This is a self-archived version of an original article. This version may differ from the original in pagination and typographic details.

Author(s): Uotila, Merja

Title: Rural Artisans' Apprenticeship Practices in Early Modern Finland (1700-1850)

Year: 2020

Version: Accepted version (Final draft)

Copyright: © 2019 Cambridge University Press

Rights: In Copyright

Rights url: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/?language=en>

Please cite the original version:

Uotila, M. (2020). Rural Artisans' Apprenticeship Practices in Early Modern Finland (1700-1850). In M. Prak, & P. Wallis (Eds.), *Apprenticeship in Early Modern Europe* (pp. 163-186). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108690188.007>

#. Rural artisans' apprenticeship practices in early modern Finland (1700–1850)

Merja Uotila

In 1775 Gustaf Haqvin, a tailor, recommended in his local district court that a young man called Johan Carlsson Tirberg should be appointed as a parish tailor for Hollola district.¹ Haqvin testified that Tirberg had begun his apprenticeship with Haqvin's late father 18 years earlier and had continued with Haqvin before being released from his service. He affirmed in writing that Tirberg had already worked for parishioners, and, more importantly, was sufficiently skilled to be a parish tailor.

In this chapter, I shall outline how rural artisans in Finland organized their apprenticeships from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the 1840s. Apprenticeship and the three-stage career pattern of artisans (apprentice-journeyman-master) have traditionally been associated with craft guilds in urban environments,² but that is not the whole picture. There were also artisans like Haqvin working in rural areas, who legitimately kept apprentices and trained younger artisans such as Tirberg. In fact, when one looks more closely at the specific training practices of rural artisans one sees more clearly how craft knowledge and skills were transferred from one generation to the next. Rural apprenticeships can thus help us to distinguish guild-based particularities from the more universal features of craft apprenticeship. We can also analyse the extent to which rural artisans emulated their urban counterparts and demonstrate when they relied on their own local training customs.

In line with mercantilist principles, the authorities in Finland (and Sweden, of which Finland was a part until 1809) regarded craftwork as an urban occupation and expected trade and manufacturing to be centred in towns. Nevertheless, in an agrarian state where the few towns that existed were small and the distances between them considerable, rural craftsmen were tolerated as a necessity. In the kingdom of Sweden, ordinances passed in 1680 and 1686 formally integrated rural crafts into a parish artisan³ system. Rural artisans had to be licenced and paid special taxes to the crown.⁴

The general attitude of urban guilds towards rural crafts was restrictive and controlling. For instance, town artisans (and their guilds) were protected by the so-called 'ban mile', an area extending for several miles around towns within which rural artisan were barred from working without guild approval.⁵ However, town guilds only controlled urban

¹ National Archives (NA), archives of Hollola District Court, autumn 1775 § 12. Language-editing Murray Pearson.

² B. De Munck and H. Soly, "Learning on the shop floor" in historical perspective', in: B. De Munck, S.L. Kaplan and H. Soly (eds.), *Learning on the Shop Floor: Historical Perspectives on Apprenticeship* (New York: Berghahn, 2007), 10–11.

³ *Sockne hantverkare*. Titles are given in Swedish as in the original texts.

⁴ I define rural artisans as persons who made handicraft goods for local markets. Cottage industry and proto-industry are excluded from this definition because their production was aimed at distant markets.

⁵ U. Heino, *Käsityö ja sen tekijät 1600-luvun Satakunnassa* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society,

crafts and not rural manufacturing, as they did in some other parts of Europe.⁶ It was local and provincial authorities who supervised rural crafts. Their clients, mainly peasant folk living by agriculture, also had a voice in deciding on the number of artisans allowed in a locality.

The prestige and skills of rural and urban artisans differed, with urban artisans enjoying greater esteem. Apart from the restrictions imposed by the parish artisan system, there were differences in training: the craft skills one acquired by serving a rural master were not as advanced as those learned in an urban apprenticeship.⁷ If a rural apprentice wanted to achieve the status of master artisan he would have to continue his training under an urban guild master for an additional period. (By definition, new guild masters had to have been taught by a guild master.⁸) These restrictions also served to limit guild membership. Rural artisans were only permitted to work in rural areas, as they were only meant to satisfy the basic needs of rural clients. Indeed, guild standards occasionally dwelled explicitly on the difference between town and countryside. For instance, in Turku, the main town in Finland, the tailors' guild masterpiece was a man's outfit matching the town dwellers' fashion in style and fabric.⁹

Rural apprentices were not unusual; their training was a legitimate practice that aimed to transfer craft skills. There were many similarities between the conventions of rural apprenticeship and urban guild-based apprenticeship: urban guild rules set the norms for several aspects of apprenticeship, such as the proper starting age, that rural craftsmen adopted. In order to understand some of the details of rural training, therefore, we also have to know what were urban practices. However, rural artisans also generated their own customs, and these practices differed between trades.

To overcome the limitations imposed by the paucity of surviving sources, I examine rural apprenticeship in detail in one area, through a prosopographical study of Hollola, a large parish in southern Finland.¹⁰ Hollola was in most respects a typical rural parish, located

1984), 67-68; C.-J. Gadd, *Själrvhushåll eller arbetsdelning? Svenskt lant- och stadshantverk ca 1400–1860* (Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet, 1991), 244.

⁶ See for instance J. Ehmer, 'Rural guilds and urban-rural guild relations in early modern Central Europe', *International Review of Social History*, 53, supplement (2008), 148-50.

⁷ K.J. Kaukovalta, *Hämeen läänin Historia I* (Hämeenlinna: Arvi A. Karisto Osakeyhtiö, 1931), 440; S. Möller, 'Ammattikuntien kukoistuskaudelta Helsingissä', *Entisaikain Helsinki*, 1 (1936), 52; A. Halila, *Iitin historia vahaisimmista ajoista 1860-luvulle* (Iitti, 1939), 598; E. Jutikkala, 'Maan omistus ja väestöryhmät', in: V. Voionmaa et al. (eds.), *Längelmäveden Seudun historia I. Kangasalan historia I* (Forssa, 1949), 299; R. Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta vuosina 1721–1809', *Turun Historiallinen Arkisto*, 20 (1967), 259; K. Vainio-Korhonen, *Käsin tehty – miehelle ammatti, naiselle ansioiden lähde. Käsityötuotannon rakenteet ja strategiat esiteellisessä Turussa Ruotsin ajan lopulla* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 1998), 130–31.

⁸ E. Söderlund, *Hantverkarna. Andra Delen. Stormaktstiden, frihetstiden och gustavianska tiden* (Stockholm: Tidens Förlag, 1949), 102, 114

⁹ Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 304

¹⁰ On prosopography, see: K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography: Approaches and Applications. A Handbook* (University of Oxford, 2007); D. Broady, 'French prosopography: definition and suggested readings', *Poetics*, 30 (2002), 381–5; M. Uotila, 'Tavallisuuden tavoittelua: Prosopografia elämäkerrallisen tutkimuksen välineenä', in: H. Hakosalo, S. Jalagin, M. Junila and H. Kurvinen (eds.), *Historiallinen elämä: Biografia ja historian tutkimus* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2014); M. Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä. Prosopografinen analyysi Hollolan*

outside the ‘ban mile’ and so free from urban craft regulations. It was well-known and prosperous, attracting artisans from neighbouring parishes as well as journeymen from the towns. From 1700 to 1850, Hollola’s population increased from 5,000 to nearly 8,000 inhabitants, mostly freeholding farmers or members of farming households.¹¹ By 1840, the parish contained over 50 settlements of different sizes, from large villages with over 200 residents and more than 30 farms to small settlements of one or two farms.¹² Hollola spread over a width of 20 kilometers, but enjoyed a good road network.

As in most of Europe, our current understanding of rural apprenticeship in Finland is fragmentary.¹³ There have been no studies of rural apprenticeship as such, although the topic is touched upon in many local histories and historical studies, especially of the eighteenth century. A long-standing research project at Turku University on early modern artisans offers some insights, while Veikko Laakso’s studies provide a useful reference point on rural apprentices, as does Raimo Ranta’s examination of the parish artisan system.¹⁴ Because Finland and Sweden share a common history, it is also important to take Swedish research into account. Ernst Söderlund’s generic description of the history of Swedish crafts gives an overall picture of urban guilds, complemented by Lars Edgren’s examination of one Swedish town’s guilds.¹⁵ What we mainly lack are studies on the decline of apprenticeship.

Studying rural apprentices’ careers and backgrounds is not straightforward; there are no records of the kind maintained by urban guilds. Crucially, there were no registers of apprentices (*inskrivningsbok*)¹⁶ and because in rural areas there were no guilds to produce such records, there was no recorded proof that artisans were fully qualified. Rural artisans’ were only weakly connected; they were not organized collectively. As we saw earlier, individual rural masters occasionally wrote letters attesting to a completed apprenticeship, but few such have survived.¹⁷ Instead, information about rural apprentices must be gleaned from other sources: annual church records of communions, in which all household dependents were listed;¹⁸ annual census lists kept by the state, which enumerate all members of

käsityöläisistä 1810–1840 (University of Jyväskylä, 2014), 31–43

¹¹ E. Jutikkala, *Suomen talonpojan historia* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 1958)

¹² Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 103; S. Kuusi, *Hollolan pitäjän Historia. Muinaisuuden hämärästä kunnallisen elämän alkuun 1860-luvulle. Toinen osa* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1937), 75–95

¹³ H. Schultz, *Landhandwerk im Übergang vom Feudalismus zum Kapitalismus* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984), 242; H. Schultz, *Handwerker, Kaufleute, Bankiers. Wirtschaftsgeschichte Europas 1500–1800*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2002), 99.

¹⁴ V. Laakso, ‘Loimaan ja Huittisten suurpitäjien käsityöläiset vuosina 1721–1809’, unpublished MA thesis, University of Turku, 1974); Heino, *Käsityö ja sen tekijät*; R. Ranta, *Pohjanmaan maaseudun käsityöläiset vuosina 1721–1809 I. Käsityöläiseksi pääsy ja käsityöläisten lukumäärä* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 1978); Vainio-Korhonen, *Käsin tehty*.

¹⁵ Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*; L. Edgren, *Lärning, gesäll, mästare: Hantverk och hantverkare i Malmö 1750–1847* (Lund: Dialogos, 1987); Gadd, *Själrvhushåll eller arbetsdelning*.

¹⁶ Möller, ‘Ammattikuntien kukoistuskaudelta Helsingissä’, 50; Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 238, 392; Papinsaari, ‘Turun räätälien ammattikunta’, 249; Vainio-Korhonen, *Käsin tehty*, 127–28; K. Vainio-Korhonen, ‘Kaupan ja käsityön ammattikasvatus’ in J. Hanska and K. Vainio-Korhonen (eds.), *Huoneentaulun maailma. Kasvatus ja koulutus Suomessa keskiajalta 1860-luvulle* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society 2010), 232–33.

¹⁷ These letters were sometimes copied or mentioned in court records.

¹⁸ Apprentices’ membership of artisans households was a necessary legal protection. Everybody in the

households between 15 and 62 years old for whom poll tax was paid; and local court records of artisan and apprenticeship licenses, permits and disputes. These allow us to compile short biographies of apprentices, including data on boys' dates and places of birth, their parents' social status, masters' names and domiciles, the duration of apprenticeships, and activities thereafter. Unfortunately, these sources do not always give precise dates, and church records only survive from the later eighteenth century.¹⁹ All in all, the careers of 300 apprentices in Hollola between 1749 and 1840 have been extracted.

Rural apprentices can only be recognized in the sources when they are identified as such; inevitably, if a person in training was not thus referred to, his apprenticeship remained hidden. Official records are in Swedish, because that was the language of administration up to the second half of the nineteenth century. Apprentices and artisans' assistants were described as *lärling*, *lärodräng*, *läropojke*/*lärögosse* – or appropriate abbreviations.²⁰ These titles had Finnish equivalents, *oppilas*, *oppirenki*, *oppipoika*. The key elements in these titles are the verbs *lära* (Sw) or *oppia* (Fi): to learn. Naturally, language and terms developed over the time, an issue that I shall return to later.

Artisans in rural parishes

Rural apprenticeship in Finland was fundamentally shaped by the parish artisan system, through which artisans obtained their licence to work (*gärningsbrev*) and paid special handicraft taxes (*gärningsöre*). Although licences were granted by provincial governors, in the eighteenth century applicants first needed a written testimonial from their local court (consisting of land-owning peasant members of the local community. This allowed the number of local craftsmen to be regulated by their clients.²¹ (Naturally, the local elite, priests and administrators, such as bailiffs, also had a say.²²) Applications were made in the name of the whole community, who first publically complained about the need for a craftsman, then subsequently announced that they had a good candidate. In the nineteenth century, artisans usually applied independently. Parish artisans also needed official permission to leave a parish or their position - at least in principle; in practice, they often simply stopped work or moved without permission. These procedural customs would suggest that rural artisans were the servants of their clients. This was often mentioned in legal texts (as a duty to serve their clients faithfully) and in court rulings, but one may assume that it was also the case in reality.²³

Up to the early eighteenth century only a few occupations were recognised by parish artisan law: blacksmiths, shoemakers and tailors. For brief periods in the mid-eighteenth

kingdom of Sweden had to be registered as belonging somewhere and have this kind of protected status, otherwise they were deemed unprotected vagrants. Parish artisans' had independent status that meant they could provide legal protection to their own households, just as a peasant could for his family, servants and lodgers. Edgren, *Lärling, gesäll, mästare*, 134.

¹⁹ Vicarage of Hollola was burnt down in 1750 and 1770 with the loss of earlier records. Kuusi, *Hollolan pitäjän Historia*, 213.

²⁰ See e.g. Svenska Akademiens ordbok (SAOB), word *lära*. <http://g3.spraakdata.gu.se/saob/>.

²¹ See Ranta, *Pohjanmaan maaseudun käsityöläiset*, 104.

²² Gentry had a right to employ own manor artisans (*gårds hantverkare*), but they did not usually have apprentices: Heino, *Käsityö ja sen tekijät*, 193-201.

²³ Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 140-41.

century a few other crafts (masons, glaziers and bricklayers) were included in this provision,²⁴ while other craftsmen were only permitted to work in towns under the supervision of the appropriate guild. However, provincial governors could grant permits to most craftsmen (except goldsmiths) using a 1604 statute which stated that rural peasants could keep the artisans they needed. As a result, weavers and tanners did sometimes gain licenses as parish artisans.²⁵ Much depended on the individual governor. This situation changed in 1824, when several more crafts, including tanners, glaziers and hat-makers, gained the right to become parish artisans. Finally, in 1859 all rural residents were granted the right to follow any craft for their livelihood. The ban mile, the distinction between rural and urban crafts, and the parish artisan system, remained intact, but were much weakened.²⁶ In Finland, the practice of crafts remained restricted until the 1879 freedom of trade act.

One peculiar characteristic of rural artisans, apart from smiths and tanners, is that they did not necessarily have their own workshops. Instead, tailors and shoemakers (and their apprentices) moved from one client to another, receiving board and lodging for a week or two while working for them.²⁷ These artisans did have their own houses, where their families remained while the master was away. Smiths, on the other hand, were tied to the smithy, which was often jointly owned by the villagers. Rural masters usually sold only their labour. The raw materials came from the client and everything was bespoke, not readymade. Shoemakers and tailors received a payment for each piece, while smiths had yearly contracts with the village, including annual payments.

Only a few parish artisans worked in each parish in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The institution evolved gradually, and general social and economic developments also served to keep numbers low. In particular, the war years of the first half of the eighteenth century severely curtailed demand for artisans' services.²⁸ From 1750, however, the number of artisans began to increase rapidly. Most parishes took their first parish artisan around this time. This so-called 'first generation' of artisans also took on more apprentices, raising the volume and availability of craft goods. In Finland, industrialization did not affect artisans' livelihoods until the later nineteenth century. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the number of rural artisans still exceeded that of their urban

²⁴ Masons (from 1756), bricklayers (1762) and glaziers (1766) were allowed to work in rural areas until 1789. Masons and glaziers were permitted to do so again in 1802: Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 230; Ranta, *Pohjanmaan maaseudun käsityöläiset*, 90; Gadd, *Sjärlvshushåll eller arbetsdelning*, 299–300.

²⁵ Ranta, *Pohjanmaan maaseudun käsityöläiset*, 90–94.

²⁶ *Samling af placater, förordningar, manifest och påbud, samt andre allmänna handlingar, hwilka i stor-furstendömet Finland sedan 1808 års början ifrån trycket utkommit. Fjerde Delen 1821–1824* (Åbo: J. Frenckell & son, 1826), 311; *Samling af placater, förordningar, manifest och påbud, samt andre allmänna handlingar, hwilka i stor-furstendömet Finland sedan 1808 års början ifrån trycket utkommit. Sjuttonde Delen 1858–1859*, (Kejserliga Senatens för Finland tryckeri, 1862), 725–30.

²⁷ NA, archives of Hollola District Court, autumn 1832, § 251; R. Ranta, 'Talouselämä, asutus ja väestö Etelä-Pohjanmaalla 1809–1917', in: *Etelä-Pohjanmaan historia V. Autonomian kausi 1809–1917* (Eteläpohjanmaan maakuntaliitto, 1988), 731.

²⁸ The great wrath (1712–21) in particular had a dire effect on local economies and living conditions: T. J. Paloposki, 'Kauppa, käsityö ja teollisuus', in: J. Tuominen, E. Jutikkala, O. Vuorinen, V. Heikkilä, Y. S. Koskimies (eds.), *Hämeen historia III.2. Vuodesta 1721 noin vuoteen 1870* (Hämeenlinna: Hämeen heimoliitto, 1976), 368.

counterparts.²⁹ With the decline of self-sufficiency, the growth of material wealth and changing consumption patterns, there was more scope for rural artisans. The result was that town artisans and craft guilds had to deal with increasing competition from rural craftsmen.³⁰

Despite the parish artisan system, there were also unlicensed artisans working in rural parishes.³¹ Most of the time, these unlicensed artisans worked without legal difficulty, as the parish artisan system was sometimes ignored. Unlicensed artisans did not pay craft taxes and do not appear in the census records as artisans.³² Unlike the situation in towns, official and unofficial rural artisans usually coexisted peacefully, even though there were considerable numbers of unofficial artisans. Unlicensed craftsmen were only taken to court when a parish artisan felt that his position and livelihood were threatened. In the nineteenth century, those rural artisans who were brought to court were usually former apprentices who had not yet been licensed by the governor.³³ A major difference between licensed and unlicensed artisans is that the latter did not usually have apprentices. The main issue was not that the parish artisans had superior skills - there is no proof of that. It was rather a question of status. Young boys were expected to train with a proper, licensed master, whose position and reputation were commonly acknowledged.³⁴ Because unofficial artisans often had other sources of income besides their craft, such as farming, they had little time to train others.

Although rural artisans often had to be jack-of-all-trades, far fewer trades were followed in rural areas than in towns. Most parish artisans were blacksmiths, tailors or shoemakers. Smiths were especially important in rural areas to make and repair farm tools, whereas in towns they usually represented only a small percentage of artisans.³⁵ The second and third largest groups in the countryside were usually tailors and shoemakers. The common people of the countryside could make everyday clothing and shoes, but tailors made men's clothes and fine attire for women. Similarly, shoemakers made finer shoes. Tailors and shoemakers were particularly affected by the rise of consumption in the nineteenth century. Together, these three occupations constituted the majority of the official parish artisans working in rural parishes (Table 1).³⁶

²⁹ P. Schybergson, *Hantverk och fabriker III. Finlands konsumtionsvaruindustri 1815–1870: Tabellbilagor* (Helsinki: Finska Vetenskaps-societeten, 1974).

³⁰ R. Hjerpe, 'Käsityöläiset uuden yhteiskunnan murroksessa' in Y. Kaukiainen (ed.), *När samhället förändras. Kun yhteiskunta muuttuu* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 1981).

³¹ Ranta, *Pohjanmaan maaseudun käsityöläiset*, 90-94; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 79-81.

³² In tax registers, unofficial artisans were listed as farmhands (*dräng*), tenant farmers (*landbonde* or *torpare*), or landless agrarian workers (like *inhysning*, *spannmålstorp*, *backstugusittare*), not as artisans. Church records, on the other hand, usually revealed craft occupations.

³³ For instance, NA, archives of Hollola District Court, winter 1830 § 192; winter 1832 § 27; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 86-91.

³⁴ The fate of free masters in towns supports this claim. Free masters were artisans working outside the guilds, under royal licenses. As guilds did not approve free masters or their apprentices, parents were reluctant to place their children with them: Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 193, 200.

³⁵ I. Talve, *Suomen Kansankulttuuri* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 1990), 105.

³⁶ The distribution of the three trades varied by time and place; see: V. Laakso, *Suur-Loimaan historia II. Isonvihan päättymisestä 1900-luvun alkuun* (Alastaro, 1994), 76. See also Ranta, *Pohjanmaan maaseudun käsityöläiset*, 206-11; Gadd, *Själrvhushåll eller arbetsdelning*, 115, 144.

Table 6.1. Number of parish artisans per year (Hollola 1751–1840)

	1751	1761	1771	1780	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840
smiths	1	4	6	11	14	14	17	20	22	15
tailors	2	4	3	10	7	11	10	10	12	20
shoemakers	0	0	1	3	5	6	6	13	17	26
weavers	2	1	1	5	5	2	1	0	1	1
carpenters*	0	1	0	2	1	4	3	2	3	3
tanners	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	2
Total	5	10	11	32	34	37	37	45	57	67

Note: The table gives the number of artisans observed in a single year in the census;

*carpenters and masons are combined, as these trades were often practiced together. Source: census records, see text.

The numbers of other artisans in rural areas, such as weavers or carpenters, fluctuated. For instance, weaving was an important male occupation from the 1750s up to the end of century, but this trade gradually lost its position when it became economically unviable due to the rising costs of materials and to competition from domestic weaving by women. Male weavers and their apprentices almost disappeared from towns and countryside in the early nineteenth century. Weaving continued, but because only males were accorded the status of artisan; female weavers were not labelled as artisans³⁷ and their work therefore remain unrecorded. We cannot therefore take female artisans into account. This also meant that there were no female apprentices - at least not officially.³⁸ Rural artisans in other trades had few apprentices. Most had served apprenticeships under urban artisans. For instance, none of Hollola's tanners took apprentices, although carpenters and masons provide a few rare exceptions.

The law of apprenticeship

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Sweden aimed to keep its apprenticeship practices consistent with general European conventions, maintaining a tripartite occupational structure and granting written documents that conformed to general, mainly German, standards. Guild-trained Swedish and Finnish journeymen travelled and worked in other parts of Europe, especially in German countries. Later this connection loosened and occasionally there were attempts to prevent journeymen travelling abroad.³⁹ The legal framework under which urban artisans and apprentices worked was set by the state in its general guild orders (*skråordning* from 1669 and 1720) which stipulated the limits of guild activities. Swedish and Finnish craft guilds were under crown supervision and needed government approval for their

³⁷ Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 75; K. Vainio-Korhonen, 'Handicrafts as professions and source of income in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Turku (Åbo)', *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 48 (2000), 48-49.

³⁸ Vainio-Korhonen, *Käsin tehti*, 16-18.

³⁹ Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 141, 152, 214, 243-4; Edgren, *Lärling, gesäll, mästare*, 249; L. Edgren, 'What did guilds do? Swedish guilds in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century', in: I.A. Gadd and P. Wallis (eds.), *Guilds and Association in Europe, 900-1900* (London: University of London, 2006), 52-51.

regulations. Although the guild orders were designed for urban craft guilds, they also set the norms for rural artisans and apprenticeship. For instance, they stipulated for apprentices a minimum enrolment age of fourteen years old and a maximum trial period of two months. They also specified master craftsmen's rights and responsibilities towards their apprentices. For instance, artisans could expect apprentices who lived with them to carry out ordinary household chores. They could not dismiss apprentices before their term was completed.⁴⁰ The number of apprentices they took was not restricted by law, although some guilds capped the number per master to ease competition.⁴¹

Guild ordinances and urban craft culture provided an important model for rural artisans since the formal rules for apprenticeships outside towns were few and non-specific. Under the 1686 parish artisan ordinance, shoemakers and tailors were allowed to take apprentice boys (*läropojke*) and one assistant ("*lärodräng*") –the latter with permission from the county administration. In 1727, this entitlement was repeated, with the clarification that the *lärodräng* had to have already served an apprenticeship.⁴² In Swedish and Finnish, *dräng* meant a hired helper, implying that they received wages. In short, artisans needed a licence to employ paid assistants, whereas training apprentices was free from licencing.⁴³ Assistants and apprentices were thus clearly distinct, although the difference is not always evident, as the usage of these terms varies from one source to another.⁴⁴ Unlike town-trained craftsmen, rural apprentices could apply to be a parish artisan immediately after their apprenticeship, without working as journeymen for a period, although it was more common for them to practise a trade on their own or as an assistant for a while before acquiring this formal status. Guild-trained journeymen (Sw. *gesäll*), were, as their different title suggested, a case apart.⁴⁵ A guild-trained apprentice was awarded a *gesällbref* – a certificate of completed training – by the guild. Hence, in the eighteenth century a rural *lärodräng* was not quite the same as a *gesäll*. For clarity, I have translated the first as *assistant* and the latter as *journeyman*.

In the nineteenth century, the distinction between apprentices and assistants became blurred. A new term, *lärling* (or the equivalent abbreviation), became commonplace, eventually replacing the older, more exact titles.⁴⁶ Clearly, artisans did also employ paid assistants, but it is often impossible to distinguish them from apprentices. A statute of 1859, however, confirmed the distinction between apprentices and assistants, and stated that

⁴⁰ R. G. Modée, *Utdrag utur alle ifrån den 7. decemb. 1718. /1791 utkomne publique handlingar, Del I.* (Stockholm, 1742), 211 (General guild orders, Art. IX:2, 4.); Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 169, 405-20; Edgren, *Lärling, gesäll, mästare*, 65.

⁴¹ Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 112; Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 246, 314; Edgren, *Lärling, gesäll, mästare*, 154.

⁴² A. A. von Stiermann, *Alla riksdagars och mötens beslut 1521–1731, del III.* (Stockholm, 1733), 2006-07; Modée, *Utdrag*, 673. See also Heino, *Käsityö ja sen tekijät*, 73–77; Gadd, *Själrvhushåll eller arbetsdelning*, 248.

⁴³ Apprentices were more often styled *lärogåsse*: Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 65.

⁴⁴ For instance, 18th-century census lists described all apprentices and assistants with one term, *lärodräng*, while communion records use more varied terms.

⁴⁵ The title *lärodräng* is also found in towns, where it referred to new journeymen who were expected to stay with their master for one year after the end of their apprenticeship: Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 273.

⁴⁶ Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 129 also noted the inconsistent use of these terms.

artisans needed permission to hire more than one waged assistant.⁴⁷ Court rulings were mixed: sometimes courts required licences to take apprentices.⁴⁸ However, applications for permission to take apprentices or assistants are scarce after 1800.⁴⁹ In Hollola, only one master applied to the district court for permission between 1810 and 1840. Yet in that period there were more than one hundred apprentices in Hollola. Obviously, artisans did not feel the need to ask for official permissions, indicating that the licensing system was in decline.

The distinction between assistant and apprentice has not been widely noticed in studies of rural crafts. It is often suggested that rural artisans did not employ journeymen, and there is little discussion of assistants.⁵⁰ The reason that parish artisans were required to obtain court permission to hire skilled servants was mainly economic. They did not need approval to train apprentices, but when it came to employing workers, local clients needed to decide whether there was sufficient demand – the same criterion that held for licensing a parish artisan.⁵¹ Accordingly, when artisans applied for permission to take on an assistant, they usually referred to their heavy workload in their petition, implying that they needed an experienced, capable assistant – effectively a journeyman – rather than an unseasoned apprentice. In the nineteenth century, in the county of Uusimaa and Häme, several artisans applied to take assistants at the same time as they applied for their own licence.⁵² Perhaps this was for practical reasons, because of court fees. In towns, in contrast, taking apprentices was more strictly regulated. Usually artisans had to work independently for a period before recruiting one.⁵³

Apprenticeship Practices

Official artisans had a monopoly on apprenticeships. In towns each new generation was taught by guild masters, while in rural areas it was licensed parish artisans who trained their successors.⁵⁴ (Some craftsmen were self-taught, it is true, especially in earlier times when there

⁴⁷ *Samling af placater*, statute 12.12.1859, § 12.

⁴⁸ E.g. Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 219. Some historians have suggested that apprentices needed permissions: Kaukovalta, *Hämeen läänin Historia*, 440; Jutikkala, 'Maan omistus ja väestöryhmät', 298; N. Berndtson, *Laukaan historia II. 1776–1868* (Laukaa, 1986), 171; M. Kuisma, *Helsingin pitäjän historia III. Isostaviehasta maalauskunnan syntyä 1713–1865* (Vantaa, 1991), 260–61.

⁴⁹ Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 135 (fig. II:9), 218–19. Laakso also notes the small number of applications, which he links to the problem of monitoring the rules, and the difficulty of separating apprentices and assistants: Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 65.

⁵⁰ E. Jutikkala, *Sääksmäen pitäjän historia* (Sääksmäki, 1934), 470; S. Suvanto, *Akaan historia: Toijala-Kylmäkoski-Viiala. Ensimmäinen osa* (Vammala, 1954), 190; J. Saarenheimo, *Vanhan Pirkkalan historia* (Nokia, 1974), 416; S. Suvanto, *Kalvolan historia I. Esihistoria ja Ruotsin vallan aika* (Kalvola, 1992), 232.

⁵¹ Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 345. See also Jutikkala, 'Maan omistus ja väestöryhmät', 300; A. Rosenberg, 'Väestö Suomen sodasta itsenäisyyden alkuun', in: A. Rosenberg, J. Lomu and K. Manninen (eds.), *Mäntsälän Historia II* (Mäntsälä, 1993), 128; A. Rosenberg, 'Väestö ja elinkeinot', in: A. Rosenberg and R. Selin (eds.), *Suur-Tuusulan historia. Tuusula - Kerava - Järvenpää. 3. Suomen sodasta 1808–1809 itsenäisyyden ajan alkuun* (Tuusula, 1995), 131.

⁵² NA, Province of Uusimaa and Häme, Governors' Secretariat, Records of applications 1790–1830; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 135.

⁵³ Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 246; Edgren, *Lärning, gesäll, mästare*, 231.

⁵⁴ Unofficial artisans or free masters in urban areas (artisans operating outside guilds) rarely had

were fewer artisans,⁵⁵ but to be accepted into a guild or licensed as a parish artisan without the evidence of having completed an apprenticeship, they would usually have to demonstrate their skills by producing a masterpiece.⁵⁶ Completion of a rural apprenticeship, however, did not entail any formal test of skill. This was a clear difference from the demands of urban guilds, where journeymen had to produce a masterpiece before admission as a master artisan.⁵⁷ For a rural apprentice, serving their time with a master sufficed. Sometimes courts asked for written proofs of the apprenticeship, as in the case of Johan Tirberg, but this was not usually necessary. But then, people applying to become parish artisans were usually well-known, having often already worked for a number of years (effectively a trial period) in the area.⁵⁸

When a boy entered an apprenticeship, the terms of the contract were arranged between the master and the youngster or his guardians; no guarantors were needed.⁵⁹ This was the same in both town and countryside. In general, guilds set a minimum term of three years and a maximum of five, but apprenticeships could be shorter if the youth learned quickly.⁶⁰ Written contracts were not compulsory; in the countryside, in particular, agreements were often oral.⁶¹ Only a few written contracts survive.⁶² (Picture 1)

Evidence of disputes between apprentices and masters is rare. Disputes, when they did occur, were usually settled in local courts. Common issues include masters complaining about apprentices leaving their household without permission, and apprentices complaining about trivial assignments or a lack of instruction.⁶³ For instance, the tailor Mats Siljander's two runaway apprentices complained that he did not give them enough to eat and lacked work, so that they were not doing anything useful.⁶⁴ In another case, the shoemaker Henrik Willberg's

apprentices. Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 193, 200; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 276-78.

⁵⁵ In Swedish towns, Söderlund calls these self-taught men amateurs. In addition, some parish artisans cannot be linked to any master, so may have been self-taught: Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 269; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 230-31.

⁵⁶ Ranta, *Pohjanmaan maaseudun käsityöläiset*, 103-04.

⁵⁷ Masterpieces were universal in Finnish and Swedish guilds and sometimes apprentices were tested before becoming a journeyman. Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 169, 259; Vainio-Korhonen, 'Kaupan ja käsityön ammattikasvatus', 230; E. Aaltonen, 'Väestö ja yhteiskunta', in: E. Aaltonen, E. Matinolli, H. Helminen-Nordberg and Y. Blomstedt, *Suur-Jämsän historia III* (Jämsä, 1963), 42; P. Tommila, *Nurmijärven pitäjän historia. II osa. Itsenäisen Nurmijärven pitäjän vaiheet* (Nurmijärvi, 1959), 203; O. K. Kyöstiö, *Suomen ammattikasvatuksen kehitys käsityön ja teollisuuden aloilla I. Ammattikasvatuksen esivaihe vuoteen 1842* (Jyväskylä, 1955), 61.

⁵⁸ Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 126.

⁵⁹ Möller, 'Ammattikuntien kukoistuskaudelta Helsingissä', 50; Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 261; Heino, *Käsityö ja sen tekijät*, 223; Edgren, *Lärning, gesäll, mästare*, 145.

⁶⁰ Modée, *Utdrag*, 210-11 (General guild orders, Art. IV:3).

⁶¹ There were no public notaries. Cf. C. Crowston, 'From school to workshop: Pre-training and apprenticeship in old regime France', in: De Munck, Kaplan and Soly (eds.), *Learning on the Shop Floor*, 46.

⁶² Heino, *Käsityö ja sen tekijät*, 222; Edgren, *Lärning, gesäll, mästare*, 145.

⁶³ Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 393; Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 265-66; Edgren, *Lärning, gesäll, mästare*, 155.

⁶⁴ NA, archives of Hollola District Court, autumn 1833 § 63; winter 1834 § 27. Cf. G. Hamilton, 'Enforcement in apprenticeship contracts: Were runaways a serious problem? Evidence from Montreal', *Journal of Economic History*, 55 (1995), 551-74; P. Wallis, 'Apprenticeship and Training in Premodern England', *Journal of Economic History*, 68 (2008), 843-44.

apprentice, Johan Pålsson, complained that he was set to farming and forestry; the local villagers thought he was a farmhand, not an apprentice. When his master admitted that he lacked work and had not obtained permission to take apprentices, the court cancelled Pålsson's contract.⁶⁵ Sometimes the county administration and governor became involved; governors, for instance, occasionally issued warrants to apprehend runaway apprentices.⁶⁶

[IMAGE 1 NEAR HERE]

Occasionally, apprentices paid masters for their training. It is difficult to establish the size of payments and how common they were.⁶⁷ Only a handful of examples survive, usually in court records from disputes about the price or quality of instruction.⁶⁸ In one rare example from Messukylä parish in 1759 a smith had promised to train a boy for three years, taking a fee of 10 daler in the first two years, but in the final year, he would receive no fee if his apprentice had learned something and could help him work.⁶⁹ For nineteenth-century Hollola, there are no references to payments in court books or anywhere else.

In Finnish towns, apprenticeships began with enrolment in a guild's apprenticeship records or the general minutes. Guilds recorded information about the boy and his fathers' names, the father's occupation, and the training period. Without the records of guilds, one has to seek the separate evidence of residence and work to gain a picture of the conditions of apprenticeship. Rural masters reported their apprentices to their parish priests as new members of their households, and they were registered in church lists of households kept to ensure attendance at communion. In a dispute between the tailor Siljander and his runaway apprentices, the local priest testified that the boys were listed in the communion records as members of his household. Customers then also gave evidence that the boys had worked with Siljander when he was fulfilling their orders.⁷⁰ With guild records, this kind of approach would have been unnecessary.

Masters were obliged to teach their apprentices everything they knew of their trade without holding anything back. How this knowledge transfer was effected, however, is unknown. Training was probably a trial and error process in which apprentices started on easier assignments, to gain hands-on familiarity with the material, style and working culture of the craft, before later assuming more complicated tasks. Technical knowledge and the acquisition of skills were only part of the training; an apprenticeship also initiated youths into the culture of artisans.⁷¹ This was evident in rural areas. One sign was artisans' and their

⁶⁵ NA, archives of Hollola District Court, winter 1823 § 113.

⁶⁶ NA, Province of Uusimaa and Häme, Governors' Secretariat, Records of applications 1790–1830; Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 266–67; Edgren, *Lärling, gesäll, mästare*, 155.

⁶⁷ Even from towns the evidence of payments is scarce. Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 391–92.

⁶⁸ K. Arajärvi, *Lempäälän historia* (Lempäälä, 1959), 297; Tommila, *Nurmijärven pitäjän historia*, 202; Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 136; Berndtson, *Laukaan historia II*, 171–72.

⁶⁹ K. Arajärvi, *Messukylän historia I. Messukylän - Teiskon - Aitolahden historia* (Tampere, 1954), 413.

⁷⁰ NA, archives of Hollola District Court, autumn 1833 § 63; winter 1834 § 27.

⁷¹ De Munck and Soly, 'Learning on the shop floor', 13–6; Wallis, 'Apprenticeship and training', 847–50; S. R. Epstein, 'Transferring Technical Knowledge and Innovating in Europe, c.1200–c.1800', in: M. Prak and J.L. van Zanden (eds.), *Technology, Skills and the Pre-Modern Economy in*

apprentices' surnames. In western Finland, there were no traditional family names, but along with the patronym the name of the farm was used. Artisans did not have farms, so they often used typical Swedish family names or names derived from their occupation, like *Stålhammar* (steel hammer) or *Sax* (scissors). For apprentices, it was a rite of passage at a certain point in their career to change their name to one suitable for an artisan. Usually this occurred shortly before they began their own independent career.⁷²

As members of an artisan household, apprentices were under their master's authority and had to obey his directions; this was a universal feature of early modern patriarchal societies. Likewise it was generally accepted that apprentices must perform household duties and chores – as long as this did not interfere with their training.⁷³ What was not acceptable, however, was excessive discipline. The use of violence, for instance hitting an apprentice without good reason, or out of drunkenness or spite, was forbidden.⁷⁴

The Growing Number of Apprentices

The number of apprentices and journeymen in Hollola fluctuated widely. There were several reasons for this. Most obviously, the number of parish artisans affected the number of apprentices. When there were only a few artisans, inevitably there were fewer apprentices.⁷⁵ The economic situation, demographic trends and general social developments could also lead to substantial variations between decades. When demand was low, a single artisan could meet the needs of several parishes. Apprentices and assistants rarely appear in the census lists of the early eighteenth century. The first in Hollola parish was recorded in 1747, when the tailor Anders Haqvin had an assistant named Anders Matsson.⁷⁶ From the 1750s, apprentices and assistants become more common, as table 2 shows. By and large, the number of apprentices was small compared to the number of boys in the same age group; only a few youngsters were apprenticed.

Table 6.2. Number of apprentices in Hollola parish 1750–1839

	1750s	1760s	1770s	1780s	1790s	1800s	1810s	1820s	1830s	total
Smiths	4	11	15	11	8	4	9	8	17	87
Tailors	7	20	28	9	6	6	3	13	18	110
Shoemakers	2	3	6	2	5	2	7	20	19	66
Carpenters*	2	0	3	8	3	1	0	0	0	17
Weavers	2	2	8	3	1	0	0	0	0	16

the East and the West: Essays dedicated to the memory of S. R. Epstein (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 29.

⁷² Möller, 'Ammattikuntien kukoistuskaudelta Helsingissä', 52; Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 264; B. Hanssen, *Österlen: En studie över social-antropologiska sammanhang under 1600- och 1700-talen i sydöstra Skåne* (Stockholm: LTs Förlag, 1952), 506; Arajärvi, *Messukylän historia*, 414; Berndtson, *Laukaan historia II*, 170; Gadd, *Själrvhushåll eller arbetsdelning*, 155-56.

⁷³ Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 393-94; Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 265-66; Edgren, *Lärning, gesäll, mästare*, 155.

⁷⁴ Modée, *Utdrag*, 211 (General guild orders, Art. IX:3).

⁷⁵ Rural youths could still be apprenticed, but not locally; presumably, boys were often sent to towns.

⁷⁶ Matsson was registered as a *lärödräng*. He probably was first apprenticed and later received wages. He lived with Haqvin for ten years, during which he married. NA, Hollola parish census records 1747–57.

total	17	36	60	33	23	12	19	41	54	296
-------	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----

Note: Observed from the starting point of the apprenticeship career. *Masons included with carpenters as the trades were often combined. Source: Apprentice biographies from Hollola 1700–1840.

The number of apprentices and journeymen depended on the particular craft. For instance, tailors and shoemakers usually had more apprentices than blacksmiths.⁷⁷ In Hollola, tailors had a lot of apprentices compared to other trades, one reason for this being that tailoring was deemed suitable for peasants' younger sons who would not inherit the farm: the trade's status was high enough and it was thought to offer lucrative prospects.⁷⁸ Smiths, on the other hand, tried with some success to keep the trade within their own families; in several families, only sons were trained and no outsiders were employed.⁷⁹ One result was that smiths had fewer apprentices than the tailors, despite this being the most common craft (See table 6.1). For the few who did obtain an apprenticeship with a smith, career prospects were bright, and many went on to become parish or village smiths.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there were few parish shoemakers, making it hard to become an apprentice in Hollola.⁸⁰ In the 1820s, however, the demand for finer shoes began to grow and shoemakers responded by taking on more assistants, with the trade becoming a more attractive prospect for poorer boys – although this may be a peculiarity of the parish.⁸¹ The lack of local masters meant that many of the shoemakers working in the parish in the 1820s and 1830s were guild-trained journeymen, who had returned to the countryside.⁸²

The weavers and carpenters present a different picture. In these trades, apprentices were more common in the eighteenth century than subsequently. Weaving was a declining occupation, increasingly limited to women and performed as cottage industry. When the weaver Mats Cajander took on two assistants in the 1750s, the craft was presumably still viable. By the nineteenth century, however, there were no parish weavers left. The carpenters' reasons for having no apprentices was different. With improvements in housing, the prospects for carpenters were good: houses began to be built with chimneys and glass windows, which attracted more masons and carpenters to the countryside. Three carpenters active in Hollola between 1750 and 1805 had taken seventeen apprentices. Their successors did not, however, keep assistants, but instead relied on their families to supply labour. For example, Mats Häggsted worked with his son Jacob for many years, and was eventually succeeded by him as a parish artisan. Jacob was not recorded as his apprentice, however, but as his son. Boys who were taught by their own father were rarely listed as apprentices; they

⁷⁷ Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 68-69; Gadd, *Sjärlvhusåll eller arbetsdelning*, 164.

⁷⁸ Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 120, 138.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 265.

⁸⁰ Making shoes was a common trade among ex-soldiers, who reduced demand for parish shoemakers. Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 226; J. Niemelä, *Tuntematon ruotusotilas. Ruotsinajan lopun ruotuarmeijan miehistön sosiaalinen ja taloudellinen asema Satakunnassa* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 1991), 127-28. See also Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 121-22.

⁸¹ In 1810 there were only six parish shoemakers and over 600 peasants' households. Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 117.

⁸² Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 222-23.

were simply raised as artisans.⁸³

Not every artisan had apprentices or assistants. Only artisans who were skilful and had sufficient work could train or find uses for a skilled helper. Taking on a large number of apprentices can be seen as an indicator of a master's reputation, skill and prosperity.⁸⁴ Usually, parish artisans had just one or two apprentices – who then might remain in their service as assistants – over their whole career. But some had several. One could say that this was the focus of their profession. For instance, the tailor Jeremias Uhrman (1730–91), one of the first generation of tailors in Hollola, had as many as thirteen apprentices and assistants, mostly in the 1770s. Uhrman took on several at a time; some were young lads, others were already trained. Uhrman was probably guild-trained, and moved to Hollola from the town of Hamina.⁸⁵ Many of his apprentices and assistants later launched their own careers in Hollola and its neighbouring parishes, and in turn trained the next generation of tailors.

Among the few smiths who had apprentices, the blacksmith Fredrik Rosenström (1724–84), who had eight apprentices in his 20-year career in Hollola, stands out.⁸⁶ Rosenström, who like Uhrman had been recruited from a town, was responsible for producing a new generation of smiths.⁸⁷ He was occasionally described as "*klenzmed*", meaning he could execute especially fine work. This higher level of skill presumably explains why he attracted numerous apprentices.

Apprentices' age, duration of training and social background

We can sketch out the general characteristics of apprentices in rural Finland, at least at the local level. Some figures are inevitably estimates, although the accuracy of these estimates increases with time. Unfortunately some questions, like apprentices' ages, can only be answered from the 1760s and 1770s onwards.

If we start with the ages of apprentices, we see little variation over this period. There were, however, differences between trades. Smiths' apprentices were usually slightly older: the average age on entering the smithy was over twenty years old – an obvious reason being the strength required in the trade.⁸⁸ It was common for smiths' apprentices to have worked elsewhere previously, for example as common farmhands. In contrast, tailors' apprentices were usually well under twenty years old. Indeed, they were often quite young when they started: tailors' apprentices are often listed in the church's children's books, indicating that

⁸³ Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 132; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 221. In towns, guild members' sons served shorter apprenticeships and paid reduced mastership fees: Södenlund, *Hantverkarna*, 117; Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 262.

⁸⁴ Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 69–70.

⁸⁵ He is first mentioned in the 1751 census list working in Pyhäniemi mansion. From there, he moved to Parinpelto village near the vicarage. He had three daughters and two sons. His sons did not become tailors; the elder became a shopkeeper in Porvoo, the younger an officer.

⁸⁶ Rosenström was an ex-soldier who had worked in Lovisa garrison. He moved to Hollola around 1761 and remained for 20 years. His son became a provincial doctor; his daughter married a town smith.

⁸⁷ A few shoemakers can also be seen as similarly establishing the trade, but their apprentices did not usually follow in their footsteps.

⁸⁸ Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 262; Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 132–33.

they had not yet been confirmed, which usually occurred at around fifteen years old.⁸⁹ Some were probably younger than fourteen, the official minimum age for apprenticeship.⁹⁰ Given their youth, they often came directly from their fathers' households and lacked much work experience. Shoemakers' apprentices generally fell between tailors' and smiths' apprentices in age.⁹¹ Eighteenth-century weavers' and carpenters' apprentices were often slightly older than shoemakers' apprentices, and had had time to work as farmhands before starting training.

The length of apprenticeships varied between trades and depended on the trade, on the apprentice's age and prior experience, as well as on whether the apprentice was compensating his master for the cost of training by working for longer.⁹² In general, apprenticeships lasted for three to five years.⁹³ In rural Hollola, between 1810–40 the average term for smiths' apprentices was four years, while tailors and shoemakers served around five years.⁹⁴ Laakso estimated slightly lower figures of three to four years in eighteenth-century Loimaa, a lower figure than for urban apprenticeships.⁹⁵ The evidence that younger boys served for longer is weak, although this has been found sometimes in the nineteenth century.⁹⁶ Overall, the length of apprenticeship varied more between individuals than between trades.

In general, apprentices and assistants rarely stayed with a master for more than six years, although apprenticeships tended to last longer in the nineteenth century. At the same time, and especially from the 1830s, an increasing share of apprentices never set up their own businesses, but instead worked permanently for wages, often moving between different masters' households over a number of years.⁹⁷ For example, Carl Evasson Hellman started his apprenticeship with parish tailor Johan Ingelin in 1833 when he was about 14 years old. He trained with Ingelin for three years, then moved to the tailor Adolf Hellman's household. After a short while, he changed master again, moving to serve a tailor in a neighboring parish. After a year he returned to Hellman, and although he was still labelled as an apprentice, he presumably received wages because during his seven years of service he married a housemaid and started his own family. For a period he then worked as a farmhand before returning to Hellman again. He never secured an independent career.

⁸⁹ The age of confirmation depended on how well they learned the catechism. NA, pre-confirmation registers of Hollola c. 1750–1840.

⁹⁰ We cannot be more exact because the children's books do not include the time of removal.

⁹¹ In the 19th century, the average starting age was 21 for smiths' apprentices, 16 for tailors, and 18 for shoemakers: Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 237. See also Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 397; Edgren, *Lärning, gesäll, mästare*, 146; Vainio-Korhonen, 'Kaupan ja käsityön ammattikasvatus', 233.

⁹² S.R. Epstein, 'Craft guilds, apprenticeship and technological change in re-modern Europe', *Journal of Economic History*, 53 (1998), 60–61; De Munck and Soly, 'Learning on the shop floor', 9, 12–14; Epstein, 'Transferring Technical Knowledge', 29–31.

⁹³ Kaukovalta, *Hämeen läänin Historia*, 445; Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 397; Edgren, *Lärning, gesäll, mästare*, 147–48; Vainio-Korhonen, *Käsin tehty*, 130.

⁹⁴ These are estimations based on parish register entries: Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 236, 240.

⁹⁵ Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 131–32.

⁹⁶ Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 233; cf. Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 398.

⁹⁷ The same phenomenon is apparent in Swedish towns: Söderlund, *Hantverkarna*, 387–89; Edgren, *Lärning, gesäll, mästare*, 29.

Short apprenticeships, on the other hand, tell us different things. They were sometimes a sign that training had been interrupted. It is difficult to ascertain whether rural apprentices faced a different trial period from the two months used in towns; the only indirect evidence comes from the very short periods that some apprentices spent with masters. These suggest that occasionally apprenticeships were terminated early. Presumably, this was usually separation by mutual consent; there are only a handful of court cases.

Occasionally, short apprenticeships were arranged to fine-tune skills, building on basic skills acquired with one master (or the father) by spending an additional year with another artisan. For example, the apprentice smith Abraham Andersson moved to Hollola from a nearby parish, Padasjoki, where he had been apprenticed for four years. In Hollola, he entered the smith Johan Sarlunds' service to develop his skills for a year, and then returned to his native parish, where he started his own career with the surname Sikström.⁹⁸

In the countryside, apprentices could have several masters (up to three), although one master was the rule. An example of this is Henrik Johan Majasson, who became a smith's apprentice at 18 years old. Majasson first served Michel Martin for a year before Martin left Hollola. He then spent a year with a second master, and then another year with a third master – although there is no obvious reasons for these later changes, and his second master, Johan Sarlund was a busy and experienced smith. This contrasts with guild-based training, where it was hard to change masters and guild approval was needed.⁹⁹

The social backgrounds of Hollola apprentices differed widely. Information from the eighteenth century is limited, because many apprentices came from neighbouring parishes. It was easy to cross parish borders to find a master – with or without the appropriate travel documents from parish priests that permitted permanent or temporary movement between areas.¹⁰⁰ Mostly, the master was not from the boys' own village.¹⁰¹ In general, apprentices were a highly mobile group; it was not only journeyman who travelled widely.¹⁰²

Most extant studies suggest that apprentices were mainly peasants' younger sons.¹⁰³ This certainly holds for eighteenth-century Hollola, especially among smiths' and tailors' apprentices. For instance, one of the smith Rosenström's apprentices was Jacob Stranden, the second son of the peasant who held Marttila farm. Jacob later returned to work in his native village of Jalkaranta. His only son, Anders, followed in his footsteps at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁴ However, the situation changed in the next century, when it became

⁹⁸ Although Andersson could have been working as an assistant, there is no evidence of wages or Sarlund obtaining a licence to employ him, suggesting he was still an apprentice.

⁹⁹ Papinsaari, 'Turun räätälien ammattikunta', 266-63; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 225-26.

¹⁰⁰ Several types of documents existed: P. Einonen, P. Frigren, T. Hemminki and M. Uotila, 'Leipä taivalten takana – liikkuminen 1800-luvun alun Suomessa', *Ennen ja nyt. Historian tietosanomat* 2016/5.

¹⁰¹ Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 225-29.

¹⁰² Tommila, *Nurmijärven pitäjän historia*, 203-05; A. Rosenberg, *Muuttoliike Uudenmaan läänissä esi-industrialistisen kauden lopulla (1821–1880)* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 1966), 55–56.

¹⁰³ Laakso, 'Loimaan ja Huittisten', 112-17.

¹⁰⁴ Smiths' family business, however, ended here, because Anders had no sons.

uncommon for the sons of peasants to enter apprenticeships.¹⁰⁵

Soldiers, tenant farmers and landless agricultural workers also placed their sons in the crafts. Many apprentices came from these backgrounds, while the sons of landless agricultural workers also became increasingly common among apprentices in the nineteenth century. They were not rare in the eighteenth century, but it seems that apprentices were now coming from more modest backgrounds. It is unlikely that agricultural workers could pay much for their sons' training; they often earned so little that it is impossible to imagine them being able to pay anything at all. Often, in fact, the family was so poor that it was a relief to send a child to find food and shelter elsewhere. Finland had no system of pauper apprentices as such, but there are cases where poor orphans were placed with artisans to provide them with some practical skills. For example, the pauper child Erik Eriksson (who later took surname Ekman) was given by the parish first to his uncle, the tailor Gustaf Halin, and subsequently served another tailor.¹⁰⁶ He spent over ten years working in these artisans' households before he set up his own business, a delay which may well be explained by his humble origins. In some cases apprentices placed by the parish or relatives were disabled, suggesting that in such cases teaching craft skills was akin to providing a kind of welfare.¹⁰⁷

The gradual decline in the social background of apprentices did not, however, signal a clear fall in the social esteem in which artisans were held. An artisan's position still counted for something in a godparental relationship or in the marriage market.¹⁰⁸ Craftsmanship and dexterity were still held in esteem and as a result, apprenticeships were still sought after, even though the chances of establishing an independent business had declined.

One aspect that deserves mention is the question of illegitimacy. As in parts of Germany, guild rules required apprentices to be of respectable origin, in other words born within wedlock. This was stated explicitly in older rules, and was also a common requirement in eighteenth-century rural apprenticeship. In Hollola, only one boy, a tailor's apprentice, was named by the matronymic, indicating illegitimacy. By the nineteenth century, the climate of opinion had shifted, and several boys born outside wedlock became apprentices. Preserving artisan honour had clearly become less important.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 251, 257-61.

¹⁰⁶ Parishes had an obligation to look after the poor. To do so, some paupers were circulated among peasant families, who formed a cluster (file) responsible for maintaining paupers. NA, parish meetings register 1817; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 235. See also Kaukovalta, *Hämeen läänin Historia*, 445; J.J. Laurila, 'Lounais-Hämeen käsityöläisistä vuoteen 1867. Helsingin yliopistossa 1838 laadittu sosiologian laudatur-kirjoitus "käsityöläisoloista Suomessa 1800-luvun alkupuoliskolla etupäässä Lounais-Hämeen oloja silmälläpitäen"', *Lounais-Hämeen kotiseutu- ja museoyhdistys. Vuosikirja*, 40 (1971), 52-53.

¹⁰⁷ P. Virrankoski, *Myyntiä varten harjoitettu kotiteollisuus Suomessa autonomian ajan alkupuolella. (1809- noin 1865)* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 1963), 436; R.O. Peltovuori, *Suur-Tuusulan historia. Tuusula - Kerava - Järvenpää II. Seurakunnan perustamisesta Suomen sotaan 1643-1808* (Tuusula, 1975), 155; Saarenheimo, *Vanhan Pirkkalan historia*, 414; Edgren, *Lärting, gesäll, mästare*, 159, 189-92; Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 238.

¹⁰⁸ Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä*, 184-89, 198-203.

¹⁰⁹ Edgren, *Lärting, gesäll, mästare*, 66, 152, 213; M. Uotila, 'Aviottomana syntyneen pojan tie käsityöläiseksi 1800-luvun alkupuoliskolla', *Genos*, 86 (2015), 194-204.

Conclusions

Rural artisans' apprentices were inferior in both rank and skills to guild-based apprentices, but they were not a rarity in rural Finland from 1750 onwards. Because there was no comprehensive legislation covering rural crafts, the practice of rural apprenticeship often emulated urban norms, the guild orders providing a common set of standards and customs, albeit with modest, practical adjustments. For instance, instead of apprentice registers, rural artisans relied on church administration to witness their apprenticeship. Although rural artisans were free of the supervision of guilds, they were still subject to the oversight of the state.

Rural artisans had also formulated their own training model in which the tripartite system was not always either necessary or clearly visible. The introduction to basic craft skills took place in the same way as in towns, with new apprentices entering contracts for training. The difference between rural and urban agreements – the length of training or concrete training practices – was slight. After their initial training, rural apprentices were fully competent to start their own independent career; there was no compulsory phase spent as a journeyman, as there was in towns. However, before they were granted the status of licensed parish artisan, former apprentices often had to have worked independently in an area, or have served as assistants to existing parish artisans. The position of parish artisans' assistants resembled that of urban journeymen, but a distinction was maintained in their titles, a distinction which was closely observed. On the other hand, without the requirement for journeywork, rural masters lacked the chance that guild masters enjoyed to exploit skilled assistants in their work. Rural artisans' customs, however, demonstrate that it was possible to function and train the next generation of artisans without craft guilds' supervision or powers of enforcement.