

OTHER TRADES AND THEIR ORGANISATION

TOPIC

ROOM 14: THE SILK FACTORY - 17TH-18TH C.

Socioprofessional category: farmer

“Living from one’s own resources”

In the primary sector, gardeners, labourers and wine growers worked above all to fulfil their own needs, because production was low, and only the surplus was sold in town. They sometimes also cultivated land on behalf of bourgeois or ecclesiastical landowners. Within the town walls, horticulture was a livelihood for some inhabitants: men sold the wood from their trees and women sold fruit at the market, in the Place de la Baleine, for example, or ran cabarets selling the wine from their vines. But in the 17th c., agriculture was not productive enough either to feed the town or to enrich the farmers...



Cultivation on the flanks of Fourvière hill, detail from the map of Lyon by Simon Maupin, extract, engraving, David Van Velthem, 17th c., Inv. 60.6.1

The Abondance, created to deal with food shortages

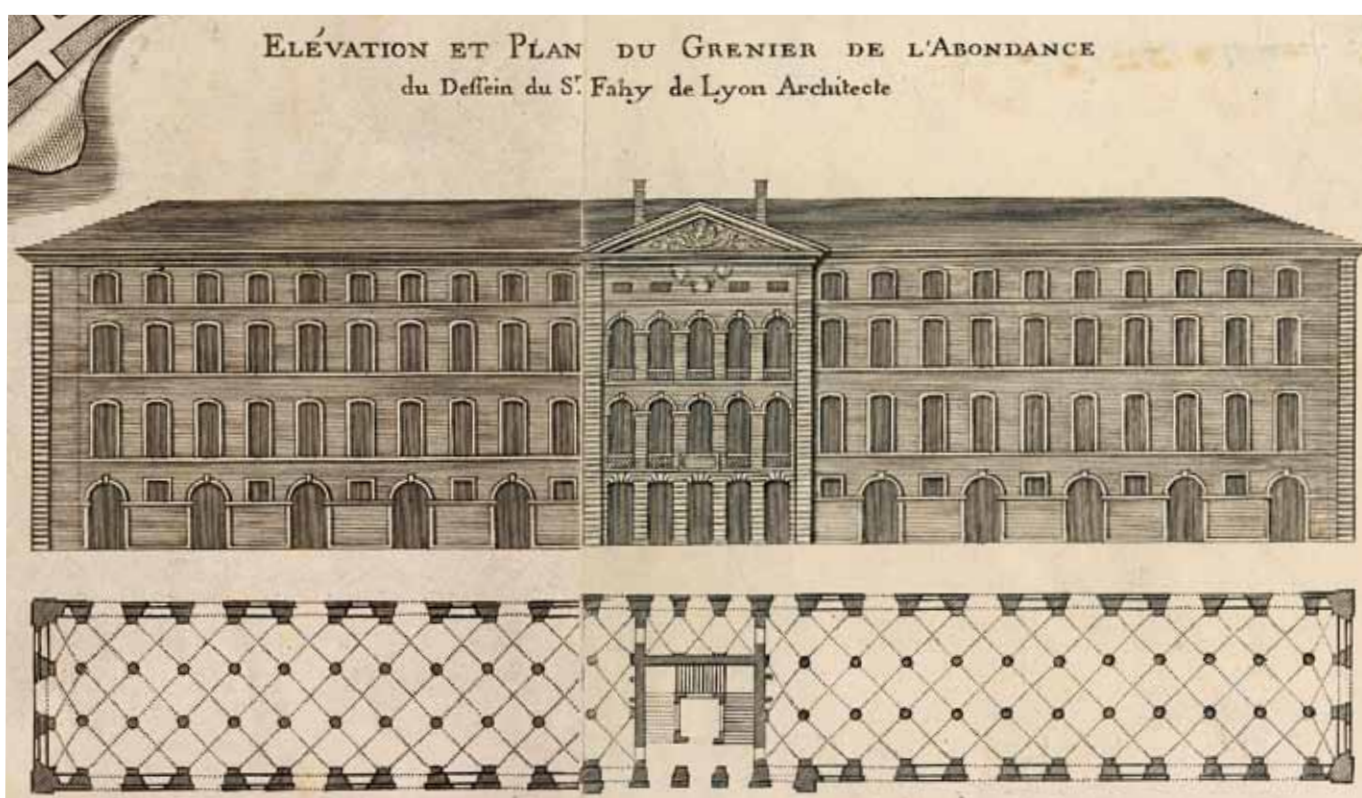
After the Lyon hunger riots, and particularly the Grande Rebeayne in 1529, the town council sought solutions.

At the end of the 16th c., it created a common grain stock, buying large quantities of grain in periods of plenty, storing it and redistributing it during periods of economic crisis and famine. But the idea was quickly abandoned due to problems conserving the grain and the uncertainty of the flow of stock.

It re-emerged in August 1643 with the establishment of a permanent feature of Lyon life: the Abondance. Responsible for ensuring the continuous supply of grain in the town, the Abondance was run by eight stewards and directors, half of whom were changed every year. They advanced money, supplemented by the Consulate, to a treasurer for the purchase of wheat, and then managed the transport, storage and sale of the grain. Sales took place in the Grenette market for private individuals, or directly in the granary for bakers (**Inv. 53.197 Master baker’s masterpiece**). For storage, the municipality first leased private granaries, before purchasing premises in Pierre-Scize and the Rue de Bourgneuf, at the foot of the Discalced Carmelite convent.

The Abondance ceased its activity after the good harvest of 1653, but resumed in 1667. Unfortunately, the institution failed to meet the annual needs of the city, especially during times of famine... The 1693 famine was accompanied by an outbreak of plague, and led to a sharp increase in mortality. Between 1722 and 1728, the Grenier d’Abondance granary (now the offices of the Rhône-Alpes regional culture department in Quai Saint-Vincent) was built in classical style by the architect Claude Bertaud de la Vaure. With a capacity of 16,000 tonnes, the granary could store enough grain to feed the 120,000-strong population of Lyon all year!

Around 1750, its role evolved, addressing the unemployed in particular. Then, after the edict on the free movement of grain in 1763, the building was no longer needed and was quickly assigned to military uses.



Elevation and plan of the Grenier d’Abondance, drawing, Etienne Fahy, 17th c., Inv. 26 g 1



Place Bellecour, detail from the map of Lyon by Simon Maupin, engraving, David Van Velthem, 17th c., Inv. 60.6.1

Charabara* in the Place Bellecour!

From 1655, a horse market was held every Wednesday and Saturday in the Place Bellecour. Trades focusing on the horse, the main means of transport, were flourishing: saddle and harness makers, wheelwrights (wheels, carts, carriages), farriers and producers of bridles, nails, spurs and stirrups occupied the market. In 1661, two four-day free fairs were held annually for the sale of horses and mules: the third Monday after Easter and 15 September. Finally, the city boasted a score of establishments where horses could be hired!

Socioprofessional category: tradesman

Tradesmen's districts

Artisans were grouped in clearly identified areas of the town: butchers in the Lanterne, Hôtel-Dieu, Saint-Georges and Saint-Paul areas, millers in Quarantaine and Saint-Clair, cheesemakers around the Rue and Place de la Fromagerie, dyers, tanners and leather workers along the rivers, hatters around the Passage de l'Argue etc.



Mills at what is now the Quai du Docteur Gailleton, detail from the map of Lyon by Simon Maupin, engraving, David Van Velthem, 17th c., Inv. 60.6.1

The three best-represented sectors in Lyon were clothing, food and construction (Inv. 54.246 - Register of master tinsmiths and plumbers of the city and suburbs of Lyon). To enter a trade, an apprenticeship of three to five years had to be served, with payment for the master. The apprentice then became a companion, employed by the master (paid partly in kind and partly in cash). To become a master and lead a workshop, resources were needed: a sum of money was paid in exchange for acceptance into the trade.



Companion's costume, watercolour, anonymous, 17th c., Inv. 42

In many trades, unlike the practice in the silk business, there were many more companions than masters. However, over the 17th c., the trades were evolving under the control of the masters, who did not hesitate to raise the price of accession to mastership, for example. As a result, the companions turned away from the trade guilds (Inv. 51285 - Table of the community of master and merchant turners, cabinetmakers, fine woodworkers, instrument makers, fan makers and parasol makers in the city and inner and outer suburbs of Lyon), in which everyone had a clearly defined status, to establish their own corporations, which set the template for the future mutual aid societies.

Socioprofessional category: tertiary sector

Cabarets, taverns and cafés!

In the 17th c., cabarets and taverns, and open-air cafés in the suburbs, welcomed a popular clientele (Inv. N 3987.1 - Rights of lemonade merchants and café owners to form trade associations). They served wine and food, not cooked on the premises but prepared by caterers: cooks, bakers, sauce makers or butchers, who also received their own customers directly, even accommodating them in furnished rooms. At the end of the century, the first cafés opened, with the decor chosen specially, where the new beverages of tea, coffee and chocolate were served, but also liqueurs, ice cream and lemonade!

glossary

charabara: in Lyons dialect, horse market.