The writing workshop of François Quesnay and the making of Physiocracy (1757-1764)

*Abstract:*
The purpose of this paper is to investigate the activities of François Quesnay and his relationships with his so-called disciples during the period that precedes the existence of the physiocratic school. We will argue that before the death of Madame de Pompadour, the relationships between Quesnay and other writers that shares his commitment for an agrarian economic theory are best described as a “writing workshop” than as a school. Before the death of Madame de Pompadour, Louis XV’s *favorite* and Quesnay’s patron, Quesnay was surrounded by a little flock of writers with whom he worked very closely. On the one hand, he exerted a tight control over those (the Marquis de Mirabeau, Pattullo, Du Pont de Nemours) who published, correcting and even rewriting whole parts of it. On the other hand, he used other writers/individuals to collect data, execute and verify calculations. In other words, Quesnay constituted a workshop dedicated to the production of political and economic writings. Our paper will be organized as such: 1. The master of the workshop: Quesnay; 2. The recruitment of the workshop; 3. The division of tasks; 4. The nature of the writings produced; 5. The dissolution of the writing workshop and the constitution of the physiocratic school.