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by

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**Educating Lyon's Poor: Children, Charity, and Commerce in the
Seventeenth Century**

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Seventeenth Century**

by

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Thesis

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my wonderful parents. I don't say it enough, but I am immensely thankful for your unconditional love, constant motivation, and sage guidance.

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Abstract

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Though the establishment of educational institutions is not necessarily surprising in Counter Reformation France as the church was obliged to foster education, what was innovative about Lyon's *écoles de charité* is that "professional education" was stressed alongside Catholic doctrine in the seventeenth century. Catering to Lyon's poor youth, these schools taught proper Catholic comportment, reading, writing, counting, and the acquisition of craft skills. Official and unofficial records reveal the charity schools' daily practices and pedagogical exercises as well as the goals of the state, church, and local elite in fostering and supporting these institutions. The schools molded children into

“moral, productive workers and faithful subjects”¹ who could act as agents of the state, church, and community. Students had the responsibility of “elevating the morality, Christianity, and education”² of their families, improving the “lower sorts” literally from the bottom-up. This thesis also addresses parents’ incentives in sending their children to these institutions.

This project spans several historiographies including that of early modern education, childhood, and the Catholic Reformation. Though other studies have mentioned the establishment of *écoles de charité* as part of a wider impulse of charitable giving spurred by the Catholic Reformation, little work exists on the schools’ specific dynamics or on the relationship to the state and community embedded in the routine life of these schools. Additionally, this project uses “childhood” as a category of historical analysis, investigating how different early modern social groups used children to change society. Finally, this project engages the Catholic Reformation as these schools were part of a larger project to expand knowledge of Catholic beliefs onto the people propelled by local as well as elite interests.

¹ Charles Démia, “Remonstrances,” 1668, Archives Départementales du Rhône 5D 7, fol 65.

² “Livre des Comptes de l’argent reçue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles,” 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7, fol. 51.

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I. Introduction: Inventing Lyon's *Écoles de Charité*

Just months before his death in 1689 Charles Démiá wrote a letter to Camille de Neufville de Villeroy, his close friend and the archbishop of Lyon, reflecting on their nearly twenty-five years of work together establishing *écoles de charité* in Lyon's poorest parishes. This letter, one of the last exchanged between the two, was added as a preface to the eighteenth-century printed editions of Démiá's *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, serving as an introduction to the text that inspired the foundation of sixteen charity schools in Lyon during Démiá's lifetime and numerous others throughout France after his death. Expressing his satisfaction with these schools and Neufville's continued friendship and support, Démiá wrote:

Without a doubt, Monseigneur, one of our greatest contributions [has been] to inspire [our] most Christian monarch to think [about] establishing similar institutions throughout his entire kingdom; Since his Majesty had been informed of the fruits of [this] Diocese...[he] declared in the month of February 1688...to establish strong schools throughout the kingdom...[Also] for the Church [we] have provided the instruction of good morals to children, [we] educated his Majesty's subjects and attached [them] to his service, but most of all, [we provided] genuinely happy, well-behaved residents and workers of the town and Diocese [of Lyon].³

Laden with both pride in their accomplishments and gratitude to Neufville for his continual endorsement of Démiá's project, the letter is the fulfillment of a promise Démiá made almost twenty-five years earlier not only to Neufville but to Lyon's magistrates,

³ Charles Démiá, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1707, Archives Municipales de Lyon 3GG 150, fol. 347.

clergy, and wealthy residents. In exchange for supporting his plan to establish *écoles de charité* in Lyon's poorest parishes, Démià promised social reform, economic prosperity, and security to Lyon's elite population. Looking back on his accomplishments, Démià was most likely both ecstatic and relieved that his gamble had paid off.

In 1664, Archbishop Camille de Neufville de Villeroy requested Charles Démià, then a priest in Paris's Saint Sulpice parish, return to Lyon to serve as a *curé* in the city. Démià, who had grown up in his wealthy uncle's Lyonnais household, was chosen by the archbishop partly because he was familiar with the city's different parishes. However, as a privileged adolescent he had had little interaction with Lyon's poor. Upon his return, Démià was appalled by the "profound ignorance" displayed by Lyon's youth, particularly by those from the city's "lower people."⁴ Disturbed by the "numerous poor children" who had "been long neglected by their parents and the state" that failed to provide "continual" and "necessary instruction throughout their young lives,"⁵ Démià drew up proposals to establish several *écoles de charité* for the children of Lyon's "honorable poor."⁶

In order to fund these schools, Démià had to solicit funds from the church, the state, and the local elite. Faced with what they saw as rising unemployment, a seemingly morally corrupt poor, and a large number of abandoned children, Lyon's elite felt social

⁴ Démià, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1681, AML 3GG 150, fol. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 8.

stability was on the precipice of dissolving in the mid-seventeenth century.⁷ Although local churches and the Hôtel Dieu offered some services to the poor, the sheer number of people requesting assistance overwhelmed these institutions. Playing on the elite's fears of social and moral ruin, Démia presented a proposal to Lyon's *Prévost des Marchans*, *Echevins*, notable residents, and the king in which he argued the "necessity and utility" of establishing schools in Lyon's poorest parishes.⁸

By 1689 Démia had successfully secured enough funds from the church, the state, and the local elite to establish sixteen charity schools, including two for girls, in Lyon's poorest parishes. The *écoles de charité* differed from other schools in Lyon not only because they were free but also because they taught reading, writing, and counting in the vernacular and stressed the importance of professional skill acquisition, placing students in apprenticeships and workshops in their final year of school.

It was relatively simple for Démia to collect funds-albeit rather limited- from the church by using his position as *curé* and citing the Catholic Reformation's initiative to "promote Christian education,"⁹ but why were the state and local wealthy elite so quick to provide Démia with the funds necessary to establish these *écoles de charité*? Were donations simply acts of charity or were there economic and social incentives in donating

⁷ Roger Chartier, Marie-Madeleine Compère, and Dominique Julia, *L'Éducation en France du XVIe au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Société d'Édition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1976): 58.

⁸ Démia, "Remonstrances faites à messieurs Les Prevost des Marchans, Echevins & Principaux Habitans de la Ville de Lyon touchant la nécessité et utilité des Ecoles Chrétiennes pour l'instruction des Enfants Pauvres," 1664, ADR 5D 7.

⁹ John Bossy, "The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe," *Past & Present*, No. 47 (May 1970): 67.

money to the schools? Why was there such a strong emphasis on professional skill acquisition instead of solely on the tenets of Catholicism? Were these schools successful in eliminating the social debauchery to which Démia referred? How were these goals achieved?

While the state, church, and local elite funded these institutions monetarily, support also came from parents who sent their children to the schools. What were the incentives of parents in sending their children to these charity schools? How were students chosen? If parents did not pay school fees to the institutions then what did they owe? What effects did a child's participation in the *écoles de charité* have on the entire family?

This paper will work to answer these questions by examining the *écoles de charité's* official and unofficial documents, including royal charters, *Reglemens*, donation records, a schoolmaster's manuscript journal that served as a "*Livre des Comptes*" as well as his personal diary which includes lesson plans, class lists, and student evaluations. These sources not only illuminate both the daily practices of these schools, such as lessons taught, class organization, and student population, but also reveal the goals of the state, church, local elite, and parents in fostering and supporting these institutions. The church, state, and local elite intended to mold a new generation of "moral, productive workers and faithful subjects of His Majesty"¹⁰ through educational institutions like the

¹⁰ Démia, "Remonstrances faites à messieurs Les Prevost des Marchans, Echevins & Principaux Habitans de la Ville de Lyon touchant la nécessité et utilité des Ecoles Chrétiennes pour l'instruction des Enfants Pauvres," 1668, ADR 5D 7, fol 65.

écoles de charité. Lyon's poor children were molded into active workers, subjects, and agents of the state in these institutions. As other historians have also noted, students were not only taught the catechism, they were also taught how to read, write, and count, as well as to "obey magistrates"¹¹ and the "laws of the city"¹² all while "developing a strict work ethic."¹³ It can be argued these benefactors intended the *écoles de charité* to improve morality, productivity, and efficiency among the lower sorts that would help consolidate power and increase profits both for the French state and Lyon's wealthy merchant elite.

Parents' incentives are more ambiguous and harder to locate in the records. But there were advantages in sending children to these schools. As a prerequisite to receive certain charitable services through the *Hôtel Dieu*, families with school-aged children often had to send their students to their parish's *école de charité* in order to be eligible for additional free bread or other assistance. Furthermore, the *écoles de charité* enabled children to receive a more specialized education and possibly a much better apprenticeship than they would have procured otherwise. In order to send their children to these schools, parents had to comply with regular inspections by the schoolmaster or local parish clergy. Additionally, their actions and behaviors in the home, at work, and in the streets were scrutinized carefully. But for parents, the immediate as well as long-

¹¹ Anna Bellavitis, "Education," *A Cultural History of Childhood and Family in the Early Modern Age* ed. Sandra Cavallo and Silvia Evangelisti, (Oxford: Berg, 2010): 106.

¹² Chartier, Compère, and Julia, *L'Éducation en France*, 59.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 60.

range benefits of sending their children to the *écoles de charité* often surpassed the nuisance associated with increased restriction and surveillance.

The *écoles de charité* quickly became cornerstones to Lyon's social, political, economic, and religious topography; new sites where state and subject interacted and negotiated their roles in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition to explaining the motivations of the elite and parents in supporting these institutions, the *écoles de charité* also can add to our understanding of how "childhood" and "children" were understood, used by, and positioned in society. From the records it is clear children played a central role in the "educating, moralizing, and Christianizing"¹⁴ of Lyon's lower sorts. It was the responsibility of students to act as teachers to their families, improving the lower sorts literally from the bottom-up.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

This project spans several different historiographies including that of early modern French education, children, and the Catholic Reformation. The history of seventeenth-century French education has usually been eclipsed by attention to the earlier humanist movements of the sixteenth century and by the much more controversial educational reforms of the eighteenth century. The little work done on seventeenth-century education primarily focuses on the universities and other forms of elite education, such as tutors, convent schools, and tuition-based *petites écoles*. It ignores the formal or

¹⁴ Ibid., 59.

informal educational practices of the majority of the population that was primarily comprised of people from the middling and lower sorts.

Additionally, few of these studies explain the daily practices of the schools. Instead, they choose to relate the institution of the “university” back to an overall humanist movement in the sixteenth century or similarly an “enlightenment” in the eighteenth. For instance, L.W.B. Brockliss’s *French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1987) explores how the humanist movement was improved by the incorporation of the study of science in university curriculum.¹⁵ Citing Descartes, Pascal, and Montaigne, Brockliss is more concerned with what different philosophers and intellectuals thought education *should* be in the early modern period, rather than what education was actually like.¹⁶ While Brockliss ignores pedagogical techniques employed in the universities, his study does clarify the demographic composition of French universities. In 1580, only one out of every twelve male nobles had a university education; by 1680 one in every three male nobles held a university degree.¹⁷ As a university education became a more highly coveted symbol of status among the nobility, more noblemen enrolled in the universities. Numerous other studies, similar to Brockliss’s, focus solely on the role of the universities. These include Walter

¹⁵ These three philosophers and scientists each have a chapter devoted to their educational treatises. See Chapters 2, 8, and 11 of L.W.B. Brockliss, *French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

¹⁶ J.H. Hexter, “The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance,” *Journal of Modern History* (March 1950):1-20.

¹⁷ See Appendix II and Appendix IV in Brockliss *French Higher Education*.

Ruegg's two-volume work *A History of the University in Europe*. But these studies do little to illuminate the daily practices of the university, neither do they consider education available outside of the university system.

One study that does attempt to “refocus the history of education to institutions outside of the university”¹⁸ is Mark Motley's *Becoming a French Aristocrat* (1990). Frustrated by myriad scholars who place too much emphasis on university education and not enough on other forms of “French pedagogy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,”¹⁹ Motley's text provides a detailed examination of educational practices among the French nobility in the early modern period. While Motley's study is well researched and accounts for a nobleman's pre-university education and for a noblewoman's entire education, it omits any discussion of non-elite education.

The underlying assumption of each of these works is that ordinary, untitled, less privileged people remained completely uneducated throughout the entire early modern period until the Enlightenment. This is entirely false, but the bulk of early modern French education historiography implies that this was reality. When we examine the source material left by “ordinary” early modern people, such as account books, rent books, receipts, passbooks, hand written memos, and letters it is obvious that these people had, at the very least, a rudimentary education. But where did they receive such an education?

¹⁸ Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility 1580-1750*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990): xi.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xii.

In 1976, Roger Chartier, Dominique Julia, and Marie-Madeleine Compère published *L'Éducation en France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle* as a “new history” of education in early modern France that provides a synthesized, yet comprehensive examination of elite and non-elite education. It is one of the first attempts to include both elite and non-elite education and to examine the pedagogical practices of both groups. Keeping with Chartier’s *Annaliste* tradition, *L'Éducation en France* minimizes the rupture typical in the history of education between the early modern period, the Enlightenment, and the Revolution, and instead argues that there was much more continuity in the availability of education as well as the social composition of particular schools from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries than has been previously recognized. Each chapter seeks to explain how particular educational institutions, including village schools, parish schools, charity schools, city schools, colleges, convent schools, and universities, were established; what type of pedagogy was employed; and to whom the school catered. *L'Éducation en France* was a landmark project of revisionism and over twenty years later, the questions it raised still remain important. However, some revision is now necessary. For example, Chartier, Julia, and Compère tended to view the history of education as a teleological phenomenon that ends with our current “modern” educational institutions. Viewing the history of education in this way may flatten the actual historical contexts in which certain themes, ideas, and practices were invented throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Although the work sheds light on educational institutions that have often been left out of the historical narrative,

including *écoles de villages* and *écoles de charité*, it does not provide a comprehensive examination of each institution. *L'Éducation en France* can serve as both a reference and as a starting point for histories on the *écoles de village*, *écoles de charité*, and the *collèges*. The questions raised by Chartier, Julia, and Compère in *L'Éducation en France* deserve further development and analysis.

More recently, Karen Carter's *Creating Catholics: Catechisms and Primary Education in Early Modern France* (2011) explores non-elite education through the specific lens of catechism instruction. Using a variety of printed and manuscript catechisms created between the late sixteenth century and the late eighteenth century, Carter demonstrates how the Catholic Church adapted its catechisms in order to better educate the laity in the tenets of Catholicism. In addition to providing invaluable information on the contents of early modern catechism booklets, she also explains how particular religious organizations, such as the Jesuits and Ursulines, incorporated catechism instruction with humanities and the arts. Although Carter does an excellent job of providing an analysis of educational reforms, such as the frequency at which catechisms were taught, and the standardization of pedagogical exercises in eighteenth-century *petites écoles* and *collèges*, her treatment of non-elite educational institutions, especially charity schools, is slim.

Carter's weakness is not necessarily surprising considering that the historiography of *écoles de charité* is even less developed than the overall historiography of non-elite education in early modern France. Though many studies, such as those by Barbara

Diefendorf, Elizabeth Rapley, and Jean-Pierre Gutton have all mentioned the fashion for establishing *écoles de charité* in the seventeenth century, they primarily concentrate on the schools' collective association to a wider impulse of charitable giving spurred by the Catholic Reformation. They have not examined the specific dynamics or practices associated with France's *écoles de charité*, nor the relationship to the state and community embedded in the routine life of these schools. The multifaceted reasons why these schools were established, how they were established, how they were maintained, who the schoolmasters were, who the children were, who the benefactors were, how the community and state used these educational institutions, nor the long and short term effects these schools had on French society need to be further explored and explained.

This thesis will begin to answer these questions by examining Lyon's seventeenth-century *écoles de charité*. In addition to making an intervention into the historiography of non-elite education, this project also seeks to use "childhood" as a category for historical analysis. Since children left few written records and were legally viewed as subservient, dependent individuals under coverture, children have often been relegated to the periphery of history. In 1962, Philippe Ariès published *Centuries of Childhood* and introduced "childhood" as a new category of analysis to social historians. Ariès argues that the rise of affection towards children in the seventeenth century was a key turning point in the development of the concept of "childhood." Despite the fact that his thesis has elicited much criticism and remains controversial, spurring numerous

revisionist histories, *Centuries of Childhood* became the foundational text of childhood studies.

A new generation of scholarship on the history of childhood is just emerging that considers children as actors in historical processes. An important pioneer in this movement is Bianca Premo. Her 2009 work, *Children of the Father King: Youth, Authority, and Legal Minority in Colonial Lima*,²⁰ is even more influential to this thesis than Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood*. A study of eighteenth-century Bourbon reforms in New Spain, particularly in Lima, in *Children of the Father King* Premo argues children often held positions as “political agents” in early modern society. Though Premo's book concentrates on a completely different time period and regional context than this project, her identification of children as agents molded according to a particular state's ideals through educational institutions, legal reforms, and family reforms, provides a model of how to think about “children” in a historical context. Much as in Lima, Lyonnais children were subjected to educational reforms by city magistrates, the state, and the church. This project will also consider children as agents of the state, the church, the local elite, and of the family, investigating children's experiences and interrogating the importance of those practices for larger patterns.

Finally, this project also engages the Catholic Reformation. Charity schools were part of a larger project propelled by the church and local elites to expand Catholic

²⁰ Bianca Premo, *Children of the Father King: Youth, Authority, and Legal Minority in Colonial Lima* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

education to the majority of the population during the Reformation. Elizabeth Rapley's *The Dévotes: Women & Church in Seventeenth-Century France* examines Ursuline and other teaching orders in early modern France to argue the establishment of early modern convent and *petites écoles* during the Catholic Reformation was the result of women asserting their roles as active contributors to the religious movement. Barbara Diefendorf also touches on this argument in her discussion of penitential asceticism and charity through the founding of hospitals and charity schools in seventeenth-century France in her work *From Penitence to Charity*. However, both works focus on institutional actors, such as founders, schoolmasters, and schoolmistresses rather than on the implications of the schools themselves. Philip Hoffman's 1984 *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon, 1500-1789* also briefly examines the role of the clergy and schoolmasters in Lyon's *petites écoles* and *écoles de charité* in the development of the Catholic Reformation. Additionally, Karen Carter's *Creating Catholics* argues that the expansion and better instruction of the catechism was essential to early modern Catholic reform.

It is important to remember educational reform was also a strong impetus to the Protestant Reformation. Gerald Strauss's *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* asserts that the establishment and subsequent reformation of vernacular schools in Protestant Germany was ultimately a failure on the part of the Protestant church. The "most powerful conditioning instrument for shaping

habits of thought” in children was the catechism.²¹ But by forcing rote memorization of long catechisms in the vernacular, Strauss argues that children quickly lost interest in school. Instead of absorbing and engaging in the material, children were often bored and failed to grasp the significance of the catechism as the church had intended. Strauss contends that the Protestant educational reforms failed in the Protestant “little schools.” However, while Protestant schools and reforms may have been a failure, we may find that Catholic educational reform in the vernacular schools was more successful.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

This paper draws on the official and unofficial records of Lyon’s seventeenth-century charity schools housed in the *Archives Municipales de Lyon* and the *Archives Départementales du Rhône* in Lyon, France. Catalogued primarily in the D and G series, the records include a variety of manuscript and printed sources of a kind little used in other studies. While the G series contains myriad decrees, letters, contracts, and *Lettres Patentes* from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the D series holds impressive leather bound account books, inventories, small personal journals, drafts of *Reglemens*, hand-written conduct and pedagogy booklets, and the “official history” of Lyon’s *petites écoles*. The level of detail and information provided in these sources is extraordinary and allows a more complete analysis of the seventeenth century charity school to be produced.

²¹ Gerald Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978):151-77.

In addition to examining the institutional history of these schools through individual royal charters, Démia's *Reglemens*, and other official documents produced and collected by the *Bureau des Écoles des Pauvres*, invaluable evidence of the daily functions and practices of these schools is provided through a "Livre des Comptes" of the *Saint Charles* school that also served as the schoolmaster's private journal. While the first pages of this small, leather bound journal appear consistent with many early modern account books, specifying monthly donations and expenses incurred by the school and schoolmasters, the majority of the journal contains sermons, lesson plans, class lists, student evaluations, parent evaluations, and a handwritten version of Démia's *Reglemens*. This type of detailed information provides a clear image of a typical school's composition, daily practices, and community involvement.

From these records we can also see that Démia's work with the *écoles de charité* was in constant evolution. In 1670 a handwritten first draft of Démia's *Reglemens* was created for the *Saint Pierre* school. Still very much a work in progress, this early set of *Reglemens* underlines the experimental nature of Démia's educational project. But by 1681, it's clear that the *Reglemens* had been perfected to Démia and the other schoolmasters' satisfaction. For example, the first draft of 1670 did not specify the length of the school day, the prayer schedule, nor the attendance policy. In the 1681 edition these issues were each devoted at least a one-page section. Similarly, in the published 1681 copy, Démia indicated which books and authors schoolchildren could read, but in the 1670 draft such a list did not yet exist. It is clear that until 1681 the

Reglemens was a living document, constantly adapting to particular circumstances and realities in the *écoles de charité*.

Published in Lyon under the title *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, this book was readily available to schoolmasters in Lyon and began to be disseminated throughout France at the end of the seventeenth century. Though initially the medium sized handbook was received only by schoolmasters in large cities such as Paris, Rouen, Marseilles, and Toulouse, by the 1730s it became the model on which many schools, whether charity or tuition-based, were established and organized around.²² For example, the *Statuts et Reglemens des escoles chrestiennes et charitables du Saint-Enfant de Jésus* produced by Nicolas Barré in 1685 borrowed heavily from Démia's *Reglemens*. Additionally, Louis XV praised Démia's work in 1733 as being "responsible for the overwhelming increase in educational efficiency among the *menu peuple* and an improved moral state" in a memorandum to Lyon's *Prévost des Marchans et Echevins*.²³

Despite the use of the Démia's *Reglemens* and the emulation of Lyon's charity schools, in modern historiography St. Jean-Baptiste De La Salle's Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is often cited as the model for "the advancement of free popular education"²⁴ in seventeenth and eighteenth-century France. De La Salle, much like Démia, extended "curriculum to include mathematics, modern languages, drawing,

²² Letter to the Archbishop of Lyon from Louis XV, 31 mai 1733, AML 3GG 150.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Howard Cline Barnard, *Education and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969): 6.

and book-keeping.”²⁵ In examining these documents, it becomes clear that D mia and De La Salle shared many of the same ideas. To cite De La Salle as the innovator of “professional education” completely omits any contributions D mia may have had to the advancement of this educational phenomenon. In examining and using these archival sources, this paper will also demonstrate how D mia thought of and directed the advancement of “professional education” among the poor in the seventeenth century, a huge innovation in non-elite education that would have repercussions on early modern society for years to come.

²⁵ Ibid.

II. Education and the Counter Reformation

At the end of the sixteenth century, elementary and religious education was at the forefront of ecclesiastical and secular concerns. According to the Catholic Church, the “principal cause” of the Reformation was “the lack of informed and educated clergy.”²⁶ At the twenty-first meeting of the Council of Trent in 1562, the synod discussed the importance of improving the education of Catholic rectors. They saw the “number of illiterate and unskilled rectors” in Europe as alarming but not necessarily surprising as there was “little supervision” over the education of rectors by Rome.²⁷ Members of the synod expressed their concerns that these “ignorant rectors” were both unhelpful and dangerous to their parishes as they would unwittingly lead their parishioners astray. In order to address this increasingly problematic issue, the Council of Trent mandated that education of the clergy be “improved immediately and thoroughly:” each rector must be able to read, write, and translate biblical passages from Latin to explain the Bible to his parishioners.²⁸ The synod believed that if the rectors were better educated, reform would be easier to achieve among the laity.

At the same time, the synod was increasingly worried about the laity’s ignorance of Catholic doctrine as well. In many Catholic countries, including France, Protestants or

²⁶ Robert Birely, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999): 122.

²⁷ James Waterworth, ed. and transl. *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Ecumencial Council of Trent* (London: Dolmar, 1848): 147.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

Protestant sympathizers founded the majority of existing *petites écoles* during the sixteenth century. Not wanting the Protestants to “hold a monopoly on elementary instruction”²⁹ and wishing to “emphasize the supremacy of the Catholic faith,” Catholic leaders found it necessary to educate the laity.³⁰ In 1563, the Council of Trent “insisted on the duty of parish priests to instruct children on Sundays and feast days in the truths of the faith.”³¹ In 1567, Pope Pius V issued a papal bull that expanded the Council of Trent’s mandate to encourage education not only on Sunday and feast days but also throughout the year, educating children in the Catholic tenets. By the end of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, elementary schools proliferated throughout Europe and began to integrate religious instruction with reading and writing, though many of these schools were still reserved for members of elite society, either noble children or those with wealthy parents.³²

It is important to remember that the Assembly of French Clergy did not accept the disciplines outlined in the Council of Trent until 1615,³³ meaning that many of the Council’s decrees were not undertaken in France until the beginning of the seventeenth century. It took even longer for the Counter Reformation policies to have a noticeable effect on Lyon. We should carefully remember Lyon’s exceptional position in seventeenth-century France as a city undergoing not only religious reformation, but

²⁹ Bernard Grossperrin, *Les petites écoles sous l’Ancien Régime* (Rennes, France: Ouest-France, 1984): 15.

³⁰ Birely, *The Refashioning of Catholicism*, 122.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 123.

³² *Ibid.*, 124.

³³ Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women & Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990): 21.

social, economic, and political reformations as well. The seventeenth century can be referred to as a “time of intense reconstruction” for Lyon in which the city magistrates and clergy worked to repair “fidelity to the Catholic church, obedience to the sovereign, and the foundations of economic prosperity” all of which had greatly suffered throughout the tumultuous sixteenth century.³⁴

By the mid-sixteenth century, Lyon had well over 70,000 inhabitants, making it France’s third largest city. Several trade routes ran through Lyon during the early modern period, putting her “in contact with the Mediterranean, the Seine basin, Flandres, and Italy.”³⁵ These trade routes, in addition to the numerous festivals held in Lyon each year during the fifteenth century, helped transform Lyon into a major European economic center. Since the city “was so devoted to business, it is not surprising that merchants dominated the social and political hierarchy” of Lyon throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁶ In fact, the majority of people who were considered part of the highest echelon of Lyonnais society were usually untitled merchants, traders, or bank investors, many of whom were foreign born.³⁷ Though these businessmen rarely held municipal offices like their titled noble counterparts, their “loans to the city and the king”

³⁴ André Latreille, *Histoire de Lyon et du Lyonnais* (Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1975): 196.

³⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis, “Protestantism and the Printing Workers of Lyons: A Study in the Problem of Religion and Social Class during the Reformation.” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1959): 23.

³⁶ Philip Hoffman, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon, 1500-1789* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984): 10.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

afforded them “considerable influence in municipal affairs” and society.³⁸ With the small number of *noblesse d’épée*, these merchants and bankers made up Lyon’s “upper” nobility, while the “lower” nobility consisted primarily of lawyers to the seigniorial and royal courts, native merchants with smaller enterprises, tax collectors, barristers, and magistrates of the *sénéchaussée*.³⁹ Immediately underneath the “lesser” nobility was a relatively prosperous and politically active group of artisans and merchants. As Natalie Zemon Davis has noted, this group could account for a “type of middle-class”⁴⁰ that was certainly above the working poor but not quite on the same social standing as members of the elite. The majority of the population, usually referred to as the *menu peuple* or “small people,” were at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Distinguished by poverty and financial insecurity, this “body had no voice in city affairs” and was primarily made up of day laborers and journeymen.⁴¹ Though the Catholic clergy had its own hierarchy, ecclesiastical men were often regarded as distinguished members of society.⁴²

As the religious wars spread across France in the sixteenth century, Lyon became a *Ligue* stronghold. Though the *Ligue* promoted the internal evolution of commercial institutions, the external, intercity, and interregional trade that Lyon depended upon eroded. Merchants, especially those of silk and lace, faced economic ruin. Additionally,

³⁸ Ibid., 10.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Davis, “Protestantism and the Printing Workers of Lyons,” 34.

⁴¹ Hoffman, *Church and Community*, 10.

⁴² Ibid.

the *Ligue* influence placed Lyon in a precarious political position as a symbol of disobedience to the French monarchy.

Interestingly, despite the *Ligue's* presence, Lyon still had a sizable Protestant population. A large number of the foreign-born bankers and traders in Lyon came from the German provinces in the sixteenth century and with them they brought Protestantism. For example, as Natalie Zemon Davis has noted, a number of print workers in Lyon during the sixteenth century were Protestants.⁴³ In fact, in 1572 when news arrived from Paris of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the *Ligue* advocated a similar massacre in Lyon that resulted in the death of several hundred Protestants and Protestant sympathizers.⁴⁴ The *Ligue* placed Lyon in an unfavorable political and economic situation throughout the end of the sixteenth century. But with death of the "king of the *Ligue*," the cardinal of Bourbon, in 1593, the resistance to royal authority supported by the *Ligue Lyonnais* started to fall. By September 4, 1594 when Henri IV made an official visit to Lyon, the *Ligue* had completely lost power.

Lyon's seventeenth-century rehabilitation was a long process guided by four successive archbishops from the Villeroy family: Charles d'Halincourt, Nicolas d'Halincourt, François Halincourt, and Camille de Neufville. The most progress was made during the last half of the seventeenth century under the leadership of archbishop Camille de Neufville de Villeroy. In addition to requiring strict adherence to Tridentine

⁴³ Davis, "Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy," 55.

⁴⁴ Latreille, *Histoire de Lyon et du Lyonnais*, 186.

reforms to “improve the quality of the clergy,” Neufville⁴⁵ also enacted a number of social reforms to ameliorate the conditions of Lyon’s poor.⁴⁶ These poor-reforms, though many did work to help eliminate heresy, were not intended as responses to Protestantism.⁴⁷ Instead, they were practical reforms to reduce the misery of the common population and restore a sense of order to the community.⁴⁸ Under Neufville’s tutelage, by 1680 donations to the *Hôtel Dieu* had quadrupled from 50,000 *livres* per year to nearly 200,000 *livres* per year.⁴⁹ Instead of children and parents “crying and wailing in the streets from hunger and the cold of the night,”⁵⁰ the *Hôtel Dieu* and the church provided the poor with temporary housing, clothing, and food.

⁴⁵ All three archbishops of the seventeenth century were from the Villeroy family, therefore in order to avoid confusion, Camille de Neufville de Villeroy will be referred to as “Neufville” in the rest of this paper.

⁴⁶ Latreille, *Histoire de Lyon et du Lyonnais*, 201.

⁴⁷ Davis, “Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy,” 55.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Latreille, *Histoire de Lyon et du Lyonnais*, 201.

⁵⁰ Davis, “Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy,” 58.

III. Charles Démia Returns to Lyon

One of Neufville's greatest achievements was obtaining Charles Démia's assistance in 1664 and the subsequent establishment of the *écoles de charité*. Even though Neufville was not sworn in as archbishop until 1665, he assumed the responsibilities of the position from his half-brother, François d'Halincourt, in the early months of 1664. After reviewing reports from Lyon's parish priests on the "moral and physical state" of their parishioners, Neufville was disappointed to learn that François's efforts to improve the morality among the laity had been relatively ineffective, with many of the parishioners unable to recite the catechism.⁵¹ Neufville quickly realized that he needed assistance in improving the "morality" of Lyon's "lower people."⁵² Wanting to find a priest familiar with Lyon's social and economic circumstances, Neufville reviewed his records and decided to hire Charles Démia, a former resident and student in Lyon, to serve as Neufville's advisor and as the city's new *curé*. Since Démia was raised in his wealthy uncle's Lyonnais household on rue Henri⁵³ and had attended *collège* at the Jesuit

⁵¹ Démia, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1681, AML 3GG 150, fol. 6.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Today Rue Henri is located in the 2nd arrondissement of Lyon on the *presque'île* and was renamed Rue de la Bourse in the nineteenth century. This area was gradually developed throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By the late seventeenth-century, Rue Henri was a popular and fashionable street to live on for members of the lesser nobility. Démia's school, the Collège de la Trinité is still located on this street just feet from Démia's former residence. See Chapter 2 in Compayré *Charles Démia et les Origines de l'Enseignement Primaire* and Figure 2 in Hoffman, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon, 1500-1789*.

Collège de la Trinité in Lyon, Neufville believed Démiá's familiarity with the city would aid in his efforts as well as interests in "moralizing" Lyon.

Born October 3, 1637 in Bourg-en-Bresse, Démiá moved to Lyon in 1645 after both his parents died. With his maternal aunt and uncle, who were members of the nobility of the robe, Démiá lived a pampered lifestyle in Lyon. Originally Démiá planned to follow in his uncle's footsteps, preparing for a career as a lawyer. However, when Démiá was fourteen he decided he was more suited for an ecclesiastical role. After receiving his *ordres mineurs* in 1654, Démiá left Lyon to study at the *séminaire de Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet* in Paris. By the early 1660s, Démiá had completed his studies and was serving as a priest in Paris's Saint-Sulpice parish when he received the offer from Neufville to return to Lyon. Seeing this as an opportunity to move up the ecclesiastical hierarchy, he immediately accepted Neufville's offer and returned to Lyon in 1664.⁵⁴

Although Démiá had lived in Lyon for over fifteen years, as a privileged adolescent he had little interaction with Lyon's poor growing up. In addition to attending a school that catered to sons of the lower nobility, Démiá lived in an upscale neighborhood.⁵⁵ Therefore, his knowledge of the Lyonnais poor was based only on superficial observations during his youth. But during his tenure in Paris, Démiá had the opportunity to interact closely with the Parisian "lower sorts" through his involvement

⁵⁴ Démiá, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1681, AML 3GG 150, fol. 6.

⁵⁵ Gabriel Compayré, *Charles Démiá et les Origines de l'Enseignement Primaire*, 27.

with the *Compagnie du Saint Sacrement*. A secret confraternity established in 1630, the *Compagnie du Saint Sacrement* was a charitable confraternity of lay and clergymen that contributed an average of 350,000 *livres* yearly in the 1650s to the poor for clothing, food, and other provisions including the establishment and maintenance of several poor hospitals throughout Paris. According to Démia, his work with “his dear Parisian brothers” inspired him “to continually support charitable efforts” and “bring Catholicism” to those “most in need.”⁵⁶

Before returning to Lyon, Démia anticipated that the Lyonnais poor would be similar to the Parisian poor he had known, if not better off. Since Lyon was a smaller, provincial town, the depravity that marred the Parisian poor might not be as severe in Lyon. But during his initial visits to the *St. George*, *St. Pierre*, and *St. Charles* parishes, Démia noticed that Lyon’s poor had “slid further into depravity” than he had expected.⁵⁷ Even though the church was “obliged to foster education” of the catechism and other Catholic tenets among “the ignorant laity,”⁵⁸ Démia noted the majority of the Lyonnais population remained uneducated in the catechism and other Catholic tenets. Their ignorance was rather shocking to Démia, as he witnessed a much different situation in Paris’s poorest parishes. Whereas in Paris there were several schools known as *écoles de charité* that specialized in “educating, moralizing, and Christianizing”⁵⁹ children from

⁵⁶ Démia, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1681, AML 3GG 150, fol 2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 6.

⁵⁸ Bossy, “The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe,” 67.

⁵⁹ Chartier, Julia, and Compère, *L’Éducation en France*, 59.

society's lower sort for free, Lyon had no such institutions.⁶⁰ In fact, only a handful of *écoles de charité* existed before the 1660s in France, with the majority of them established in and around Paris. Only those who could afford to send their children to convent schools, expensive tuition-based *petites écoles*, or a private tutor had access to formal education.

Before Démia had visited Lyon's parishes he and Neufville believed a series of individual, small-scale parish reforms along with the establishment of a seminary in Lyon would suffice to improve the morality and education of the lower sorts. Since many of Lyon's parish priests were rather ill informed, educational reform was to start with them. In order for this to happen, a seminary would have to be opened. Agreeing with Démia that this was a necessary step, Neufville began to seek donations from various sources, most notably elites. Pierre Blanqui bequeathed two houses in the *Saint Charles* parish for the establishment of a seminary in early 1664. Existing parish priests would have to attend Latin classes as well as reading and writing workshops at the seminary on a bi-monthly basis to improve their skills. Neufville also required that every new priest attend the seminary before being appointed as a parish rector. New priests would have to attend the seminary for at least one year in order to serve as a parish *curé*. The seminary would also actively solicit new priests who would be strenuously educated in the Catholic

⁶⁰ Although the Hôtel Dieu did offer a number of services to Lyon's poor, it concentrated on providing the poor with temporary housing, medical services, and food.

doctrine, Latin, and French reading and writing. Apart from establishing the seminary, Démia felt that parish priests needed to increase the frequency of catechism lessons.

However, after interviewing each parish priest and nearly three hundred of Lyon's poorest children and adults, Démia realized the task of "moralizing" and "educating" the Lyonnais population was going to be a much larger project than he had anticipated.⁶¹ Démia reported his findings to Neufville with the recommendation to immediately establish "a school that would cater to Lyon's depraved and uneducated youth."⁶² Using his position as *curé* and by citing the synod of Trent's 1563 edict to "promote Christian education," Démia was able to acquire 10,000 *livres* from the Lyonnais clergy and an additional 5,000 *livres* from Neufville's family account. Unfortunately, Démia could not use the two houses Pierre Blanqui donated to the church for the establishment of an *école de charité* since the contract specified it was to be used for a seminary. Though 15,000 *livres* was certainly a large sum, it was not enough capital to establish and maintain a school. Démia, with Neufville's permission, set out to raise funds from Lyon's nobility, merchant elite, and from the state in 1664.

⁶¹ Démia, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1681, AML 3GG 150, fol. 8.

⁶² Bureau de l'École, "Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon," ADR 5D 1.

IV. Fundraising Through Fear

With the expansion of the silk and cloth industries as well as the rise of banking institutions and specialized *grand marchands*, Lyon's economy gradually started to rebound from the crisis of the sixteenth century. Asserting its role as France's "second" city by the mid-seventeenth century, Lyon was a commercial capital of the region. With new industry came new a new population. In addition to *financiers*, Lyon also attracted journeymen and day laborers. Especially drawn to Lyon were silk workers, who took advantage of the rapidly expanding trade. Despite the rise in commercial activity, many people, notably those who lacked adequate training in specialized skills such as blacksmithing, tanning, silk work, or construction remained unemployed. However, it should be noted that the unemployment rate of the seventeenth century was far less than that of the sixteenth and was gradually decreasing over time. But the elite perceived the idleness of the poor, regardless of whether or not it was decreasing, as a dangerous situation. Faced with what they saw as a large number of abandoned children, rising unemployment, and a seemingly morally corrupt poor, Lyonnais elite felt social stability was on the precipice of dissolving in the late seventeenth century.⁶³

The *Hôtel Dieu* and parish churches provided a number of charitable services to the poor, including temporary housing, clothing, medical assistance, and food. But by 1660, the sheer number of people requesting assistance from the *Hôtel Dieu*

⁶³ Davis, "Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy," 59.

overwhelmed the institution.⁶⁴ Though the increased funds raised by Neufville for the *Hôtel Dieu* helped to expand the physical size of the complex and to provide more food for those in need, both state and municipal authorities recognized that the services offered by the *Hôtel Dieu* were only a temporary fix to a larger problem of growing poverty and depravity of the *menu people*.

In the seventeenth century, the French monarchy sent *intendants* to all the provinces in order to monitor local activity. In 1665 Lambert d'Herbigny, the *intendant* stationed in Lyon, wrote to Neufville expressing his concerns regarding “the increasingly lewd actions of the lower sorts” which “threaten[ed] the safety, security, and livelihood of the entire city and region.”⁶⁵ Through d'Herbigny, the French state conveyed its anxieties regarding social stability. Louis XIV, his administration, and the elite became more and more preoccupied with the possibility of society falling back into chaos due to the actions of the poor.

Playing on the elite's fears, in 1668 Démia presented a proposal to Lyon's *Prévost des Marchans*, *Echevins*, and the king in which he argued the “necessity and utility” of establishing schools in several of the city's parishes. The *Prévost des Marchans* was the head of municipal affairs in Lyon.⁶⁶ Assisted by four or more *échevins* (magistrates), the *Prévost des Marchans* handled provisions for the city, public works projects such as

⁶⁴ Chartier, Compère, and Julia, *L'Éducation en France*, 58.

⁶⁵ Bureau de l'École, “L'établissement des écoles des pauvres,” in “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D 1, fol. 78.

⁶⁶ Camille Dreyfus, ed., *La grande encyclopédie : inventaire raisonné des sciences, des lettres et des arts*, vol 25 (Paris: Lamirault, 1902): 1025.

building courthouses, roads, and bridges, certain municipal taxes, and had jurisdiction over commercial matters.⁶⁷ Therefore, by approaching the *Prévost des Marchans et Échevins* as well as the king, Démia made this project a civil as well as an ecclesiastical concern. Educating the poor, according to Démia, should have been of the “utmost importance of the state” since the poor made up the majority of the population.⁶⁸ By providing education to these children, the “debauchery which undermined social stability could be eliminated.”⁶⁹ Echoing the elite’s concerns, Démia emphasized that without a proper Christian education, youths could easily “fall into laziness...[and] become uncontrollable libertines, schemers, blasphemers, and fighters.”⁷⁰ In order to assure “public tranquility” and “reduce the stress of the magistrates,” children had to be taught “in their infancy” to “respect God, magistrates, and law.”⁷¹ Through various pedagogical exercises, including reading and writing assignments,⁷² the *écoles de charité* would emphasize the importance of being “good servants of God, loyal subjects of His Majesty, respectful members of their society, and hardworking, loyal laborers.”⁷³

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Charles Démia, “Remonstrances faites à messieurs Les Prevost des Marchans, Echevins & Principaux Habitans de la Ville de Lyon touchant la nécessité et utilité des Ecoles Chrétiennes pour l’instruction des Enfants Pauvres,” 1668, Archives Départementales du Rhône 5D 7, fol 60.

⁶⁹ Ibid., fol 58.

⁷⁰ Ibid., fol. 59.

⁷¹ Ibid., fol. 60.

⁷² “Reglemens de Saint Charles,” 1679, ADR 5D 8, fol. 27.

⁷³ Démia, “Remonstrances faites à messieurs Les Prevost des Marchans, Echevins & Principaux Habitans de la Ville de Lyon touchant la nécessité et utilité des Ecoles Chrétiennes pour l’instruction des Enfants Pauvres,” 1668, ADR 5D 7, fol 65.

These initial appeals to the future of public safety and social stability appear to have been successful in raising support and funding from Lyon's wealthy elite. Immediately after presenting this proposal, the *Prévost des Marchans et Echevins* pledged to "support Démia's ambitious, but necessary goals in establishing schools" by "promising [to provide] up to 300 *livres* annually" for the "maintenance and support of the schools."⁷⁴ However, the *Prévost* noted the "continued support" was contingent upon the establishment and satisfactory progress of the schools in "dissuading the *menu peuple* from depraved actions."⁷⁵ After the *Prévost des Marchans et Echevins* made their donation commitment, individual donations quickly followed.

In 1670 these donations led to the establishment of an *école de charité* in the *Saint Pierre* parish, which certainly held a large population of journeymen and workers, but was not necessarily one of the city's poorest. According to a list formulated by Démia in 1668, *Saint Pierre* was actually more prosperous than the *Saint Paul*, *Saint George*, *Saint Charles*, and *Saint André* neighborhoods respectively.⁷⁶ However, the reason why the school was established here was due to the requests of the initial benefactors. In many of the donation records for *Saint Pierre*, the benefactors explicitly specified their money was to be used for the establishment of a school in *Saint Pierre*. Their motivations for establishing a school here were manifold. First, the *Saint Pierre*

⁷⁴ Bureau de l'École, "Reponse de Prévost des Marchans et Échevins," in "Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon," 16 mars 1669, ADR 5D1.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Bureau de l'École, "Liste des Pauvres Paroisses de Lyon," in "Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon," 1668, ADR 5D1.

parish neighbored several wealthy neighborhoods and in the 1650s the number of workers who resided in the area drastically increased.⁷⁷ Worried about the safety of their own neighborhoods, some of these benefactors felt changes should take place near their own residences first. Additionally, as several donation entries note, the *Saint Pierre* parish was home to many of the benefactors' employees. The schools would not only ensure a safer neighborhood but also improve the elite's neighbors, many of which were also their workers. For example, Jean François Barrieu Meyzonne, a wealthy silk merchant, lived on the *rue du grand côte* that traversed the *Saint Pierre* parish. His workshop was located on the same road and consequently, many of his workers also lived in the parish. By donating three houses on the *rue du sel* in 1670, Meyzonne ensured that a school would be established in *Saint Pierre* for his workers.⁷⁸ Similarly, Monsieurs de Moulceau and de Glorieu agreed to pay two hundred *livres* annually as well as an initial 500 *livres* "for the establishment and maintenance of a school for the poor in the *Saint Pierre*" parish.⁷⁹ The business partners "facilitated the export of silk, cotton, and various manufactured goods" to other regions of France as well as "the importation of common

⁷⁷ The records are ambiguous as to whether the *Saint Pierre* school was in the "original" *Saint Pierre* parish, renamed *Saint-Pierre-Le-Vieux*, on Lyon's right bank in the medieval section or in the "new" *Saint Pierre* parish on the north presqu'île around the *Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Saturin* church. The *rue du grand côte* is today located on the presqu'île but it is possible that is a new name. More research will be needed in order to explain exactly where this was located. For now, we can only sketch a picture of the parish and its surroundings from the information provided in the records. To see the two different possible locations, see Figure 2 in Hoffman, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon*.

⁷⁸ Donation records dated September 1670 in Bureau de l'École, "Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon," ADR 5D1.

⁷⁹ Donation records dated 14 septembre 1670 in Bureau de l'École, "Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon," ADR 5D1.

necessities” to Lyon.⁸⁰ Of their fifty workers, 45 lived in or near the *Saint Pierre* parish, making it the “best location” for a school in “order to moralize our lower people.”⁸¹ Following the lead by Meyzonne, de Moulceau and de Glorieu, by late 1670, other merchants as well as a few members of the lesser nobility, including Jean Manis and Pencot du Tour, provided both buildings and the cash necessary to maintain the school.⁸² The school opened the following January with 60 students. By September 1672, benefactors were obviously pleased as many, including de Moulceau, recommitted funds to the school and new people, such as wealthy widow Marie Caudel, started to donate in order “to continue the successful moralization of *Saint Pierre*’s inhabitants.”⁸³

Though *Saint Pierre* was the first school to open, other charity schools were established under the elite’s zeal to eliminate immorality among the poor. Both the *École Charitable de Saint Charles* and the *École Charitable de Saint Paul* were founded in 1671 through donations from the local merchant elite and nobility. *Saint Paul* received “two small, but well appointed and ideally located, neighboring buildings” as well as an initial gift of 3,000 *livres* from Jean Besset, an *avocat en parlement*, and his wife, Marie Cachet.⁸⁴ The buildings had been part of Cachet’s dowry and the cash was from a recent

⁸⁰ Donation records dated 14 septembre 1670 in Bureau de l’École, “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D1.

⁸¹ Donation records dated 14 septembre 1670 in Bureau de l’École, “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D1.

⁸² Donation records dated novembre 1670 in Bureau de l’École, “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D1.

⁸³ Donation records dated 12 decembre 1672 and 14 octobre 1672 in Bureau de l’École, “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D1.

⁸⁴ Donation records dated 7 janvier 1671 in Bureau de l’École, “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D1.

“successful investment” of Besset. They donated the money “in order to help alleviate the suffering of the poor [but]...most importantly, to safeguard society against immoral behavior and activities.”⁸⁵ In several entries of the *École Charitable de Saint Charles’s* donation records, benefactors, such as widow Isabel Guidot and surgeon Juliene Blauq, also noted they donated certain funds because of the “school’s commitment to the elimination of vice among the poor.”⁸⁶

The local nobility and wealthy merchant elite were not alone in commending the schools for their commitment to the moral improvement of the lower sorts. Louis XIV recognized this improvement as well in 1679 when he chose to bequeath a small building to the *École Charitable de Saint Charles* and provide funds to other *écoles de charité* in Lyon, including *Saint Pierre* and *Saint Paul*. In a letter addressed to the “*Maîtres des Écoles et Bureau de Saint Charles*,” Louis XIV explained that according to his *intendants* as well as numerous other noblemen, “since the establishment of these schools [in Lyon] there has been a visible change in the popular conduct of the people.”⁸⁷ The building and funds provided by Louis XIV allowed *Saint Charles* to expand its student population significantly, as well as to hire two new schoolmasters in 1680.⁸⁸ For Louis XIV this

⁸⁵ Donation records dated 7 janvier 1671 in Bureau de l’École, “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D1.

⁸⁶ Donation records dated 1 février 1671 and 22 mars 1671 in Bureau de l’École, “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D 1.

⁸⁷ Letter signed by Louis XIV and Le Tellier addressed “Aux Maîtres des Écoles et au Bureau de Saint Charles,” 1679, ADR 5D 6.

⁸⁸ “Livre des Comptes de l’argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles,” 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7.

donation was a way the monarchy could extend its reach directly to the lower sorts in an effort to centralize authority and power.

By exploiting the elite's preoccupation with social licentiousness, Démia convinced Lyon's wealthy merchants, noblemen, and organizations of the "necessity and utility" of the *écoles de charité*. In order to avoid social chaos, the poor had to be properly and formally educated. Although promises of reducing vice, increasing morality, and creating a more Christian society provided a strong incentive to support these schools, an even greater incentive for the elite and the state in supporting the maintenance and growth of these schools was Démia's emphasis on "professional education."⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Compayré, *Charles Démia*, 23.

V. Organization and Practices of the *Écoles de Charité*: Schoolmasters, Schoolchildren, and Professional Education

In 1672 Démia decided a *Bureau des Écoles de Pauvres* could help maximize efficiency in establishing, maintaining, and recruiting funds for the *écoles de charité*. Additionally, by requiring the schoolmasters of the *écoles de charité* to attend bimonthly meetings, abide by the rules established by the *Bureau*, and use Démia's *Reglemens*, a type of standardization of education was established in the charity schools. Throughout the 1670s, Neufville, Démia, and the Lyonnais schoolmasters worked together to build a central governing institution for the charity schools.

On February 1, 1672 Neufville appointed Démia "*Directeur General*" of Lyon's *écoles de charité*.⁹⁰ As a result, he was the de facto head of the *Bureau*. Though the *Bureau* was technically under the immediate purview of Neufville, in order to receive donations and be a tax-exempt organization, the *Bureau* had to receive permission from Louis XIV. In 1675 Louis XIV issued *Lettres Patentes* in which he approved the creation of the *Bureau des Écoles des Pauvres de Lyon* for the "good of the poor;" he declared the organization "a special civil order" that could "collect donations...without having to pay fees to the monarchy."⁹¹ As soon as the *Bureau* received the *Lettres Patentes*, it held its first assembly on April 28, 1675. In attendance were Démia, Neufville, and 59

⁹⁰ "Ordonnance de Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Lyon," 1 fevrier 1672, ADR 5D 8, fol. 280.

⁹¹ "Lettres Patentes du Roi pour l'establissement du Bureau des Écoles des Pauvres de Lyon," 1675, ADR 5D 8, fol. 281.

schoolmasters from the existing charity schools.⁹² The schools' curriculum was the main subject of this first meeting, with each schoolmaster attesting to “teach the catechism, reading, writing, counting, and crafts...in accordance to the rules outlined by Monsieur le Directeur General.”⁹³ Adherence to these and future rules would make the schools “as uniform as possible” to “best assist the transformation of the city.”⁹⁴

Démia states in the introduction to his *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon* that from a young age he had “wanted to teach the ignorant about the glory of God.”⁹⁵ It is not surprising then that the aspect he enjoyed most about being a priest was “teaching the lessons of Our Savior” to others. One of the main goals of the *écoles de charité* was to foster education in basic Catholic doctrine to the laity. But Démia also realized that in order for the lower sorts to truly undergo a “transformation,” the schools also had to “equip the poor with the necessary skills” to provide for themselves “throughout their lives.”⁹⁶ This meant charity schools served religious and moral purposes, but also practical ones, focusing on strengthening commerce, manufacturing, and trade.

In another presentation to the *Prévost des Marchans et Echevins* in 1669, Démia asked for additional funds to help develop the curriculum of the *écoles de charité* in order

⁹² See Appendix 1 for a complete list of schoolmasters in attendance.

⁹³ “La premiere assemblée des Maîtres des Ecoles de Lyon...” 28 avril 1675, ADR 5D 8, fol. 3.

⁹⁴ Ibid., fol. 5.

⁹⁵ Démia, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1681, AML 3GG 150, fol. 7.

⁹⁶ Compayré, *Charles Démia*, 23.

to stress “the acquisition of skills.”⁹⁷ These schools could “not only produce moral, obedient subjects and Christians,” but “could instill a love of work” in the children “from a young age.”⁹⁸ The result would be “loyal, efficient, and productive workers for the workshops, merchants, and manufacturers of Lyon.”⁹⁹ These “hardworking employees” were “essential to Lyon’s industry if it were to survive.”¹⁰⁰

In response to Démia’s presentation, the *Prévost des Marchans et Echevins* and several notable residents including Sieur Jean François Barrieu, Nicholas Ponchon, and Pierre Bouillet, provided Démia with 4,000 *livres* to “develop a curriculum that would prepare students for their future jobs in the arts and trades.”¹⁰¹ In the introduction of one of Démia’s earliest drafts of his *Reglemens* he promised to “shape honest, industrious, and efficient workers” at the *écoles de charité*.¹⁰² To prepare students for “apprenticeships, commerce, and service to the state,” students were educated in five major subjects: religion, reading, writing, mathematics, and craft skills necessary to particular trades.¹⁰³

This chapter will delineate the typical structure, organization, and daily functions of seventeenth-century Lyonnais charity schools, highlighting the emphasis on

⁹⁷ Démia, “Remonstrances faites à messieurs Les Prevost des Marchans, Echevins & Principaux Habitans de la Ville de Lyon pour l’establissement des Écoles des Pauvres,” 1669, ADR 5D 7, fol 121.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “Lettre des Prévost des Marchans et Echevins à Messire Charles Démia,” 1670, AML 3GG 150.

¹⁰² Démia, *Reglemens des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon*, 1670, ADR 5D 9, fol. 22.

¹⁰³ Démia, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1681, AML 3GG 150, fol. 6.

“professional education.” Due to the excellent extant source material, this chapter draws heavily on the records of the *École Charitable de Saint Charles*. In addition to using the *Bureau’s* “Inventaire Générale,” the school’s royal charter, and Démia’s *Reglemens*, this chapter also uses the “Livre des Comptes de l’argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles” which served both as an account book and as the schoolmaster’s personal diary that includes class lists, student evaluations, lesson plans, sermons, and parent evaluations.

SCHOOLMASTERS AND SCHOOLHOUSES

Each charity school employed one headmaster who reported directly to Démia. These headmasters were in charge of leading mass, admitting students, evaluating the other schoolmasters, and ensuring the *Reglemens* were upheld. They also performed administrative duties, including the keeping of account books, donation records, and interviews with students’ parents. Since the headmaster was required to lead mass, this position was usually reserved for male clergy members. In very rare circumstances, such as at the *École Charitable de Saint Paul* from 1679 to 1683, a headmaster could be a layperson as long as a priest was available to fulfill the religious duties associated with the headmaster’s position. Each school usually employed five or six other schoolmasters and, at most, one to two schoolmistresses. Schoolmasters could either be clergymen educated at a university or seminary, or members of the laity educated at a university. Schoolmistresses were usually single lay women, mostly from noble or wealthy families that had been educated by a private tutor. On occasion, schoolmistresses were members

of teaching congregations, such as the Ursulines, but typically they were *filles séculaires*. As part of their compensation, schoolmasters and mistresses were provided small apartments on school grounds or very near the site. Additionally, the teachers received a small monthly stipend depending on how many students they taught.¹⁰⁴

The school's location in the parish and its physical size were usually determined by the location of donated buildings. Sometimes this worked out extremely well as was the case in the *Saint Croix* parish. Though the *Bureau* received several cash donations to establish a school in the *Saint Croix* parish in 1677, as was customary, a school was not established until a building was donated. In April 1678 Catherine l'Anglais, the sister of Noble François Beneon, bequeathed a large house on the *rue St. Jean* for "the immediate establishment of one or two schools for boys and girls" in the *Saint Croix* parish.¹⁰⁵ Her sister, René l'Anglais, bequeathed the adjacent home in 1679 in order to expand the current school "of the lower people's children who work honestly and hard."¹⁰⁶ By combining these two structures, the *Saint Croix* school became the biggest in Lyon. Its huge, four-story complex spanned nearly an entire street corner and provided an ideal setting for a school. Not only was it near the parish church, it had an inner courtyard that was perfect for "outdoor activities," as well as enough room to "adequately house

¹⁰⁴ In 1698 Louis XIV issued a law that required charity schools to pay their schoolmasters and mistresses no less than 100 livres no more than 150 livres annually. The records do not indicate the amount of the monthly stipend, but it should be assumed that the teachers were making, at most, 150 livres per year.

¹⁰⁵ "Liste des rentes et donations" in "Archives des Écoles des Pauvres," 28 avril 1678, ADR 5D 1.

¹⁰⁶ "Liste des rentes et donations" in "Archives des Écoles des Pauvres," 1679, ADR 5D 1.

schoolmasters.”¹⁰⁷ The *École Charitable de Saint Croix* was therefore able to open in the late summer of 1679.

But donated buildings were not always ideally located or suited for schools. For example, in 1676 Alexandre Nicolas, a wealthy twill manufacturer, donated 2 small houses in the *Saint Simphorien* parish.¹⁰⁸ The houses were located on separate streets and each was in disrepair. Though it was suggested that one house could be used as a residence for the schoolmasters and the other as the school, when the school opened in 1678, there were serious problems with the school. There was not enough room for the students and the damp conditions in the basement were ruled hazardous to the health of the schoolmasters and students. The priests at the *église de Saint Simphorien* allowed the school to use its complex for classes until another building was acquired. Luckily, the *Bureau* was able to successfully sell both properties, securing enough money to move the school elsewhere in the parish by January 1679.¹⁰⁹ Once the *Bureau des Écoles* was active, it was easier for the schools to sell donated properties to buy or rent buildings that offered a more ideal location or size.

SCHOOLCHILDREN

Class lists or attendance records for non-elite schools are extremely rare. Although early modern universities kept meticulous records of the students’ names, ages,

¹⁰⁷ “Liste des rentes et donations” in “Archives des Écoles des Pauvres,” 28 avril 1678, ADR 5D 1.

¹⁰⁸ “Liste des rentes et donations” in “Archives des Écoles des Pauvres,” 20 septembre 1676, ADR 5D 1.

¹⁰⁹ “L’assemblée des Maîtres des Ecoles...” 13 decembre 1678, ADR 5D 8, fol. 5.

fathers' professions, and intended fields of studies, non-elite schools such as convent schools rarely kept such detailed records. The information contained in Lyon's *écoles de charité's* archives is both a surprising and precious source for an accurate and complete description of charity schoolchildren. When a new student started at the school the child's parents were required to accompany their child to the school's office on the first day of class. The schoolmaster carefully recorded the student's first name and last name, along with his or her age, sex, father's name, and father's employment. Though they were not required to, occasionally headmasters would also record where the student was born.¹¹⁰ New students would then have to confess that they were both Catholic and committed to the Catholic faith before being allowed to enter class.

The *écoles de charité* originally accepted both boys and girls, dividing them into groups, known as *bandes*. These groups were based on students' previous educational experience and not necessarily on age. As a result, even a student who was twelve but had no previous formal education might start in the first *bande*, while a nine year old with some education could be placed into a more advanced *bande*. However, students younger than seven and older than sixteen could not attend school.¹¹¹ Every charity school in Lyon accepted both boys and girls, placing them in the same schools and occasionally in the same *bandes*. However, in 1680, the *Bureau* received a notice from

¹¹⁰ This happened more in the late seventeenth century when it appears more first generation Lyonnais children attended the school.

¹¹¹ Though officially the rules stated that children could only attend school from the ages of 7 to 16, from the actual class lists it appears that occasionally students as old as 18 were enrolled in the very last *bandes*, suggesting that either this was not a strict rule or that children could complete their education as long as they started before the age of 16.

the king demanding that the schools immediately separate boys and girls, at the very least, into different *bandes* and that actions be taken to remove girls entirely from the grounds and into their own charity schools.¹¹² There is no indication in the records that anyone in Lyon complained about the mingling of the sexes in the schools and classroom, but the state certainly felt it was problematic, citing the division of sexes in tuition-based *petites écoles* as precedent and official policy. Eventually two schools were created solely for girls, but it appears as late as 1715 girls were still being educated alongside boys in certain charity schools since the *Bureau* received another notice regarding the subject.¹¹³

Most of Lyon's charity schools had four to eight *bandes* depending on the total number of students enrolled, though the majority of schools had five. The average size of an individual *bande* was 11 students. In 1681, the schoolmasters petitioned the *Bureau* to cap the number of students in *bandes* at 25 students since many classrooms could not accommodate more than this number.¹¹⁴ Instead of limiting the number of total enrollment, the headmasters chose to simply make multiple *bandes* of the same levels in the 1680s. The average total enrollment in charity schools in 1672 was 95 students, whereas in 1681 it was 211, which demonstrates the exponential growth of these schools in Lyon over the course of the late seventeenth century.

¹¹² "Concernant le prejudice et les sexes dans les écoles..." 1715, AML 3GG 150, fol. 4.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ "L'assemblée des Maîtres des Ecoles..." 27 août 1681, ADR 5D 8, fol. 282.

In 1678 the *École Charitable de Saint Charles* had five *bandes* for boys and five for girls. In total, 92 students were enrolled in September with 40 girls and 52 boys. The youngest boy was seven and the oldest was fifteen, whereas the youngest girl was nine and the oldest was fourteen.¹¹⁵ The average age of children enrolled in the *premiere bande* was nine; in the *cinquième bande* thirteen.¹¹⁶ All of the students were residents of the *Saint Charles* parish and were members of the “honorable poor.”

The most important prerequisite for entering an *école de charité* was that parents, notably the father, had to be employed in an “honorable profession,” but be “unable to provide a reasonable education to his children due to his own lack of education and necessary funds.”¹¹⁷ Since the silk and cloth industries provided the backbone of Lyon’s economy, many of the students who attended the *écoles de charité* were children of silk and textile workers.¹¹⁸ Over one third of the students who attended *Saint Charles* came from families with a father employed as a silk worker.¹¹⁹ Other paternal professions included masons, tanners, blacksmiths, shoemakers, carpenters, other textile workers, printers, bakers, and butchers.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ “Livre des Comptes de l’argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles,” 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7, fol. 12.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 22.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ This information is based on the class lists in the “Livre des Comptes” as well as in the meeting notes of the Bureau’s meetings in April 1677, May 1678, May 1680, September 1680, and September 1681. This trend appears to have continued according to Roger Chartier, who counted 211 *ouvriers en soie* or 23.8% or of father’s occupations in 22 of Lyon’s *écoles de charité* from 1697 to 1705.

¹¹⁹ See Appendix 2 for the exact figures. “Livre des Comptes de l’argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles,” 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7.

¹²⁰ See Appendix 2 for the exact figures. *Ibid.*

According to the *Bureau*, orphaned or abandoned children could be admitted to the *écoles de charité* if the *Hôtel Dieu* was willing to sponsor their education for at least five years.¹²¹ The majority of students sent by the *Hôtel Dieu* were between the ages of 10 and 13 with some previous instruction in a skill such as metalwork or leather tanning.¹²² Children might have gained these skills from working alongside their parents in various jobs, especially if the parents were skilled workers or journeymen. Though *Saint Charles* only received 2 orphans from the *Hôtel Dieu*, in other *écoles de charité*, notably in *Saint Sulpherien* and *Saint Paul*, there were significant numbers of older abandoned or orphaned children.¹²³ These figures reveal, with the exception of particularly skilled orphans, the *écoles de charité* were strictly reserved for members of the working or honorable poor. In order to be considered a member of the “honorable” poor it was necessary to be employed and not be completely mendicant.

CURRICULUM AND DAILY ACTIVITIES

Each *bande* had a different curriculum focused on what the students needed to practice the most. Most schools were organized according to the specifications outlined in the *Reglemens* that calls for five *bandes*.¹²⁴ When students were first admitted to the school, the headmaster would interview the child and his or her parents to determine the

121 “L’assemblée des Maîtres des Ecoles...” 18 septembre 1681, ADR 5D 8, fol.120.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.

124 Most of the charity schools had five *bandes*. However, *Saint Paul* and *Saint Iréné* both had eight. Their *Reglemens* and curriculum were slightly different than that of the other schools.

student's educational abilities. Diagnostic tests were usually administered during the first in-home interview with the child and his or her family and evaluated the child's reading, writing, mathematics, and religious proficiency.

Instead of moving progressively through each *bande* step by step, students were evaluated at the end of a six-month period to determine what *bande* they should be moved to or if they needed to stay in the same *bande* for another six-month term.¹²⁵ Students would typically stay in the same *bande* for at least twelve months, but occasionally students advanced faster. Démia believed that given "four or five years of continual schooling, children should have the capabilities and knowledge required to serve as an apprentice or employee in the professional arts and trades."¹²⁶

The *première bande* was intended for students who had no previous reading, writing, counting, or religious education. Students were introduced to the catechism gradually, with the headmaster making biweekly visits to the class to teach them about "Catholic practices" and beliefs. In addition to being introduced to the catechism, the *première bande* students spent a considerable amount of time learning the French alphabet. The schoolmaster was "encouraged to sing or play games with the students" in order to help them "remember the different letters and their proper order."¹²⁷ Once

¹²⁵ "Livre des Comptes de l'argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles," 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7, fol. 21.

¹²⁶ Démia, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1681, Archives Municipales de Lyon 3GG 150, No. XXXI.

¹²⁷ Démia, "Chapitre III: Méthode d'enseigner la lecture de Français, l'écriture, l'arithmétique, et l'orthographe. Ensemble des officiers et meubles des Ecoles des Pauvres..." in *Reglemens des Ecoles des Pauvres*, 1679, ADR 5D 9, fol. 27.

students “learned how to recite the alphabet in the proper order,” they were introduced to “the letter’s physical form” through “wooden blocks with painted letters.”¹²⁸ It was later noted in the printed copy of Démia’s *Reglemens* that “older students may feel too juvenile singing and using printed blocks,” but that this “[is] the best way to teach” and would “encourage those students to learn faster.”¹²⁹ Schoolmasters could “write the letters out on small boards as well” if this seemed to help “older students learn more effectively.”¹³⁰ In order to move onto the *deuxième bande*, students had to demonstrate some familiarity with the catechism and other Catholic prayers, recite the alphabet in its entirety, prove they recognized the printed letters, and both recognize and form small words such as “un,” “il,” “elle,” “on,” “non,” and “oui” when written on the board or formed out of the wooden blocks.¹³¹

In the *deuxième bande*, students studied phonetics and spelling during the first two months. Following this, students learned to read long sentences or extremely short fables and to write their names and small words onto paper. Using the same wooden blocks and sometimes small worksheets created by the schoolmasters, the students “would join the proper letters to make syllables and then eventually more complicated words.”¹³² Reading and writing were not viewed as two parts of the same whole in early modern pedagogy, so students were initially introduced to letters, phonetics, and spelling

128 Ibid.

129 Démia, *Reglemens pour les écoles de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon*, 1681, AML 3GG 150, fol. 29.

130 Ibid.

131 Démia, “Chapitre III: Méthode d’enseigner...” in *Reglemens*, 1679, ADR 5D 9, fol. 27.

132 Ibid., fol. 29.

without being able to compose the letters onto paper themselves. After grasping the basics of phonetics and spelling, students would learn how to “form all the letters, both capital and lower case.”¹³³ Students practiced writing their names, small words, and finally very small sentences. Unlike in the tuition-based *petites écoles*, students were not taught to read or write in Latin since “it would be of little practical use to them.”¹³⁴ By the end of the *deuxième bande* students were expected to “read small stories and compose coherent simple sentences with little difficulty.”¹³⁵

In the *troisième bande* students continued practicing to read and write. Time was spent reading French fables aloud to one another and composing letters and small memorandums. Schoolmasters did not encourage creative writing of short stories or poems as was done in tuition-based *petites écoles*, but instead had students write letters to one another about their father’s professions and what they did to help their families.¹³⁶ The idea was to make students familiar with the sorts of daily documents they would encounter later as merchants and journeymen. In addition to practicing reading and writing, *troisième bande* students were finally introduced to the basics of mathematics. In fact, more emphasis was placed on mathematics in this *bande* than was placed on reading and writing. Students began by learning how to count on their fingers to 10, then

¹³³ Ibid., fol. 30.

¹³⁴ Démia, “Chapitre III,” in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Démia, “Chapitre III: Méthode d’enseigner...” in *Reglemens*, 1679, ADR 5D 9, fol. 32.

to 20, and then silently to 50 and 100.¹³⁷ Once students mastered how to count “by 2, by 10, by 20, by 50, and by 100,” they learned “how to compose the numbers on paper.”¹³⁸ In addition to learning Arabic and Roman numerals, students were also taught how to read, write, and translate *chiffres de finance* that were used in account books, contracts, and other commerce documents.¹³⁹ Students then advanced to practicing addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, usually mastering these before moving on to the *quatrième bande*.

During the *troisième bande*, students were also required to focus on the catechism more intensely. Students typically used *petit* catechisms specially “designed for children,” in particular those who were still learning how to read.¹⁴⁰ These *petit* catechisms were usually significantly shorter than the average 127-page adult catechism. Aside from the actual catechism, these workbooks contained information regarding the commandments, the parish, mass attendance, feast days, and tithes.¹⁴¹ After Easter, students in the *troisième bande* were asked to recite the catechism in its entirety before the schoolmaster, headmaster, and parish priest. If a student was unable to fully recite the catechism he or she was required to repeat the *troisième bande* and attend regular lessons with the headmaster.

¹³⁷ Démia, “Chapitre III,” in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

¹³⁸ Démia, “Chapitre III,” in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Carter, *Creating Catholics*, 37.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

By analyzing the handmade worksheets and pedagogical exercises used by the students in the *deuxième* and *troisième bandes*, we can see how ideas about the authority of the monarch were engrained into their minds. For example, a typical sentence students would practice writing was: *Je suis un sujet de sa Majesté le roi.*¹⁴² This sentence underlines the subservience of the French people to the monarch, asserting that the people's role was as a subject, a position that was answerable to and dependent on the king. Young minds were taught to conceive of selves as subjects. Additionally, in the *troisième bande* students would also typically read stories about the monarch's power or the glory of the church. This further emphasized the children's roles as inferior subjects to both institutions.

There was little difference between the curriculum of the *quatrième* and the *cinquième bandes*. Students in both *bandes* used their newly developed reading, writing, and counting skills to read business contracts, practice keeping account books, and make mock purchases and sales.¹⁴³ Additionally, teachers introduced various laws and organizations related to finances.¹⁴⁴ These more advanced students divided their time between learning in the classroom and participating in their family's business, in a craftsman's workshop, or in a manufacturing house as a quasi-apprentice.¹⁴⁵ The charity schools helped the students to acquire part-time positions at silk and other textile

¹⁴² Démia, "Chapitre III," in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

¹⁴³ "Livre des Comptes de l'argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles," 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7, fol. 38.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Démia, *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

workshops, metal refineries, shoemakers' workshops, leather workshops, butchers' shops, a candle maker's workshop, a baker's shop,¹⁴⁶ and at various construction sites sponsored by the city of Lyon or the French state, such as the completion of the *Hôtel de Ville* and the expansion of the *Hôtel Dieu*.

Though the students were technically not yet apprentices, they were exposed to the trades they would later be apprenticed into, allowing them to have shorter apprenticeships and the craftsmen to take on more skilled apprentices. According to *Saint Charles's* schoolmaster in 1679, "the requests of craftsmen and manufacturers to receive students from our school far exceed[ed] the number of students available,"¹⁴⁷ suggesting that merchants, manufacturers, and craftsmen saw the advantages of educating these students.

Compared to the curriculum of mostly private, tuition-based *petites écoles* that emphasized a humanist education of reading, writing, and translating Latin, Greek, and other foreign languages in preparation for university studies,¹⁴⁸ it is striking to see how much the *écoles de charité's* curriculum of was geared towards the development of a "professional education." Charity school students were only taught the skills they needed to have in order to become well-qualified, efficient workers. For instance, instead of

¹⁴⁶ This boulanger, Jacques Roulet, consistently requested a student every year for his shop until his death in 1685. Coincidentally, many abandoned children were left on his shop's doorstep in the seventeenth-century according to the *Hôtel Dieu's* records.

¹⁴⁷ "Livre des Comptes de l'argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles," 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7, fol. 44.

¹⁴⁸ See Motley, *Becoming A French Aristocrat* for elite curriculum.

learning Latin and Greek as was common in tuition schools, students were taught how to read business contracts and account books in the French vernacular. Additionally, charity students were educated heavily in “skill acquisition” through onsite participation in workshops and manufacturing houses.

Mathematics was a huge part of this “skill acquisition” as these students would eventually be in charge of keeping finance records, account books, and managing their household economies. Even more apparent was the status-heavy language used in reading and writing exercises. The exercises emphasized that children were subject to their parents’ authority, but as adults, they would be subject to the “city magistrates,” to “the king,” and “to the church.” Whether it was in the *deuxième bande*, where students repeatedly wrote and recited they were “subjects of his majesty, the king,” or in the *cinquième bande*, where they were taught about laws and regulations, children were repeatedly told of their inferior social status. In no way were these schools meant to increase social mobility. By educating the students in such a way, it was clear the *écoles de charité* intended for students to gain the skills necessary to become efficient, effective workers and to emphasize their social roles as inferior to the king, the church, city magistrates, and their employers.

VI. Elite Economic Interests

Charity schools served both state and municipal interests throughout the seventeenth century. During the 1660s Colbert was busy trying to reorganize France's finances. One of his main objectives was to strengthen manufacturing and trade within France. In his *Memorandum on Trade* in 1664, Colbert noted the need to "strengthen the manufacture and trade" of "clothes, ironware, silk, linens, paper, and soaps."¹⁴⁹ Many of the students' parents were employed in the silk industry that accounted for a large amount of Lyon's exports. It could be argued that by stressing the creation of a more efficient and prosperous workforce, and by choosing students who were already familiar with specific trades from their parents, the *écoles de charité* supported Colbert's economic reforms. Just as the *Bureau* had had to receive permission from the monarchy, each time a school was established, Démiat reported it to the government in order to receive a royal charter for the school. In several of the *Lettres Patentes de Sa Majesté*, Louis XIV praised the *écoles de charité* in Lyon for creating "industrious workers and subjects."¹⁵⁰ In 1681 Louis XIV stated his *intendants* had informed him the *écoles de charité* "have lifted the spirits [of the poor] and made them more industrious and likely to serve in the arts and manufacturing [industries] after leaving school," leading to increased "industry

¹⁴⁹ Jean-Baptiste Colbert, *Lettres, Instructions et Memoires de Colbert*, vol. 2, ed. P. Clement (Paris: Librairie Imperiale, 1863): 263, 268.

¹⁵⁰ "Lettres Patentes de Sa Majesté pour L'Etablissement du Bureau des Ecoles à Lyon," 1681, AML 3GG 150.

and trade in the region.”¹⁵¹ Wanting to “strengthen France’s economic interests,” Louis XIV pledged an additional 2,000 *livres* specifically to the *École Charitable de Saint Charles* and 500 *livres* to the *Bureau* for other expenses associated with other schools. In addition to creating “loyal subjects,” the king felt that by supporting these schools, France’s internal economy would grow, increasing stable revenue for the state.

Capitalizing on Louis XIV’s praise of the *écoles de charité*, Démia presented a report to the *Prevost des Marchans*, *Echevins*, and “notable residents of Lyon” in 1681. In this report Démia pointed out the success of the *écoles de charité* in improving social morality as well as helping bolster Lyon’s economy through the creation of a new generation of loyal, hardworking employees. Démia began his report by arguing that these schools had kept their promise to reduce vice among the lower sorts as “these schools [could] account for the reduction in crime and the improvement of employment among the poor”¹⁵² that had transpired in the previous decade. But even more impressive than improving the morality of the lower sorts were the economic advantages these schools had afforded to the Lyonnais workshops. According to Démia, since 1670 “little by little [Lyon’s] factories and manufacturers replace[d] their workers with well skilled, loyal apprentices”¹⁵³ from the *écoles de charité*. It was in the “best interest of Lyon’s economy” to continue to fund and maintain these schools. Démia also boasted “almost

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Démia, “Remonstrances faites aux Messire le Prévost des Marchans, Echevins,” 1681, ADR 5D9.

¹⁵³ As quoted in Compayré, *Charles Démia*, 24.

every student who successfully completed their education at an *école de charité*,” was “handsomely employed in a trade” within one year of exiting school.

After this report, donations from wealthy investors increased to their largest amount. In October 1682, the *Saint Charles* school received a record 47 donations of between 4 and 200 *livres*; the *Saint Paul* school received an equally impressive 39 donations of between 20 *livres* and 3,000 *livres* during that same month.¹⁵⁴ This increase in donations proves that the merchants, the elite, and even the state were convinced that by supporting these institutions, Lyon’s economy would prosper.

Local wealthy merchants, manufacturers, and elites also noted these economic advantages. Donations for the *écoles de charité* steadily increased each year from the establishment of the first school in 1670. In examining the donation records, by the end of the 1670s, there was a marked difference in the reasons given by benefactors for donation. While some still cited the “schools’ incentive to reduce vice among the poor,” most cited economic advantages they themselves received from this new generation of workers. For example, in November 1678 Monsieur Pincet, Monsieur Baillet, and Monsieur Biller each donated 4 *livres* to the *École Charitable de Saint Charles*, citing the institution’s reputation for producing “skilled, industrious workers” who could be employed in their businesses as reasons for continued support to the school.¹⁵⁵ All three men were repeat donors, committing about 4 *livres* every month to the school from 1678

¹⁵⁴ Bureau de l’École, “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D1.

¹⁵⁵ “Livre des Comptes de l’argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles,” 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7, fol. 42.

to 1685.¹⁵⁶ Pincet, Baillet, and Biller had all had at least one student work for them as a quasi-apprentice or later as a full apprentice when the student finished school. Both the donations and the placement of students display the men's commitment to and belief in school's success.

François Denuzier Ponthus, a wealthy banker and textile merchant, expressed his satisfaction with the *écoles de charité* in helping “expand his workforce” with “more qualified, hardworking young men.” Ponthus had originally donated 200 *livres* to *Saint Paul* in 1679. “After seeing the progress made,” he decided to donate 3,000 *livres* to the school in 1687 “to further support the work of the school.” When Ponthus died the following year, his will left another 3,000 *livres* to be given to the school over the period of ten years. Similarly, Pierre Bouillet, an active member of the *Prévost des Marchands* and a paper manufacturer, bequeathed 4,000 *livres* to the *Saint Iréné* school in his will that was payable over ten years starting in 1689 “in order to continue educating the poor in order to provide better educated employees to the dedicated merchants of Lyon.” In addition to donating this large sum in his will, during his lifetime Bouillet had supported at least four other *écoles de charité*, including *Saint Charles*, *Saint Paul*, *Saint Pierre*, and *Saint Simphorien*, donating 1,000 *livres* to each school from 1679 to his death in 1689. In his donation to *Saint Simphorien* in October 1682, Bouillet stated that “the

¹⁵⁶ According to the schoolmasters' accounts, 4 *livres* could support one student for about 18 days. Considering that the school was only open about 20 days per month, this money was usually more than sufficient to provide for one student. It is possible that the men continued to give money to the schools after 1685 but the donation records for this period are not housed in the same archival boxes as the earlier set. Further research may uncover them.

workers who came out of this school were some of his best and most loyal employees” and were “responsible for helping [to] increase [his] revenue.” These two men had not only witnessed the positive economic advantages of these schools on the overall Lyonnais economy but had experienced it first hand by hiring former charity school students. Neither man spoke about reducing vice or immorality, but instead about economic advantages.

In sum, by the 1690s, the reasons for elite support of these schools had evolved dramatically. Originally, benefactors had been motivated by fears of social instability due to an increasingly immoral poor. Charles Démia had capitalized on these fears to accumulate enough capital to establish several *écoles de charité* by the early 1670s. Observing how the charity schools educated poor children in both Christian ideals and advantageous skills, the wealthy elite began to perceive these schools not solely as sites of moralization, but also as sites of “professionalization” for the poor. Slowly, merchants and manufacturers utilized the resources of these schools by hiring former students or allowing current students to serve as quasi-apprentices, allowing the benefactors to witness first-hand how these charity schools molded their students into loyal and efficient workers. Though crime rates and unemployment steadily dropped over the course of the 1670s and 1680s,¹⁵⁷ what became an even greater incentive for donors was the economic advantage that these students and schools promised. The state similarly took notice of the increased morality, obedience, and economic efficiency of the

¹⁵⁷ Latreille, *Histoire de Lyon et du Lyonnais*, 215.

lower sorts, particularly among the children and young adults, and decided to continue donating and praising the work of the schools. This in turn encouraged the elite to continue donating as well. At the end of the seventeenth century, Lyon's *écoles de charité* had kept its promises to reduce vice, create "obedient subjects," and provide a new generation of loyal, industrious workers.

VII. Schoolchildren as Social Agents

The initiatives of the *écoles de charité* indicate that early modern French society understood childhood as a formative period of development. Children could learn social mores and religious belief. Outside of formal educational institutions, parents, siblings, and other household members, regardless of their socio-economic handicaps, were responsible for teaching their children acceptable social behavior and various skills. Since the Lyonnais elite wanted to change the character of the city's lower sorts, charity schools provided an institution through which poor children could be inculcated. They promised to create a new generation of Catholics, subjects, and workers who would abide by the ideals of the church, the state, and the local wealthy elite. But schoolchildren attending the *écoles de charité* were also to spread their influence beyond the classroom and school walls into the early modern household. Teachers and donors thus understood children themselves as agents of social change.

On the face of it, school demands were tough: children attended school six days a week from 7 in the morning to 7 at night with a two-hour break for lunch and a small respite. Due to the frequency of feast days and other holidays, however, school was rarely held more than 18 days per month. In order to attend the *écoles de charité* schoolchildren and their parents had to sign an "attendance contract" specifying students would attend every school day unless they were ill.¹⁵⁸ If students were ill three or more

¹⁵⁸ Démia, *Reglemens des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon*, 1670, ADR 5D 9, fol. 37.

days in a row, the schoolmaster would come to the student's household to "assess whether or not the child or the family [was] in need of medical attention from the *Hôtel Dieu*."¹⁵⁹ Excessive absences or failure of the parents to send their children to school would result in expulsion from the *école de charité*. Children who simply skipped school without their parents' permission to "play, gamble, or otherwise amuse themselves in the streets" would also be expelled and "severely reprimanded" by the schoolmaster, the parish priest, and their parents.¹⁶⁰

In addition to attending all six days of school, schoolchildren were responsible for extending knowledge of Catholic tenets and the adherence to Catholic practices to their families and households. Children were required to "lead their families to mass every Sunday morning" and "feast days."¹⁶¹ Student were also required to engage in regular discussions with siblings, parents, and other household members regarding the catechism, explaining what they had learned. If the student was "old enough to have memorized the catechism, the student should attempt to teach [it] to their family."¹⁶² In requiring schoolchildren to do these tasks, the Catholic Church extended its influence into the household, a task that had proven difficult for the church in the past.

Incentives encouraged schoolchildren to persuade their families to attend church. Arriving at mass more than three times in one month without one's family was considered a failure on the student's part. If this happened, the student was required to

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., fol. 38.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., fol. 42.

¹⁶² Ibid., fol. 37.

attend additional catechism lessons with the headmaster or parish priest during lunch or on Sunday afternoon. At these special sessions, the student would review the catechism and discuss how a family could be convinced to attend mass. Schoolmasters suggested that if students encountered resistance from their families, students “should remind them of the zealous charity of the church and the glory of God.”¹⁶³ If the family, especially the mother or father, still refused and “were being idle during the hours of mass,” they were to report this behavior to the headmaster the following Monday so that “the necessary actions could be taken” to rectify the situation.¹⁶⁴ Usually the parents would receive a warning from the headmaster that their actions endangered their student’s education and soul.

Schoolchildren assisted schoolmasters and the parish priests not only in advancing Catholicism among the masses but also in furthering the education of the laity. Older students, usually those enrolled in the *quatrième* or *cinquième bande*, were encouraged to “assist in the giving of alms to the mendicants”¹⁶⁵ at the *Hôtel Dieu* at least one feast day per year. These students would provide food, clothing, and other necessities to the residents of the *Hôtel Dieu* and spend the day “praying with the poor.”¹⁶⁶ On a separate feast day, these same students were also encouraged to help teach the alphabet or counting to those who requested such lessons from the parish priest. These children provided much needed assistance to the priests and schoolmasters on feast days and were

¹⁶³ Ibid., fol. 38.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., fol. 39.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., fol. 41.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., fol. 38.

therefore, according to one schoolmaster, “able to reach a much larger section of the population”¹⁶⁷ than had previously been possible without their assistance. These children served as visible models of good Catholics for others to emulate. Committed to Catholic tenets, the young people engaged in charity and productive work. In extending the knowledge of Catholicism to their families and to the laity, charity schoolchildren became active agents of the Catholic Reformation.

The charity schools were able to diffuse their influence into the household and community in other ways as well. Aside from attendance requirements, students also had “home work.” Schoolmasters requested that students routinely “engage their families in their studies,” whether it was reading, writing, mathematics or even basic crafts. This activity was much easier for students in the *première* and *deuxième bandes* since their “home work” was usually practicing mnemonic devices, such as songs, to remember the alphabet, phonetics, or spelling and grammar rules. Hearing these songs, siblings or parents might acquire some of the information.¹⁶⁸ For students in the *troisième*, *quatrième*, and *cinquième bandes*, however, imparting knowledge at home was a much more difficult and involved process. Since their exercises usually revolved around writing or reading, they could not actively engage their families in this activity as easily.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 35.

¹⁶⁸ This idea of learning indirectly or in the presence of someone learning was also readily used by elites. Instead of hiring separate tutors for their daughters, if the family had a tutor for the sons often the eldest daughter would be in the room, listening to their brothers recite information back to the tutor. Though the girl did not actively engage in pedagogical exercises, many parents felt that this provided her with a “basic” education before going to a convent school or another female school where she would learn how to read and write at very basic levels. See Motley *Becoming a French Aristocrat*.

Once students began to write or to read, schoolmasters suggested that they should teach the “physical forms of the letters” to siblings, parents, servants, or others who might benefit from this information. The *Reglemens* do not specify exactly how schoolmasters were to advise students on how best to teach their families the written alphabet.

Schoolmasters also encouraged students in the *troisième*, *quatrième*, and *cinquième bandes* to teach their mothers and siblings how to count and identify numbers. It was assumed that most of these students’ fathers were able to count since many worked in factories or workshops where a basic knowledge of mathematics was needed. Just as students were advised to sing songs about spelling aloud or to read aloud, students were encouraged to count aloud in the presence of other family members. It was hoped that through hearing students repeat the same words, family members would also memorize this same pattern, advancing their knowledge of mathematics. In addition to teaching their families the order of numbers, students helped family members count first on their fingers, then with physical objects, and finally in silence just as the students had learned how to do. There is little discussion of whether or not students were intended to teach their families Arabic or Roman numerals or *chiffres de finance*. More than likely, families were taught Arabic and Roman numerals rather than *chiffres de finance* since there was more practical use for the former and *chiffres de finance* were typically not mastered by students until well into the *cinquième bande*.

In addition to serving as teachers in the family setting, students also had the responsibility of policing family members’ actions. At several of the early *Bureau*

meetings, Démia insisted that children be instilled with a clear sense of legality and illegality. In all *bandes*, students were introduced to and reminded of the various “laws of the city,” especially if any had recently changed or there had been an increase in a particular crime. Special attention was paid to laws that Démia viewed as “crimes typically committed by the poor,” including gambling, drunkenness, theft, and deception. If students “observed their parents, siblings, friends, or [other household] members,”¹⁶⁹ committing illegal acts, they were supposed to remind the offender of his fault, asking him to cease his actions immediately. If the “ill behavior” continued or “was repeatedly committed on a frequent basis,” then students were required to report the person to the headmaster.¹⁷⁰ The offender would then be subject to the applicable punishments and even to legal action. By educating schoolchildren in the laws and requiring them to report any unlawful or lewd actions to the schoolmasters, children became the police of moral practice within the household. The city and state magistrates extended their power into the household via informal legal systems made up of children.

Schoolchildren also helped solidify social strata in the late seventeenth century. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as guilds began to subcontract work to various journeymen, non-elite society began to develop its own social hierarchy. Despite the rise in journeymen, there was not a corresponding expansion of guild master positions. Instead, the position of guild master came to be understood as one of particular status and wealth. Though guild masters may not necessarily have been elite in traditional terms (as

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., fol. 46.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., fol. 38.

they were rarely members of the *noblesse de robe* or *noblesse de l'épée*), their wealth and positions as controllers of certain industries placed them significantly above journeymen and the working poor. At the same time, while students were actively being educated and fashioned to improve France's economic efficiency and productivity, they were constantly forced to confront their inferior status. Schoolmasters were "never to give false hope" to the students that they could rise to the ranks of guild master.¹⁷¹ Instead, students were repeatedly "reminded of their position as workers and employers."¹⁷² The *écoles de charité* clearly explained and reinforced the lesson that students could not expect to move upwards in the social hierarchy by much. While they might move out of "depraved poverty" once done with their education, a former student normally remained a worker for the rest of his life. By articulating and exposing these ideas to students early on teachers taught students to internalize their positions as workers and subjects. Children could help the church, the state, and the elite to establish and ensure traditional social hierarchies.

Charity schools established a reciprocal relationship with students. In order for students to continue attending school and for their families to continue receiving charitable donations, students had to comply with the rules and regulations. As sites of social reproduction, the *écoles de charité* molded students into active agents of the state, the local elite, and the church. By encouraging their families to attend church and by

¹⁷¹ Meeting Notes from April 1680 in "Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon," ADR 5D 1.

¹⁷² Ibid.

engaging in charitable practices on feast days, children became agents of the Catholic Reformation. Similarly, by teaching their families skills like reading, writing, and counting as well as by policing their actions, schoolchildren were acting as agents of the state, local elite, and as agents of family economic and social improvement. These authorities saw how useful children could be in infiltrating the lower sorts. Elites cleverly used children to improve society from the bottom-up, according to prescribed ideas about morality, work, and the state.

VIII. Motivating Poor Parents

For parents, charity schools offered both opportunity and danger. Although families could receive bread, money, gifts, and childcare by participating in the schools, they also came under increased surveillance and supervision by the Church, the local elite, the state, and their own children. The influence of charity schools extended well beyond the schoolchildren who attended the institutions into their households and larger communities. In 1681, Louis XIV wrote to Démia, mentioning the positive effect schooling had not only on the children of Lyon but “also on their parents [who were] more industrious and skilled than before,” and who “had learned Catholic morals and respect for magistrates from their children.”¹⁷³ Each register of Lyon’s *écoles de charité* indicates these schools “were instituted not only for the children [of Lyon] but also to try to provide an education to their parents.”¹⁷⁴ The schools’ clearly defined goals extended beyond educating children to instructing all of lower society.

Every year in August, the head parish priest would make a list of his poorest parishioners. This list was shared with the headmaster of the parish’s *école de charité*. The headmaster scrutinized the list for families who were “members of the honorable poor” and whose children “could benefit from an education.” The headmaster would then extend invitations to the parents of these children to attend school in September.

¹⁷³ “Letres Patentes de Sa Majesté pour L’Etablissement du Bureau des Ecoles à Lyon,” 1681, AML 3GG 150.

¹⁷⁴ Démia, No. XXIX in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

These invitations were formulaic, indicating which charity school the child would attend, when to report to the school, and how many children the parents were to bring. Normally the invitations specified only one child per family was to attend the school, but as the *écoles de charité* started to expand in size, more students were offered positions.

Parents had a number of factors to think about when determining if they were going to send a child to the school and, if they decided to send one, which child was appropriate. The ideal urban household consisted of a male tradesman who specialized in a particular craft and was aided by his wife, children apprentices, journeymen, and servants. Even in the many households that did not fit this ideal, children still played an important role in the family's economy, running errands, cooking, cleaning, or working odd jobs for small wages that were essential to raising cash to pay their families' taxes. By sending a child to school, the family lost a source of cheap labor and possibly steady income. Especially for families already in financial distress, sending their children to the charity schools did not make sense.

However, as the *Saint Charles* schoolmaster noted in 1678, every family he had invited, with the exception of "two particularly obstinate" fathers, agreed to participate.¹⁷⁵ Evidently parents felt that the advantages of sending children to the charity schools outweighed any disadvantages. However, it is difficult for the scholar to understand this family calculation today. Although some diaries, letters, or other documents may exist that help to answer this question for particular families, such sources are difficult to

¹⁷⁵ "Livre des Comptes de l'argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles," 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7.

locate. Instead, the records of the schoolmasters' tri-yearly *Visite Generale* can be interrogated in order to help us understand why parents may have agreed to send their students to the schools.

To send children to Lyon's charity schools, parents had to consent to intense supervision by the schoolmaster, parish priest, and civil authorities. Poor parents were liable to regular household inspections by the schoolmaster and occasionally, depending on the parish, a civil deputy. Known as the "*Visite Generale*," these inspections were deemed "necessary" by the *Bureau* to ensure that families were not undermining the work of the schools. The *Bureau* required schoolmasters to conduct inspections "three times or more" per year "during September, May, and one other month of the schoolmaster's choice, preferably in the winter."¹⁷⁶ If parents did not admit the schoolmaster into the household for inspection, the child faced immediate expulsion. Additionally, if parents were cited for "drunkenness, gambling, prostitution," or other "immoral acts," their children were immediately expelled and any charitable donations given to the family were temporarily suspended. These requirements meant that families had to behave according to particular standards established by the *écoles de charité* that usually reflected the attitude of their benefactors including the church, the state, civil magistrates, and the wealthy elite.

¹⁷⁶ Démia, "Avis au Lecteur: Visite Generale des Parens" in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

At the first *Visite Generale*, schoolmasters examined the parents' knowledge of "the catechism, reading, writing, civility, spelling, and general skills."¹⁷⁷ This was done through a battery of oral and, when necessary, written exercises. The headmasters held low expectations for the families, indicating in the *Reglemens* "if the parents and family members display[ed] ignorance, this [was] to be expected, but carefully addressed."¹⁷⁸ These types of statements help us better understand how society conceived of the lower sorts. In addition to viewing them as an immoral group, elite society also had the preconceived notion that the majority of people were highly uneducated and ignorant. A further examination of a larger pool of records from the *Visite Generale* would be needed in order to provide a better picture of the actual educational levels of Lyon's lower sort in the seventeenth century.

In addition to testing the education of the household, the family was also judged on other aspects. The father or male head of household, possibly a brother or uncle, had to provide "proof of employment" by taking the schoolmaster to his "workshop, shop, or place of work."¹⁷⁹ This was the only way that fathers or male heads of household could establish proof of employment. If the male head of household changed jobs or became unemployed in between inspections it was his responsibility to "alert the schoolmaster immediately."¹⁸⁰ Though the records do not specify what happened in situations where

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ "Visite Generale" in "Reglemens aux maîtres," ADR 5D9, No. 18, fol. 22.

¹⁷⁹ Démia, "Avis au Lecteur: Visite Generale des Parens" in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

¹⁸⁰ "Visite Generale" in "Reglemens aux maîtres," ADR 5D9, No. 18, fol. 22.

the father lost his job, it's important to remember that the class lists never indicate a child had an unemployed father with the exception of orphans.

The mother was not required to show proof of employment, but she was judged on the quality of house she kept. This speaks volumes to the gendered nature of family responsibilities in pre-modern Europe. If the house did not include “adequate sleeping quarters, reasonable food, and an environment to foster Christian learning,” a child could not attend an *école de charité* until the “mother had attended to these issues.”¹⁸¹

Siblings and any other members of the family or household were interviewed as well, though not with as much vigor as the parents. In interviewing siblings, the schoolmasters focused intensely on “the civility of the student,” taking note of any “contention between siblings, rowdy fights, lewd behavior, or irreverent speech.”¹⁸² Schoolmasters noted that “a child's relationship to [his] siblings could predict how that child will interact with students” in the classroom and in the streets.

The first home visit was always the most time-consuming and thorough inspection, usually requiring the schoolmaster to spend several hours with the family. Subsequent visits went much faster, with the schoolmaster usually only staying for about an hour at the family's residence. During these visits, parents, siblings, and other household members were required to “demonstrate proper and improved Christian comportment, continued employment, behavior appropriate of a loyal subject of His

¹⁸¹ Démia, “Avis au Lecteur: Visite Generale des Parens” in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

¹⁸² “Visite Generale” in “Reglemens aux maîtres,” ADR 5D9, No. 18, fol. 22.

Majesty, and advancement in reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic.”¹⁸³ If any family member did not show improvement in one or more of these areas the entire family was reprimanded and the student was required to meet with the schoolmaster to find ways to “help improve [the] family’s shortcomings.”¹⁸⁴

As part of the initial *Visite Generale*, schoolmasters drew up a contract with the parents in which schoolmasters explained the parents’ responsibilities and during which parents verified their consent in sending their children to the schools. These contracts, though usually no longer than 3 lines long can reveal a lot about parents’ incentives. Schoolmasters, sometimes escorted by a civil deputy depending on the parish, would arrive with presents for the family including “several loafs of bread, clothing, an item for the father’s craft, and another gift, usually paper and ink for the student.”¹⁸⁵ According to the *Reglemens* these initial gifts were intended to “convince the parents of the charitable spirit of the schools.”¹⁸⁶ Schoolmasters and parents then negotiated a contract. In the *Saint Charles* parish, most schoolmasters agreed to send “additional loaves of bread” to families “two times per month” and to “pay for all costs of the student’s education, including clothing and supplies.”¹⁸⁷ In subsequent visits, schoolmasters would often note that families “were extremely appreciative of the extra bread” and that “it was

¹⁸³ D mia, “Avis au Lecteur: Visite Generale des Parens” in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ “Visite Generale” in “Reglemens aux maîtres,” ADR 5D9, No. 19, fol. 23.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 22.

¹⁸⁷ “Livre des Comptes de l’argent recue pour la grosse d pense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communaut  de Saint Charles,” 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7.

absolutely necessary for their survival.”¹⁸⁸ At a meeting of the *Bureau* in December 1681, M. Durand, a schoolmaster, indicated that parents in his parish were “begging [him] to allow their children to enter the school” so that “the families could receive extra bread” and “other gifts” that were not included “in regular alms to the poor.”¹⁸⁹ Lyon’s poor families began to see the *écoles de charité* as conduits through which additional resources could be obtained.

In addition to bread, clothing, and other alms, in the 1670s certain families, especially bakers, butchers, and blacksmiths, could also receive funding for their shops. If the student’s family agreed to one or two students in the *quatrième* and *cinquième bandes* work in their workshops, learning the trade in a hands-on environment, then the family would receive “appropriate compensation.”¹⁹⁰ Not only was the family provided with free laborers this way that could make up for any loss sustained by the absence of their own child, the family was also being paid by the schools to use their facilities and the father’s knowledge of the trade. As the schools grew in size and popularity across Lyon, placement became more competitive and fewer students in the *cinquième bande* were being placed in charity families’ workshops. However, it appears that many of these families were retained for schoolchildren in the *quatrième bande* to gain experience before being placed as an apprentice in a better workshop.

¹⁸⁸ “Livre des Comptes de l’argent recue pour la grosse dépense des Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles,” 1678-1679, ADR 5D 7.

¹⁸⁹ Bureau de l’École, “Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon,” ADR 5D 1.

¹⁹⁰ Démia, “Avis au Lecteur: Visite Generale des Parens” in *Reglemens*, 1681, AML 3GG 150.

Additionally, the *écoles de charité* made efforts to employ the services of their students' families in constructing and renovating the schools. For instance, at the *Saint Pierre* school in 1678, four masons were chosen to help with the renovation of a schoolhouse "because their daughters and sons were going to attend the school."¹⁹¹ If the school had a child of a bread baker enrolled, the school typically bought its bread from that student's father. In this way, schools also helped to bolster the economy and possibly provided parents with new clients.

Aside from the material advantages of sending their children to these schools, the *Visite* records also indicate that parents felt these schools might help improve their family's social status. Specifically, these schools were able to place students in better apprenticeships than they would have been able to secure themselves. For instance, the Piget family told the *Saint Paul* schoolmaster in 1681 that their son "secured a highly coveted apprenticeship in printing"¹⁹² that he would have otherwise never received. Additionally, in the *Saint Charles* parish, the Lemercet family indicated that their eldest son who had not been educated at the *écoles de charité* did not have "as nearly as good of an apprenticeship" as their second son who, as a result of his education at the charity school, was serving "as an apprentice for a successful blacksmith."¹⁹³ Parents saw the *écoles de charité* as a way in which their children could gradually move up the social scale, improving their family's reputation and economic status. Though they did not

¹⁹¹ Bureau de l'École, "Inventaire Général des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des Pauvres à Lyon," ADR 5D 1.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

have delusional expectations of their children becoming noblemen or serving in a high political position, many parents believed the schools provided a way in which their children could escape the confines of poverty and enter into a state of financial security.

Since the *Reglemens* dictated that students could not attend charity schools without the explicit consent of their parents or male head of household, parents played an essential role in the schools' continued success. Démia knew that poor families relied on their children for household help and occasionally for outside wages. Therefore a system of incentives had to be established in order to convince parents to allow their students to attend the *écoles de charité*. Instead of taking a coercive approach by threatening legal action against the parents, Démia and the *Bureau* decided to exchange bread, clothing, alms, and money to the families in return for participation and cooperation. This promise was often enough to convince parents to send their children to their parish's charity school and to submit to the intense scrutiny of schoolmasters, the church, and the community through regular household inspections. While having children act as their agents, the church and the state could additionally infiltrate the household during the *Visite Generale*. Since attendance at the *écoles de charité* dramatically increased during the 1680s, it can be assumed that families saw the economic and social advantages of sending their children to the charity schools. Possibly parents perceived a correlation between the schools, work, and the improving economy or possibly they appreciated the additional charity opportunities. Regardless of their reasons for participation, it is still

noteworthy that by the end of the 1680s, nearly every student who was invited to the *écoles de charité* enrolled.

IX. Conclusion: The Future of Charity Schools

As Charles Démia wrote in the letter to Neufville in 1689, Lyon's *écoles de charité* had inspired Louis XIV to oversee the establishment of similar schools throughout France. In fact, in 1698 Louis XIV released an edict that required "schoolmasters and mistresses be appointed in all parishes where there currently are none as soon as possible in order to instruct all children...in the catechism and prayers...[and to] teach reading and even writing to those who need to learn."¹⁹⁴ The schools in Lyon served as a model on which others throughout France would be established in order to foster education of the masses in the eighteenth-century.

Although the seventeenth-century zeal for charity undoubtedly factored into some of the donations given to these schools, in examining the records of Lyon's *écoles de charité* it is clear that additional religious, social, and economic incentives supported the establishment and maintenance of these schools. An intense fear of the immorality that seemed to fester in the lower sorts drove the first benefactors to support Démia's plan for the establishment of the *écoles de charité*. While the local wealthy elite and the state may have feared the social repercussions of what would happen if the lower sorts were not improved, the church was concerned by the level of ignorance among the laity in regards to Catholic tenets and the catechism. Always fearful of the possibility of a Protestant uprising, the church provided funds to the *écoles de charité* to ensure that

¹⁹⁴ Isambert, *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises, depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la Révolution de 1789*, 317.

children would be fashioned early according to Catholic beliefs and practices, minimizing the possibility of a Protestant revolt.

Within two years of the first *écoles de charité* being opened in Lyon, fear began to subside and was replaced by explicit statements of economic interest. As the schools continued to produce well-qualified, industrious workers, wealthy merchants and workshop owners began to see increased productivity and profits. Wanting to ensure that the *écoles de charité* continued to provide Lyon's workshops and factories with these types of workers, benefactors increased both the amount and frequency of their donations. Also observing the improvement of Lyon's economy was the state. Busy with Colbert's economic reforms, the French state was in dire need of industrious workers like those being created by the *écoles de charité*. Better workers and increased profits meant that the state would be able to collect more taxes. Therefore, the state saw it was necessary to support these schools with monetary and building donations.

The creation of the *écoles de charité* also changed the role of children in society. Although the church had always been concerned with children, the state and even Lyon's elite had tended to underestimate their importance. But these groups quickly realized that children could be molded into active agents of social and religious change. The unofficial mission of these schools was the indoctrination of Lyon's youth according to the ideals of the church, state, and local wealthy elite. Children were used to mold the lower sorts according to these ideals, infiltrating households and advancing reform literally from the bottom-up.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Démiat's experiments in Lyon's poorest neighborhoods with the *écoles de charité* appear to have been successful in providing a new generation of loyal subjects and skilled workers. The state continued to support the *écoles de charité* until 1789 with the fall of the *Ancien Régime*. Private investors, most notably master craftsmen, also continued to provide support to the schools in the forms of monetary donations, buildings, and apprenticeships throughout the eighteenth century and even into the nineteenth.

"Educating Lyon's Poor" is only a preliminary intervention into the historiography of early modern popular French education and childhood. Much still remains to be studied in regards to charity schools, early modern conceptions of childhood, and the overall historiography of early modern popular education. The "future" of these schools lies with the next steps of this project.

For starters, a more detailed portrait of the schoolchildren themselves is necessary. We need to determine what happened to these children after they left the *écoles de charité*. Though the records insist that these schools would further crystallize the social stratification of Lyonnais society, keeping members of the lower sorts firmly within their social boundaries, it is worth questioning whether this hardening actually occurred or if a more complicated social system emerged as a result of increased education. What role did these schools have in the changing social and political dynamics of the eighteenth century, especially towards Revolutionary era? How many of the *écoles de charité*'s alumni ended up on the parish's poor lists? Such an investigation

would not only indicate how successful the *écoles de charité* really were but it might also better clarify why parents submitted to the intense authority of the schools in the first place.

Schoolmasters need to be examined further. Aside from the list of names present at various *Bureau* meetings and the scribbles of one *Saint Charles* schoolmaster, we know relatively little about Lyonnais schoolmasters. As the main disseminators of information, their participation in the charity schools is essential in understanding how and to what effect these schools were successful. Though the *Reglemens* provide us with a good understanding of the charity schools' curriculum, we do not know whether or not the schoolmasters actually taught the lessons in the manner described in the handbook. Additionally, more information is needed about the men themselves. Who were these men? What were their individual backgrounds? Were they Lyon natives? If not, where did they come from and why? How were they educated and where? Were they just schoolmasters at the charity schools or were they also tutors and teachers at the *petites écoles*? Answers to these questions will help us better define a "typical" schoolmaster. In the process we may also discover if there were connections between elite and popular education in the seventeenth century.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to consider the exceptionalism of Lyon during the seventeenth century. Was the development of these schools specific to Lyon due to the particular social, religious, and economic realities that existed there in the seventeenth century? This requires a larger chronological and regional perspective, examining similar

developments throughout major urban areas such as Paris, Marseilles, and Rouen. With the establishment of *écoles de charité* across France, education was no longer restricted solely to those who could afford to pay high tuition or the services of a private tutor. It should be better explained how education came to be understood in the “enlightened” eighteenth century not as a mark of status but rather as an issue of “civil importance and concern”¹⁹⁵ and charity schools’ association to this ideology.

The establishment of educational institutions is not necessarily surprising in early modern France since, after the Council of Trent, the church in France was “obliged to foster education.” Nevertheless, Lyon’s *écoles de charité* were innovative in stressing “professional education” along with the tenets of Catholicism. “Educating Lyon’s Poor” has demonstrated how in these schools commerce, work, and subjecthood met Catholic morality and identity in prescription and practice. Priests and parents, employers and elites sought to shape children into reformed Catholic subjects who had the necessary skills to support the economic as well as spiritual growth of the state. For children, the schools were sites where they learned to be reformed Catholics, skilled workers, and obedient subjects.

¹⁹⁵ E. Beguillet, *Considerations generales sur l'education* (Bouillon, 1782): v.

**Appendix 1: Schoolmasters Present at the *Bureau des Écoles des
Pauvres de Lyon's* First Assembly on April 28, 1675**

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Auillet | Dufour | Hevaud |
| Breton | Dayon | Longuenoux |
| Belleville | Donnadey | Labessetter |
| Briod | Des Flesche | Millanoix |
| Blanq | Dubois | Mignot |
| Bigouvrais | Durand | Mevois |
| Bissoudon | Dumars | Mazet |
| Bagies | de Tallard | Majot |
| Chaperon | du Cloix | Reyt |
| Capet | d'Arc | Pubillibet |
| Chassin | d'Aspas | Tollin |
| Chanteuille | Francoix | Tavdieu |
| Challier | Grollet | Volon |
| Constantin | Godaud | Vignolle |
| Carro | Goyoit | Villebus |
| Debrull | Griot | Villeforcé |
| Doindy | Guevin | Vallant |
| Dumoins | Groix | Vallancié |
| Duvrais | Gauvrechon | Vray |
| Deville | Gillet | |

Appendix 2: Father's Occupations at the *École Charitable de Saint*

Charles, September 1678

| Father's Occupation | Number of Students |
|--|---------------------------|
| Silk worker | 34 |
| Textile (cotton, twill, etc) manufacturing | 19 |
| Shoemaker | 9 |
| Mason | 6 |
| Blacksmith | 6 |
| Tanner | 5 |
| Carpenter | 4 |
| Baker | 4 |
| Printer | 2 |
| Butcher | 1 |
| Orphaned Children | 2 |
| <i>Total Students Enrolled</i> | 92 |

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Serie G: Instruction, Assistance Publique

3GG 150 Les Petites Écoles de Lyon

Archives Départementales du Rhône (ADR)

Serie D: Instruction Publique

Écoles Charitables de Lyon

5D1 Bureau de l'École "Inventaire General des Titres et Papiers des Écoles des
Pauvres de la Ville et Diocese de Lyon"

5D2 Archives du Bureau des Ecoles des Pauvres et Seminaire de St Charles de
Lyon divisées en quatre chapitres

5D3 Terrier de tous les titres du Bureau des Petites Ecoles Estably à Lyon

5D7 "Livre des Comptes de l'argent recue pour la grossed dépençe des
Ecclesiastiques de la Communauté de Saint Charles Pour l'année scolastique
commencant le 1 novembre 1677 et finissant au mesme jour de l'an suivant
1678"

5D8 Écoles Charitables de Lyon

5D9 Écoles Charitables de Lyon

5D10 Écoles Charitables de Lyon

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