

Steven L. Kaplan and Cynthia J. Koepp, eds. — *Work in France*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1986. Pp. 576.

Work in France is an excellent collection of essays, many of which introduce fundamental reinterpretations of central ideas about French workers on both sides of the Revolutionary divide. Sans-culotte ideology, artisan mentality, pride in craftsmanship, the proletarian family, the process of capitalist domination, the control of master craftsmen, and the proletarianization of artisans all come under scrutiny as a result of the application of new methods and in some cases the discovery of new data. During the past two decades, the introduction and later the near domination of quantitative methods in the study of social history, engendered lively debate and led to the "discovery" (or recovery) not only of valuable historical sources, but also of new populations which demanded further study and interpretation. Now that we know more about "how many" and "how often" and "in what combinations" many peoples accomplished many things, a new generation of scholars is urging us to look more closely at the meaning of the evidence and pushing us to recover sources not yet fully explored by historians. In so doing they are both widening the field and sharpening the focus of the historical discourse.

This anthology is the product of a conference titled Representations of Work in France convened at Cornell in 1983 by Steven L. Kaplan and Cynthia J. Koepp who also edited, contributed to, and introduced the volume. Employing the leitmotif of Voltaire's *Candide*, Kaplan and Koepp present an admirable summary of the essays and conclude their introduction by taking issue with Martin, the self-proclaimed last Manichee on earth. To Martin's "Let's work without speculating" the editors reply with a rewrite of Kant: "Speculation without work is empty, work without speculation is blind." The anthology is superbly reviewed in an afterward by Christopher Johnson who subjects the speculation of all 17 authors to his scrutiny and finds that all of the essays probe a fundamental historical question: "To what extent are work, the division of labor, and the general terrain of the social relations of production molded by impersonal market forces, and to what extent do the struggles (and the compromises) that characterize these social phenomena act back upon such forces to reshape them"? Johnson concludes with a warning against excessive preoccupation with work which inadvertently might lead away from a study of working class life in all its complexity. I will return to that point in my conclusion.

Given the innovative nature of the scholarship in the volume, I am surprised that the editors did not make a bolder decision with regard to the arrangement of the essays which are presented in chronological order. I would like to suggest a more useful and I would hope more provocative organization of the essays employing a modified version of the subtitle of the book: *Representations, Meaning, Organization, and Practice*. The order I recommend is as follows: Meaning of Representation, Meaning of Organization, Meaning of Practice. The first section would be divided in half to distinguish the four essays which explicate official texts from those using worker autobiography, drawings, songs and poems. Due to the limitations of space, I will limit my review of the essays to one example from each section and subsection, while urging a complete reading of all the essays to appreciate the substantial contribution of this volume.

Kaplan's essay on Turgot's edict abolishing the guilds, the frenzied reaction to the law, and the reinstatement of the guilds is a masterful study of the Meaning of Representations. Kaplan interprets and analyzes the world-view of the makers of the documents and vividly depicts the struggle between those who could fathom a new world and those who wanted to protect the old at all costs. Kaplan shows clearly that,

Corporate discourse was a compound of conscious and unconscious motives, of sincere and disingenuous claims, of coded and transparent idioms, of particularistic and universalistic anxieties, of self-serving calculations on the one hand and more complex and more ambiguous social and political solidarities on the other.

Michelle Perrot adds important insights to the Meaning of Representation in her essay on the autobiography of Norbert Truquin. She cites Truquin's eloquent testimony about the need for instruction; his acquaintance with a number of occupations, but identification with none of them; and

his perpetual search for work. Perrot comments that Truquin's memoirs are more than testimony: they are messages. Her interpretations begin to decode some of the messages. For example, Perrot points out Truquin's sympathy for the plight of young women in the ateliers of Lyon, "victims of premeditated assassination" in his words. Yet Truquin is at the same time very misogynistic, declaring repeatedly that women are very behind the times ideologically.

Finally, in the category of Meaning of Representations there are two essays which introduce interpretive strategies in the visual and literary arts. William Reddy proceeds by inference and guesswork to discover what place and what functions popular songs and poems served in the lives of Lille factory workers. He seeks to uncover the underlying principles which governed the choice and handling of subject matter. Reddy finds encoded in the farcical ritual a profoundly moral response to lives of deprivations and hardship. He concludes that the songs and poems represent an effort to transform the lives of their authors and declaimers. They were not a mere reflection of their conditions. In a similar manner, William Sewell notes that visual images are not simply transparent illustrations of the past. Further, he argues that visual images have a dynamic and a language of their own which do not correspond in any direct way with the language or dynamics of either the intellectual discourse about labor or workers' organizational practices. Surveying drawings from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, Sewell is struck by the distinctiveness of the Enlightenment depictions of work. His extensive analysis of the drawings leads him to believe that

[a] clear notion of labor as fully alienated abstract labor power was thinkable, and picturable, as early as the 1750s, decades before the development of the technology that supposedly made such a thing possible. (p. 279).

Cynthia Truant directs our attention to the Meaning of Organization in her exhaustive study of the 17th and 18th century *compagnonnage* and related associations, which she tells us were still in a creative and formative stage, developing rules, regulations, and codes of behavior as circumstances demanded. After a rigorous presentation of journeymen activities and behavior in Lyon and Nantes, Truant concludes

In the range of individual and collective actions seen in this essay, one theme remains dominant: journeymen demanded certain liberties and a type of independence in the world of work...they wished to turn things upside down — scorn the masters and to put the masters in a sort of dependence on the journeymen. (p. 171).

Yves Lequin turns our attention finally to the Meaning of Practice in his excellent essay about the "working class habit" of apprenticeship, long thought to have largely disappeared with the Old Regime and proletarianization. Lequin pinpoints two essential aspects of this tradition: 1) the shared belief that initiation into a working knowledge could successfully be transmitted only by demonstration and 2) the shared experience of daily practical training that implied equality in the distribution of knowledge and lent strength to the workers as a group. Lequin illustrates the persistence of this tradition in highly automated plants. He does not neglect to mention that former generations of apprentices could hope to become masters, while current apprentices do not hope to become employers and owners, but he notes, "There will have to be other revolutions to break (the working class habit), and the apprenticeship crisis is yet to come" (p.474).

Work in France, the editors tell us, attempts to investigate some basic questions: "to return to the workplace itself, to consider work as it is actually lived, to determine its meaning for specific groups and individuals at a given time in a given society (p. 28).

But does focussing on work lead us away from the study of working class life in all its complexity, as Christopher Johnson suggests? Maurice Garden appears to share Johnson's concern in his call for integrating into the basic research on the "monde du travail" two fundamental and complementary dimensions — the role of the family and formation of a culture proper to each craft. Garden notes, "if we begin to turn our attention toward the family, its networks, and its complementaries, if we begin to see children as something other than apprentices, and women as more than simple auxiliaries, we may comprehend another culture with a moral and social aspect as well as a domestic and professional side."

The sparkle of several brilliant pieces in this collection notwithstanding, I share in the conclusion that these essays include several missed opportunities to speculate on working class history in all its complexities.

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Sharon Kettering — *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986. Pp. x, 322.

This book is one of a growing number of studies that deconstruct myths about royal absolutism in early modern France: the myth, for example, that starting with the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV the crown dissociated nobles from power; or the myth that bureaucrats of middle class origin monopolized a newly rational system of administration. Reality was a great deal more complex.

Kettering shows in particular how vital it was for the monarchy to mobilize the loyal support of provincial nobles. Information derived from extensive archival research permits her to analyze in detail the means by which this process was accomplished: patron-client relationships, often with the mediation of brokers. She concentrates on Provence, not as a paradigm for the whole kingdom, but as a fair example of the techniques used by the government in Paris for dealing with outlying provinces. Some corroborative evidence is presented however for areas other than Provence.

The author herself concedes the difficulties in writing a case study based on a vast number of transactions between a multitude of persons. She especially deplores the absence of a natural story line to organize the narrative. That may account for a good deal of repetition — not only repetition of examples because the same persons and transactions necessarily recur in different contexts, but reiteration of ideas and phrasing. A more thorough copy-editing might have been helpful. On the other hand, Kettering engages her readers with graceful introductions to most of the chapters.

The book is divided into two parts, with considerable overlapping. The first three chapters define the characteristics of patron-broker-client ties, while the last three explore the operation of the patronage networks in their various aspects and implications.

The discussion opens with a look at patron-client relationships in France in general, and with great detail in Provence in particular. Kettering takes issue with Roland Mousnier's emphasis on the emotional nature of such relationships, their content of fidelity. Her own findings indicate that the tie between patrons and clients, even though expressed in affective language, was primarily based on mutual self-interest and became increasingly practical and material as the seventeenth century wore on. This is a valuable observation, although Mousnier's remarks may have been taken somewhat out of context. He was after all less concerned to define patron-client relationships as such, than to counter the notion that economic class interest determined relations between social groups in early modern France.

From patrons and clients the book moves on to consider brokers, men who had clients of their own to whom they could pass on royal or ministerial patronage in return for services. It was on the local clientele of provincial brokers that the king's ministers counted to move business according to their wishes through the *parlements* or other courts, provincial estates or assemblies, and municipalities. The chief examples in this section are drawn from the careers of two Provençal rivals, Henri de Forbin-Maynier, baron d'Oppède, and Charles de Grimaldi, marquis de Régusse. Lastly the characteristics of clienteles are discussed, and contrasted with the functioning of twentieth-century political machines. The seventeenth-century variety was not necessarily urban; there were judicial clienteles, and the clienteles of great nobles or ministers. Even where a municipal clientele was im-