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Anne Montenach

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"Coping with economic uncertainty. Women's work and the protoindustrial family in eighteenth-century Lyon", *Continuity and Change*, Cambridge University Press (CUP), 2020, 35 (1), pp. 33-52.
Anne Montenach, Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, TELEMME, Aix-en-Provence, France

Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyse how female working conditions and remunerations were affected by the structural and economic crises that impacted Lyon silk industry in the second half of the eighteenth century. It concentrates, at a micro level, on different circumstances in which sources allow us to see women and their families coping with economic uncertainty: small-scale wage conflicts with their employers, clandestine work and illicit activities. This essay studies how women's work was a real issue in power conflicts and a tool for household adaptive strategies during periods of crisis.

1. Introduction

In the eighteenth century Lyon was the second-largest city in France with a population that had grown from 100,000 to nearly 150,000 between the early eighteenth century and the end of the Old Regime. As shown in extensive studies of this industry by Justin Godart and Maurice Garden, amongst others, the textile sector, the city's largest industrial sector, was dominated by the silk industry (*Grande Fabrique*) which employed up to 34,000 workers in 1789.[1] As elsewhere in Europe, girls and women represented a large proportion of the skilled labour force in silk manufacturing.[2] Daryl Hafter's significant body of research on female silk workers in Lyon has highlighted the well-established sexual division of labour that relegated females to lower-paid ancillary tasks and the guild restrictions that gave preference to women with family ties to masters.[3]

Between the 1740s and the 1780s, the *Grande Fabrique* labour structure evolved into a large capitalist export industry in which handloom weavers were dominated by a small group of important merchants. Moreover, during the last decades of the Old Regime, the silk industry encountered frequent economic crises and work stoppages. The aim of this article is to analyse how female working conditions were affected by structural and conjunctural crises experienced by Lyon's silk industry in the second half of the eighteenth century. It concentrates on the different circumstances in which sources allow us to see women – and their families – coping with economic uncertainty: small-scale wage conflicts with their employers, clandestine work, and illicit activities, which never cut them completely off from the formal economy. By comparing regulations and practices, this essay echoes existing scholarship on women and the guilds which has challenged the traditional argument of exclusion and marginalization.[4] It also explores female agency and the strategies women developed in order to make ends meet. In particular, a close look at the archival sources dispels previous assumptions by Garden and Godart about the difficulties faced by powerless female silk workers, given their uncertain and unequal working conditions. Of course, silk-making in Lyon was a family business. As fathers, husbands or workshop masters, men were directly involved in female activities, and strategies used by working women frequently relied on family support. However, this article will focus on women's, rather than men's, work and is organised as follows.

The first section provides information about the silk industry in Lyon, its increasing reliance on female labour, and the economic crises that it experienced during the second half of the eighteenth century. These crises were quite different in nature but, as we shall see, all had a serious impact on the *Grand Fabrique* and its activities. Section 2 investigates how female workers in the silk industry coped with economic uncertainty, either through legal avenues (such as making claims to the authorities for unpaid wages) or by working outside legal structures. It shows that women's work and remuneration were particularly important during times of crisis, not only for individuals but also for families, and analyses the ambivalent attitude of guildsmen and town authorities towards female labour. The last

section is devoted to a particular form of illicit activity, in which women were the principal actors: pilfering of raw materials for resale (known as *piquage d'once*). By focusing on one specific and well-documented type of behaviour, we can see that *piquage d'once* was clearly an adaptive strategy not only for the female 'proletariat' at the *Grande Fabrique*, but also for silk-workers' families during specific moments of crisis.

2. Silk-making in Lyon: a dominant industry exposed to crises

In Lyon during the eighteenth century, the largest economic sector was textiles produced by craftsmen and this was dominated by the silk manufacturers (38.35 per cent of the trade workforce in 1789).[5] It is difficult to place a value on silk production, since the sources are neither coherent nor consistent: Pierre Cayez suggests a figure of just over 40 million *livres* in 1789, of which 26 to 27 million *livres* could be attributed to the export market.[6] The term *Grande Fabrique* refers to the silk corporations which had grouped themselves into a large cooperative industry—it was in fact run along the same lines as a traditional craft organization.[7] These guilds handled different types of manufacture, the most prestigious being the silk weavers. Apart from wholesalers (*marchands-banquiers*) and their staff (less than 100 persons in all), there were 350 master merchants (*marchands fabricants*) at the top of the pyramid who gave work to dependent weavers (*maîtres ouvriers en soie*, around 8,000 in 1732) and small independent weavers (*maîtres à façon*, around 700 in 1732). The *maîtres ouvriers* worked at home on piece rates for the *marchands fabricants* from whom they received designs and thread. The *maîtres à façon* were sole traders and, like the *marchands fabricants*, had direct access to the market, a privilege prohibited for *maîtres ouvriers*.[8] By the mid-eighteenth century (1744), the *maîtres à façon* lost their right to sell their woven goods directly to consumers: the merchants obtained exclusive control of sales and master weavers were reduced to the level of virtual wage workers.[9] Thus, inside the *Grande Fabrique,* two different hierarchies were interwoven: one covering the classic craft guilds of masters and journeymen; and the other covering commercial activities with the merchant dominating a mass of master weavers and a wide range of male and female workers.[10] Moreover, several other guilds, such as *passementiers* and wimple makers (*guimpiers*), played a key role in the *Grande Fabrique*'s production process. In addition to these workers, there were pattern-makers, who were employed by merchants, and some 2,500 embroiderers (who were mostly women) of gold, silver and silk working in their homes for approximately 50 merchant embroiderers who were not organized in guilds.

The *Grande Fabrique* was, with its mass of employees and annual turnover, one of the largest 'industries' in eighteenth-century France, but it was still a craft-based structure through family workshop units located within Lyon's city limits. Following the development of the drawloom by Claude Dangon in 1605, these workshops produced fabrics with large motifs using a variety of colours, known as '*façonnés*' (flowered silks) – fabric using gold and silver threads were known as 'brocade'. This system required help from several assistants, who were mostly female: *dévideuses* (unwinders of skeins of thread), *ourdisseuses* (makers of warps), *tireuses de cordes* (drawgirls who pulled weights for the looms), *liseuses de dessin* (pattern-readers), and *faiseuses de lacs* (thread-lifters).[11] Based on earlier restrictions, regulations issued in 1702, 1737 and 1744 prevented *maîtres ouvriers* (master weavers) from having more than four looms in their workshop – though there were a few exceptions – and this ban remained in force until 1786.[12]

The way the *Grande Fabrique* was organized during the sixteenth century is often presented as a demonstration of how women were excluded from all opportunities of obtaining financial autonomy.[13] From 1596, all the guild regulations forbade women from working on the loom and only wives, widows and daughters of masters were allowed to practise weaving. Wives had permission to help their husbands at the loom and, until 1744, they could also work for other masters outside the home. In September 1752, a general survey of persons working in the *Grande Fabrique* indicated that, of the 3,638 master

weavers, 'two-thirds were married and that, setting aside widowers and widows, their wives constituted an additional workforce of some 2,400 persons'.[14] The work carried out by married women was made possible by regularly placing children with rural families.[15] In 1667, in order to facilitate the transmission of tools and looms, widows of silk-weavers were allowed to use the husband's workshop and continue his trade, an arrangement confirmed in regulations issued in 1744. Furthermore, in the event of a widow's remarriage with a journeyman, he was allowed to take over the husband's loom. Similarly, daughters of master silk weavers could transfer their father's commerce to their husband. All these arrangements were indicative of the competence and skills acquired by women within masters' families. However, they were not permitted to become silk-weavers in their own right, unlike guild regulations in Venice in 1754.[16]

Female workers in the *Grande Fabrique* therefore fell into two major categories. In 1788, one group consisted of 3,924 masters' wives 'working in the production of fabrics', 5,575 unsalaried sons and daughters of *maîtres ouvriers,* and 1,015 waged female workers working on the loom: this last category was in fact clandestine work that was not recognized until September 1786 by a decree issued by the *Conseil d'État*. The second group covered more than 10,000 *dévideuses*, *ourdisseuses*, *tireuses de cordes*, etc. who were in fact servants on very low wages with no opportunities for social mobility. These tasks were given to young girls from Bugey, Dauphiné and Savoy.[17] Their wages and work schedules depended on variations in demand and the salaries of their masters, thus creating a high level of precariousness for this workforce. After 1704, *tireuses de cordes* were hired on an annual basis, since only married women and widows could work as day-workers.[18] This was a way of guaranteeing their attachment to a master and a sign that masters were reacting to the 'crisis' caused by mobile female labour by completely reconfiguring their conditions of employment. A similar survey in 1752 placed *dévideuses* and *tireuses de cordes* in the category of domestic servants, an ambiguity highlighted by Monica Martinat, amongst others. Many orphans from the Hôpital de la Charité were sent to work for master weavers as *dévideuses*.[19] Employment records kept by several master weavers confirm this confusion of tasks, positions and wages relating to apprentices, domestic servants and labourers.[20] Female workers thus made up a very large proportion of the 'true proletariat of the Lyon factory', while family members played a fundamental role in the workshops.[21]

Although the silk industry was the main driver for the Lyon economy (silk production doubled between 1720 and 1760 and continued to grow until 1786), it was very sensitive to variations in the market, as was all manufacturing linked to luxury goods. In total, there were 17 crises and work stoppages between 1689 and 1791. Although there were a few random downturns in production during the first half of the eighteenth century, such crises became more common after 1750 and continued until the end of the Old Regime. The many reasons behind them reveal the dependence of the *Grande Fabrique* on supplies of silk threads from Piedmont (silk shortages in 1750–1753 and 1786–1789) and closure of trading opportunities: war (1756–1763), general stagnation of world trade (1766), royal and noble funerals (in 1774, during a period of national mourning for Louis XV, the *Académie de Lyon* reflected on the best way to employ silk workers during crises at the *Grande Fabrique*[22]), monetary difficulties (1784), fashion trends (demand for light and cotton fabrics in the 1770s and 1780s), and foreign competition (1786–1787), as well as overproduction (1770–1771).[23]

Many of these serious crises were caused by a combination of several factors, as can be seen in the crisis of 1750, for example. That year, bad weather had seriously affected the silk harvest in Piedmont and Piedmontese merchants 'quickly put their silks on the market at a high price', while silk produced in France could 'only provide work for our factories for a period of four months'.[24] In addition to this conjunctural supply crisis, Lyon's silk industry was facing competition from other factories in the kingdom and from abroad, as well as from fabrics imported from India, even though these were theoretically banned until 1759. Merchants found themselves forced to lay off workers and the *Grande Fabrique* had to take out a loan of 75,000 *livres* in order to provide some help for their poor members.

That year, the number of newly inducted master weavers fell to 67, compared to 127 in 1749. This crisis dragged on until the middle of 1753.[25] The most serious crises, even short ones, brought many looms and workshops to a total halt and left hundreds of workers without employment. They occurred in rapid succession during the last decades of the Old Regime, though there were short periods of recovery: the number of working looms dropped from 11,356 in 1777 to 7,500 in 1788.[26]

The archives of the *Grande Fabrique* and those of the *Consulat* (city council) tribunal provide two valuable and complementary sets of source documents for studying the impact of these crises on the internal operations at the *Grande Fabrique* and for highlighting the strategies used by families and individuals when faced with these recurring difficulties. These source documents, though their existence was known, had not been studied systematically and collectively until now. In the eighteenth century, during which the *Grande Fabrique* continued to grow in importance, the Lyon *Consulat* was dominated by a majority of merchants. The *Prévôt des marchands* and the *échevins* nominated the guild masters and kept records of the guilds' rules and statutes. The *Consulat* was the primary tribunal for hearing cases between workers or between workers and *marchands fabricants*, including cases relating to workers' wages. It held free hearings for infractions of guild regulations that did not require a transcript and trials for crimes with serious repercussions for the *Fabrique*, such as transporting merchandise to foreign countries and theft of silk. The *Prévôt des marchands* and the *échevins* thus acted as the police and jurisdiction for the Arts & Crafts guilds and recorded the minutes of audiences held for this purpose every week at the City Hall. Here we have an insight into a summary justice system covering issues, disputes and infractions relating to their rules and statutes and cases where the monetary value of the dispute was no higher, in theory, than 150 *livres*. The *maîtres gardes* of the *Grande Fabrique* (two merchants and a *maître ouvrier* designated by the *Consulat*) were required to make not only an annual and obligatory visit to all workshops and shops but also, and as often as possible, unannounced visits to workshops and stores of silk workers and to the homes of persons who were not members of the guild. These visits, which could be triggered by denunciations or suspicions of fraud, would invariably be followed by a transcript which was delivered to the *Consulat* together with the materials and fabrics confiscated. Its decision was usually handed down within days or weeks of the visit.[27] These procedures generated two different types of documents: a collection of transcripts and judgements deposited in the *Grande Fabrique* archives; and, some fifty registers of the *police des métiers* complete with a summary of conflicts and infringements to regulations of all Lyonnais guilds that had been submitted to the *Consulat* over more than a century.[28]

These sources are particularly interesting in documenting changes in economic conditions and social difficulties in the silk industry. From the gender perspective, such practical sources offer opportunities to give visibility to a number of women who would otherwise have disappeared from the classic corporate archives, since Lyon was essentially a city of masculine guilds. As a result, direct observations from these registers will allow us to nuance Michael Sonenscher's statement that women's work, because it was closely associated with the domestic economy, left no traces in tribunal archives.[29]

3. Women's work and remunerations: key issues in times of crisis

The families of silk-workers developed several strategies for confronting crises in their industry, though they cannot all be studied exhaustively in this article. Many *maîtres ouvriers* and, more importantly, craftsmen simply left Lyon to work elsewhere. The number of abandoned children multiplied, while the city sought to organize help for the poor.[30] With regard to the employment market, we will focus on analysing two phenomena that emerge from the sources we mentioned earlier: conflicts over female salaries, and issues relating to women's illicit work. Of course, demanding unpaid wages or working illegally seem to be pretty standard worker responses to low-paid and precarious jobs. We will analyse these phenomena in terms of family issues and of their significance during crises.

Françoise Bayard has shown that, over the long term, work-related conflicts were the most common reason for complaints to the *Sénéchaussée* (royal court in Lyon) in 1788 as they did a century earlier. During the eighteenth century, conflicts between equals (between journeymen or between masters) became less common than problems related to the hierarchy of guilds and apprenticeships, hiring of workers and, above all, salaries and unpaid accounts.[31] The *Consulat* records allow us to refine these observations. While qualified female workers were certainly not absent from these documents, the first impression when inspecting these registers is hearing, admittedly in intermittent or muffled occurrences, the voice of the feminine 'proletariat' which Maurice Garden describes as 'their dependence [being] such that one cannot even imagine them initiating a single industrial action'.[32] The family structure and the low visibility of the *canuts'* (master weavers) silk workshops explain why the *Grande Fabrique*'s assistants (waged girls and *dévideuses* whose status fell somewhere between domestic servant and day-worker), who were strictly controlled by masters and journeymen, had few opportunities for making their grievances heard.[33] The registers provide evidence of the constraints and obstacles against which these women had to fight or circumvent and the arguments structuring the wage system. But they also highlight the fact that at least some of these women knew how to take advantage of the opportunities offered by consular tribunals for being heard and putting forward their demands in order to receive payment of their wages.[34]

Somewhat surprisingly at first sight, certain crisis years such as 1750 do not appear to give rise to more complaints about unpaid wages from the lowest category of worker at the *Fabrique* – *tireuses de cordes* and *dévideuses* – at least according to the *Consulat* records. Surveys of these records seem to suggest the opposite, in fact, as these demands were much more frequent in 'normal' years than in periods of reduced markets and massive unemployment: 7.8 per cent of all entries in 1730, 6.5 per cent in 1740, but only 1.9 per cent in 1750. This extremely low figure can probably be explained in part, and particularly for *tireuses de cordes*, by the fact that even though these job contracts were, for the most part, annual contracts, masters were free to sack *tireuses de cordes*, especially when there was less work available: during the long crisis in 1750, many of these girls were just useless mouths to feed in periods of under-employment and so were fired and sent back to their home town – the same phenomenon reoccurred in 1759. These young girls were considered to be the first variable for adjustments during periods of crisis, when the loss of orders forced the *maîtres ouvriers* to reduce the number of active looms and encouraged them to give work to members of their family in order to reduce costs. Following the economic recovery in 1751, an assembly of the *Fabrique*'s *maîtres* and *marchands* noted that, despite the arrival of new orders, 'a large number of looms even though mounted could not work because *maîtres ouvriers* were having difficulty finding girls to do the work'. They voted a resolution to send agents into 'the mountains of Dauphiné and Savoy' to tell people that 'work had begun again' and to convince girls 'to return to the town and bring with them many others'.[35]

In 1770 however, about 9 per cent of cases involving the *Grande Fabrique* were brought by domestic girls, *dévideuses* and *ourdisseuses* demanding their wages – some 40 cases. As their claims were often made several months or several years after the claimants had left their employment, the amounts varied considerably, from a few *livres* to nearly 200 *livres*, depending on the period of work involved. This gives us an idea of the size of the problem of non-payment (or delays in payment) of wages and may also be indicative of the difficulties experienced by employers themselves during periods of economic crisis, unemployment and rising food prices. The early 1770s were indeed a period of massive increases in food prices: between August 1769 and July 1770, the price of wheat nearly doubled at the La Grenette market and was only reduced for a short while, thanks to the harvest of summer 1770 and the arrival of imported wheat, before rising again in September and staying high until spring 1771.[36] Meanwhile, the wealthy members of the *Confrérie de Notre-Dame de Confalon* set up a system of food banks for workers fired by the *Grande Fabrique* due to the over-production crisis in 1771.[37]

Conflicts over non-payment also affected the better qualified workers at the *Grande Fabrique* during this crisis. In addition to the *dévideuses* and *ourdisseuses* mentioned above, we find several *liseuses* and embroiderers among the silk factory's female workers demanding their unpaid wages. The situation of female embroiderers is particularly revealing, given the high level of sums due for a long and intricate task and the difficulties facing the silk manufacturing sector. On 7 August 1770, a *maître fabricant*'s wife submitted a claim for 136 *livres* for 68 days spent embroidering with her daughter at the house of another *maître fabricant* who was also an embroiderer. This sum was reduced to 48 *livres* to be settled by monthly payments of 10 *livres*.[38] Several cases also refer explicitly to underemployment in the silk sector during this period. Mlle Rouillet was forced to cancel, at a loss, the contracts she had signed with a tailor in October 1769 for the employment of his three daughters 'given that the embroidery business had fallen and she had no more work for them for the four years covered by the said contracts'; she sought to be released, 'given the circumstances of lack of work', from paying the damages and interest owed to the father, in vain – though the *Consulat* reduced these costs from 1,500 to 300 *livres*.[39]

Overall, these cases are interesting because they allow us to understand aspects of the employer/employee relationship that were not strictly speaking economic, and did not necessarily involve a relation of complete domination – since even female servants claimed and obtained redress from their employers. In the context of greater supervision of master weavers by master merchants after 1744, the *Consulat* showed that it was often more interested in improving the situation of women workers as they were a less costly workforce than men. But in times of crisis, it was also sensitive to the situation of poor masters who were unable to pay their wages. On the one hand, the sums demanded were sometimes reduced by the *Consulat*. On the other hand, the dependence of masters on the market and on orders from master merchants can be seen in the frequent demands submitted by masters' wives for rescheduling of their husbands' debts to payment of a few *livres* per month over several months.[40] On 12 February 1760, Françoise Mategon, a *tireuse de cordes*, claimed from Danival, a silk worker, the sum of 23 *livres* 15 *sols* 'the reminder of a year's wages that she had earned in his service'; Danival's wife acknowledged the debt but 'begged' that she be given a deferment of payment, which was granted on condition that she repay four *livres* a month.[41] On 28 April 1750, the *maître ouvrier* Garet, from whom a *dévideuse* demanded 69 *livres* 'the remainder of wages for work she had carried out for him', told the *Consulat* that he 'had no work, being in poverty' and requested a delay for paying the sum: he was allowed to repay the sum over 12 months.[42]

Quite apart from wage conflicts, the registers of the *police des métiers* allow us to shed light on a range of illicit practices linked to a fundamental aspect of the Old Regime economy, uncertainty.[43] They provide evidence of the different strategies for adapting to circumstances used by single individuals or families during economic crises. The difficulties linked to the economic crisis in 1770–1771 led to a strike by journeymen hatters, a movement which was not followed by any other guild: Maurice Garden has shown that silk workers, threatened by unemployment and anxious to maintain their precarious income, did not rebel during economic downturns.[44] However, this absence of collective strikes did not prevent workers from developing other strategies for their survival. Here again, this article cannot provide an exhaustive analysis. Illicit practices were an integral part of the economy and only an extremely detailed chronological study would allow us to shed light on those which became more widespread – or the object of very strict supervision or repression – in periods of crisis, such as, for example, dampening or greasing silks and gildings in order to make them easier to work and to improve productivity.[45] In order to analyse the household economy during periods of crisis, we will limit our discussion here to examining infractions relating to the work of women in the *Grande Fabrique*. Records of infringements of the guilds' statutes allow us to produce a more concrete analysis of the presence of women in the silk sector and to clarify the position taken by masters and city authorities with regard to illegal practices and women's work.

Maîtres ouvriers were often found guilty of having their servants, *tireuses de cordes* and other 'girls' work their looms, a practice which was strictly forbidden by a Consular Order in May 1696, reissued on 25 October 1701. Repetition of these prohibitions during the first half of the eighteenth century suggests that they were ineffective.[46] The Edict of October 1744 clearly refers to the scarcity of *tireuses de cordes*, due to 'the facility with which they could quit working for masters on tasks they were expected to carry out for the *Fabrique* in order to take up the work of daughters of masters and journeymen'. Among the offenders reported in the years 1755–1761 (a crisis caused by the Seven Years' War), we see many widows and silk *maîtres ouvriers* who employed country girls to work on their looms, including one 'from the province of Bugey', another 'wearing a peasant's dress', and others originally from Savoy and Dauphiné. Sometimes, city craftsmen' daughters – such as a dyer journeyman or a carpenter labourer – worked on the loom as 'journeywomen' and 'without rights'. On 30 December 1762, the *maîtres gardes* published a *Mémoire* 'on the difficulties that would arise if the factory allowed girls other than the daughters of masters to be involved in fabrication'.[47] The reiteration of complaints and bans, which coincided with periods of difficulty for the *Grande Fabrique*, seems merely to highlight a growing practice whereby *maîtres ouvriers* secretly hired women in order to reduce their labour costs, even though it led to throwing journeymen out of work. On 13 July 1770, five masters and a master's widow appeared before the *Consulat* for having 'hired for the looms girls who had no right or qualifications at the expense of real journeymen'; the cases against two defendants were dismissed as they were able to show that they employed four daughters of masters and two charity orphans, but the others were fined 30 *livres* each. Two more masters were found guilty of the same offence the following month and another four on 4 December.[48] Indeed, we can hypothesise that master weavers preferred to hire cheap female labour to work on their looms, while their daughters and wives were illegally employed in other workshops where they could find better wages. A weaver's household earned more when it produced medium quality cloth at home and its qualified womenfolk was hired by workshops producing more complex and more expensive fabrics.

This phenomenon allows us to emphasise the problems that the work of women caused, particularly during economic crises, and more precisely their access to employment in the weaving trade. Research carried out by Justin Godart, Maurice Garden and Daryl Hafter has analysed the somewhat paradoxical attitude of heads of households and workshops, at a time when liberal ideas were beginning to circulate. On the one hand, until the early 1780s, one of the technical issues for silk producers was the invention of a brocade loom that could be worked by one weaver alone and would eliminate *tireuses de cordes* from the process. On the other, *maîtres ouvriers*, who did not hesitate to employ these girls on the loom despite the regulations, refused systematically to offer them a official position, as liberal-minded *contrôleurs généraux* and *marchands fabricants* wished – because they feared that this would lead to an overall reduction in wages.[49]

Although the *maîtres ouvriers* and, more generally, masters of various corporations, remained opposed to liberating female employment, the somewhat ambiguous attitude adopted by the authorities towards women textile workers who infringed corporate bans reveals the gaps between social, economic and repressive standards in a global context of recurrent underemployment. It illustrates how the conservative city aldermen, in assuming the paternalist role traditionally attributed to the king, were expected both to protect the masters' monopolies from illicit competition and to ensure survival for poor women in the town. From this perspective, the relatively light sentences handed down by the *Consulat* against single women or widows – who were sometimes heads of families with very limited resources – could be interpreted as tolerance of activities that allowed them to escape poverty.[50] In addition, the *Consulat* and guild officers authorized certain women to practise their profession—on a case-by-case basis, and in complete contradiction of the professions' regulation. In the 1760s and 1770s some women were officially accepted as *maîtresses passementières*, even though there was no mention in the guild's regulations of women becoming masters before 1779. However, all the women admitted were either

sick or old or apparently spinsters who had worked for a long time as journeywomen. On 16 January 1770, Marceline Fayon, ‘a *passementière* journeywoman’ for 30 years and stricken by ‘the infirmities of her old age’, was received as *maîtresse ouvrière* in the guild ‘with the right to have a single loom … in order to work for merchants in the guild’. Such a promotion in fact allowed her to have a pension in her old age.[51]

Periods of conjunctural crisis thus allow us to observe, on the one hand, how *maîtres ouvriers* sought to preserve the interests of family workshops, to the detriment of official recognition of work by qualified women, and, on the other, how city authorities managed to create opportunities for women in difficulty – the only argument that the guilds would accept. In total, our attempts to quantify the number of circumventions of rules and of fluctuations due to crises can only be met with frustration since, by definition, the persons involved wanted to remain invisible. For one offence however, the pilfering of raw materials called *piquage d'once* (a form of embezzlement), the recurring crises during the second half of the eighteenth century does appear to have been the reason for considerable growth in this unusual form of underground economy, thus allowing us to reconstruct its networks and analyse its links with the household economy.

4. Crises, household and the underground economy: *piquage d'once*

The felony known as *piquage d'once* is described in a note sent by the Community of the *Grande Fabrique* to its lawyer in 1711: ‘These are the type of merchants who have shops in the streets filled with people and workers; they buy and fence silks and gold threads stolen by workers from their masters and merchants, they even encourage workers to engage in this type of crime and then, with all the silks gathered from many sources, they produce fabrics’.[52] The silk industry's decentralized structure clearly encouraged this type of fraud.

This form of pilferage was particularly widespread in the history of the preindustrial workplace and perfectly illustrates the fine line between tolerance and proscription, perquisites and embezzlement, and the licit and illicit economy.[53] As Michael Sonescher has shown in his study of Parisian and Lyonnais joiners and carpenters, the right to recuperate waste materials from the workshop was recognized initially as part of the corporative ideal, the ‘moral community’ constituted by the guilds. Often practised by women, recuperation of pieces of wood in the workshop was ‘an established component of the household resources for married journeymen’.[54] In a pre-industrial economy characterized by a ‘composite reality’ of wages, this form of ‘payment in kind’ also gave workers – especially underpaid female workers – a supplement to their wages.[55] It sometimes took the form of illicit sampling as part of the ‘putting-out’ system, as demonstrated by John Styles in his research on England's textile proto-industry.[56] Stolen materials could then be used to produce items of lesser quality or resold at more reasonable prices through informal networks of workers and small dealers: in Norwich, a third of those convicted for receiving embezzled goods between 1749 and 1778 were women. As well as providing additional income for the household budget for both male and female workers, illegal appropriation of materials thus contributed to the emergence of a more diverse consumer market.

However, this usage, considered to be customary and morally acceptable for workers, was gradually being redefined as a crime.[57] The *Consulat* denounced the practice in 1645 on the grounds that it demonstrated ‘the infidelity of [silk] workers’. Already, the Regulation of 1554 required that merchants and masters both maintain a ledger in which they would enter details on the quantities of silk, gold and silver delivered and received, as well as the textiles produced with their weight, lengths and type of cloth, and the advance on wages; in the event of disagreement between two parties, their registers could thus be compared.[58] In 1711, the regulations at the *Grande Fabrique* required that workers return the totality of silk offcuts to their employer, the master merchant, who would then reimburse them at cost price. This provision was confirmed in later regulations (1737 and 1744) which barred *maîtres ouvriers* from ‘having fabrics carried anywhere other than to the shops of city merchants whose profession was

to sell them' in order to prevent 'secret trading and larceny'.[59] During the first half of the eighteenth century, the accusation of theft of thread was clearly used as a weapon by merchants for curbing the excessive independence of master weavers.[60] As shown by Carlo Poni, this accusation was often coupled with another relating to the use of stolen designs: theft of threads and designs allowed *maîtres à façon* to deliver cheap imitation fabrics of inferior quality to shops through re-use of offcuts.[61] These *maîtres à façon*, 'with no experience in managing a factory', were openly accused of ruining the reputation of the *Grande Fabrique*.[62] Broadly speaking, such presumption of dishonesty mirrored the very negative image of the lower classes held by the Lyonnais notables during the eighteenth century and in particular of silk workers whose supposed idleness opened the door to all sorts of criminal behaviour.[63]

The Consular Ordinance of 14 February 1770 renewed the prohibitions of 1744 by forbidding silk workers from 'selling, trading, pawning or keeping' silks that had been given to them by merchants, for which they could be punished as 'domestic thieves'. In addition, all other persons 'of any profession, sex, age, class or condition' who bought or accepted as payment any silk or other material used in the *Fabrique*, including anything made from off-cuts, or sold them could be punished as 'fencers and accomplices in theft'.[64] The potential sentences for these two crimes were extremely severe and this severity does not seem to diminish over time: since 1711, fines could be as high as 500 *livres* and were sometimes accompanied by banishment for repeated offences. On 26 June 1748, Charpenet, a *maître ouvrier,* was sentenced to the galleys for life and his wife to the pillory and nine years of banishment for having 'kept back' silks given to them.[65] In July 1765, a cobbler's wife from Saint-Chamond, who had been condemned the previous year to five years banishment for fencing, was arrested for having broken the terms of her banishment. The *Consulat*'s sentence, confirmed by a Parliamentary decree, sentenced her to the pillory, a whipping and branding and being 'confined for the rest of her days in a prison for the crime of *piquage d'onces*'; her husband was condemned to the pillory and then banished 'for having her in his house and participating [in her crime]'.[66]

Despite the extreme severity of these sentences, documents deposited at the City Archives in Lyon show that the number of cases of *piquage d'once* increased significantly in the second half of the eighteenth century when the silk industry encountered serious and periodic economic difficulties. Surveys of the *police des métiers*' registers found no references to cases of *piquage d'once* for the year 1740 and only 4 cases in 1730; however, 8 cases were registered in 1750, 24 in 1760, 21 in 1770, and 8 more in 1780.[67] These figures are only the tip of the iceberg since much more substantial judicial files involving men and women have been kept in the archives of the *Grande Fabrique*: there were only 39 cases in the first half of the eighteenth century, in stark contrast with the 150 transcripts registered between 1750 and 1785, precisely at the time when the *Grande Fabrique* was experiencing crisis after crisis.[68] As always when it is necessary to analyse practices which are expected, by definition, to remain discreet, the high number of arrests may also suggest that *pilferage* was growing and, on the other hand, that the authorities were becoming much more vigilant about cases of fraud. The following discussion is based on an exhaustive – and, to date, the only – analysis of the *Grand Fabrique*'s archives for the entire eighteenth century.[69]

It seems plausible, as has been suggested in other studies focusing particularly on England, that there was much more tolerance of *pilferage* in times of prosperity. During crisis periods, however, and sharp falls in the amount of work available, the *marchands fabricants* and city authorities were extremely keen to stamp out pilferage which, because it appeared to encourage illicit and shoddy wares, undermined the reputation of Lyon silk on foreign markets.[70] The years 1760 to 1766, which corresponded, as we have said earlier, a period of conjunctural difficulties for the *Grande Fabrique*, the *maîtres gardes* launched a campaign of systematic searches in the homes of men and women in the guilds including those not working in the silk trade but who were suspected of practising *piquage d'once*. The police transcripts from these 'visits', even when they were fruitless, provide evidence of heightened sensitivity on the part of the authorities to this phenomenon during a period of poor trade – this sensitivity seems to have

attenuated in the 1780s when, following aborted reforms by Turgot, the tensions within the *Grande Fabrique* seemed to focus more on creating opportunities for loom work to male and female workers 'without qualifications' than on pilfering. In addition, these transcripts provide us with precise information on the 'public' targeted by these raids. The thirty-four fruitless visits carried out in the first six months of 1760 in the homes of 'various individuals suspected of buying from all and sundry and where they found nothing' were far from focusing exclusively on female and male silk workers, but also targeted persons working certain minor activities in commerce, transport and crafts which could serve as a cover for illicit trade.[71]

Daryl Hafter has insisted on the fact that Lyonnais female workers, because they were excluded from becoming masters in most professions in the silk industry, took advantage of their technical skills to steal and resell raw materials, sometimes to the masters themselves.[72] They developed, quite illegally, commercial practices that circumvented constraints placed on women workers by the *Grande Fabrique*.[73] Hafter's seminal study has shown the structural importance of these 'off-market enterprises' to the whole city economy and to the history of women in business. Theft and fraud 'went hand in glove with legitimate work'.[74] They created work for the poor and flexibility for businesses which could also justify the masters' tolerance of *piquage d'once*.[75] Such affirmations were particularly pertinent during periods of crisis. A detailed chronological approach to these infractions, based on an exhaustive analysis of the *Grande Fabrique* archives, allows us to understand that *piquage d'once* became, like other forms of illicit trade, a safety valve in 'the economy of makeshifts' among the poorer social classes.[76] But cases registered during the crisis years of 1756–1763 and again in 1766 lift the veil on a second aspect of this felony: its importance for the family – in another words, its contribution to the household budget. This dimension was not included in Hafter's analysis since she was more interested in *piquage d'once* as a form of 'clandestine female entrepreneurship' or empowerment for dominated female workers in the *Grande Fabrique*.

The Seven Years' War was devastating for the Lyonnais silk industry's markets and led to suspension of work and widespread poverty. In November 1756, the King's Council refused to grant a loan of 50,000 *livres* to the *Grande Fabrique*, which it needed to help its members. To raise the necessary funds from the city's inhabitants, the *Grande Fabrique* launched a subscription. According to a summary document produced a few years later, the number of looms had fallen from 9,404 to 9,017 between 1752 and 1761, while the number of masters rose from 3,638 to 3,650 over the same period – these figures must of course be taken carefully, but they are indicative of a global slowdown in the silk industry.[77] In 1766, stagnation in world trade once again caused the factory to be closed down and the city was forced to provide food for silk workers. At a meeting on 11 April, representatives of the *Grande Fabrique* decided to set up a subscription 'in favour of poor factory workers without work', to which 'all the merchants were invited to contribute'; 10,000 *livres* from the *Grande Fabrique*'s reserves was used to establish the fund.[78] In total, 60 transcripts for *piquage d'once* were preserved for the period 1756 to 1763 and 18 for the single year of 1766. Even if these only represent the tip of the iceberg, they nevertheless give us an insight into socio-economic issues and its impact on family budgets during periods of crisis.

In the first instance, they show that *piquage d'once* was far from being an exclusively feminine activity. A wide range of male and female players throughout the production and distribution chain were actively involved in this illicit activity. Silk was usually stolen by *dévideuses* or *ourdisseuses*, the first workers to come in contact with the silk and then, moving up the production chain, by clerks, journeymen, and even master weavers. The threads, both silk and gold, were removed from the reels, the difference in weight being disguised by deliberately greasing or dampening the remaining threads before they were returned to the *marchand fabricant*. Initially, this phase appears that the key factor was not so much the perpetrator's sex *per se,* as his or her easy access to the raw materials. As can be seen in the numerous arrests of single women in possession of silk for which they could not justify the

provenance, women were mostly accused as acting as peddlers or brokers for distributing stolen silks. Lyon's street layout, with its narrow, twisting streets and back passages on the peninsula and right bank of the river Saône, make it easy for people to circulate without being seen and thus facilitated an underground economy.[79]

Several affairs give us an insight into feminine networks involving both work colleagues and family relations. On 27 March 1755 a *dévideuse de soie* appeared before the *Grande Fabrique*'s *maîtres gardes* and declared that she had worked 'as loyally as possible' for two of Lyon's *marchands fabricants*. She complained about thefts of silk given to her for warping and strongly suspected one of the women 'warping in her workshop'. She claimed that this woman had unwisely shown 'some money' and a new pair of shoes to one of her friends. The suspect soon admitted that she had indeed stolen some of the silk she had been given for warping and that she had sold it for 24 *sous* to Gadan, another *dévideuse* who was married to a man working in a print shop, having arranged the sale with Gadan's niece whose father had died and 'whose mother was ill and a beggar'. A search was immediately carried out at Gadan's house and several *roquets* (spools) of silk were found. On the same day, Gadan was arrested in the street with a package containing several offcuts of silk in different colours and a set of copper scales. This was proof enough for the *maîtres gardes* that she 'earned a living as a *piqueuse d'once*' and was going to 'buy other silks which she stored in a warehouse away from her home'.[80] Two months later, another affair led to the discovery of a small clandestine workshop run by Marguerite Guillin, 'an adult woman with the profession of schoolmistress': following a tip-off, a young Savoyard woman was found in Guillin's home weaving handkerchiefs on a loom. This girl claimed that this was for Marguerite's brother who had provided the silk and 'to whom she sold them from time to time'. Marguerite Guillin was immediately found guilty of *piquage d'onces* and sentenced to a fine of 500 *livres*.[81]

A few women trading in fashion and clothing were also charged with these infractions: Widow Hérard, a *bourgeoise* and reseller of fine clothes (*revendeuse à la toilette*), was sentenced for repeated offences of *piquage d'once* in 1760.[82] In 1763 Demoiselle Allard, a *marchande de modes*, was accused of paying an almost blind former silk journeyman for silks stolen by a *maître ouvrier* who had fallen on hard times '[and] had no bread for his children'.[83] At the other end of the chain, *maîtres ouvriers* who reused stolen silk were heavily condemned when they could not produce a purchase and sales ledger, invoice or day book to prove how they had obtained it or when invoices and chits had unfortunately been kept and provided proof of illicit trade.[84] In many cases, fraud played an integral part in the family budget based on both legal and illegal sources of income, according to need and opportunity. As can be seen in numerous transcripts of cases against married couples, some husbands sought to cast the blame on their spouse. One example was the Bouchés, a bourgeois couple: the wife tried to hide compromising merchandise during the search, while the husband claimed 'that he did not know that his wife had any silk'. In another case, Flandrin, a vinegar-maker, became angry with his wife and reduced her to tears, 'stating that he was no knowledge of this bad trade'. In November 1759, it was thanks to the testimony of his wife before the *Consulat* – a phenomenon already mentioned earlier – that Sir Atalante, *marchand* and *maître fabricant*, who was suspected of 'buying anything and everything', was given back his unfairly confiscated merchandise. Among silk-workers, fraud could become a family business, in the same way as legitimate work: arrested while delivering silk to Demoiselle Roux, an 'adult spinster' and seller of canvasses, threads and haberdashery who was suspected of *piquage d'once*, one young girl of about 20 said that her father, a silk worker, had sent her to sell it 'in order to pay his journeymen', which information was confirmed by her father.[85]

Piquage d'once sometimes appears to be the only alternative to poverty, whatever the family situation of the accused. During a raid, Claude Mortier, a *maître ouvrier* condemned for *piquage d'once* in January 1759, declared 'that he did what he could to survive'. A month and half later, the *maître guimpier* Dumas and his wife, in whose house was found a packet of silk of doubtful origin, stated 'that from now on they would respect the regulations, that they had six small children for whom they begged

for mercy on this first occasion'. Widow Pulignieux, housewife and 'advanced in age', said in her defence 'that she was about to go to the *Charité* [one of the town's hospitals], that she had to earn a living somehow'.[86] The *Consulat* was often moved by such situations of real distress, since the goods confiscated from Dumas were returned and he was let off without a fine, 'as he had promised to respect the regulations from now on'. This was far from an isolated case, as fines were often replaced by a simple reminder of the law or recorded but clearly not enforced. One example of this attitude was the leniency shown to the Gardelle couple (a tobacco merchant and his wife, a comb seller), who received repeated sentences, at least four fines over three years. This did not prevent them from continuing to commit offences.[87] Between 1761 and 1763 and again in 1766, numerous transcripts contain references to 'inadequate resources', indicating that persons convicted for *piquage d'once* were unable to pay the – exorbitant – amount for the fine: when the bailiff went to the home of the offenders, a relative would sometimes say that they 'were in hiding' because they 'feared incarceration of their persons'; the bailiff usually decided not to confiscate their furniture and belongings, since their low value would not cover the cost of the process.[88]

Several summaries of decisions confirm the low rate of payment of fines for *piquage d'once*: in the last six months of 1766, for 13 cases issuing fines of 500 *livres*, the court received a mere 1,408 *livres* in cash, while 262 *livres* 10 *sols* was raised from the sale of confiscated silks and gildings.[89] It is all the more surprising that a fifth of the total sum had been paid, given the obvious poverty of many offenders and the moderate sums of many fines. This could be interpreted as an indication that some wealthy merchants and *maîtres fabricants* were involved in these fraudulent activities or that there were opportunities for high profits (though it is impossible to know how much) from this illicit trade.[90] In the mid-1780s, a period that saw yet another downturn in Lyon's silk industry, a number of cases indicate that the authorities had become more indulgent towards offenders and would sometimes go so far as to limit sentences to the confiscation of stolen silk without imposing the statutory fines, even in cases of repeat offenders.[91]

5. Conclusion

In total, a collective and unprecedented analysis of the registers of the *police des métiers* and the archives of the *Grande Fabrique* has made it possible to obtain a very precise idea of how families working in the silk industry reacted to the many crises facing the *Grande Fabrique* during the years between 1750 and 1780. It shed light on the innovative strategies, whether licit or illicit, used by female and male workers in the textile industry to overcome the uncertainties in their daily life and to generate an additional source of income during periods of crisis. From this perspective, one of the most interesting aspects of these documents lies in their ability to bring a certain number of women out from the invisibility and marginality in which the traditional sources of economic life have long relegated them while simultaneously shedding light on the *agency* and autonomy, however fleeting, of these silk workers. Wives of *maîtres ouvriers* involved in *piquage d'once, tireuses de cordes* working illegally on the loom, embroiderers claiming their unpaid wages: these women developed a variety of strategies for ensuring that they and their families could survive in periods of economic crisis – by taking advantage of skills often acquired informally in the home, calling on city institutions in their rôle as protector of the poor, drawing on family and professional networks, or becoming involved in illicit market practices which were more or less tolerated by the authorities, since this provided sustenance for the most needy. At another level, the question of institutional recognition of women working on looms was a key issue during the conflicts that took place within the *Grande Fabrique* during the second half of the eighteenth century. Here, Lyon seems to have been out of step with other French cities where growth in several economic and manufacturing sectors, and in particular in the textile sector, favoured the entry of women in their guilds during the eighteenth century.[92] This was no doubt due to the influence of the conservative stance taken by the guilds' masters during the structural and economic crises that impacted Lyon silk

industry after 1750. It was not until the Council Decree of 3 September 1786 that women, without distinction, were authorized to work on looms. This legislation led to grievances from the community, who was worried about seeing women, until then employed in inferior tasks, taking the place of male workers and causing a decline in salaries. The extent to which the Decree of 1786 had any real impact on skilled employment of women has yet to be evaluated. Three years later, the French Revolution was a disaster for the *Grande Fabrique,* which was already in serious decline and where women still represented 69% of its workforce. The abolition of the guilds in 1791 removed the last institutional barriers to female labour, but the decline of the *Grande Fabrique* continued until the early years of the nineteenth century. It was not until the reign of Napoleon and a renewed period of prosperity in the silk sector that a number of women emerged as mistresses of workshops.[93] Even if most of the women working in the *Grande Fabrique* were still performing ill-paid auxiliary tasks, the new-found autonomy of women with their own businesses appears to be the most long-lasting outcome of the crises and struggles of the previous century.

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[1] Maurice Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1970); Justin Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie: monographie du tisseur lyonnais* (Lyon, 1899).
[2] Anna Bellavitis, *Women's work and rights in early modern urban Europe* (London, 2018), chapter 14.
[3] Daryl M. Hafter, *Women at work in preindustrial France* (University Park, 2007), 123–43.
[4] For a recent overwiew, see Bellavitis, *Women's work*, chapter 13 and 16.
[5] André Pelletier ed., *Histoire de Lyon des origines à nos jours* (Lyon, 2007), 480–1.
[6] Pierre Cayez, *Métiers Jacquard et hauts fourneaux. Aux origines de l'industrie* lyonnaise (Lyon, 1978), 52–3.
[7] Suppressed by Turgot in 1776, the guilds were recreated in Lyon by the Decree of January 1777. The organization of the *Grande Fabrique* remained more or less unchanged until the French Revolution.
[8] Maurice Garden, 'Ouvriers et artisans au XVIIIe siècle. L'exemple lyonnais et les problèmes de classification', in René Favier and Laurence Fontaine eds., *Maurice Garden, un historien dans la ville* (Paris, 2008), 87–112, here 88–91; Carlo Poni, 'Fashion as flexible production: the strategies of the Lyon silk merchants in the eighteenth century', in Charles F. Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin eds., *World of possibilities. Flexibility and mass production in Western industrialization* (Cambridge, 1997), 37–74, here 47–8.
[9] Daryl M. Hafter, 'Women who wove in the eighteenth-century silk industry of Lyon', in Daryl M. Hafter ed., *European women and preindustrial craft* (Bloomington, 1995), 42–64, here 42; Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 389.
[10] Garden, 'Ouvriers et artisans', 89–91.
[11] Pelletier ed., *Histoire de Lyon*, 482–4; 87.
[12] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 180–1.
[13] Jean-François Budin, 'Les ouvrières de la soie à Lyon au XVIIIe siècle', in Maurice Hamon ed., *Le travail avant la révolution industrielle* (Paris, 2002), 117–26, here 117–18.
[14] Archives municipales de Lyon (hereafter AML), HH 540, September 1752.
[15] Olwen Hufton, 'Women and the family economy in eighteenth-century France', *French Historical Studies* **9**, 1 (1975), 1–22, here 13–4; Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais*, 116–40.
[16] Hafter, *Women at work*, 133; Hafter, 'Women', 51; Marcello Della Valentina, 'Il setificio salvato dalle donne: le tessitrici veneziane nel Settecento', in Anna Bellavitis, Nadia Maria Filippini and Tiziana Plebani eds., *Spazi, potteri, diritti delle donne a Venezia in età moderna* (Verona, 2012), 321–35.
[17] Budin, 'Les ouvrières'; Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais*; Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*; Hafter, 'Women'; Daryl M. Hafter, 'Il lavoro delle donne nella Francia preindustriale: un dibattito storiografico', *Genesis* **7**, 1–2 (2008), 139–63, here 158–62; Daryl M. Hafter, 'The programmed brocade loom and the "decline of the drawgirl"', in Martha Moore Trescott, ed., *Dynamos and virgins revisited: women and technological change in history* (London, 1979), 49–66.
[18] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 173.
[19] Monica Martinat, 'Travail et apprentissages des femmes à Lyon au XVIIIe siècle', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome – Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines* **123**, 1 (2011), 11–24, here 17.
[20] See for instance Archives départementales du Rhône (hereafter ADR), 8 B 750/2, 1773–1774; 8 B 763/1, 1751–1753.
[21] Garden, 'Ouvriers et artisans', 89.
[22] Pelletier ed., *Histoire de Lyon*, 618–9.
[23] Pelletier ed., *Histoire de Lyon*, 505–7, 615; Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 206–25, 228–45.
[24] AML, HH 538, 'Mémoire concernant la manufacture des étoffes d'or, d'argent et de soye de la ville de Lyon', 1751.
[25] AML, HH 541, 1 April 1755; Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 233.
[26] Cayez, *Métiers Jacquard*, 43–4.
[27] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 199–202, 333; HH 528, 'Statuts et règlement', 1744.
[28] AML, HH 500–560; HH 214–267, 1667–1781.
[29] Michael Sonenscher, *Work and wages. Natural law, politics & the eighteenth-century French trades* (Cambridge, 1989), 66–7.
[30] Julie Hardwick, 'Parasols and poverty. Conjugal marriage, global economy, and rethinking the consumer revolution', in Simon Middleton and James Shaw eds, *Market ethics and practices, c. 1300–*

1850 (London, 2017), 129–49; Jean-Pierre Gutton, *La société et les pauvres. L'exemple de la généralité de Lyon, 1534–1789* (Paris, 2018).
[31] Françoise Bayard, 'Les conflits du travail portés en justice, Lyon, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle', in *Le travail avant la révolution industrielle* (Nancy, 2006), 71–80.
[32] Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais*, 572.
[33] Garden, 'Ouvriers et artisans', 100–101.
[34] On women's ability to use the legal process in its many forms, see Julie Hardwick's extensive work, especially *Family business: litigation and the political economies of daily life in seventeenth-century France* (Oxford, 2009), and 'Women "working" the law: gender, authority and legal process in early modern France', *Journal of Women's History* **9**, 3 (1997), 28–49.
[35] AML, HH 538, 16 July 1751.
[36] AML, BB 337, BB 338 and BB 339.
[37] Pelletier ed., *Histoire de Lyon*, 610.
[38] AML, HH 260, 28 March, 13 July, 7 August 1770.
[39] AML, HH 260, 13 July 1770. See also 8 August 1770.
[40] See for instance AML, HH 260, 20 February and 6 March 1770.
[41] AML, HH 252, 12 February 1760.
[42] AML, HH 242, 28 April 1750.
[43] Jean-Yves Grenier, *L'économie d'Ancien Régime. Un monde de l'échange et de l'incertitude* (Paris, 1996), 9–15.
[44] Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais*, 584; AML, HH 260, 14 February 1770.
[45] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 185, 476, 480; AML, HH 260, 13 February and 4 December 1770.
[46] AML, 6 Fi 00265, 25 October 1701; 6 F 00307, 4 November 1739; 6 Fi 00310, 19 July 1743; 6 Fi 00316, 2 October 1744.
[47] AML, HH 541, 13 March 1755; HH 543, 10 and 23 May 1757; HH 544, 2 March 1759; HH 545, 25 April 1760; HH 547, 7 September 1761; HH 548, 4 September 1761.
[48] AML, HH 260, 13 July, 7 August and 4 December 1770
[49] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 358; Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais*, 578; Hafter, 'The programmed brocade loom'; Hafter, 'Women who wove', 54–8; Hafter, *Women at work*, 196–9.
[50] Initiatives taken by city authorities on behalf of poor women employed in the silk sector are described for Venice in the sixteenth century and Barcelona in the seventeenth century, see Bellavitis, *Women's work*, 201–5.
[51] AML, HH 260, 16 January 1770. See also HH 169, 1 December 1761, 30 November 1769.
[52] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 471.
[53] The following analysis was made by Liliane Hilaire-Pérez, 'Le vol de déchets dans l'industrie en France et en Angleterre au XVIIIe siècle. Jalons pour une histoire comparée de l'*embezzlement*', in Benoît Garnot ed., *La petite délinquance du Moyen Âge à l'époque contemporaine* (Dijon, 1998), 281–308.
[54] Sonenscher, *Work and Wages*, 208–9 and 259–63.
[55] Grenier, *L'économie d'Ancien Régime*, 255; Jane Humphries and Benjamin Schneider, 'Spinning the industrial revolution', *The Economic History Review* **72**, 1 (2019), 126–55, here 144; Deborah Valenze, *The first industrial woman* (Oxford, 1995), 72–3.
[56] John Styles, 'Embezzlement, industry, and the law in England, 1500–1800', in Maxine Berg, Pat Hudson and Michael Sonenscher eds., *Manufacture in town and country before the factory* (Cambridge, 1983), 173–210; Adrian J. Randall, 'Peculiar perquisites and pernicious practices. Embezzlement in the West of England woollen industry, c. 1750–1840', *International Review of Social History* **35**, 2 (1990), 193–219.
[57] Hilaire-Pérez, 'Le vol de déchets', 297–301.
[58] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 184–5.
[59] AML, HH 148, 19 June 1744.
[60] AML, HH 147, 25 October 1711, 3 July 1725; HH 148, 18 December 1727, 19 June 1744.
[61] Poni, 'Fashion', 48–9.
[62] AML, HH 147, 25 October 1711.
[63] HH 147, 12 July 1645; Pelletier ed., *Histoire de Lyon*, 610.
[64] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 472.
[65] AML, HH 149, 11 May 1748.
[66] AML, HH 152, March 1763–Februrary 1764, July 1765, 20 June and 18 July 1769.

[67] AML, HH 234 (1740), HH 242 (1750), HH 252 and 253 (1760), HH 260 (1770), HH 267 (1780).
[68] AML, HH 149 to 155, HH 506 to 558.
[69] AML, HH 502 to 558.
[70] Hilaire-Pérez, 'Le vol de déchets', 306; Styles, 'Embezzlement', 178; Randall, 'Peculiar perquisites', 202–3.
[71] AML, HH 546, 22 January–4 May 1760.
[72] Daryl Hafter, 'Women in the underground business of eighteenth-century Lyon', *Enterprise & Society* 2, 1 (2001), 11–40.
[73] Pawning material was also important for Parisian medieval silk workers. See Sharon Farmer, *The silk industries of medieval Paris: artisanal migration, technological innovation, and gendered experience* (Philadelphia, 2017).
[74] Hafter, *Women at work*, 141.
[75] Hafter, 'Women', 13–14, 18, 34.
[76] Olwen H. Hufton, *The poor of eighteenth-century France 1750-1789* (Oxford, 1974), chapter X.
[77] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 235. AML, HH 552, 'Recapitulation des marchands, des maitres et des metiers qu'ils occupoient, tirée des differentes visites faites depuis l'année 1667 a l'année 1765 comprize' (1766).
[78] Godart, *L'ouvrier en soie*, 236. AML, HH 552, May 1766.
[79] Hafter, 'Women', 20.
[80] AML, HH 541, 27 March 1755.
[81] AML, HH 541, 12–13 May 1755.
[82] AML, HH 150, 29 February 1760.
[83] AML, HH 151, July–October 1763.
[84] See for instance AML, HH 543, 3 and 9 March 1757.
[85] HH 545, 4 May, 28 and 30 November, 1st December 1759.
[86] AML, HH 544, 13 January and 2 March 1759; HH 545, 4 May 1759.
[87] AML, HH 544, 8 March 1758, 16 and 22 February 1759; HH 545, 22 November 1759, 20 May 1760; HH 547, 4 September 1761.
[88] See for instance AML, HH 549, 29 August 1763; HH 552, October and November 1766.
[89] AML, HH 552, 'Etat des contraventions faites pendant les six derniers mois de 1766'.
[90] See for instance AML, HH 544, 6 March 1759; HH 545, 28 April and 30 November 1759; HH 549, 14 and 18 December 1762. Whereas Styles has estimated that embezzlement could offer a valuable supplement to wages (up to 20 per cent for spinners in the Gloucestershire wool industry in the 1770s), Randall has been more cautious: Styles, 'Embezzlement', 181 and 207; Randall, 'Peculiar perquisites', 204–5.
[91] AML, HH 558, 6 February and 19 December 1783, 10 December 1784, 15 March, 28 April, 6 May and 23 July 1785.
[92] Bellavitis, *Women's work*, chapter 13.
[93] Hafter, *Women at work*, 259–81.