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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

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From Artisan to Worker

From Artisan to Worker examines the largely overlooked debate on the potential reestablishment of guilds that occurred both inside and outside the French government from 1776 to 1821. The abolition of guilds in 1791 overturned a system of labor that had been in place for centuries. The disorder that ensued – from concerns about the safety of the food supply to a general decline in the quality of goods – raised strong doubts about their abolition and sparked a debate that continued for decades. The issue of the reestablishment of guilds, however, subsequently became intertwined with the growing mechanization of production. Under the Napoleonic regime, the government considered several projects to restore guilds in a large-scale fashion, but the counterargument that guilds could impede mechanization prevailed. After Bonaparte's fall, the restored Bourbon dynasty was expected to reestablish guilds, but its sponsorship of an industrial exhibition in 1819 signaled its endorsement of mechanization, and after 1821 there were no further efforts to reestablish guilds during the Restoration.

Michael P. Fitzsimmons is Professor of History at Auburn University Montgomery. His previous works include *The Parisian Order of Barristers and the French Revolution*, *The Remaking of France*, and *The Night the Old Regime Ended*, in addition to multiple articles published in scholarly journals.

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*Guilds, the French State, and the Organization
of Labor, 1776–1821*

MICHAEL P. FITZSIMMONS

Auburn University Montgomery, Alabama



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To my colleagues in the Department of History at Auburn University

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Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

ACCIP	Archives de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris
AD	Archives Départementales
AM	Archives Municipales
AN	Archives Nationales (Paris)
APP	Archives de la Préfecture de Police (Paris)
BHVP	Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris
BM	Bibliothèque Municipale
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris)
BNU	Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg
Strasbourg	
IISH	International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam)