

FROM *JONGLEUR* TO MINSTREL:
THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF SECULAR MUSICIANS
IN THIRTEENTH- AND FOURTEENTH-CENTURY PARIS

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On Monday, September 14, 1321, the Feast of the Holy Cross, a group of thirty-seven *jongleurs* and *jongleuses* living on and around the *Rue aus Jugléurs* in Paris signed a charter addressed to Gille Haquin, the city provost, for the incorporation of a minstrels' guild—the *Corporation des ménestriers*.¹ The statutes of the charter outline the rules and regulations of the guild—similar to those of many other contemporary craft guilds in Paris. This action also marks a major pivot point in the history of urban minstrelsy. For centuries, the Church had derided *jongleurs* as agents of the devil because of their associations with profane music and obscene bodily movement that inspired men to lustful behaviors. Because they had no practical use to society, they were forbidden the sacraments and marginalized. The incorporation of a craft guild—a marker of utility, artisanship, and professionalism—stands in stark contrast to the theologians who said that *jongleurs* had no hope for salvation. This study asks: how did *jongleurs* professionalize over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and incorporate themselves into society as legitimate, productive members?

¹ The charter is found in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 24069, fol. 181v, and in Paris, Archives nationales, ms. Châtelet, KK. 1336, fol. 114. It is reprinted in full in Bernard Bernhard, "Recherches sur l'histoire de la corporation des ménestriers, ou joueurs d'instruments, de la ville de Paris," *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 3 (1842): 400; René de Lespinasse, ed, *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris: XIVe–XVIIIe siècle*, vol. 3 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1897), 580; Edmond Faral, *Les jongleurs en France au Moyen Age* (Paris: H. Champion, 1910), 128, n.2; and Christopher Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France, 1100–1300* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 204.

Unlike the *troubadours* and *trouvères*, those paragons of the medieval courtly love ideal, *jongleurs* were furtive figures, living on the margins of society. Generally considered jack-of-all-trades performers, they were singers, dancers, instrumentalists, jugglers, acrobats, mimes, jokers, storytellers, and even trainers of dancing bears. Because they were primarily performers and not composers, they left little written music behind, and consequently, have been largely ignored by musicologists. Few music history textbooks give them more than a glance, and even Richard Hoppin's *Medieval Music* (1978), still considered one of the most comprehensive of introductory volumes on the topic, devotes exactly one paragraph to *jongleurs*.²

This is not to say that they have been ignored entirely. Much of what we do know about minstrelsy in the Middle Ages comes from the work of nineteenth century historians' compilations of source materials. The most important early work, Bernard Bernhard's "Recherches sur l'histoire de la corporation des ménestriers, ou joueurs d'instruments, de la ville de Paris" (1842), surveys the extant documentary evidence, and describes the development and history of the Paris *Corporation des ménestriers*, including work on tax records from the 1290s and the manuscript sources of the guild itself.³ Eugène d'Auriac's *La Corporation des Ménestriers et le Roi des Violons* (1880) further discusses the *Corporation* through its dissolution at the turn of the French Revolution.⁴ Edmond Faral's *Les Jongleurs en France au Moyen Age* (1910), remains as monumental of a work today as it was one hundred years ago for its diverse range of sources and

² Richard Hoppin, *Medieval Music* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 262–263.

³ Bernhard, "Recherches."

⁴ Eugène d'Auriac, *La Corporation des Ménestriers et le Roi des Violons* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1880).

discussion of *jongleurs* across medieval society.⁵ Although most of what he wrote has been updated since, if nothing else, his fifty-five-page appendix of references to minstrelsy between the ninth and thirteenth centuries remains a valuable untapped resource.

More recent works on the intellectual history of minstrelsy provide an important context. John Baldwin's work on Peter the Chanter and his circle, most notably *Masters, Princes, and Merchants* (1970), leads to the critical observation that the *jongleur* was redeemable despite the frequent condemnations of the Church, and opens up a path for a consideration of minstrelsy as a profession in the early fourteenth century.⁶ Christopher Page's *The Owl and the Nightingale* (1995) examined the intellectual role of music, and the way that secular and sacred music interacted to challenge Church authority, moving toward the development of the state.

Recent social histories on the *jongleur* elucidate how they conceived of themselves in society. Carol Symes' *A Common Stage: Theatre and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (2007) gives detailed discussion of the *Carité de Notre Dame des Ardents*, a confraternity—in essence a burial society—run by *jongleurs* that developed in the late twelfth century.⁷ Stemming from the story of a miraculous gift to the city—the *Sainte-Chandelle*, or, the Holy Candle—by the Virgin Mary, Symes details how the constant retelling and reenactment of the story enabled this group of *jongleurs* to obtain a place of high honor in the ceremonial life of Arras. Musicologist Lawrence Gushee's

⁵ Faral, *Les jongleurs*.

⁶ John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants; the Social Views of Peter the Chanter and His Circle*, two vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

⁷ Carol Symes, *A Common Stage: Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

conference presentation, “Two Central Places: Paris in the French Court in the Early Fourteenth Century” (1978), returned to the Paris tax records for the first time since Bernhard, and began to lay out the geography of minstrels in Paris, making connections between the street and the court, and arguing for the collapse of a distinction between the two musical genres.⁸ Finally, Kay Brainerd Slocum’s “‘Confrérie, Bruderschaft’ and Guild,” (1995) surveyed the professional development of minstrels across Europe, with a focus on Arras and Paris.⁹

This paper is a case study about a process of differentiation between skilled and unskilled labor in the Middle Ages, whereby seemingly everyday tasks such as baking and weaving became artisanal crafts. While this is the case for music making as well, minstrels are exceptional in this process. In order for them to professionalize, there was first the need for an intellectual shift regarding secular musicians in order to overcome the moral problem posed by their denigration by the Church, and grant them entry into society as productive professionals. The three parts of this paper describe this process. The first section contextualizes the intellectual problem of secular musicians, and how evolving ideas about civil society and artisanship provided a path for the minstrel to professionalize. The second section is about the geography and demographics of medieval Paris, using tax records to examine when and where minstrels began to congregate before they incorporated. The third section is about social practice, and details not only the formation of the *Corporation des Ménestriers*, but also the ways in which

⁸ Lawrence Gushee, “Two Central Places: Paris and the French Court in the Early Fourteenth Century,” in *Bericht über den Internationalen Musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress, Berlin 1974*, ed. H. Kühn, and P. Nitsche, (Kassel, 1980), 135–157.

⁹ Kay Brainerd Slocum, “‘Confrérie, Bruderschaft’ and Guild: The Formation of Musicians’ Fraternal Organisations in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Europe,” *Early Music History* 14 (1995): 257–274.

minstrels echoed the professional practices of other craft guilds, with an eye toward mutual benefit for guild members and civic engagement for the benefit of society as a whole. It is only through the act of professionalization that the *jongleur* could complete his social transformation into the respectable, productive minstrel.¹⁰

The Intellectual Context for the Professional Minstrel

In order to understand the importance of the *Corporation des Ménétriers*, it is necessary to examine the intellectual currents that were driving the changes to their social status. *Jongleurs* had long been faced with a unique moral dilemma that impeded their recognition as productive members of society. Since Late Antiquity, musicians—and entertainers more broadly—had been the recipients of a steady stream of criticism from the early Church for the perceived association of instruments with sexual immorality, luxury, the theater, and paganism. Musicologist James McKinnon has argued that during the formative centuries of the church, and within the context of Patristic asceticism, secular instrumental music stood in stark contrast to the image of sacred music presented in Biblical psalmody.¹¹ When combined with the feasting, dancing, obscenity and potential pagan rituals that took place along with it, instrumental music contradicted the moral and religious teachings of Christianity, and the Church Fathers were swift to

¹⁰ A note on terminology: the definitions of the various words used for minstrels and entertainers are numerous, ill defined, and frequently interchangeable. The French *jongleur* (Old French: *jugléur*) literally means *juggler*, coming from the Latin *joculator*, but is historiographically the most frequently used word for medieval minstrels. Other Latin terms include *histrion* (actor), *mimus* (mime), and *scurrus* (buffoon), all of which are holdovers from Classical Antiquity and are loaded with connotations of bodily movement and contortion, entertainment, acting, and street performance. These are primarily used by Church authorities, and carry all of the earlier connotations with them. Finally, another term that comes into increasing usage throughout the thirteenth century is *minstrel* (Latin: *minister*, *menestrellus*; French: *menestrel*, *ménétrier*). The origin of the term is clear from the Latin *minister*, as an attendant or servant, and develops in courtly circles as entertainers are kept on staff. This seems to be the word of choice of the musicians themselves, and is free from the ideological baggage of the *jongleur*.

¹¹ See James McKinnon, “The meaning of the patristic polemic against musical instruments,” *Current Musicology* 1 (1965): 69–82.

condemn it. Adding force to the polemics written by figures such as John Chrysostom, Tertullian, Arnobius, and Novatian, was constant ecclesiastical legislation denying the sacraments to musicians.¹²

The force of this invective did not diminish over the course of the early Middle Ages, even in a period where there is little evidence to suggest a continued threat to the Church posed by musicians and their instruments. Nevertheless, at the end of the eleventh century, Honorius Augustodunensis wrote in his *Elucidarium* what is often held up as representative of the medieval Church's "unwavering" stance against *jongleurs*:¹³

Student: Do *joculatores* have any hope for salvation?

Master: None. For in fact, by their whole intention, they are servants of Satan; concerning these people it is said, "They did not recognize God; therefore God scorns them, and the Lord will mock them."¹⁴

The continued denial of salvation and the sacraments to *jongleurs* effectively placed them outside of the Church, and consequently on the margins of society. Here, they were joined by a growing urban poor along with other prominent marginal figures—none of whom fit into the traditional tripartite schema of *bellatores*, *oratores*, and *laboratores*. The most significant of these figures were Jews and prostitutes, whose function and place within society remained ill defined, and changed drastically over the course of the Middle

¹² Ibid., 69.

¹³ For an example of the "unwavering" interpretation, see Faral: "*Tous ces textes sont en parfait accord. Des origines à la fin du moyen âge, l'opinion de l'Église sur les jongleurs n'a pas varié: [...] Elle condamne avec acharnement le scandale de leur vie, l'immoralité de leur oeuvre, le désordre dont ils sont la cause.*" (28–29).

¹⁴ "*Discipulus: Habent spem joculatores? Magister: Nullam: tota namque intentione sunt ministri Satanae, de his dicitur: Deum non cognoverunt; ideo Deus sprexit eos, et Dominus subsannabit eos.*" Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium* II, 18, in Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus: [...] Series Latina*, vol. 172 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1844–1904), col. 1148 (hereafter, *PL*). The Biblical quotation is Psalm 11:4.

Ages.¹⁵ Jews served as a constant reminder that, in fact, the world was not as wholly Christian as often envisioned, and they frequently bore the brunt of that tension.¹⁶ At the same time, they adopted a profession that was essential to the growth of the emerging mercantile economy, though fraught with moral difficulty for Christians—money lending. Their function, as historian Lester Little argues, was consequently “to bear the burden of Christian guilt for participation in activities not yet deemed morally worthy of Christians.”¹⁷

Prostitutes faced a similar ambiguity in medieval society, as the shameful use of their bodies decisively placed them outside of the Church.¹⁸ Yet at the same time, they played an important role as an outlet for sexual desire. Prostitution was not hidden away, but rather took place openly. Brothels were not only sanctioned, but in fact, regulated and policed by civic authorities. When Louis IX took a stance against them in 1254 and attempted to ban prostitution, the backlash was so severe that two years later he capitulated, and agreed that the women could stay so long as they lived outside of the city walls.¹⁹ The Church’s stance toward prostitution was equally ambivalent, reflecting a general unease with sexuality but also the desire that individuals should lead virtuous lives. The problem essentially came down to which was the lesser of two evils when faced with a choice between fornication and lust. Thomas Aquinas came down on the side of prostitution, writing in his *Summa Theologica*, “Accordingly, in human

¹⁵ See Bronisław Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹⁶ See R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1987).

¹⁷ Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 56.

¹⁸ Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval Prostitution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 55–56.

administration also, those who have authority rightly tolerate certain evils, lest certain goods be hindered, or even certain worse evils befall. Thus Augustine says in *De Ordine* II[.4], ‘Remove the harlots from human affairs, and everything will be thrown into wantonness.’²⁰ Similarly, in *De Regimine Principum*, again quoting Augustine, Aquinas compares prostitutes to a palace cesspool: “Take away the sewer, and you will fill the palace with filth.”²¹ Prostitutes were literally portrayed as a sewage system for the collective lusts of medieval society. But this is not to say that their work was endorsed—Aquinas had little love for prostitutes and denounced them frequently in his writings.²² Yet, he was willing to make a concession that for the greater good of society, they were a necessary evil that should be tolerated.

As a figure similarly on the outskirts of society, the image of the *jongleur* related closely to that of the prostitute. When considering the broader definitions used by the Church—the Latin *joculator*, *histrio*, and *mimus* in particular—that evoke not just instrumental music, but dancing, acting, juggling, miming, and other types of movement, it becomes clear that it was the improper use of the body that drew criticism. This is certainly the kind of bodily contortion that Bernard of Clairvaux contrasted to the spiritual contemplation that instead required acrobatics of the mind:

That is to say in the manner of acrobats and dancers, who with heads down, and feet raised up, contrary to human skill, they stand or walk on their hands, and thus draw all eyes to themselves. But this is not a

²⁰ “Sic igitur et in regimine humano illi qui praesunt recte aliqua mala tolerant, ne aliqua bona impediuntur, vel etiam ne aliqua mala peiora incurrantur, sicut Augustinus dicit, in II de ordine, aufer meretrices de rebus humanis, turbaveris omnia libidinibus.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II.10.11.

²¹ “Tolle cloacam, et replebis foetore palatium.” Thomas Aquinas, *De Regimine Principum* 4.14. It is unclear where the quotation from Augustine comes from.

²² See for example, *Summa Theologica* II-II.32.7: “For the woman who practices whorishness acts disgracefully and against the law of God.” [“Quod enim mulier meretricium exerceat, turpiter agit et contra legem Dei.”]

childlike game, or the theater, which display vulgar acts, and with effeminate and shameful contortions provoke the passions: it is a joyous game, honest, grave, and admirable, which is able to delight the gaze of heavenly spectators.²³

Twisting the body into unnatural positions meant using it for base purposes that were unfitting to Christian society. And in the early thirteenth century, this same type of movement continued to draw the ire of a circle of theologians in Paris around 1200, centered on Peter the Chanter.

The writings of Peter the Chanter and his intellectual descendants about *jongleurs* at the turn of the thirteenth century are numerous, and at times, contradictory. They were, however, influenced by earlier criticism of the *jongleur's* performative use of the body, drawing on Latin terms that did not distinguish musicians from actors. Following this line of thought, in his *Summa de Sacramentis*, Peter the Chanter wrote, “For some [*histriones*] obtain the necessities of life with mockery and disgrace of their bodies, and they deform the image of God.”²⁴ That is to say that like prostitutes, the livelihood of the *jongleur* was based on putting the body to shame. In distorting the *imago Dei*—the image of God in their bodies—they denied not only their chance for salvation, but also their own humanity. Peter’s student, Thomas of Chobham, continued the assault on the *jongleur's* bodily distortion, barely able to contain his disgust:

For some [*histriones*] distort and transfigure their bodies through indecent acrobatics or through indecent gestures, or by indecently revealing their

²³ “*More scilicet jocularum et saltatorum, qui capite misso deorsum, pedibusque sursum erectis, praeter humanum usum stant manibus vel incedunt, et sic in se omnium oculos defigunt. Non est hic ludus puerilis, non est de theatro, qui femineis foedisque anfractibus provocet libidinem, actus sordidos repraesentet: sed est ludus jucundus, honestus, gravis, spectabilis, qui coelestium spectatorum delectare possit aspectus.*” Bernard of Clairvaux *Epistola LXXXVII ad Ogerium* 12 in *PL* 182, col. 217.

²⁴ “*Quidam enim cum ludibrio et turpitudine sui corporis acquirunt necessaria, et deformant ymaginem Dei.*” Peter the Chanter, *Summa de Sacramentis* 211.

bodies, or by putting on horrible garments or masks, and all of them are damnable unless they put aside their trades.²⁵

Chobham reaffirmed the position that *jongleurs*, as long as they persisted in their shameful and reprehensible actions, had no hope for salvation, and remained outside of the Church. It is perhaps this continued discourse that encouraged Pope Innocent III, in the text of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, to forbid clerics from attending the performances of *mimi*, *joculatores*, and *histriones*, as well as engaging in secular affairs, playing dice or other games, and going to taverns—except in dire necessity!²⁶

There is another aspect to the texts of Peter the Chanter and Thomas of Chobham however, that would prove critical to the professionalization of the *jongleur* over the course of the thirteenth century—the concept of *officium*, or trade.²⁷ Chobham suggested in the above text that *jongleurs* did have some hope for salvation, but only if they were willing to denounce their shameful occupation. Peter the Chanter, too, had previously formulated the *jongleur* in explicit terms of skill and profession. In his *Verbum abbreviatum*, he wrote: “There is no class of men in which some practical skill is not found [...] besides this one, which is a monstrosity, by no virtue redeemed from its faults, adapted to no skill of human necessity.”²⁸ Like Chobham, Peter the Chanter understood

²⁵ “*Quidam enim transformant et transfigurant corpora sua per turpes saltus vel per turpes gestus, vel denudando corpora turpiter, vel induendo horribiles loricas vel larvas, et omnes tales damnabiles sunt nisi relinquant officia sua.*” Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum* VI.4.2a.

²⁶ “*Mimis, jocularibus, et histrionibus non intendat, et tabernas prorsus evirent, nisi forte causa necessitates in itinere consituti.*” *Decreta Generalis Consilii Lateranensis IV* 16 in J. D. Mansi, ed. *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. 22 (Paris: H. Welter, 1901–1927), col. 1003, 1006.

²⁷ For a full account of the social rehabilitation of the *jongleur*, see Faral, 44–60; Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 198–204; John W. Baldwin, “The Image of the Jongleur in Northern France around 1200,” *Speculum* 72 (1997): 635–663; John W. Baldwin, *Paris, 1200* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 220–222; and Page, *Owl and the Nightingale*, 19–33.

²⁸ “*Nullam genus hominum est, in quo non inveniatur aliquis utilis usus [...] praeter hoc genus hominum, quod est monstrum, nulla virtute ademptum a vitiis, necessitates humanae nulli usui aptum.*” Peter the Chanter, *Verbum abbreviatum* 49 in *PL* 205, col. 155.

the *jongleur* through a relationship to skill and necessity—here he calls it a *usus utilis*—but in this case, it is something the *jongleur* does not possess. As long as that is the case, he is damned.

This leaves room, however, for an intellectual rehabilitation of the *jongleur*, should his trade be deemed practical and beneficial to society. The key to this change, as John Baldwin has argued, is a shift away from bodily movement and instead toward the musical aspects of performance.²⁹ “But,” wrote Peter the Chanter, after describing how the contortions of bodies deformed the *imago Dei*, “if they sing with instruments, or sing of great deeds to give relaxation, or perhaps to give information, then they are nearly free from blame.”³⁰ Thomas of Chobham elaborated on this line of thought, going so far as to distinguish *histriones*—entertainers generally—from *joculatores*—who might be better described at this point as minstrels:

There are others who are called *joculatores* who sing the deeds of princes and the lives of saints and give solace to men either in their illnesses or in their difficulties [...]. If [they do this] as has been said, it is quite possible that such people might be put up with.³¹

For Peter the Chanter and his circle, redemption for the *jongleur* comes by setting aside the bodily aspects of their trade and instead focusing on the performance of that which is morally or spiritually uplifting—*chansons de geste*, hagiography, and similarly edifying genres. In such cases, the *jongleur*’s craft might even be tolerable.

²⁹ Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 198–204

³⁰ “*Sed si cantent cum instrumentis, vel cantent de gestis rebus ad recreationem vel forte ad informationem, vicini sunt excusationi.*” Peter the Chanter, *Summa de Sacramentis* 211.

³¹ “*Sunt autem alii qui dicuntur ioculatores qui cantant gesta principum et vitas sanctorum et faciunt solatia hominibus vel in egritudinibus suis vel in angustis suis [...]. Si [...] sicut dictum est, bene possunt sustineri tales.*” Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum* VI.4.2a.

The notions of skill, craft, and necessity were essential to later medieval conceptions of *civitas*—the state—and of civil society. Antony Black argues that for medieval philosophers, *civitas* was based on the Aristotelian concept of *polis*, broadly defined as political society, rather than the city-state.³² The *civitas*, based on civil, rather than domestic association, allowed for individual liberty so long as the general moral code was followed, though it would not itself be the transmitter of moral values—that was under the Church’s purview. Additionally, the *civitas* was beneficial to all, because the congregation of people in towns and cities made more readily available the skills and crafts necessary not just for living, but for living well. Thomas Aquinas, in the middle of the thirteenth century, consequently approached the *civitas* as based on the bonds of friendship, fraternity, and mutual aid:

Therefore, it is natural to man that he live in a partnership (*societate*) of many [...] It is therefore necessary to man that he live in association (*multitudine*), so that one might be aided by another, and that different people should be occupied in discovering different things by reason.³³

For Aquinas, civil society was based on an ordered community directed “towards its common good through the discharge of those functions necessary for the achievement of that good.”³⁴ In other words, whatever skills or crafts were necessary to uphold order in society were of value.

It is here that *jongleurs* begin to fit more precisely within a vision of civil society. Aquinas even argued for a specific place for them within the context of the virtue of

³² Antony Black, *Guilds and Civil Society in European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 76–85.

³³ “*Si ergo naturale est homini quod in societate multorum vivat, necesse est in hominibus esse per quod multitudo regatur. [...] Est igitur necessarium homini quod in multitudine vivat, ut unus ab alio adiuvetur et diversi diversis inveniendis per rationem occupentur.*” Thomas Aquinas, *De Regimine Principum* 1.1.

³⁴ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 56.

ludus—play. Play is both necessary and virtuous not as an end to itself, but rather as a means of replenishing the soul, and of giving rest and relaxation. “*Histriones* especially,” he wrote, “would seem to exceed in play, who spend their whole lives at playing.”³⁵ *Ludus* is the lifelong craft of the *jongleur*, his *officium*, and it is even legitimate because it is “necessary for the conservation of human life.” Consequently, it “may be regarded as a lawful employment.”³⁶ Aquinas directly carved out a place in civil society for the *jongleur*, where he is deemed to be a lawful participant, a skilled craftsman, and necessary for its functioning.

A generation earlier, Peter the Chanter had articulated a similar vision of the necessity of professional skills, though one that was significantly restrained, based strictly within the moral range of the Church, rather than society broadly defined:

Consider, therefore, which artisans are necessary to the Church and which are not; which are to be tolerated by her and which are not. Farmers are necessary just as the soil of the land. [...] So too are cobblers of skins, tanners and simple carpenters; but makers of ornate and costly things are not necessary. [...] Players [*artifices*] of musical instruments are also necessary so that sadness and boredom can be relieved by them and devotion, not wantonness, may be aroused.³⁷

For Peter the Chanter, necessities are only those things that serve essential, basic functions. It is surprising to find musicians on the list, but in Aquinas’ vision, they, too, are contributing to the emotional, moral, and spiritual well being of society. The word choice for the musicians is also very particular. As *artifices*—craftsmen—they join the

³⁵ “*Maxime histriones in ludo videntur superabundare, qui totam vitam suam ordinant ad ludendum.*” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II.168.3.

³⁶ “*Ludus est necessarius ad conversationem humanae vitae. Ad omnia autem quae sunt utilia conversationi humanae, deputari possunt aliqua officia licita.*” Ibid.

³⁷ “*Videndum ergo, qui opifices necessarii essent Ecclesiae et qui non; qui tolerandi in ea et qui non. Necessarii sunt agricolae, sicut pes mundi. [...] Similiter pelliparii sutores, tannarii, carpentarii simplices; non daedalini, non sumptuosi fabri. [...] Artifices etiam instrumentorum musicorum, ut eis tristitia et taedium amoveatur, devotio non lascivia excitetur.*” Peter the Chanter, *Verbum abbreviatum* 84, in *PL* 205, col. 253.

ranks of the tailors, tanners, and carpenters, not only as practicing a craft, but as skilled professionals of that craft.

The language of civil society and craftsmanship does not appear only in theological and philosophical discourses. In Paris, around 1300, Johannes de Grocheio wrote *De Musica*, a treatise on the theory of music. This short work is his only known opus, and in it he sought to examine the origins, mathematical theories, social functions, and contemporary practices of music. In so doing, Grocheio drew from both Peter the Chanter and Thomas Aquinas in seeing certain types of music as moral and emotional stabilizers that benefit society as a whole. Most interestingly, he did this with secular music as well as sacred, in contrast to earlier musical treatises. Considering the various styles of secular music, Grocheio wrote about *chansons de geste* and hagiography:

This kind of song, however, ought to be furnished to old men, to laboring citizens and to average workers when they rest from their customary labor, so that, having heard the miseries and calamities of others, they might sustain themselves more easily, and approach whatever their tasks more eagerly. Thus, this kind of song is influential in the conservation of the whole state.³⁸

Through his songs, the *jongleur* helps to keep order in society, providing the regenerative power of music to those who are laboring. Similarly, different types of songs are useful to youth, to keep them from falling into vice. With dance genres, a *cantus versualis* prevents idleness; the *stantipes* moves the spirit to contemplation; and a *ductia* works against the passions of Eros.³⁹ By working at his own craft to the health of others, the *jongleur's*

³⁸ “*Cantus autem iste debet antiquis et civibus laborantibus et mediocribus ministrari, dum requiescunt ab opere consueto, ut auditis miseriis et calamitatibus aliorum suas facilius sustineant et quilibet opus suum alacrius aggrediatur. Et ideo iste cantus valet ad conservationem totius civitatis.*” Johannes de Grocheio, *De Musica*, 50. [Page numbers from Ernst Rohloff, *Der Musiktraktat des Johannes de Grocheo*, Media latinitas musica 2 (Leipzig: Kommissionsverlag Gebrüder Reinecke, 1943)].

³⁹ “*Cantus [versualis] autem iste debet iuvenibus exhiberi, ne in otio totaliter sint reperti;*” “[*Cantilena*] facit animos iuvenum et puellarum propter sui difficultatem circa hanc stare et eos a prava cogitatione devertit;”

music not only aids others, but imparts an even greater benefit to the orderly functioning of the whole state (*ad conservationem totius civitatis*).

Grocheio also formulated the composition and performance of music in terms of artisanal labor. He frequently likened constituent components of music—tones, rhythms—to natural materials that are then shaped by an artisanal craftsman. He compares the composition of music for the Divine Offices, which often involved borrowing previous musical material and elaborating upon it, to the way that craftsmen work together to harness natural materials and then create with them:

[...] the craftsman should take his text or material from some one else, that is, a theologian or a scholar, and afterwards the musician ought to give to it the required shape. The mechanical arts assist each other in this way, as is evident to those who recall the preparation of leather made in shoe shops.⁴⁰

The musician—or perhaps better to say the composer—in this instance fulfills the same role and function as a shoemaker. Nor is the performer left out of Grocheio’s vision of music in society. Almost in passing, he expressed a crucial notion about the role of secular musicians—that they too are artisans: “A *bonus artifex in viella* uses normally every cantus and cantilena and every musical form [...].”⁴¹ Echoing Peter the Chanter (“*artifices instrumentorum musicorum*”), Grocheio identifies the *vielle* as an instrument that requires particular skill not just to play, but to play well. In its difficulty, the *vielle*

“[Ductia] enim ducit corda puellarum et iuvenum et a vanitate removet et contra passionem, quae dicitur amor vel [eros] valere dicitur.” Ibid., 50–51. Numerous scholars have attempted to definitively match Grocheio’s various genres to the extant musical literature, with varying degrees of success. See, for example, Timothy J. McGee, “Medieval Dances: Matching the Repertory with Grocheio’s Descriptions,” *Journal of Musicology* 7 (1989): 498–517.

⁴⁰ “In componendo partes praedictas debet artifex dictamen vel materiam ab alio, puta theologo vel legista, recipere, et post hoc formam ei debitam debet musicus applicare. Sic enim ad invicem se iuvant artes mechanicae, ut in sutoria et corii praeparatura sensui fit apertum.” Johannes de Grocheio, *De Musica*, 67.

⁴¹ “Bonus autem artifex in viella omnem cantum et cantilenam et omnem formam musicalem generaliter introducit.” Ibid., 52.

itself may be one of the primary forces driving the acceptance of music as a learned skill. In many earlier musical treatises, there is little discussion of actually playing music—it was a strictly theoretical concept as part of the *quadrivium*, along with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. Grocheio represents a shift from this view, perhaps influenced by the arrival of polyphony at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in the twelfth century—which he also likened to a skilled craft—toward one in which performance takes just as much skill as theoretical exercise.⁴² A *bonus artifex in viella* was a professional, whose mastery of the instrument afforded him the opportunity to participate in and contribute to civil society. The *jongleur* now had a path through which to shed the immoral associations of body and lack of function, and instead to pursue the practices of professionalism as a minstrel.

Social Geography: Minstrels on the *Rue aus Jugléurs*

These intellectual shifts mapped onto the social geography of thirteenth-century Paris. The city itself fell into three primary divisions. The Left Bank—the south side of the Seine—was a center of learning, containing the University of Paris, established in the early 1200s. Here was the heart of medieval scholastic thought from which emanated such prominent figures as Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas. On the *Isle du Palais*, in the middle of the Seine, were the twin centers of secular and religious power and authority in France—the French royal palace and the cathedral of *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The Right Bank—the north side of the river—was the city’s center of commerce and finance, where merchants would gather to peddle their wares at the covered marketplace

⁴² See Craig M. Wright, *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris, 500-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

at *Les Halles*, and around which the various craft guilds had begun to coalesce since the twelfth century. As members of a profession came together, often living on a single street, the name of the street would frequently take on an association with the profession. We see in this period street names such as *La Draperie* (drapers), *La Tanerie* (tanners), *Rue des Cordiers* (rope-makers), and *Rue aus Coiffieres* (barber-surgeons).

By the thirteenth century, the *jongleurs*, too, had a street named for their craft. The earliest known record of it dates from May 1225, in a document from Ernaudus de Curva Villa, the Dean of Paris, concerning the taxation of bread produced on the street. Interestingly, the street is referred to by two different names: the heading for the document is labeled, “*Littere de vico Viellatorum*,” while in the letter itself, it is called the “*vic[us] de Juggleours*.”⁴³ Other variations on the name in the thirteenth century are frequently mentioned in modern historiography—including *Rue des Juggleours* (“*XIIIe siècle*”) and *Vicus Joculatorum* (1236)—but are never documented.⁴⁴ Regardless of the variations, the street appears definitively as the *Rue aus Jugléeurs* in the tax records of 1292.⁴⁵

The *Rue aus Jugléeurs* was located on the Right Bank, in what is today the fourth arrondissement. In fact, it is currently the section of the Rue Rambuteau located directly

⁴³ B. M. E. Guérard, ed., *Cartulaire de l'Église de Notre-Dame de Paris*, vol. 2, *Magnum Pastorale* (Paris: Imprimerie de Crapelet, 1850), 525–526. It is unclear when the heading was added to the letter, and it may be the result of later compilation. It predates the 1850 publishing however, since J. B. M. Jaillot cited the manuscript source of the *Grand Pastoral* in 1772 as containing the reference to the *Vicus Viellatorum* “*au Chapitre intitulé*.” J. B. M. Jaillot, *Recherches critiques: historiques et topographiques sur la ville de Paris, depuis ses commencements connus, jusqu'à présent [...]*, vol. 3 (Paris: A.M. Lottin aîné, 1772), 76.

⁴⁴ See for example, Jaillot, 76 and C. Aubertin, *Histoire de la langue et de la littérature françaises au moyen âge d'après les travaux les plus récents*, vol. 1 (Paris: E. Belin, 1883), 268, among many others. While it is true this is a simple linguistic issue—*Rue des Juggleours* and *Vicus Joculatorum* are direct translations of each other—there is still an unidentified reference from 1236.

⁴⁵ H. Géraud, *Paris sous Philippe-Le-Bel: d'après des documents originaux, notamment d'après un manuscrit contenant le rôle de la taille imposée sur les habitants de Paris en 1292* (Paris: Imprimerie de Crapelet, 1837), 61 and 68.

north of the present-day Centre Georges Pompidou. In 1292 however, it was a small street located just off of the *Rue Saint-Martin*, between it and the *Rue de Biau-Bourc* (Figure 1). The *Rue aus Jugléurs* fell directly between two governing parishes which literally controlled opposite sides of the street—that of *Saint-Josse*, a tiny parish covering the area to the southwest, and that of *Saint-Nicholas-de-Chans*, a larger parish covering the area to the northeast.⁴⁶ To the north and south were the *Rue de Petit-Chans* and the *Rue des Éstuves* (bathhouses). Other professions congregated in the area as well. Nearby were the *Rue de la Platrière* (plasterers), the *Rue de la Petit Bouclerie* (shield makers), and the *Rue de la Baudrairie* (tanners of heavy leather). While this was not the commercial center of Paris—that was the marketplace at *Les Halles*—the *Rue aus Jugléurs* was situated well within a local community of craft guilds.

The development of this community in the decades around 1300 can be tracked by analyzing the tax records, or *taille* rolls, created by the royal administration of Philip the Fair. Due to ongoing conflicts in Flanders and England in the 1290s, Philip constantly levied taxes on the municipality of Paris. These were not poll taxes in the strictest sense, as many people were exempt, and the number of individuals from whom taxes were collected varies widely between the rolls. Nevertheless, they provide an exceptionally rich source of demographic data for the period. Taxes were levied six times in the 1290s—in 1292, then each year from 1296 to 1300—and once again in 1313. The last of these however, was to raise funds for a special occasion—the coronation of the future Louis X. Of these seven *taille* rolls, four are published (1292, 1296, 1297, and 1313), and

⁴⁶ The parish of *Saint-Nicholas-des-Chans* was subdivided between the areas that fell inside and outside of the city walls built by Philip Augustus. The *Rue aus Jugléurs* falls well within those walls.

the other three remain solely in manuscript form.⁴⁷ The entries in the rolls are divided into parishes, and then streets. The entry for each listed individual gives a name, a profession, and the amount of tax they paid. Many people retained regional identities, however, and if an individual was originally from outside of Paris, their regional affiliation was recorded instead of their profession. Looking through these records, it is possible to trace some of the individual residents of the *Rue aus Jugléurs* during the years leading up to the incorporation of the minstrel guild in 1321.

The individual entries in the *taille* rolls present a wealth of information about the inhabitants of the *Rue aus Jugléurs*, but also raise many questions. Among the one hundred eleven residents listed across the four published rolls, only twelve can be reasonably identified as musicians by their profession, listed as *jugléur*, *jugleresse*, and *trompéur*.⁴⁸ One additional musician, *Henri aus vieles*—a *vielle*-maker—appears in the first three rolls.⁴⁹ Deducing the exact number of musicians is difficult, as it requires accounting for those who are listed on more than one roll, as well as those whose musicianship can be inferred. While *Bernart le trompéur* is listed the same way in three successive rolls, others are not as simple. In 1292, *Giles du Bourc-l'Abbé* appears without

⁴⁷ See Géraud, *Paris sous Philippe-Le-Bel*; Karl Michaëlsson, *Le Livre de la taille de Paris l'an 1296* (Göteborg, 1958); Karl Michaëlsson, *Le Livre de la taille de Paris l'an 1297* (Göteborg, 1962); Jean Alexandre Buchon, ed., *Chronique métrique de Godefroy de Paris: Suivie de La taille de Paris en 1313: publiées pour la première fois, d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi* (Paris: Verdrière, 1827); and Karl Michaëlsson, *Le livre de la taille de Paris, l'an de grâce 1313* (Göteborg: Wettergren & Kerber, 1951).

⁴⁸ There is some confusion in the historiography regarding the number of musicians present in the 1292 *taille*. Both Kay Brainard Slocum (263) and Nigel Wilkins, *Music in the Age of Chaucer* (Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer: 1995), 137, cite Bernard Bernhard as having identified nineteen musicians on the *Rue aus Jugléurs* in 1292. This however, is not the case, and a cursory glance at the 1292 *taille* confirms as much. In fact, Bernhard indicates that he found nineteen musicians across all of the rolls: “*En conférant entre eux ces divers rôles, on y trouve mentionnés dix-neuf individus avec les dénominations de Jugléur, Trompéur ou joueur de trompette, plus une femme qui porte le titre de jugleresse, et un fabricant de vielles ou violons*” (379). Seeing as only twelve are identified in the present count, it stands to reason that seven more are identifiable from the data in the three unpublished rolls, to which Bernhard had access.

⁴⁹ In the entry for 1296 he is listed as *Henri qui fait les vieles*.

any indication as to his profession, but in 1297, he is listed as *Gile du bourc-l'abbé, jogleeur*. Given his uncommon name, it is reasonable to assume that they are the same person. But there is less certainty for others—for example, is *Estienne de senliz* in the 1296 roll the same as *Estienne le jogleeur* from 1297? Given that there are no other *Estiennes* on the street in any year, it would not be unreasonable to think so, though the evidence is meager at best. Finally, it is notable that of the seventeen listed residents of the *Rue aus Jugléeurs* in 1313, none are repeated from the 1297 roll, and none are listed as musicians. A comparison with the list of names from the 1321 minstrel guild charter however, yields two matches: *Jehan de Biaumont* and *Jehan Petit*, who appears in 1313 as *Jehan maupetit*.

It is not just musicians who inhabited the *Rue aus Jugléeurs*; quite to the contrary, it was filled with individuals possessing a variety of skills. Among common trade professions are found seamstresses, a shield-maker, a parchment-maker, a scribe, two plasterers and a mason—the latter three of whom likely worked two blocks south on the *Rue de la Platrière*—and a garlic seller, among many others. Others seem to have been more prominent members of the local community, suggested by their continued presence across multiple *taille* rolls. Such figures include *Jaques de Chartres*, a royal notary; *Thomas de Chartres*, a sergeant of the castle; three educated men—*Mestre Alixandre* and *Mestre Henri*, whose professions are unclear, and *Mestre Guillaume*, a physician; *Franque de Reins*, who ran the local tavern; and *Dame Agnes*, who just might have been his alewife. But for each figure that we know something about, there are two more whose professions are uncertain. Some of these individuals are listed only by simple descriptions—*Charle le riche*, *Guillaume le blond*, *Jehanne la camuse* (pug-nosed)—but

many of the others are identified by their geographic origins, primarily from around France, but also including three Lombards and another three Englishmen.⁵⁰ Finally, it is worth noting that other musicians can be found outside of the *Rue aus Jugléurs*. Some are in neighboring parishes—one *jugléur* lived on the *Rue ou l'an cuit les Oës*, and *Guillaume le trompéur* appears in the first three *taille* rolls living on the outermost edge of the city. Others are scattered throughout, though Lawrence Gushee had identified small clusters of musicians living just outside the city walls on *Rue Saint-Denis*, around the parish church of *Saint-Germain de l'Auxerrois*, and on the Left Bank, south of the *Pont Saint-Michel*.⁵¹

	1292	1296	1297	1313	Total individuals ⁵²
Total - Rue aus Jugléurs	63	15	37	17	111
Musicians - Rue aus Jugléurs	7	5	8	2	12
Total - Repeated Names					15 ⁵³
Musicians - Repeated Names					7

Figure 2. Demographic data from published *taille* rolls⁵⁴

The vast difference in total individuals listed on the *Rue aus Jugléurs* between the *taille* rolls indicates immediately that the records do not account for everybody—likely a result of inconsistent recordkeeping and taxation mechanisms. Indeed, the *taille* of 1292 includes 14,566 individuals for the whole city, while the numbers drop off

⁵⁰ The Lombards are all listed in a separate section of the *taille*, and were subject to particularly heavy taxation.

⁵¹ Gushee, 138.

⁵² The numbers in this column account for explicit and inferred duplicate entries across multiple years.

⁵³ This total and the seven repeated names of musicians do not include the two people identifiable in 1313 by the signatures on the 1321 guild charter.

⁵⁴ These numbers differ somewhat from Gushee's (139), though he was not interested in counting repeated names. Notably, he neglected to count the three Lombards from the 1292 *taille*, and was hesitant to identify the two musicians from 1313 with those from the 1321 charter.

significantly for subsequent years—5703 in 1296, 9930 in 1297, and 6352 in 1313.⁵⁵ Additionally, even the largest record from 1292 does not account for the overall population of Paris, which has been estimated at anywhere between 60,000 to 200,000 people.⁵⁶ Even though not everyone was subject to the *taille*—nobility, clerics, and students were exempt, and together could have easily numbered well over ten thousand—there is still a massive discrepancy in the numbers.⁵⁷ At the same time though, the number of people living on the *Rue aus Jugléurs* is roughly proportional to the total number of taxpayers recorded in the *tailles* each year.

Approximately 11% to 33% of people living on the street at any time were musicians. But it is difficult to say which of these two numbers is the greater outlier—the 1292 and 1313 rolls are on the lower end, while 1296 is the upper limit, with 1297 squarely between them. The aggregation of names found across the rolls pushes the percentage down further to 10.8%, suggesting that 1292 and 1313 are more representative. Regardless, data from the remaining three records would help considerably. In addition, there is the problem of how many musicians were living there who are not listed as such. The example of *Giles du Bourc-l'Abbé* above, and others like him, indicates that this is a legitimate concern. Taking into account the list of signatories to the 1321 guild charter further illustrates this problem—nearly half of the thirty-seven signatures are by those easily identifiable as originating from outside of the city, from places such as Burgundy, Beauvais, Lorraine, and Chartres. It is reasonable to imagine

⁵⁵ Al Slivinski and Nathan Sussman, “Taxation Mechanisms and Growth in Medieval Paris,” 2009, <http://www.medievalists.net/2009/12/23/taxation-mechanisms-and-growth-in-medieval-paris/> (accessed April 18, 2011).

⁵⁶ Gushee, 137.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

that a notable number of those living on the *Rue aus Jugléurs* with regional identities attributed to them instead of professions may have been musicians as well.

Turning away from a concern over those who are not included in the numbers, there is something to be said for the continued presence of those individuals found across multiple *taille* rolls. Of the one hundred eleven individuals named in the rolls, only fifteen of them (13.5%) appear more than once. Even accounting for the discrepancies in size between the rolls, this seems like a particularly high rate of turnover, especially since two of the rolls are from consecutive years. When it comes to repeat names of musicians, however, the result is vastly different. Although musicians only account for some 10.8% of the named individuals, seven out of the fifteen repeated names—a very substantial 46.7%—are those of musicians. This suggests, in fact, that musicians had a significantly lower rate of turnover than the broader population of the street. Not only had they been congregating around the *Rue aus Jugléurs* for nearly a century since the first mention of the *Vicus Viellatorum* in 1225, they were less mobile than the rest of the local population. These were not itinerant, wandering street musicians. Rather, like the members of other craft guilds who, over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, began to assemble in one location for the benefit of their mutual trade, the minstrels of the *Rue des Jugléurs* were moving toward the incorporation of a guild, and with it, the official recognition of their profession.

Practicing Professionalism: Incorporation and Civic Engagement

Professional craft guilds had been in existence in Paris since at least the mid-twelfth century, if not before. Frequently, they developed out of religious confraternities—societies created around a patron saint for the mutual benefit of their

members—in particular, assuring that they and their families received proper burials. Since these confraternities were often organized around a single profession, they were some of the first to incorporate into craft guilds. The earliest records of these guilds come from the most prominent professions, including leatherworkers in 1160, bakers in 1162, drapers in 1183, and cloth-merchants in 1219.⁵⁸ From the mid-thirteenth century, however, much more information becomes available. In 1261, Louis IX appointed Étienne Boileau as provost of Paris, a man whom Jean de Joinville described as a just administrator, immune to bribery, and on account of whom, “no evildoer, thief, or murderer dared to remain in Paris.”⁵⁹ As part his duties in the civil and judicial administration of the city, Boileau took on the massive task of collecting, in writing, the statutes of all chartered guilds currently active in the city. His compilation, the *Livre des Métiers*, recorded the statutes of one hundred one Parisian guilds.⁶⁰ These statutes detailed the organizational structure of each guild—how membership and rank were determined, who was allowed to practice the profession, and how they interacted with customers and members of other guilds. Compilations of later statutes also demonstrate how various guilds became active in civic life by building halls and founding churches, chapels, and hospitals.⁶¹

The *Corporation des Ménétriers* was not a part of this initial compilation, as Bouleau’s work predated the guild’s charter by half a century. The statutes contained

⁵⁸ F. B. Millett, “Craft Guilds of the Thirteenth-Century in Paris,” *Bulletin of the Departments of History and Political and Economic Science in Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada* 17 (1915): 3.

⁵⁹ “[...] *que nul malfaiteur, ne liarre, ne murtrier n’osa demourer à Paris.*” Jean de Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis* 141.

⁶⁰ Published in René de Lespinasse, ed., *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris, XIIIe siècle*, (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1879). A number of significant guilds, such as the butchers and tanners, are missing from this collection however, as they apparently did not comply with Boileau’s request.

⁶¹ See Lespinasse, *Les métiers et corporations, XIVe–XVIIIe siècle*.

within the *Livre des Métiers*, however, would have provided a model for the Paris minstrels when they incorporated their own guild. Their completed charter was dated September 14, 1321, and an addendum to the letter indicates that it was officially registered with Guillaume Gormont, the new provost of Paris, on October 22, 1341.⁶² Its eleven statutes outlined the rules and regulations of the guild, emphasizing limits on who could perform minstrelsy in Paris, and the ways in which minstrels could promote their craft.

The thirty-seven signatories to the charter include eight female minstrels and Pariset, “minstrel to the king, for himself and for his children.”⁶³ That Pariset held such a title should not come as a surprise—minstrels had been known at the French court at least since the late twelfth century, when Philip Augustus expelled them from the royal household in 1181.⁶⁴ Pariset was also no stranger to the court—his name appears in two separate accounting records from the court of the Count of Poitiers around 1313–1314 as “*Parisot de naquaires et tymbales*.”⁶⁵ That count, Philip the Long, became Philip V, King of France, in 1316. Pariset apparently moved with him from Poitiers to Paris, as his name is found in another royal household account of 1318 as “*Pariset, jogleur le roy*.”⁶⁶ Philip would have still been king when the guild charter was signed in 1321.

The charter itself sets up the guild governance under two or three judicious men—*preudes hommes*—who were elected each year and confirmed by the provost of Paris

⁶² It is unclear why there is a twenty-year discrepancy between these two dates. It is possible that it was a simple transcription of the original document, with additional information included at the later date. This would also explain why one of the statutes refers to the provost of *Saint-Julian-des-Ménétres*—the chapel that was not established until 1331—it was added to the original document by a later hand.

⁶³ “*Pariset, ménestrel du roy, pour lui et pour ses enfans*.” Lespinasse, *Les métiers et corporations, XIVe–XVIIIe siècle*, vol. 3, 582.

⁶⁴ Wilkins, *Chaucer*, 143.

⁶⁵ Bernhard, 381.

⁶⁶ Gushee, 145.

(Statute XI). Their task was to run the guild and affirm that its statutes were being followed. These statutes fall into a number of categories. First, they placed all minstrels living in Paris under them, whether they were members of the guild or not. Any minstrel, domestic or foreign, apprentice or master, who did not agree to abide by them could be banished from the city for a year and a day (Statutes VII–IX). Statutes II and III established a code of conduct for performances. They state that it was forbidden to leave an event before it was finished, and that a minstrel could not send anyone in his place, except in cases of “illness, imprisonment, or other emergency.”⁶⁷

Other statutes established specific rules about advertising and hiring. Minstrels were not allowed to show up at feasts and weddings and offer to play (Statute IV), nor were cooks permitted to engage them for performances (Statute X). Apprentices were forbidden to speak of their craft at taverns, and if they were asked about minstrelsy, they were required to say, “Sir, I am bound by the ordinances of my craft to hire only myself. If you are looking for minstrels or apprentices, go to the *rue aus jongleurs*, you will find good ones there” (Statute V).⁶⁸ Even in the statutes, the street itself played a major role as the center of professional activity. When that person arrived on the *Rue aus Juglèeurs*, they would have to approach a potential hire themselves, as minstrels were not allowed to seek them out, or interrupt when they were speaking with someone else (Statute IV).

The most important statute, however, is the first, which explicitly forbid minstrels from entering into contracts where they engaged other players. Apparently, there was a problem with minstrels bringing lesser players with them, charging one amount for the

⁶⁷ “de maladie, de prison ou d’autre nécessité.” Lespinasse, *Les métiers et corporations, XIVe–XVIIIe siècle*, vol. 3, 581.

⁶⁸ “Seigneur, je ne puis alouer autrui que moy mesmes par les ordenances de nostre mestier, mais se il vous fault menestreus ou aprentiz, alès en la rue aus Jongleurs, vous en trouverez de bons.” Ibid.

services of the group, but paying the others less and pocketing the difference. The statute singled out those “who keep bringing *taboueurs*, *villeurs*, *organeurs* and other *jougleurs* from another *jouglerie* with them, [...] and they take people who know nothing and leave the good players behind.”⁶⁹ These lesser players were similar to those found in a late twelfth century song called *Des Taboueurs*, in which a minstrel lamented the status of his craft, as unskilled rustics from the fields pour into the towns after the harvest is finished, banging on drums and creating a racket with their flutes and whistles.⁷⁰ The noise is so great, he claimed, it seemed as though the Antichrist were about to appear!⁷¹ Differentiating between types of secular musicians, he drew an explicit contrast between himself as a skilled minstrel and those to whom he is losing business: “Maliciously, the drummers assemble throughout the countryside / And good minstrels are being displaced by them.”⁷² Something similar may have still been going on in the early 1300s, prompting the Paris minstrels to make sure that those lesser musicians would not get hired. According to the statute, “it damages the profession and the common profit [...] and deceives good men.”⁷³ By preventing minstrels from engaging other players and requiring that the majority of hiring be done directly at the *Rue aus Jugléurs*, the statutes created an effective monopoly on minstrelsy in Paris that kept out the kinds of musicians found in *Des Taboueurs*, and enforced a minimum standard of musical ability that was

⁶⁹ “[...] *qui font marchié d'amener taboueurs, villeurs, organeurs, et autres jougleurs d'autre jouglerie avecq eulx, [...] et prennent gent qui riens ne sevent et laissent les bons ouvriers.*” Ibid., 580.

⁷⁰ Paris, *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, fonds fr. 837, fol. 278va–279vb. Modern editions are found in Achille Jubinal, ed., *Jongleurs et trouvères; ou, Choix de saluts, épîtres, reveries et autres pieces légères des XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Paris: J. A. Merklein, 1835), 164–169; and Willhem Noomen, *Le jongleur par lui-même: choix de dits et de fabliaux* (Louvain: Peeters, 2003), 141–150.

⁷¹ “*Il samble qu'Antecrist doie maintenant nestre!*” *Des Taboueurs*, ln. 63.

⁷² “*Malement sont tabour par païs assamblé / Et bon menesterel sont par aus refusé.*” Ibid., ll. 25–26.

⁷³ “*le font ou préjudice du mestier et du commun proufit [...] en décevant les bonnes gens.*” Lespinasse, *Les métiers et corporations, XIVe–XVIIIe siècle*, vol. 3, 580–581.

deemed worthy of members of the profession.

While the 1321 statutes do much to enforce professional standards for the guild, there are a number of details that were not included. The most important of these is information about how guild membership was determined. The statutes required that all minstrels in Paris abide by their rules, but presumably, one who was not a guild member would not be hireable. This omission was rectified by a new set of statutes, passed on April 24, 1407.⁷⁴ Under these, admission to the guild was done by audition, and if deemed competent, the minstrel would be allowed to perform at general functions. Only masters, however, were allowed to play at events for the upper ranks of society, and obtaining mastership required a minimum of six years of apprenticeship, as well as additional auditions and tests.⁷⁵ Although it took over eighty years to establish these new regulations, it is likely that similar customs would have been in effect for some time—even if only loosely defined—as they were in the statutes of most other guilds.

By incorporating into an official craft guild in 1321, the minstrels of Paris aimed to clearly define and regulate the practice of their trade for their mutual benefit. In so doing, they differentiated themselves from other kinds of amateur musicians who did not possess the same skills or training as they did. The services of a minstrel were now readily available for hire in the same way as those of a cobbler, a tailor, or a mason. Once they had adopted statutes similar to those of other well established craft guilds, the minstrels then sought to imitate their practices of civic engagement.

Craft guilds were not solely concerned with the well being of their own members; they were also actively involved in their communities, and played an important role in the

⁷⁴ Ibid., 584–585.

⁷⁵ Slocum, 268.

development of local institutions such as chapels and hospitals. Sometimes these connections were developed by pre-guild confraternities, but craft guilds themselves could also be directly responsible for the construction or maintenance of a building. For example, the bakers supported the chapel of *Saint-Pierre-aux-Liens*, the masons maintained the chapel of *Saint-Bleive*, and the goldsmiths built the church of *Saint-Josse*.⁷⁶ In some cases, the guild charters even specified specific funding for the church. Any mason, for example, who did not keep an apprentice for at least six years, was fined twenty *sous*, to be paid directly to the chapel.⁷⁷ Craft guilds supported hospitals as well. The leper-house of Roule was founded by the moneyers' guild, and the bakers' guild rented a number of beds for its own members in the leper-house of *Saint-Lazare*.⁷⁸ The support of chapels and hospitals was a mark of civic engagement—an act of charity to the local community. The *Corporation des Ménétriers* quickly became involved in similar developments. Less than a decade after the 1321 charter was signed, its members funded the construction of a hospital and a chapel.

According to legend, the hospital was founded through the efforts of two of the guild minstrels—Huet, from Lorrain, a palace watchman, and Jacques Grare, also known as Lappe, from Pistoia in Lombardy.⁷⁹ On the Tuesday before the Feast of the Holy Cross

⁷⁶ Millett, 19; and Graham A. Runnalls, "Mediaeval Trade Guilds and the *Miracles de Nostre Dame Par Personnages*," *Medium Aevum* 39 (1970): 279.

⁷⁷ "Et se il le prenoit a mains de VI ans, il est a XX s. de paris d'amende a paier a la chapele monseigneur S. Blesve." Lespinasse, *Les métiers et corporations, XIIIe siècle*, 88.

⁷⁸ Geremek, 174.

⁷⁹ The earliest known extant source for this legend is Jacques de Breul, *Le Theatre des Antiquitez de Paris* (Paris: C. de la Tour, 1612), 990–994. According to Faral, Breul was working from documents that have since been lost (131). Of the two minstrels, only Huet is easily identifiable from the 1321 charter. Bernhard claims that both names are on it (390), but the only possibility for such an attribution is "*Jacque le Jongleur*," which hardly seems convincing. It is possible that Jacques Grare might be the "*Jacquet le Cloutier*" mentioned in later guild documents, in which case both minstrels would have been palace watchmen, which might explain their friendship.

in September 1328, the two friends were walking down *Rue Saint-Martin*, and stopped at Lappe's doorstep while chatting about their work. Gazing across the street, they saw Fleurie de Chartres, a paralyzed woman who lived in a small wagon and subsisted on the alms of passersby. Moved by her plight, the two agreed to find out who owned the land on which she sat, and purchase it so they could build a hospital. They were led to the Abbess of Montmartre, who agreed to rent it to them "in perpetuity" for one hundred *sols* per year and an additional eight *livres* payable within six years. The purchase was registered in October 1330, the Sunday before the Feast of Saint Denis. Shortly thereafter, they constructed a small building with a "beautiful room" and a few beds, and affixed a box for alms to the door. The first person to stay at the new hospital was Fleurie de Chartres, who "never moved from the place until her death."⁸⁰ On Wednesday, August 21, 1331, a guild meeting was held, during which they created an endowment for the hospital at sixteen *livres* per year, paid by the guild members themselves, and dedicated it to Saint Julian and Saint Genois.⁸¹ Their stated purpose for the hospital was "to host and take in poor travelers, and to care for the sick."⁸² Huet and Lappe hired a clerk named Janot Brunel to administer the new hospital in exchange for free housing (but no other salary), and an elderly woman named Édeline Dammartin to make the beds and attend to those who were housed there, for eighteen *deniers* per week.

Shortly after opening the hospital, the guild inquired about another plot of land adjacent to the hospital, on *Rue Saint-Martin* at the corner of *Rue Jehan-Paulée*, two

⁸⁰ "[...] *n'en bougea jamais jusques à son décès.*" de Breul, 991.

⁸¹ St. Genois, or Genesius was a *mimus* who was martyred under Diocletianic persecution in 303, and was considered the patron saint of actors and entertainers.

⁸² "[...] *pour hebergier et recevoir les povres passans et sustenir les malades.*" Michel Félibien, *Histoire de la ville de Paris*, vol. 5 (Paris: G. Desprez et J. Desessartz, 1725), 648. There is some disagreement about the dating of this document. It is signed 21 August 1331, but Gushee dates it to 1333, while mentioning another (unpublished) document from 10 July 1331 that does not appear in any of the other historiography.

blocks north of the *Rue aus Juglérieurs*. The land was purchased from Etienne d'Ausoire, a court lawyer—for 12 *livres*, with an additional 10 *livres* payable each year—and would become the site for a new chapel. The guild endowment would pay for the chaplain—who would be responsible for chanting the divine offices “*sans cesser*”—as well as all necessary supplies required for the regular operation of the chapel and performance of the divine offices.⁸³ The building was completed during the next four years, and the portal on the façade displayed statues of the two patron saints—St. Julian on the right, and St. Genois on the left, playing the *vielle* (Figure 3).⁸⁴ In September 1335, on the Sunday before the Feast of Saint Remi, the prior of Saint-Merry, under whose jurisdiction the new chapel fell, celebrated the first High Mass there.⁸⁵ In 1337, a letter registered with the provost of Paris confirmed the establishment of a benefice of twenty *livres* per year by Guellemine, Viscountess d'Othyolles. And a 1344 letter from Fulk, the bishop of Paris, confirmed a guild letter of October 19, 1343, that appointed Guillaume Amy and Henriette de Mondidier, two *fleurs*, as the administrators of the hospital, and approved governing statutes for the chapel—including festal celebrations for the Virgin Mary and Saint Julian. Over the course of just fifteen years, then, and barely two decades after the founding of the *Corporation des Ménétriers*, the minstrels of Paris had endowed and created two significant institutions in their neighborhood.

The hospital and chapel were constructed to serve the community at large, as is evident from the earliest intentions—the hospital was founded by a charitable act for a needy local woman. And while they certainly would have served the members of the

⁸³ “[...] toutes les choses nécessaires [...] à faire et accomplir les offices divins.” Félibien, vol. 5, 648.

⁸⁴ Aubin-Louis Millin, *Antiquités nationales, ou Recueil de monumens*, vol. 4 (Paris: M. Drouhin, 1792), XLI, p. 5.

⁸⁵ de Breul, 994.

guild when required, the minstrels explicitly stated that the purpose of the hospital was to give shelter to travelers—perhaps including visiting musicians—and those who were sick and in need. Like the masons, bakers, and other craft guilds, the minstrels of Paris sought to play a larger role in their community.

The construction of buildings was not the only way in which minstrels engaged in civic life. As musicians, members of the guild took part in celebratory occasions that brought the community together, such as civic festivals and productions of sacred and secular drama. While other craft guilds might supply food or costumes, the minstrels were able to provide music, just as they did for the feasts and weddings for which they were most frequently hired. One of the best-known and well-documented examples of medieval civic drama took place in Paris during the fourteenth century—the *Miracles of Notre Dame*.⁸⁶ The *Miracles* were a cycle of liturgical drama put on by the goldsmiths' guild every winter, dating from at least 1339 until 1382, with breaks in the late 1350s due to the Jacquerie rebellions. Each play, one produced per year, recounted the story of how a hopeless sinner—a pregnant abbess or an excommunicated parishioner, for example—was saved and redeemed through a miracle performed by the Virgin Mary. The plays were mostly spoken dialogue, but they contained musical interludes in between the dramatic scenes, as well as at the end.

Unfortunately, the musical settings for the *Miracles* have been lost—that is, if they were ever written down in the first place. However, the texts to all of the vocal musical interludes—as well as the dramatic texts—have been preserved, and provide a

⁸⁶ G. Paris and U. Robert, eds., *Miracles de Notre Dame par personnages*, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 8 vols. (Paris: Le Puy, 1876–1893).

rich source for genre analysis of medieval music in the fourteenth century.⁸⁷ More important for the present purpose, however, is the presence of minstrels in the dramatic texts. The first occurrence was in 1341, the third year that the *Miracles* were performed. Arriving in town and hearing that there will be a celebration for the consecration of a new bishop, one minstrel exclaims: “We need to know the right route / so that we can earn gold or coin!”⁸⁸ These minstrels seem to be of the wandering variety, and of some disrepute—their interest in the consecration and celebration is purely monetary, not based in piety. The second time minstrels appeared was in 1345. This time they have no dramatic lines, but are called upon to perform:

Knight: Now I say to these *jongleurs*
 That they come over here without delay
 [...]
 Squire: I see. *Seigneurs*, come here
 Do your craft.⁸⁹

In this instance, the minstrels are included purely to provide background music to help set the stage for the dramatic action that is taking place.

These two different kinds of appearance of the minstrel in the *Miracles* become even more common in later years, where they are called upon frequently by other characters to play music and also have occasional dramatic lines. Their on-stage performances are an example of diegetic music—that which takes place within the dramatic narrative. The minstrels frequently supply the music for feasts and wedding celebrations in the narrative, just as they do in their daily business. In effect, the minstrels

⁸⁷ See Nigel Wilkins, “Music in the Fourteenth Century ‘Miracles de nostre dame,’” *Musica Disciplina* 28 (1974): 39–75, for a thorough analysis of the musical forms in the plays.

⁸⁸ “Droit la nous fault acheminer / Et savoir s’y pourrons gaingner or ou monnoye.” Ibid., 66.

⁸⁹ “Le Chevalier: Or me vas a ces jeugleurs dire / Qu’ilz viengnent ci sanz demourée. [...] L’Escuier: Je vois. Seigneurs, venez leyens / Faire mestier.” Ibid., 67.

play themselves in the cast—albeit a somewhat unsavory version of themselves—as they are hired to perform at the various celebrations. From a dramatic standpoint, their music is valuable in enhancing the scenes taking place, and creating an effect of realism. Additionally, the minstrels likely provided the instrumental accompaniment for the musical interludes throughout the drama.

Who were these minstrels that performed in the *Miracles of Notre Dame*? It is extremely likely that they would have been members of the *Corporation des Ménétriers*. The guild statutes make it nearly impossible that anybody else could have been hired for the performances. But there is another link to the minstrels' guild as well. The goldsmiths' guild, which put on the annual productions, was centered around the *Église Saint-Josse*, and owned a large hall attached to the church, in which it is quite plausible that the *Miracles* were performed.⁹⁰ *Saint-Josse* was only a few blocks away from the *Rue aus Jugléurs*, and was the center of its governing parish.⁹¹ The *Miracles of Notre Dame*, then, were not simply an annual civic event in which the *Corporation des Ménétriers* participated, but one that was altogether local to its own community. In taking part in functions like the *Miracles*, just as in constructing their own chapel and hospital, the Paris minstrels continued to make their presence known, not as vagabonds on the outskirts of society, but as professional craftsmen, like those of any other guild, who were not only useful to society, but who were actively engaged in its institutions and its upkeep.

⁹⁰ Runnalls, 279, 286.

⁹¹ At least, for the south side of the street.

Conclusion

The 1321 establishment of the *Corporation des Ménétriers* marked a turning point in the history of minstrelsy during the Middle Ages. For centuries, the Church had ostracized *jongleurs* because it deemed the performative use of their bodies inappropriate. No better than Jews or Prostitutes, they were thought to have no useful purpose and did not fit into a schema of Christian society that had yet to adapt to the reality of an increasingly urban population. As *jongleurs* became more sedentary and shed their itinerant identities, they began to look to the existing craft guilds as a model for professionalization. Their ability to self-fashion a new identity, however, required an intellectual shift by the Church that could recognize some use in their musicianship. Early thirteenth century writers such as Peter the Chanter and Thomas of Chobham were ambivalent, and their writings reflected both the traditional stance of the Church as well as a possibility that the *jongleur's* craft could be tolerated when applied with skill and without bodily movement. Thomas Aquinas followed them, drawing from the works of Aristotle on *civitas* and civil society, and made a full argument that the *jongleur's* profession was not only legitimate, but necessary.

The minstrels of Paris, whether they were fully aware of the intellectual debates or not, nonetheless were taking steps toward coming together as legitimate craftspeople. Like so many other guilds, they began to congregate on a single street—the *Rue aus Jugléurs*—and during the last decade of the thirteenth century, the residence of those individual minstrels living on the street can be seen to be more stationary than their non-musical neighbors. In 1321, they incorporated into a craft guild, but their professionalization did not end there. Rather, as legitimate members of society, they

undertook a series of civic building projects—a hospital and a chapel—for the benefit of the community at large. They also collaborated with other craft guilds in civic festivals, providing music to community dramas. The minstrels of Paris had successfully integrated into society.

This is not to suggest that minstrelsy was beyond reproach. In 1372, an edict from the provost of Paris forbade minstrels from going outside after nightfall, as performances on street corners were being used as a cover for burglary.⁹² Two decades later, in 1395, another edict sought to curb the speech of minstrels, forbidding them from speaking ill of the king and the pope, punishable by a fine and two months of imprisonment on bread and water.⁹³ These complaints, however, are civil, not moral. As the Church began to adapt to the changing circumstances of medieval life, and Franciscan and Dominican mendicants began to minister to the urban faithful, attacks against *joculatores* and *histriones* no longer matched the world in which they were living. The *jongleur* was nowhere to be found.

⁹² Bernhard, 403–404. It is unclear from the edict whether it was the minstrels themselves who were doing the robbing, or whether unrelated malefactors were simply posing as minstrels.

⁹³ Ibid., 404.

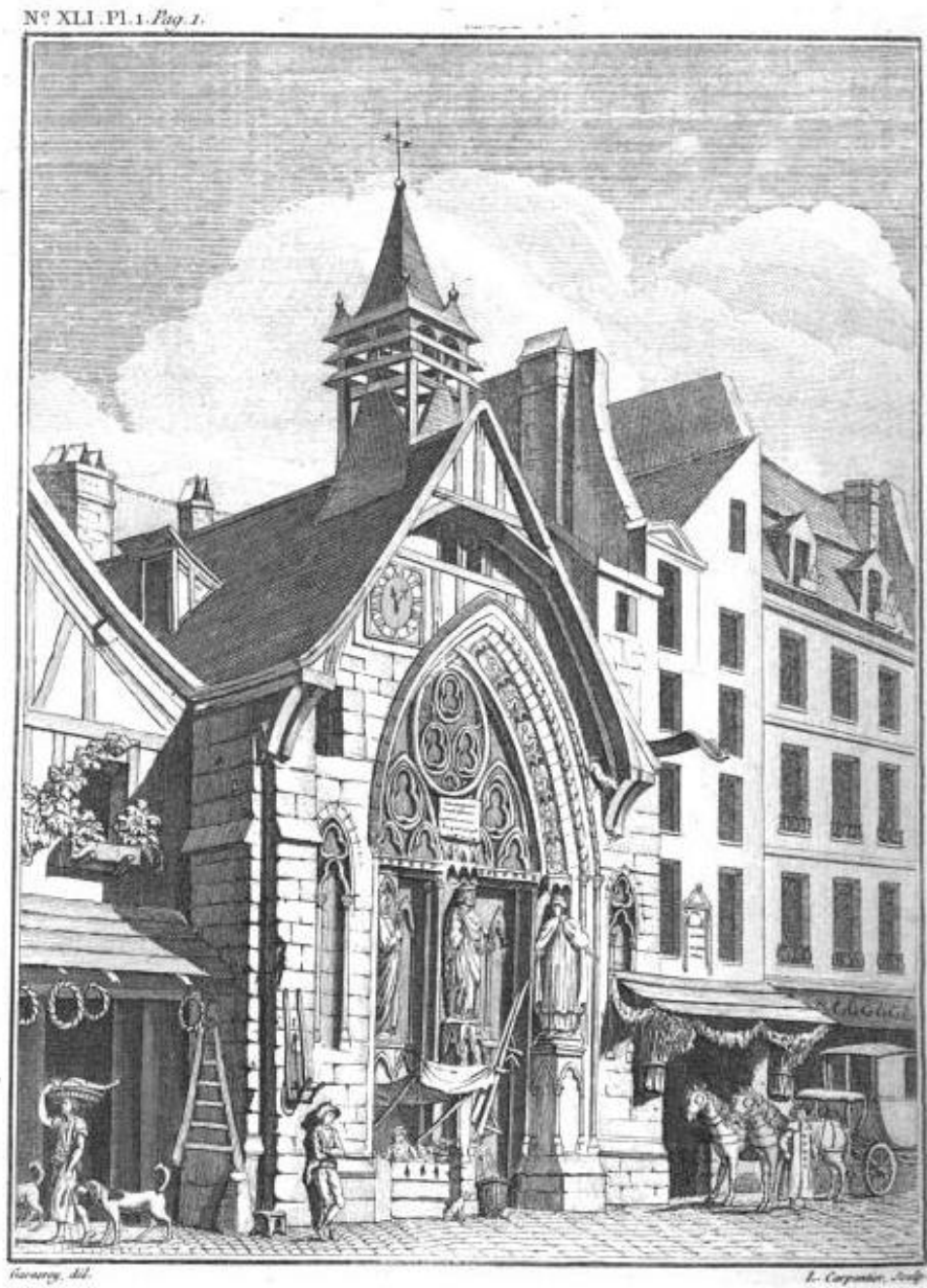


Figure 3. *Saint-Julian-des-Ménétriers.*

Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, vol. 4, XLI, plate 1.

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