

the work in the first place, that could not be learned. For Vasari, a key element in the intellectual component of art lay in *disegno* (planning/drawing) which underlay the three “arts of design” (painting, sculpture, architecture). These principles were incorporated into the Florentine Academy of Design (founded 1563) which, although it did not replace the apprenticeship system, did much to elevate the status of artists.

One strategy in the artistic community’s campaign to reclassify art as liberal was to deny the role played by manual execution in its creation. “Painting is a mental occupation” (*pittura è una cosa mentale*), wrote Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) stated equally firmly, “We paint with our brain, not with our hands” (*si dipinge col ciervello et non con le mani*). Leonardo laid down the correct sequence in the creative cycle: the painter must work first in the mind (*mente*), then with the hands (*mani*). Promoting this union of ideation and labor, Vasari maintained that the trained hand mediated the idea born in the intellect, or, as Michelangelo put it in a famous sonnet, “the hand that obeys the intellect” (*la man che ubbidisce all’intelletto*), that is, the hand as an extension of the mind. It was not until the 1590s that one (highly idiosyncratic) artist felt sufficiently self-confident to mention the manual labor involved in artistic creation without first having recourse to its intellectual principles: “We must speak with our hands” (*habbiamo da parlare con le mani*), Annibale Carracci (1560–1609), founder of the Carracci Academy in Bologna, is reputed to have said, equating the artist’s hand with the poet’s voice for the first time. The writing of treatises was another aspect of the campaign to improve artistic and social status and, in the mid-sixteenth century, artists themselves not only wrote treatises—Paolo Pino (1548), Anton Francesco Doni (1549), Vasari (1550), Benvenuto Cellini (1560s), Pirro Ligorio (1570s), and Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo (1580s)—but some (Michelangelo through Ascanio Condivi in 1553; Cellini, and Vasari) also wrote autobiographies.

The speed of progress of the artistic community’s long-term struggle for professional and personal betterment differed from country to country in early modern Europe. In Italy artists had, by the seventeenth century, succeeded dramatically in re-

negotiating the standing and value of both artifact and maker. The idea developed that skill should be rewarded, and rates of pay accordingly improved. Many of the artifacts, taking on a heightened aesthetic character and a mystique of greatness, were redefined as “art,” and a number of craftsmen succeeded in reinventing themselves as “artists” to be venerated for their godlike powers. The example of Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) in the North and the “divine” Michelangelo in the South, both of whose works were perceived by contemporaries and successors as belonging to a new realm that transcended ordinary cultural production, were especially important in bringing about this profound shift in the cultural values attached to the visual arts.

See also Academies of Art; Cellini, Benvenuto; Dürer, Albrecht; Leonardo da Vinci; Michelangelo Buonarroti; Vasari, Giorgio.

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ARTILLERY. *See* Military: Battle Tactics and Campaign Strategy.

ARTISANS. What is an artisan? Traditionally, historians answered this question simply, saying that

artisans were members of guilds, skilled men who fashioned artifacts with their hands and tools in autonomous workshops without the aid of powered machinery—the classic handicraftsmen. Now, in the light of recent research, our answer is more complex. Historians now broaden the definition and place artisans on a spectrum with apprentices and journeymen working for wages or piece rates at one end, and at the other entrepreneurial masters, almost indistinguishable from merchants, no longer working primarily with their hands, spending most of their time wholesaling products or managing their enterprises. Moreover, the boundaries at each end of the spectrum were porous, with men and, notably, women, sliding into and out of what we think of as artisanal activity. The definition of *artisan* has also become more complex in another way, for traditional institutional and economic frameworks are no longer sufficient to analyze important aspects of the experience of the groups of people—men and women—we label “artisans.” Not every such person belonged to a guild (few women did in their own right), nor were tanners (as they would be the first to tell us) simply men or women who happened to cure leather, or shoemakers simply men or women who happened to make footwear. In other words, an adequate definition of *artisan* must also grasp the sense that these men and women had of themselves and that others had of them.

ARTISANS AND THE CRAFT ECONOMY

Historians have long known that the European population stabilized during the first half of the fifteenth century and in the second half entered a sustained period of growth that lasted well into the first half of the seventeenth century and increased Europe’s total population by about 20 percent, to about 100 million souls. Population growth was joined by economic growth, although capital tended to concentrate increasingly in the coffers of a wealthy elite of landowners, rentiers, merchants, lawyers, government officials, and some artisans. After 1650 population growth slowed dramatically for a century, and even though the agricultural sector of the economy plunged into recession, a consumer revolution centered on luxury products and on inexpensive manufactured items nonetheless took off, as real wages rose among city dwellers and disposable income increased for many.

Surging demand for an increasingly wide variety of artisanal products triggered significant developments in the community of urban artisans. Artisans everywhere represented a substantial percentage of the stable urban population throughout the early modern centuries, generally ranging from 20 percent (as in Montpellier, France) to 50 percent (as in Cuenca, Spain), although in some places, like Nördlingen in Germany, four out of five taxed inhabitants were craftsmen. Not surprisingly, the numbers of artisans in the construction and luxury trades often registered the greatest increases, and those in textiles the sharpest decreases (as they lost out to accelerating rural production). Behind these percentages, however, a proliferation of various kinds of artisans was taking place, above all in Europe’s growing cities (as rural artisans tended to be less specialized). Indeed, the most noteworthy feature of early modern manufacturing is its decentralization. Unlike modern “economies of scale,” in which high-volume, standardized, and concentrated production is the rule, the vast majority of early modern urban artisans worked according to the logic of “constant returns to scale,” an economic rationale whereby “growth of output required proportional growth of the inputs of labor and raw materials” (de Vries, 91). Increased demand, then, would be accommodated by decentralization, diversification, and specialization, not by concentration or expansion of the physical plant or technological innovation. A look at the division of labor within the early modern urban craft economy amply confirms this.

First, we see everywhere that trades came and went as demand grew and shifted to new products. To take but one example, in the middling French city of Dijon between 1464 and 1750 the number of crafts increased from 81 to 102, but fully 67 new ones had appeared and 45 had vanished. Second, everywhere complex systems of subcontracting became ever more common, so that few items were finished in the shops where their production had begun, and the street resembled an early modern version of an assembly line. As early as 1300 in London, for instance, we find a saddle being produced by a joiner who made the saddle tree, a lorimer who made the leather covering, and painters who did the decoration. The master saddler coordinated the operation, providing the in-



Artisans. *Interior of a Tailor's Shop*, detail, fifteenth-century fresco in the Castle di Issogne, Aosta Valley, Italy. ©ARCHIVO ICONOGRAFICO, S.A./CORBIS

vestment capital and retailing the finished product. In sixteenth-century Augsburg, to take another example of subcontracting, some master furniture makers arranged with lesser masters of their trade to produce component parts of furniture that would then be assembled in the workshop of the contracting master. By the eighteenth century many a European city was like Birmingham or Sheffield, a matrix of small, interconnected, and interdependent workshops. A third response to the vagaries of demand, and consistent with the logic of constant return to scale, master artisans hired and fired workers, retaining only a core of journeymen full-time, and meeting business orders by hiring from a vast and populous periphery of semi-skilled and often transient workers.

Hidden from traditional accounts of European craft folk are female artisans. Until recently historians thought that the early modern family economy and the market economy operated in separate spheres, and because women were central to the former, they were absent from the latter. Recent research has blurred these distinctions, and a consensus is emerging that women participated significantly in the market economy outside the household. Indeed, despite legal exclusion of women from most guilds nearly everywhere in Europe during the early modern centuries, many women practiced artisanal trades in most of Europe's cities. There were female dyers in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Flemish towns and female glovers, shoemakers, and tailors in sixteenth-century Ox-

ford. There were also female needle and thimble makers in sixteenth-century German cities, and joiners, curriers, and pewterers in York at the same time. Despite this diversity, however, a trend was emerging that would increasingly concentrate women in clothing and textile trades, so that by the eighteenth century a much more rigid gendered division of labor had taken hold.

GUILDS, DISCIPLINE, AND RESISTANCE

During the Middle Ages theologians embraced the idea that labor was a penance imposed on humankind for the original sin. After the Fall, man was commanded to work henceforth “by the sweat of his brow,” not to nurture the fruits of nature, but to redeem himself for salvation. The value of labor was not, therefore, its productive capacity, but rather its moral force. During the early modern period this theological notion was elaborated under the spreading influence of the writings of St. Augustine, with their emphasis on obedience and servitude to the commands of God. Work, in the minds of learned men, became a spiritual discipline, and idleness, rank rebellion against God and society. It followed that labor was a bulwark against social disorder, while it protected the soul from the assault of evil. As late medieval and early modern society became increasingly organized across the intersecting axes of hierarchy and subordination, artisans were expected to know their place and stay in it. The sign of this place was labor, and the key institution created to regulate it was the guild. Guilds drafted regulatory statutes that were sanctioned by public authorities. As such, they were fundamentally about disciplining the world of labor.

The triumph of hierarchy in the early modern political world resulted in the growing dominance of an oligarchy within guilds and the progressive exclusion of artisans from the world of municipal governance. Increasingly guilds were dominated by the wealthier craftsmen, the same families tending to run the affairs of their guilds for generations. The composition of the political community varied from one town to the next, with more guildsmen included in some places than in others. During the early modern centuries, however, the trend everywhere was toward control by a patriciate of merchants, legal professionals, and in some places royal officials, and the exclusion of guildsmen. The exclu-

sion occurred first in Renaissance Italy, but by the eighteenth century European artisans rarely possessed the constitutional rights of political participation that they had often enjoyed in the cities and towns of the High Middle Ages. The only political action left to them was the threat or act of rebellion.

Hundreds of artisanal rebellions erupted in Europe’s cities from the Late Middle Ages to about 1700. These centered on two interrelated concerns—overtaxation and fiscal maladministration by the municipal elite. From one perspective artisanal rebellions were dismal failures, for none permanently altered the constitutional arrangement of cities or realms, but from another perspective one can see that rebellious artisans were warning the ruling elite that too great a disregard for artisanal interests and concerns would ignite violence. Often the spark for rebellion was fiscal, but the fact that antitax sentiments or concerns about fiscal maladministration leapt to constitutional levels about artisanal participation in politics so quickly suggests that artisans were also deeply concerned about issues that went beyond their pocketbooks and reached the level of the structure and maintenance of the community. How well the government secured the kind of order that artisans needed to maintain the security of their place in the community—their status—was an issue worth fighting over. Medieval and early modern artisanal rebellions, then, were very much about the maintenance of a stratified community and of the artisan’s place within it.

STATUS AND HONOR

Artisans from the Late Middle Ages well into the nineteenth century were defined and defined themselves not primarily as producers, as their labels may suggest, but rather as members of an *état*, a rank or “degree,” a *Stand*. They designated themselves (and were so designated by the authorities) by occupational labels not just because these described what they did (it often did not), but rather because it was the sign of status. Everywhere late medieval and early modern Europeans divided themselves more and more into a series of graduated ranks. Sometimes this was done formally by institutions authorized by political authorities (for example, guilds), sometimes informally.

As society’s elites increasingly distanced themselves from the craftsmen, artisans in turn became



Artisans. Sixteenth-century woodcut of bookbinders in a workshop by Jost Amman. ©CHRISTEL GERSTENBERG/CORBIS

increasingly keen on defining the distance between themselves and their inferiors. The early modern hierarchical system of distinction and difference was animated by a concern for subordination and discipline of inferiors. This preoccupied men at all levels of society, including artisans, be they guild masters, journeymen, or apprentices. From a master's perspective, breach of discipline by journeymen or apprentices reflected not only instability in the labor market, but also, and more dramatically, a perceived threat to hierarchy and to the principle of distinction itself. Masters were deeply sensitive to insubordination by journeymen, and journeymen were keen, in turn, on maintaining the inferiority of apprentices and nonguild wageworkers beneath them.

One's all-important place in this system was signaled by status. At all social levels, this process of

dissociation was visualized by cultural markers, and the key badge of status, for artisans no less than anyone else, was honor. This swung on the hinge of respectability, but beyond that it could be expressed in a variety of ways. For the master craftsman it could be economic solvency and heading one's own reputable business and respectable household, while for a journeyman it surely was being subject to no one's discipline, with no restrictions on one's freedom of movement.

ARTISANS AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

The labor historian Christopher Johnson has observed that "a good deal of our work as historians of the industrial transition has concerned the ways in which that vast, amorphous, and ill-defined category of handworkers called 'artisans' experienced the profound legal and economic changes of the



Artisans. Engraving of tailor's workshop, France, 1770, from the *Dictionary of Sciences*. ©HISTORICAL PICTURE ARCHIVE/CORBIS

age” (p. 1047). Scholars have recently discovered that the industrial transition did not immediately destroy small-scale artisanal production as was once thought, but rather for a time (late into the nineteenth century) created a whole new set of possibilities for small commodity producers. Only in the last quarter of the century, even later in some parts of Europe, did mechanized, factory production, in a quantum sense, overwhelm the master’s shop. Still, beginning, clearly, in the second half of the eighteenth century, artisans everywhere were affected by the gradual transition to industrial capitalism. Some sank into wage work in the new factories, but many more retained their own shops, working in the interstices of large-scale industry or mass marketing or directing their energies toward neighborhood provisioning. Capitalistic mechanized industries like sawmilling, ironmaking, and eventually steelmaking generated an increase in work for the small workshop of the machinist or toolmaker. Likewise steam-driven sawmills turned out wood that still had to be fashioned in the carpenters’ and furnituremakers’ shops, while the enormous furnaces of the Black Country in England provided large quantities of material to thousands of local smiths toiling in their own shops. These shops were organized in the traditional manner, with masters taking on or laying off workers and journeymen (labor was abundant due to galloping population growth after 1750) as industrial output and the pace of demand dictated.

Yet beneath the similarities with the Old Regime there lurked a difference, for the seeming independence of artisans was built increasingly on a foundation of dependency. No longer did masters, or shopkeepers for that matter, have much control over access to their materials, now provided by merchant industrialists, factors, and wholesalers. Moreover, masters came to rely on a steady flow of orders, often from only a few middlemen or owners of factories. The same can be said of access to credit and to markets, which was increasingly controlled by merchant operations. Of course, even in the Old Regime masters were not entirely independent, especially in emerging economies of scale and those, like textiles, organized around the putting-out system. But the early modern urban master tailor, shoemaker, cabinetmaker, cutler, butcher, or baker was not as encumbered by these dependencies as his

descendants experiencing the transition to industrialism would be.

The transformation that we call industrialization occurred in production, processing, and retailing, enabled by regularization of demand, which was smoothed by dramatic changes in transport and communication, price elasticity, and capital-intensive and increasingly standardized production. Amid such changes, artisans did not suddenly disappear, but they did become something altogether different, gradually but ineluctably more integrated into production and distribution networks that were controlled by large capital. Intensive subdivision of tasks and subcontracting continued apace, but independence became increasingly a chimera, and artisans gradually evolved into mechanics, shopkeepers, or waged workers.

See also **Capitalism; Commerce and Markets; Guilds; Industrial Revolution; Industry; Laborers; Proto-Industry; Textile Industry; Women; Youth.**

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ASAM FAMILY. The most important members of this family of German architects, painters, sculptors, and stucco workers are Cosmas Damian (1686–1739) and Egid Quirin (1692–1750). Both initially trained with their father, the fresco painter Hans Georg (1649–1711). Cosmas Damian then studied painting at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, probably 1711–1713; Egid Quirin apprenticed with sculptor Andreas Faistenberger 1711–1716 in Munich, perhaps visiting Rome in 1716.

The brothers worked extensively in fresco and sculpture (primarily Cosmas Damian), and stucco (primarily Egid Quirin), and were involved with a dozen church projects. The interiors, which combine inventive creations of architectural space and light shaped by fresco, sculpture, and stucco in the service of complex religious programs, are their most distinctive and brilliant achievements. They integrated architecture and the arts within settings that were simultaneously emotional and rational, sensual and compassionate, and that pitted victor against vanquished and the marvelous against nature. They also employed contrasts of light and dark as well as stillness and movement. The tensions of encounter and confrontation within these interiors were intended to embrace the churchgoer in a dazzling display of persuasion. The brothers would have seen work produced during the seventeenth century in Rome by such artists as Bernini and Cortona that explored a visual rhetoric for Counter-Reformation purposes, but the scale, brilliance, and sweep of their own creations produced a very different experiential realm.

Immediately upon completing their training, the brothers began work on what would turn out to

be two of their greatest projects. In 1716 Cosmas Damian designed the church for the Benedictine monastery at Weltenburg bei Kelheim, located on the Danube west of Regensburg; the following year at nearby Rohr, Egid Quirin produced the Augustinian priory church and its spectacular high altar of the Assumption of Mary.

Weltenburg (1716–1735) was a collaborative work, to which Egid Quirin contributed the stucco and over-life-sized altar sculpture. Within the oval plan, bracketed by a rectangular space for the entrance and organ balcony at one end, and at the opposite end by a similar rectangle (with apse) for the choir, the brothers dramatically transformed the interior by means of chapels, sculpture, paintings, frescoes, contrasts of color and light, a dome that opens to an illusionistic fresco above it, and a choir composed as a proscenium stage. This space, complete with loggia boxes and an architectural stage set, features a St. George astride a spirited horse, lancing the dragon to his right and rescuing the princess to his left, and a fresco on the rearward apse wall ablaze in light. All of these media and effects are orchestrated to bring the history and legends of St. Benedict to life, and celebrate the glory of the church.

At Rohr, Egid Quirin designed a traditional Latin cross basilica, the shape of which was determined in part by existing foundations and sections of wall from the medieval church it replaced. But Egid Quirin also employed this deliberately old-fashioned interior to contrast with the dazzling vision of Mary's ascension that overwhelms the choir and visually determines the interior. Located well behind altar and choir stalls, and staged within a setting of richly colored architecture, complete with sarcophagus and tapestry, the sculptural reenactment of the Assumption employs figures of porcelain white with gilt highlights who witness Mary's ascension into a blaze of golden light and cloud.

Several years later, in 1725, Egid Quirin designed a project for a centralized chapel dedicated to the Holy Spirit that is as audacious as Rohr was conservative; a drawing shows the project in elevation and section. The lively exterior contains an extraordinary, multilevel architecture inside: free-standing stairs curve up to a balcony covered by small half domes, and they in turn support an inter-