saint-Antoine (1789–1815)* (Paris: Société des Etudes Robespieristes, 1981), but only two chapters are devoted to the organization of work and the scope of the book is limited to one neighborhood – albeit an important one – of Paris. In addition, there are classic studies of French workers during the first years of the Revolution, but they are devoted primarily to the political activities of workers rather than to the structure of work itself. These include Soboul, *Les Sans-culottes parisiens en l'an II*; Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution*; Tønnesson, *La Défaite des sans-culottes*. In addition, there is an admirable work that, from its title, appears to be an exception, but it leaps from 1794 to the Restoration. William A. Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

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By the eighteenth century guilds had been a prominent feature of urban life for centuries, providing a structure to labor and, although the degree of success is open to debate, a measure of control over journeymen and apprentices – corporations were, in fact, regarded as an extension of the police. Although they were abolished during 1776, they were restored after only a few months because of unrest among journeymen. Consequently, by May 1789, as the Estates-General opened, with memories of 1776 still relatively fresh, the position of guilds seemed secure.

Just two months later, however, on August 4, 1789, the National Assembly – the body into which the Estates-General had evolved after a prolonged stalemate – unexpectedly launched a comprehensive attack on privilege, during the course of which it pronounced the dissolution of guilds, which were perceived as repositories of privilege. Even among the cascade of renunciations made during the meeting, which astonished both deputies and observers, the suppression of corporations seemed extraordinary. Indeed, their abolition was so stunning that the National Assembly appears to have had doubts about what it had done because it temporized – in the drafting of the August decrees summarizing the renunciations made during the session, the Assembly announced the reform of guilds rather than their abolition. Ultimately, however, the National Assembly did eliminate corporations, although relatively late in its tenure; their abolition came only after the destruction of provinces, the *parlements* and the nobility, and a fundamental reorganization of the Church. The dilatory approach by the Assembly testifies to the uncertainty and even apprehensiveness felt by deputies, but they honored the compact they had forged on August 4 and dissolved guilds.

In place of corporations and in the cause of liberty, the National Assembly enacted an occupational license (*patente*) that allowed its holder to practice any trade he wished. Problems quickly arose, so much so that for contemporaries the dissolution of corporations and the introduction of the occupational license became indelibly associated with a sharp decline in standards in both production and commerce.

As that descent continued, France declared war on Austria, initiating what would become nearly a quarter of a century of almost continuous war. Within a few months, serious reverses led to the overthrow and execution of Louis XVI, which in turn widened the conflict and placed France on the defensive. In response, the government, primarily the Committee of Public Safety acting on behalf of the National Convention, placed the country on a war footing. Among many measures, it enacted mass conscription, and supplying the hundreds of thousands of men taken into the armies required levels of production far beyond that of the traditional artisanal mode, leading the Convention to launch a large-scale manufacturing program.

1980). A notable exception, which addresses the effort to restore guilds in the context of French industrialization, is Jeff Horn, *The Path Not Taken: French Industrialization in the Age of Revolution 1750–1830* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), pp. 262–266.

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In terms of manufacturing capacity, the efforts undertaken by the Committee of Public Safety succeeded, especially in arms – Paris became the largest producer of muskets in the world. Ultimately, however, the government shut down the arms workshops, largely due to unrest among workers. Nevertheless, the endeavor essentially defined the issues that would frame the debate on the reestablishment of guilds that ensued.

On the one hand, the Convention's effort had revealed the possibilities of mass production, which would subsequently become attached to mechanization of production – the arms program had been driven mainly by a regimentation of labor, rather than mechanization. In the view of advocates of mechanization, any restoration of corporations would offer workers a platform from which they might impede mechanization.

On the other hand, the government had ended the system because of worker unrest, and proponents of guilds asserted that their reestablishment would bring an end to “insubordination.” They also argued that it would restore quality and trust to manufacturing and commerce.

Moreover, guilds under the Old Regime had performed a number of functions, such as overseeing apprenticeships, conducting quality control and ensuring the safety of the food supply. After it abolished corporations, the National Assembly failed to provide for any of these responsibilities, and its successor bodies did not address these issues either. As skill, quality, and food safety declined precipitously, the issue for legislators, officials, and police was whether they should address abuses or problems with laws and regulations on an individual basis or seek a more comprehensive solution by reestablishing guilds, albeit in a reformed fashion.

As France emerged from the Terror, disaffection with the unregulated market and workplace was widespread, particularly in Paris. In a clear indication that sentiment favoring a return to corporations was more than idle longing, the commission appointed by the National Convention in 1795 to draft a new constitution believed it necessary to include an article maintaining the proscription of guilds. Two deputies from different parts of the political spectrum opposed the measure, but the Convention approved it and it became article 355 of the Constitution of the Year III that established the Directory.

Article 355 reinforced the abolition of corporations – it bolstered the statutory law of 1791 with constitutional status. Whereas a statutory measure could be repealed or overturned by the passage of a new law, to amend the constitution required a minimum of six years. The extraordinarily difficult winter of 1795–1796, the first after the installation of the Directory, provided additional impetus to the favorable recollection of guilds. Amidst dearth and severe hardship, most contemporaries associated the era of corporations with adequate supply, market stability, and good quality. Indeed, approximately a year after it was adopted, the deputy who claimed to have written and put forward article 355 expressed regret at having done so.

The easing of conditions diminished somewhat the positive outlook toward a restoration of guilds. Furthermore, in 1798 the Directory sponsored an

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Exhibition of Products of French Industry, the first industrial exposition held in the Western world. The exhibition was successful, drawing large crowds despite inclement weather, and contributed to the creation of a favorable image of industry among the public.

The next year, in 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte overthrew the Directory, terminating the Constitution of the Year III and effectively reopening the possibility of more quickly restoring guilds. If, in fact, there was a moment during the revolutionary and Napoleonic epoch when corporations might have been reestablished, it was during Bonaparte's rule. The Council of State debated the question on several occasions until 1810, and under the Consulate the central government reorganized bakers and butchers of Paris into bodies strongly reminiscent of guilds. Furthermore, a secret counselor of Bonaparte repeatedly urged him to reestablish guilds.

Guilds were known and familiar, and it was recognized that they had provided services that were socially and economically beneficial. Their reestablishment seemed to some to be preferable to the partial solutions that had been attempted, the most notable of which was the law of 22 germinal year XI, with which there was dissatisfaction. The question that presented itself, then, was whether to accept limited results and continuing deficiencies or take the final step of restoring guilds.⁹ Those who argued for their restoration emphasized the greater order and discipline that would result – values strongly embraced by the Napoleonic regime.

At the same time, manpower shortages resulting from conscription virtually mandated mechanization of production. Those who opposed any reestablishment of guilds asserted that they could become a platform from which opposition to mechanization could be mounted. For more than a decade, Bonaparte did not make a clear choice between the reestablishment of corporations and mechanized production, but a resolution occurred when the government undertook a major reorganization of the Ministry of the Interior in January 1812. A portion of the ministry's responsibilities were transferred to an entirely new entity, the Ministry of Manufacturing and Commerce. The restructuring signaled the triumph of mechanized, industrial production under the Napoleonic regime, but the formation of the new ministry coincided with a severe economic crisis that continued until the fall of Napoleon.

Bonaparte's defeat brought back the Bourbon monarchy, which was widely expected to undo the work of the Revolution. Only weeks after its return, the restored monarchy abolished the Ministry of Manufacturing and Commerce and reintegrated its functions into the Ministry of the Interior. This action, along with the expectation that it would reverse most reforms of the Revolution, fed a perception that the government of Louis XVIII would reestablish guilds. Both the Crown and the Ministry of the Interior received a number of requests to this end, and a lively debate, both in public and within

⁹ Indeed, in contrast to the law of 22 germinal year XI, the reorganization of bakers and butchers was generally judged to have been successful.

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the government, took place on the issue. A determination ultimately came in a somewhat indirect fashion – in 1819 the royal government sponsored an industrial exhibition in Paris, signaling a preference for industry and mechanization over a restoration of corporations.

The contradistinction between the reestablishment of guilds and mechanization reflects the terms of the arguments waged by contemporaries, particularly within the government but also in public. The oft-used phrase “freedom of industry” used in opposition to any reestablishment of guilds meant above all the freedom to innovate, and the primary connotation of innovation was mechanization of production. Although both proponents and opponents of the reestablishment of guilds may have had other objectives or motives,¹⁰ the debate revolved principally around these issues, especially until 1819.

Through an examination of the debate on the reestablishment of guilds, this study seeks to demonstrate that the passage from the eighteenth-century regime of guilds to the working classes of the nineteenth century was neither irreversible nor automatic. Indeed, the decision to abolish guilds was questioned during succeeding years and at times maintained in the face of public discontent. The maintenance of the dissolution of corporations should in no way be taken for granted – their reestablishment was advocated and considered many times over the next thirty years. The proscription of guilds held, however, and in the end the change in the organization of labor altered its nature as well. After the abolition of corporations work would be regarded more as a commodity offered by independent workers than as a skill developed and ratified by artisans within a hierarchical, regulated system. The continued proscription of corporations also served to help set France on the path of industrialization that it would follow during the nineteenth century, with all of the consequences that would arise from this.

¹⁰ Later in the nineteenth century, for example, some artisans viewed corporatism as a means to stem the development of capitalist production or marketing practices in their trade or as a vehicle for social reform. Christopher H. Johnson, “Economic Change and Artisan Discontent: The Tailors History, 1800–48,” in *Revolution and Reaction: 1848 and the Second French Republic*, Roger Price, ed., (London: Croom Helm, 1975): pp. 87–114, especially pp. 108–110; Michael David Sibalís, “Shoemakers and Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century Paris: The Société Laborieuse des Cordonniers-Bottiers,” *Social History/Histoire Sociale* 20 (1987): 24–49.

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The Decline and Demise of Guilds, 1776–1791

Your committee believed that it should link the existence of this tax to a great benefit done for industry and commerce, the suppression of masterships and guilds that your good sense should abolish for the sole reason that they are exclusive privileges.

– d’Allarde, spokesman for the Committee on Taxation,
to the National Assembly, February 15, 1791

During the eighteenth century many guilds became increasingly enfeebled because of external competition, internal divisions and other developments, but the decisive event in their decline was their dissolution in 1776, after which they fell away precipitously until their final suppression in early 1791. Although the Crown, after only a few months, retracted the edict of Controller-General Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot that had abolished corporations, the reorganized bodies were left weakened and ill prepared to meet the challenges posed by the French Revolution, which brought about their final abolition.

GUILDS UNDER THE OLD REGIME

By the latter part of the eighteenth century, guilds had long been a prominent feature of urban life. Many of them had been in existence for centuries – in Paris the corporation of linen makers claimed to have statutes dating from 1278 and that of vinegar makers from 1294. The guild of bakers in Paris had statutes from 1290, but claimed foundations in the Gallo-Roman period.¹ Not all corporations could claim such venerable lineage, of course, but the entire system of guilds was deeply woven into the fabric of urban life, from large cities to smaller towns. In Lyon, even omitting workers in the silk industry,

¹ *Guide des corps des marchands et les communautés des arts et métiers, tant de la ville et faubourgs de Paris, que du royaume* (Paris: Veuve Duchesne, 1766), p. 295 (linen makers); p. 484 (vinegar makers); Steven Laurence Kaplan, *The Bakers of Paris and the Bread Question 1700–1775* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 155.

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which gave the city its unique character, the guild system encompassed tens of thousands of men.² In Grenoble, with a population of approximately 24,000 in 1776, there were 1,141 masters in forty-one guilds.³ Including journeymen apprentices, who were not enumerated, the number of men associated with guilds probably approached 2,500, meaning that perhaps 25 percent of the active male population was connected to the guild structure.⁴

The scale of their presence gave guilds a substantial role in urban life, from municipal politics to policing, and was reinforced by the requirement of many corporations that members had to be born in the city in which the guild was located. Guilds served to oversee and regulate the behavior of masters and journeymen; indeed, during an age in which police structures were not well formed, they played a significant role as an auxiliary to the police.⁵ In the final analysis, the primary function of each guild was to promote stability, both economic and social.

For this reason, workers outside of the guild system were often an object of suspicion and even fear.⁶ In Nîmes, for example, unemployed silk workers threatened to riot and set fire to the town, leading the intendant to seek to employ them in a public works project tearing down the city walls.⁷

So prestigious was the corporate paradigm that in Paris and elsewhere non-skilled laborers sought to emulate it – even in the world of unskilled work, claims of a monopoly on certain tasks existed, although the basis of such assertions was “unformalized custom.” As Haim Burstin noted, “these rights assumed the status of property. Even the water-carriers, upon retiring from

² Maurice Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais au XVIII^e siècle* (Grenoble: Allier, 1970), pp. 315–320.

³ AD Isère 2 C 88, documents 47–92; the population figure is from *Histoire de Grenoble*, Vital Chomel, ed., (Toulouse: Privat, 1976), p. 150.

⁴ In the same vein, Edwin J. Shephard, Jr., “Social and Geographic Mobility of the Eighteenth-Century Guild Artisans: An Analysis of Guild Receptions in Dijon, 1700–1790,” in *Work and Revolution in France: Representation, Meaning, Organization and Practice*, Steven Laurence Kaplan and Cynthia Koepp, eds., (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 97–130, presents a portrait of the importance and pervasiveness of the guild structure in the similarly sized city of Dijon. For a profile of a stratum of guilds in a city, see Daniel Joseph Heimmermann, “Work and Corporate Life in Old Regime France: The Leather Artisans of Bordeaux (1740–1791),” (Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1994). On corporations in Caen, Jean-Claude Perrot, *Genèse d’une ville moderne: Caen au XVIII^e siècle*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), I: 320–327. For a wider perspective on a single trade, Michael Sonenscher, *The Hatters of Eighteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).

⁵ BM Orléans Ms. 1422, section 7, (Commerce); Alan Williams, *The Police of Paris 1718–1789* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), pp. 118–119; Steven Kaplan, “Réflexions sur la police du monde du travail, 1700–1815,” *Revue historique* 256 (1979): 26–27; Bernard Gallinato, *Les Corporations à Bordeaux*, pp. 197–200.

⁶ William H. Sewell, Jr., *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 24; Dean T. Ferguson, “The Body, the Corporate Idiom, and the Police of the Unincorporated Worker in Early Modern Lyons,” *French Historical Studies* 23 (2000): 545–576, especially p. 553.

⁷ AN H¹ 1023, documents 27, 30.

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their occupation, would sell their business to a comrade.”⁸ In part, the adoption of the corporate model was a survival strategy in the extraordinarily difficult conditions of Paris for unskilled workers, but it also testified to the preeminent place of the guild structure. In Grenoble, horse-renters formed themselves into a corporation, but it had no statutes or regulations.⁹ Similarly, in Bordeaux, shoemakers outside of the guild sustained a commitment to the corporate system of labor until the end of the Old Regime.¹⁰

The forming by unskilled laborers of a corporate configuration underscores a fundamental aspect of the guild system: It was not merely an economic institution, perhaps not even primarily an economic institution, but a social taxonomy that clearly demarcated one’s place in the social hierarchy. Each guild also had a strong moral dimension that ranged from religious devotion to charitable relief.¹¹

Guilds were vested with an array of privileges, the most important of which was a monopoly on production, and the privileges of each corporation were enforced by municipal authorities, who for example often accompanied representatives of a guild as they searched for those who were practicing its trade outside of the corporation. Such searches could sometimes become fearsome in nature.¹² Known as “false workers,” *chambrellans* or other designations, non-guild workers were ubiquitous, and their products, despite the efforts of guilds to enforce their monopoly, substantially undermined that monopoly.

An important source of such goods were the suburbs or neighborhoods of most major cities that were nominally outside of the guild or municipal jurisdiction – the *faubourg* Saint-Antoine in Paris is the best known, but others included the *sauvetats* of Saint-André and Saint-Seurin in Bordeaux.¹³

⁸ Haim Burstin, “Unskilled Labor in Paris at the End of the Eighteenth Century,” in *The Workplace before the Factory: Artisans and Proletarians, 1500–1800*, Thomas Max Safley and Leonard N. Rosenband, eds., (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 70–72, with the quotation from p. 71.

⁹ AD Isère 2 C 88, document 90.

¹⁰ Daniel Heimmermann, “The Guilds of Bordeaux, les métiers libres, and the *sauvetats* of Saint-Seurin and Saint-André,” *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History* 25 (1998): 30.

¹¹ Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais*, pp. 552–555; Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France*, pp. 34–35; Heimmermann, “Work and Corporate Life in Old Regime France,” pp. 73–85; Sydney Watts, *Meat Matters: Butchers, Politics, and Market Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006), pp. 98–100.

¹² AN T 1373, dossier Martin (Philibert), *Mémoire au Roi concernant la communauté des maîtres perruquiers...*, which related the physical violence associated with seizures against unauthorized practitioners. For more on the violence associated with guilds, see Leonard Rosenband, “Jean-Baptiste Réveillon: A Man on the Make in Old Regime France,” *French Historical Studies* 20 (1997): 481–510. See also Judith Coffin, *The Politics of Women’s Work: The Paris Garment Trades, 1750–1915* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 24–25.

¹³ Raymonde Monnier, *Le Faubourg Saint-Antoine*; Steven L. Kaplan, “Les corporations, les ‘faux ouvriers,’ et le Faubourg Saint-Antoine au XVIII^e siècle,” *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (1988): 353–378; Heimmermann, “The Guilds of Bordeaux.”

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Indeed, it appears that consumer goods, particularly shoes, produced by artisans in Saint-André and Saint-Seurin – outside the jurisdiction of guilds – dominated the Bordeaux market.¹⁴ The legal existence of a monopoly on production, then, should not necessarily be taken to represent the actual situation.¹⁵

Another feature of the monopoly on production, and an aspect of guild privilege that did have a broader effect, was that each guild determined both the method and volume of production, so, for example, the confection process was closely guarded by the corporation and was one of the “mysteries” of the trade.¹⁶ The ability to govern fabrication and determine the quantity of a product to be officially manufactured – designed to assure stability within the guild – served to discourage innovation. In fact, during the revolutionary and Napoleonic eras, the period of guilds was pejoratively referred to as one of “routine.” What Robert Darnton observed of Montpellier – that during the eighteenth century the city produced the same items that it had fabricated since the late Middle Ages and on the same scale¹⁷ – would have been true of many other cities and towns of France and accounts, at least in part, for the centrality of guilds in most urban areas.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their commanding position, during the eighteenth century corporations became an object of criticism by liberal economic theorists, who assailed in particular the regulatory apparatus at the heart of the guild system.¹⁸ A key figure – the first in France to suggest the abolition of guilds – was Jacques Vincent de Gournay, who emerged during the 1750s. He believed that human labor formed the basis of national wealth and that it should be encouraged by the deregulation of work and production, including the abolition of guilds, freedom in fabrication, shorter apprenticeships and facilitating artisanal innovations.¹⁹ Gournay died in 1759, but his doctrines gained adherents in France. Ultimately, however, although critiques of guilds had become more pointed by the mid-eighteenth century, and despite divisions within and among guilds, there was little to indicate the devastation that lay immediately ahead.²⁰ Rather, guilds appeared to be a permanent fixture in French society.

¹⁴ Heimmermann, “The Guilds of Bordeaux,” pp. 25–27.

¹⁵ James R. Farr, *Artisans in Europe, 1300–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 81–82.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

¹⁷ Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), p. 114.

¹⁸ Simone Meysonnier, *La Balance et l’horloge: La genèse de la pensée libérale en France au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Editions de la Passion, 1989), pp. 66–70; Catherine Larrère, *L’Invention de l’économie au XVIII^e siècle: Du droit naturel à la physiocratie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1992), pp. 100–101.

¹⁹ Meysonnier, *La Balance et l’horloge*, pp. 200–202. See also Steven L. Kaplan, *La Fin des corporations*, pp. 7–49, especially pp. 24–26.

²⁰ Kaplan, *La Fin des corporations*, p. 79.