

## FOOD AND DRINK ON STAGE AND OFF (1660-1700)

This essay will examine payments related to food and drink recorded by Parisian theatre companies from 1660 to 1700. To this end, it will examine account books and other documents kept by three troupes: first, Molière's troupe, which occupied the Petit-Bourbon theatre (1658-1660) and then the Palais-Royal (1661-1672); second, the company formed by a fusion at the Hôtel Guénégaud of the late Molière's troupe with actors from the Marais theatre (1673-80); and third, the Comédie-Française, created in 1680 by a union of the Guénégaud and Hôtel de Bourgogne companies, which occupied first the Guénégaud (1680-1689) and then a new, purpose-built theatre in the rue des Fossés Saint-Germain (now the rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie).<sup>1</sup> However, although the account books mention food and drink a good deal (for example, between 1677-78 and 1681-82, payments to the *cabaretier* or for the '*pain et vin des répétitions*' occur at almost every performance),<sup>2</sup> the majority of these entries do not provide much actual information. This is frustrating, because many payments clearly relate to rehearsals, and I had hoped to draw new conclusions as to the companies' production processes. But the play (or plays) rehearsed on a given day were not necessarily those given at that afternoon's performance (performances habitually began at 5pm), particularly if a new creation or major revival was being prepared. So, unless other information is available (as is sometimes the case), all we can say with any degree of certainty on the basis of our 'food evidence' is that the companies in question rehearsed a good deal, which is borne out by sources from the latter part of our period. For example, a rehearsal schedule drawn up by the Comédie-Française on 9 July 1685 shows that it intended to rehearse five plays in total on all but two of the next fourteen days, sometimes rehearsing two plays in a single morning and, on one occasion, three.<sup>3</sup>

We must exercise caution, too, because it is frequently difficult to determine whether an item for which payment was made was required on or off the stage. For example, when 12 *sols* were paid '*pour du vin*' on 20 October 1675, when Molière's *Amour médecin* was given, was this intended as a refreshment for the participants or to be drunk as part of the performance? I have tried to resolve such problems by asking three questions. When was the reference made? Are food and drink mentioned in the play itself? And did the performance involve supernumerary performers for whom refreshments were frequently provided (e.g. dancers)? The first consideration derives from there being a change to the way in which information was entered into the account books over time. In the early years, the troupes were more likely to record everything (particularly during the Guénégaud period), whereas latterly they tended to omit items relating to their backstage activity. So, interrogating that performance of *L'Amour médecin* by means of my three questions: the entry dates from the Guénégaud period when the account book records are generally very full; there is no mention of wine in the play; and it did feature musical episodes requiring singers and dancers. On balance, therefore, I would conclude that the wine was taken off stage rather than on.

A final consideration concerns the decoding of references to meals and snacks. The terms most frequently employed are '*vin*', '*pain et vin*' and '*collation*', with '*déjeuner*', '*dîner*' and '*souper*' also present, albeit much more infrequently. Furetière, in his *Dictionnaire universel* of 1690, defines *déjeuner* as the '*repas qu'on fait le matin devant midi. La pièce de huit heures, les pâtés, les saucisses, c'est ce qu'on mange d'ordinaire à un déjeuner*'; while *dîner* is the '*repas qu'on prend vers le milieu du jour*';<sup>4</sup> and *souper*, according

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<sup>1</sup> The account books of the Hôtel de Bourgogne and Marais companies are not extant.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the seventeenth century, theatrical seasons began and ended at Easter and spanned, therefore, two calendar years.

<sup>3</sup> BMCF, R52\_0\_1685, Feuilles d'assemblée (1685), 9 July.

<sup>4</sup> Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel* (The Hague: A. et R. Leers, 1690). Quotations have been modernised in the interests of consistency and comprehensibility.

to the 1694 edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, is simply '*le repas du soir*' (Furetière gives only the verb).<sup>5</sup> *Collation*, on the other hand, according to Furetière, has a multiplicity of meanings, making it frequently difficult to interpret:

*Collation est aussi le petit repas qu'on fait en hâte en passant, quand on n'a pas le loisir de s'arrêter. Voulez-vous prendre un doigt de vin, faire une petite collation ? Collation est encore le repas qu'on fait entre le dîner et le souper, que les enfants appellent goûter. Collation est aussi ce qu'on prend en allant coucher, un doigt de vin, et des confitures. Collation est pareillement un ample repas qu'on fait au milieu de l'après-dîner, ou la nuit. Il y aura chez le roi bal, ballet, et collation. [...] Ce mot s'est depuis étendu à tous les autres repas qu'on fait depuis dîner.*

Bearing in mind that companies rehearsed or held meetings in the mornings (rehearsals began at 10am or 11am), then presumably had a break (and took their *dîner*) before the performance began at 5pm, we can see that most of the refreshments provided would, indeed, have been *collations*. What is more, there appears to be a clear distinction between snacks taken 'on the go' and the fuller meals that were occasionally provided, particularly during business and other trips, as we will see. We do, though, occasionally find *déjeuner* being used where we would normally expect *collation* (e.g. '*pour le déjeuner de la répétition d'hier*'),<sup>6</sup> which I understand as meaning something like a 'working breakfast'. The question remains, though, of whether the much-used term '*pain et vin*' would have been just that or whether this was a synonym for *collation*.

## FOOD OFFSTAGE

### DAILY EXPENSES

Companies provided refreshments for their members from the earliest days for which we have records. La Grange first listed the daily expenses per performance day for Molière's troupe in 1660, at which time it included 1 *livre* for '*collation de vin, tisane, pain*'. And two years later, the same sum was still being paid for a '*collation pour la troupe*'.<sup>7</sup> The presence of tisane in the first list (defined by Furetière as a '*potion rafraîchissante faite d'eau bouillie avec de l'orge et de la réglisse*') might seem surprising, but no doubt the licorice it contained was thought to be good for the throat, since he also notes that the root was used to cure colds. What is more, tisane continued to be provided at the Comédie-Française after 1680, where it is mentioned in the daily expenses for 1683-84, 1685-86, 1686-87, 1687-88, and 1690-91.<sup>8</sup> This tisane was supplied for the company by Jeanne Malgras, the wife (and later widow) of one of the Guénégaud *décorateurs*, Gilles Crosnier, at which time she was known as Mme Crosnier. See for example the payment to her of 5 *livres* 14 *sols* '*pour la tisane*' on 10 September 1680,<sup>9</sup> presumably in respect of several days' provision. In 1681, Mme Crosnier married the candlemaker Jean Raguenet,<sup>10</sup> but continued to work for the troupe and is mentioned by her

<sup>5</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (Paris: J.-B. Coignard, 1694).

<sup>6</sup> Sylvie Chevalley, 'Le "Registre d'Hubert", 1672-1673', *Revue d'histoire du théâtre*, 25 (1973), 1-132, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Varlet dit La Grange, *Registre*, ed. by B. E. Young and G. P. Young, 2 vols (Paris: Droz, 1947), pp. 18, 47.

<sup>8</sup> BMCF, R15, Registre 1683-84; BMCF, R17, Registre 1685-86; BMCF, R18, Registre 1686-87; BMCF, R19, Registre 1687-88; BMCF, R25, Petit Registre 1690-91. Companies appear to have habitually first entered information in a draft account book, before tidying it up and correcting it for the official record. A number of these *petits registres* survive in the archives of the Comédie-Française and are interesting for the additional or complementary information they contain. They are generally not paginated, whereas official account books have often been paginated retrospectively. I have, therefore, in the present essay, identified entries by means of their dates, only giving page numbers when an account book has been subsequently published. The companies also frequently recorded information on the reverse of their account book pages. Sometimes, particularly towards the end of a season, this had to do with the annual settling of the accounts. Elsewhere, it relates to the performance for which the receipt and expenditure are shown on the facing page. Unless otherwise specified, I have identified such entries by giving the date of the preceding page followed by v (verso).

<sup>9</sup> BMCF, R12, Registre 1680-81.

<sup>10</sup> Madeleine Jurgens and Marie-Antoinette Fleury, *Documents du Minutier central concernant l'histoire littéraire (1650-1700)* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1960), p. 118.

married name in the lists of *frais ordinaires* of 1685-86, 1686-87 and 1687-88. It is curious, then, to find the inclusion of 16 *sols* ‘à la Crosnier pour la tisane’ in the *frais ordinaires* of 1690-91.<sup>11</sup> However, we also find her under her married name shortly thereafter, since in November 1691, the company resolved that ‘Mme Raguenet qui a 16 sols pour fournir la tisane n’aura plus rien et ne fournira plus de tisane’, but would be compensated with a post as *ouvreuse* for the first-row boxes and stage boxes with an annual salary to 100 *livres* per annum, to be paid monthly.<sup>12</sup>

### Rehearsals

Even though, as previously noted, it is not always possible to determine precisely in what context the payments recorded were made, it would appear that, in the first part of our period at least, the majority were for rehearsals. Similarly, it is not always clear whether purely liquid refreshment was provided or something more substantial, since on occasions the payment is entered simply as ‘cabaret’,<sup>13</sup> or ‘au cabaretier’.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes it is specified for which section of the company (including supernumerary performers) the refreshment was provided, and it is perhaps not surprising to find that the dancers were particularly thirsty, with wine being provided for them at both rehearsals and performances. For example, wine was supplied at rehearsals for the dancers on a number of occasions when *Le Sicilien* and *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* were performed together.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, payments were made with regard to rehearsals for the dancers for *Le Malade imaginaire*,<sup>16</sup> and for *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*.<sup>17</sup> We should also note a payment for the ‘vin de la répétition des danseurs’ on 28 December 1681, the day before a performance of *L’Inconnu* by Thomas Corneille and Donneau de Visé.<sup>18</sup> Payments from earlier in our period remind us that the people who instructed or assisted the performers also required refreshment. Thus, 1 *livre* 10 *sols* were paid ‘pour du vin au record des danseurs’ on 22 April 1663;<sup>19</sup> and 2 *livre* 10 *sols* for ‘du vin pour les records’ on 15 February 1664.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the use of the formulation ‘vin des danseurs’ on 1 July 1680, when *Les Fâcheux* and *Les Fourberies de Scapin* were performed together, and on 9 October 1681, when *Le Malade imaginaire* was given,<sup>21</sup> leaves it unclear as to whether these were for rehearsals or performances. We should also note the payment of 1 *livre* 6 *sols* on 1 September 1685 ‘pour un dîner aux musiciens’ (i.e. the singers) in connection with the preparation of Dancourt’s *Angélique et Médor*, and of 3 *livres* 8 *sols* 6 *deniers* on 22 October 1685, for expenses including a déjeuner for the ‘violons’ (i.e. the orchestra).<sup>22</sup>

There are too many payments in respect of rehearsals where the recipients of the refreshments are not specified to make it worthwhile to list them here. However, the following may be of interest, not least for the use of terms other than the more usual ‘pain’ and ‘vin’: 2

<sup>11</sup> Petit Registre, 1690-91. Other mentions of Jeanne Malgras as ‘la Crosnier’ after her marriage to Raguenet occur in the *feuille d’assemblée* for 2 June 1687 (BMCF, R52\_0\_1687, Feuilles d’assemblée (1687)); in the *registre* entries for 1 June 1689 and 27 December 1689 verso 1689 (BMCF, R23, Petit Registre 1689-90); and in the *feuilles d’assemblée* of 9 and 23 May 1707, when it was decided to terminate her employment (BMCF, R52\_1 1706-1709, Feuilles d’assemblée (1706-1709)). On the website of the Comédie-Française Registers Project, the call number for this document is given incorrectly as R52\_1 1706-1707.

<sup>12</sup> BMCF, R52\_0\_1691, Feuilles d’assemblée (1691), 5 November.

<sup>13</sup> For example, BMCF, R10, Registre 1678-79, 24 June 1678.

<sup>14</sup> For example, BMCF, R8, Registre 1676-77, 29 September 1676. Furetière’s definition of *cabaret* is particularly interesting: ‘Lieu où on vend du vin en détail. On confond aujourd’hui ce mot avec *taverne*: néanmoins ils sont fort différents, en ce que le *cabaret* est le lieu où on donne seulement du vin à pot par un trou pratiqué dans une treillis de bois qui y sert d’enseigne, sans qu’il soit permis d’asseoir, ni de mettre la nappe. On l’appelle pour cela à *buis coupé*, et *pot renversé*, parce que l’hôte est obligé de renverser le pot sitôt qu’il a vendu le vin. Au lieu qu’à la *taverne* on vend le vin par assiette, et on y apprête à manger.’

<sup>15</sup> Registre 1680-81, 10 June, 11 September, 28 December 1680; BMCF, R14, Registre 1682-83, 11 June 1682.

<sup>16</sup> Registre 1680-81, 30 August, 2 and 6 September 1680; Registre 1682-83, 28 October, 2 and 3 November 1682.

<sup>17</sup> Registre 1680-81, 29 September, 5 October 1680; BMCF, R13, Registre 1681-82, 31 August 1681.

<sup>18</sup> Registre 1681-82.

<sup>19</sup> Georges Monval, *Le Premier Registre de La Thorillière (1663-1664)* (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1890), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> BMCF, R3, *Le Second Registre de La Thorillière (1664-65)*.

<sup>21</sup> Registre 1680-81; Registre 1681-82.

<sup>22</sup> Registre, 1685-86.

*livres 9 sols* to Crosnier [the *décorateur*] ‘*pour la collation en repassant*’ on 22 May 1663;<sup>23</sup> 1 *livre 10 sols* on 27 October 1664, ‘*pour une collation*’;<sup>24</sup> 11 *livres 2 sols* on 8 July 1672, ‘*pour le déjeuner de la répétition*’;<sup>25</sup> various payments for ‘*collation*’ or ‘*feu et collation*’ on 29 November, 6, 9 and 11 December 1672;<sup>26</sup> 2 *lives* on 21 January 1674 ‘*pour collation à une répétition*’;<sup>27</sup> 1 *livre 18 sols* on 30 May 1679 for a ‘*collation*’, and 1 *live 8 sols* for another on 2 June 1679.<sup>28</sup> Further examples of these types of payment will be examined shortly when we turn to consider a number of ‘case study’ productions.

### Workers

When a production was being prepared and performed, refreshments also had to be provided for members of the backstage crew, particularly if it involved a degree of spectacle. Thus, in 1682, during the preparation of the revival of Pierre Corneille’s *Andromède*, the following sums were paid: 2 *livres 18 sols* on 24 June for the ‘*vin de la répétition pour la machine*’, 8 *livres 8 sols* on 24 July for ‘*menus frais et cabaret pour la machine*’, and 3 *livres 10 sols* on 26 July for the ‘*vin des ouvriers pour la machine*’.<sup>29</sup> Since the revival only opened on 19 July, the first payment reveals that the machines were already operational almost a month beforehand. Another payment made with regard to the preparation of a production was the 14 *livres* paid for ‘*deux repas au peintre chez Sorel*’ on 23 January 1696,<sup>30</sup> which was four days after the premiere of Dancourt’s *Foire Saint-Germain*. This would have been the specialist scene painter brought in to create the decors.

As with rehearsals, we find numerous references to the provision of refreshments for backstage employees and workers of different kinds, without it always being clear whether this was in connection with a specific production. Although, on other occasions, the men for whom refreshments were provided were clearly involved in construction or maintenance work on the theatre building. Here, though, we have the added complication of not always knowing whether the wine mentioned was ‘*pour boire*’ or a *pourboire*, i.e. we do not know whether the money given was actually to buy drink or not. For, although the word *pourboire* only enters the Académie-Française dictionary in 1798, this does not mean that the phenomenon it describes did not exist prior to that date. Payments that probably have to do with the preparation of productions include the following: 4 *livres 10 sols* ‘*au nommé Antoine Charpentier pour boire et à ses confrères*’, during the payment of the extraordinary expenses for *Circé* by Thomas Corneille and Donneau de Visé;<sup>31</sup> and 6 *livres* for the ‘*chandelle et vin des ouvriers pour la Pierre philosophale*’ on 27 March 1681.<sup>32</sup> This was Thomas Corneille’s disastrous final machine play, which was taken off after just two performances, for reasons still unknown.<sup>33</sup> The 3 *livres* paid ‘*pour boire aux ouvriers*’ on 28 November 1679 after a performance of *La Devineresse* by Thomas Corneille and Donneau de Visé may also fall into this category,<sup>34</sup> as may the 3 *livres 12 sols* paid ‘*aux ouvriers pour boire*’ on 10 July 1697, after the first performance of Donneau de Visé’s *Lotterie*.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Monval, *Le Premier Registre de La Thorillière*, p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> Le Second Registre de La Thorillière.

<sup>25</sup> Chevalley, ‘Registre d’Hubert’, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 87, 90-92. These payments almost certainly relate to the revival of *Psyché* by Molière, Pierre Corneille and Philippe Quinault.

<sup>27</sup> BMCF, R5, Registre 1673-74.

<sup>28</sup> BMCF, R11, Registre 1679-80.

<sup>29</sup> Registre 1682-83.

<sup>30</sup> BMCF, R36, Petit Registre 1695-96.

<sup>31</sup> BMCF, R6, Registre 1674-75, 5 April 1675 v.

<sup>32</sup> Registre 1680-81.

<sup>33</sup> See Jan Clarke, ‘When enchantment doesn’t work: the case of *La Pierre philosophale*’, in *Enchantement et désillusion en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. by Michael Call (Tübingen: Narr, 2021), pp. 103-15.

<sup>34</sup> Registre 1679-80.

<sup>35</sup> BMCF, R40, Petit Registre 1697-98.

On 29 August 1684, 11 *livres* were given ‘pour boire aux décorateurs’.<sup>36</sup> These were the individuals who oversaw the preparation (and repair) of *decors* and the running of the performance, although, as we have just seen, specialist scene painters were also brought in when required. The chief *décorateur* with Molière’s troupe was Jean Crosnier, who received small sums for wine in 1663 and 1664.<sup>37</sup> However, the Hôtel Guénégaud *décorateur* was most probably Gilles Crosnier (who may have been Jean’s brother), and it was no doubt he who received 27 *sols* 6 *deniers* ‘pour du vin’ on 3 June 1674.<sup>38</sup> The Guénégaud Crosnier was assisted by a certain Dubreuil. Thus, on 1 January 1677, 1 *livre* 10 *sols* were paid ‘aux Crosniers et Dubreuil pour boire’, which would suggest that Crosnier senior was also present, and Dubreuil and Crosnier received a further 5 *livres* 5 *sols* for bread and wine two days later.<sup>39</sup> One of the Comédie-Française *décorateurs* was Michel Laurent, known as Champagne, who came to the Hôtel Guénégaud with the Hôtel de Bourgogne actors at the time of the union of the troupes, and who is famous for having continued the list of scenic requirements known as the ‘*mémoire de Mabelot*’.<sup>40</sup> He died in 1688 and was succeeded by his son Charles, known as Charlot or ‘le petit Champagne’. It was he, then, who, along with another employee, Subtil, received 3 *livres* ‘pour boire’ on 21 September 1698.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, payments that probably had more to do with work on the theatre buildings and their immediate environs include 4 *livres* 10 *sols* ‘pour le vin des ouvriers’ when the Palais-Royal was being fitted out in 1660,<sup>42</sup> 3 *livres* ‘pour boire aux couvreurs’ on 6 May 1672 and again on 18 October,<sup>43</sup> and 8 *sols* ‘pour boire à des paveurs’ on 5 July 1692.<sup>44</sup> We should also note the payment of 1 *livre* 10 *sols* in May 1674 ‘pour faire boire les ouvriers et crocheteurs’, immediately after a delivery of wood.<sup>45</sup> The companies regularly employed woodworkers of different kinds, both to work on productions and on their premises. Thus, we find payments of an indeterminate sum ‘aux menuisiers pour boire’ on 24 January 1673,<sup>46</sup> and 1 *livre* 10 *sols* ‘pour boire aux charpentiers’ on 28 October 1682.<sup>47</sup>

Another important category of employee for whom refreshments were provided or to whom payments were made ‘pour boire’ is that of the guards, or *soldats* as they were sometimes termed in the early years. For example, on 27 April and 25 May 1664, sums were paid ‘aux soldats [...] pour leur vin’;<sup>48</sup> and payments were made ‘pour boire aux gardes de la porte’ or ‘aux gardes pour boire’ at various times at the Hôtel Guénégaud.<sup>49</sup> In this context, the payment of 1 *livre* 10 *sols* ‘aux Suisses pour boire’, at the time of the settling of accounts for *Circé*, is interesting, since this term was on its way to becoming a synonym for *portier*.<sup>50</sup> We should also note the payment on 15 March 1687 of 2 *livres*

<sup>36</sup> BMCF, R16, Registre 1684-85.

<sup>37</sup> For example, Monval, *Le Premier Registre de La Thorillière*, 29 April 1663, p. 13; Le Second Registre de La Thorillière, 29 February 1664. Companies usually employed two *décorateurs*, and Jean may have begun by working with his father, since La Grange’s second list of the daily expenses for Molière’s troupe of 1662 gives ‘*décorateurs Crosniers*’ in the plural (the first has a single *décorateur* named Matthieu) (La Grange, *Registre*, I, 18, 47). Crosnier père continued to be employed by the Guénégaud company on a casual basis as an *assistant* (supernumerary performer) and labourer; see Jan Clarke, ‘The Function of the *décorateur* and the Association of the Crosnier Family with Molière’s Troupe and the Guénégaud Theatre’, *French Studies*, 48 (1994), 1–16.

<sup>38</sup> Registre 1674-75.

<sup>39</sup> Registre 1676-77.

<sup>40</sup> Pierre Pasquier, *Le Mémoire de Mabelot: mémoire pour la décoration des pièces qui se représentent par les Comédiens du Roi* (Paris: Champion, 2005).

<sup>41</sup> BMCF, R42, Petit Registre 1698-99.

<sup>42</sup> La Grange, *Registre*, I, 29.

<sup>43</sup> Chevalley, ‘Registre d’Hubert’, pp. 4, 70.

<sup>44</sup> BMCF, R29, Petit Registre 1692-93.

<sup>45</sup> Registre 1674-75, 29 May 1674 v.

<sup>46</sup> Chevalley, ‘Registre d’Hubert’, p. 110.

<sup>47</sup> Registre 1682-83.

<sup>48</sup> Le Second Registre de La Thorillière.,

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Registre 1678-79, 12 June 1678; Registre 1681-82, 28 December 1681, 3 January, 8 February 1682; Registre 1687-88, 3 January 1688.

<sup>50</sup> *Suisse*. ‘Nom donné au domestique à qui est confiée la garde de la porte d’une maison, parce qu’autrefois ce domestique était pris ordinairement parmi les Suisses’ (*Dictionnaire de l’Académie-Française* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1835)).

17 *sols* ‘pour du vin à des laquais’,<sup>51</sup> since the actors’ servants regularly assisted the companies of which their employers were members, both onstage and off.

Finally, having noted that it is frequently impossible to determine whether payments made to workers were actually tips, I would suggest that this is far more likely to have been the case where mention is made of payments to employees external to the company, as in the following cases: 8 *livres* ‘aux cochers pour boire’ on 20 January 1664,<sup>52</sup> 1 *livre* 10 *sols* ‘donné à un charetier pour boire’ on 30 September 1672,<sup>53</sup> 4 *livres* 10 *sols* ‘donné à trois cochers pour la visite pour boire’,<sup>54</sup> and ‘donné à un cocher pour son vin’ at the time of the search for new premises in 1688.<sup>55</sup>

## CABARETIERS

Payments made in connection with productions enable us to identify those *cabaretiers* and other *fournisseurs* who supplied foodstuffs to the companies we are discussing. These include, for the creation of *Le Malade imaginaire* at the Palais-Royal in 1672-73 (of which more later), Boyvin, who provided ‘le pain et le vin des répétitions’; Mme Boury, who supplied the ‘petit pain des répétitions des danseurs’; and La Forest who furnished wine, bread and biscuits ‘pour les demoiselles’.<sup>56</sup> The Hôtel Guénégaud company was supplied first by M. and Mme Ourlies, in 1674-75,<sup>57</sup> with a further payment the following season for an outstanding bill.<sup>58</sup> Between 1675-76 and 1677-78, we find regular payments to M. and Mme Massé or (more rarely) Macé and M. Doquin – far more than can be comfortably listed here. And we should also note a payment of 12 *sols* to M. Docquin over a decade later, on 21 May 1688.<sup>59</sup> Before undertaking this research, I had assumed that M. Massé and M. Docquin were two different individuals.<sup>60</sup> However, I have recently discovered that, in October 1676, a certain Macé Docquin, a *marchand de vins* resident in the rue Guénégaud, married Catherine Ouvrard, who was herself resident in the rue de Seine.<sup>61</sup> There can be little doubt, then, that M. Massé and M. Docquin were one and the same, and that he was the chief supplier of wine to the Hôtel Guénégaud, which was situated between the rue de Seine and the rue Mazarine, facing the rue Guénégaud, from which it took its name. This is also excellent evidence of the way in which the presence of a theatre in a neighbourhood benefitted the local tradespeople.

The Guénégaud company and the Comédie-Française had, in fact, their own purveyor of refreshments on the premises in the person of Mlle Michel, the proprietor of what was known as the *loge à limonade*, in which enterprise she was assisted by Mlle La Villette,<sup>62</sup> and an individual known as the ‘garçon de la limonade’.<sup>63</sup> Mlle Michel initially rented her premises at a rate of 50 *livres* per month,<sup>64</sup> which had risen to 66 *livres* by April 1680,<sup>65</sup> and one of the features of the annual settling of accounts that occurred each Easter was a statement of what had been received from

<sup>51</sup> Registre 1686-87.

<sup>52</sup> Le Second Registre de La Thorillière.

<sup>53</sup> Chevalley, ‘Registre d’Hubert’, p. 63.

<sup>54</sup> Registre 1679-80, 15 September 1679.

<sup>55</sup> BMCF, R191, La Grange, État des premières dépenses du nouvel établissement des comédiens ordinaires du Roi.

<sup>56</sup> Edouard Thierry, *Documents sur le Malade imaginaire: état de la recette et despence* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1880), pp. 171-74, 183, 193.

<sup>57</sup> Registre 1674-75, 22 May, 19 June, 3 and 31 August, 11 September, 21 October, 30 November 1674.

<sup>58</sup> BMCF, R7, Registre 1675-76, 17 May 1675.

<sup>59</sup> BMCF, R22, Petit Registre 1688-89.

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Jan Clarke, *The Guénégaud Theatre in Paris (1673-1680). Volume Two: the Accounts Season by Season* (Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2001).

<sup>61</sup> Archives nationales, Châtelet de Paris. Y//231-Y//234. Insinuations (11 janvier 1675 - 29 janvier 1678), fol. 261, Contrat de mariage de Macé Docquin et Catherine Ouvrard.

<sup>62</sup> Registre 1676-77, 2 March 1677 ff.

<sup>63</sup> Registre 1673-74, 14 January 1674.

<sup>64</sup> For example, *ibid.*, 26 November 1673.

<sup>65</sup> La Grange, *Registre*, I, 232.

her during the course of the season. It is not my intention to enter here into a detailed discussion of the lemonade booth; a full description of what was on offer is provided by Samuel Chappuzeau in his *Théâtre français*.<sup>66</sup> It is, however, interesting to see that Mlle Michel occasionally provided beverages – most frequently ‘*du chocolat*’ – for the troupes she served. For the most part, these seem to have been consumed on stage (see below), but there is evidence that members of the Comédie-Française also enjoyed her products privately, since on 10 January 1695, Le Comte recorded that ‘*j’ai commence à prendre le jeton de Mlle Dancourt pour ce qu’elle doit à Mlle Michel jusqu’à la fin de ce paiement*’, which was in fact achieved some nine months later, on 30 October.<sup>67</sup>

The lemonade booth, or café as we should probably more properly call it, caused the Comédie-Française company some anxiety at various points. On 24 September 1685, following disturbances ‘*à la recette de l’argent*’, it was thought necessary to post the employee (and former actor) M. Dupin in a position where he could ‘*prendre garde à l’amphithéâtre et à la loge de limonade et aux billets écrits à la main*’.<sup>68</sup> Then, twelve years later, when it became clear that some customers from the *parterre* were cutting through the café in order to access the more expensive seats, the company resolved as follows:

*Premièrement que la porte de la loge de la limonade du café de l’escalier des premiers loges sera murée pour empêcher que l’on ne passe du parterre à l’amphithéâtre et aux loges et qu’il y sera seulement laissé une ouverture à la hauteur qui sera jugée à propos pour donner à Mlle Michel la facilité de faire porter des liqueurs aux loges et théâtre et amphithéâtre.*<sup>69</sup>

Also, Mlle Michel was instructed that she should bring with her ‘*que des personnes qui lui seront absolument nécessaires pour son commerce et qu’elle déclarera pour être examiné par la compagnie et l’on donnera ordre à la porte de ne laisser entrer personne de plus*’.<sup>70</sup> Unsurprisingly, Mlle Michel was less than thrilled at having her access door closed up and complained about it to the troupe,<sup>71</sup> although there is no evidence as to the ultimate outcome.

Moving briefly outside of our period, in 1716, the lemonade booth was taken over by a gentleman who continues to enjoy a certain degree of renown. Thus, on 7 December of that year, the company recorded that ‘*On a réglé de louer la loge de la limonade douze cents livres par an et on l’a accordée à M. Procope pour ladite somme payable de quartier en quartier*’.<sup>72</sup> This considerable rent hike evidently did not go down well, and two years later the rent was reduced to ‘*neuf cents livres toutes déductions faites, à commencer du 25<sup>e</sup> avril 1718*’.<sup>73</sup> This is not, though, the first reference to Procope in the account books. On 27 December 1692, when the Comédie-Française performed the Dancourt double bill *Le Chevalier à la mode* and *Le Bon soldat*, 1 *livre* was paid ‘*pour de l’eau d’anis chez Procope*’;<sup>74</sup> in 1694, the Comédie-Française borrowed money from him in order to repay a sum to the actress Mlle Raisin;<sup>75</sup> and in 1696, he received 19 *sols* in connection with ‘*le Médecin maréchal*’.<sup>76</sup> This would appear to be

<sup>66</sup> Samuel Chappuzeau, *Le Théâtre français*, ed. by Christopher J. Gossip (Lyon, Michel Mayer, 1674) (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2009), pp. 233–34.

<sup>67</sup> BMCF, R52\_0\_1695, Feuilles d’assemblée. The *jeton* was the token received by company members as a reward for attending company meetings and which had a monetary value (see Sylvie Chevalley, ‘Les Premières Assemblées des Comédiens Français’, in *Mélanges de littérature et d’histoire offerts à Georges Couton*, ed. by Jean Jehasse et al (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1981), pp. 443–51).

<sup>68</sup> Feuilles d’assemblée (1685). The *amphithéâtre* was a raked seating area facing the stage. In the new Comédie-Française theatre of 1689, the café was situated below the *amphithéâtre*, and I have suggested that this may also have been the case at the Guénégaud (Jan Clarke, ‘L’Hôtel Guénégaud selon un croquis inédit’, *Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature*, 45 (2018), 159–82).

<sup>69</sup> BMCF, R52\_0\_1697, Feuilles d’assemblée (1697), 17 April.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, 23 April.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, 6 May.

<sup>72</sup> BMCF, R52\_5\_1716–19, Feuilles d’assemblée (1716–19)

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, 7 April 1718 ff.

<sup>74</sup> Petit Registre 1692–93. The *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* of 1798 defines *anisette* as a ‘*liqueur composée avec de l’anis*’ (Paris: J. J. Smits, 1798).

<sup>75</sup> BMCF, R52\_0\_1694, Feuilles d’assemblée (1694), 1 February.

<sup>76</sup> BMCF, R38, Petit Registre 1696–97, 14 June 1696.



the title of a play, but there is no record of a work of that name having been given. It may be, therefore, that Procope provided the refreshments for a reading of the play, which was subsequently rejected. (For more information on the provision of refreshments for company meetings, see below.)

### *Foodstuffs and drinks*

As we have seen, the greater part of the time, the foodstuffs provided are described as bread and wine. However, we do occasionally find references to other items. The most popular alternative drink was *limonade*,<sup>77</sup> but we also find chocolate (as previously noted),<sup>78</sup> and even, on one occasion each, beer and tea.<sup>79</sup> Again, it is often difficult to determine whether these beverages were consumed onstage or off. For example, while coffee is mentioned quite frequently in the 1690s, this is most often in connection with given productions – notably, *L'Inconnu* by Thomas Corneille and Donneau de Visé, Boursault's *Fables d'Ésope*, and, inevitably, *Le Café* by Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, which will be discussed in more detail below. Coffee was also provided on two occasions in connection with Baron's *Homme à bonne fortune*,<sup>80</sup> which leads me to think that it may have formed part of Moncade's morning ritual that is such a feature of Act I.

As for comestibles, we find occasional references to meat products. For example, a *mémoire* submitted by M. Doquin on 2 January 1677 in connection with the preparation of Pradon's *Phèdre et Hippolyte* includes 'quatre langues de mouton' and 'une douzaine de saucisses'; and more 'langues' were provided just over two weeks later.<sup>81</sup> More common, though, are references to fruit, with oranges appearing to have been particularly popular. For example, M. Docquin supplied eight at a cost of 1 *livre* 4 *sols* on 5 May 1675.<sup>82</sup> But we also find cherries,<sup>83</sup> *groseilles*,<sup>84</sup> and, on one occasion, strawberries.<sup>85</sup>

As far as baked goods are concerned, in addition to the ubiquitous 'pain', we find frequent references to 'biscuits'. For example, these were supplied to the female singers in *Le Malade imaginaire* in 1673, as we will discuss in more detail shortly. I have previously noted that biscuits were often purchased when a production involved children.<sup>86</sup> Thus, we find the payment of 16 *sols* 'pour des biscuits pour la petite' on 1 December 1676, in connection with Thomas Corneille's *Triomphe des dames*,<sup>87</sup> and of 9 *sols* 'pour trois biscuits au petit enfant' on 16 December 1682 for Robbe's *Rapinière*.<sup>88</sup> Other sums paid for baked goods include 15 *sols* 'pour des gâteaux et du bois' on 2 October 1684,<sup>89</sup> and 1 *livre* 10 *sols* 'pour trois brioches' on 27 December 1682.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>77</sup> For example, Registre 1673-74, 10 December 1673.

<sup>78</sup> For example, BMCF, R21, Registre 1688-89, 22 November 1688.

<sup>79</sup> Registre, 1685-86, 18 March 1686; BMCF, R27, Petit Registre 1691-92, 18 October 1691.

<sup>80</sup> Petit Registre, 1690-91, 6 January 1691; and BMCF, R26, Registre 1690-91, 6 January 1691. This is an instance where the same reference occurs in both the *petit registre* and the main account book.

<sup>81</sup> Registre 1676-77, 2 and 19 January 1677

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> For example, *ibid.*, 5 and 7 July 1676.

<sup>84</sup> For example, BMCF, R9, Registre 1677-78, 11 July 1677.

<sup>85</sup> Petit Registre 1692-93, 24 June 1692.

<sup>86</sup> Jan Clarke, 'De Louison à Fanchon: des enfants acteurs et leurs costumes chez Molière et à l'Hôtel Guénégaud', *Le Nouveau Moliériste*, 4-5 (1998-1999), 171-190.

<sup>87</sup> Registre 1676-77.

<sup>88</sup> Registre 1682-83.

<sup>89</sup> Registre 1684-85.

<sup>90</sup> Registre 1682-83.



## CASE STUDIES

I would now like to consider the preparation of productions in more detail by means of a number of case studies, which I will examine in production order. These have been selected as instances where more information is available than is the norm.

*Le Malade imaginaire*

Our first cast study is *Le Malade imaginaire*, which was premiered at the Palais-Royal in 1673, revived at the Guénégaud in 1674, then performed regularly both there and at the Comédie-Française. We have considerable information relating to the creation of this work thanks to the publication by Édouard Thierry of his *Documents sur le Malade imaginaire* in 1880. I have already mentioned the *mémoire* of M. Boyvin for ‘*le pain et le vin des répétitions*’, which came to a total of 186 *livres*, and was agreed by the actor Beauval on 23 February 1673;<sup>91</sup> and that of Mme Boury for ‘*le petit pain fourni aux répétitions des danseurs*’ for a total of 22 *livres*, which she received from Hubert on 22 April 1673.<sup>92</sup> Of potentially more interest, however, is the *mémoire* for the bread wine and biscuits provided ‘*pour les demoiselles*’ by La Forest.<sup>93</sup> According to Thierry, these ‘*demoiselles*’ were the three female singers required for the *intermèdes*, and La Forest was Molière’s domestic servant.<sup>94</sup> Some doubt is thrown onto this last assertion, however, by the fact that over twenty years later, 5 *sols* were paid on behalf of the Comédie-Française ‘*pour du vin chez Mme La Forest*’.<sup>95</sup> In any event, La Forest’s *mémoire* indicates not only what the young ladies consumed during their rehearsals, but also when these took place. Thus, they rehearsed fifteen times between 22 December 1672 and 2 February 1673, and on each occasion consumed three *chopines* of wine, between four and six loaves of bread, and between six and eight biscuits.<sup>96</sup> Another payment on food for *Le Malade imaginaire* was the 5 *livres* 11 *sols* reimbursed to Beauval ‘*pour des petits pâtés des répétitions*’ on 17 March 1673, when the play was brought back at the Palais-Royal following Molière’s death.<sup>97</sup>

*Le Malade imaginaire* was revived at the Guénégaud on 4 May 1674, and enjoyed a long and successful run, during which payments were made to the *cabaretier* with such frequency as to suggest that this was a feature of the daily expenses for that production.<sup>98</sup> On 19 and 24 June, it is specified that the *cabaretier* in question was Mme Ourlies.<sup>99</sup> And when *Le Malade imaginaire* was brought back in 1679 and 1680, wine was again provided for rehearsals for the dancers.<sup>100</sup>

*Circé*

Turning now to the machine play *Circé* by Thomas Corneille and Donneau de Visé, which was premiered at the Hôtel Guénégaud on 17 March 1675, we find references to the provision of refreshments from 8 February onwards. On this date, it was specified that 2 *livres* 2 *sols* had been paid for ‘*le pain et le vin de la répétition de mercredi de la musique*’.<sup>101</sup> Then, two days later, the additional expenses included ‘*le pain et le vin de la première répétition à M. Ourlies*’.<sup>102</sup> Among the payments for refreshments over the following days, of particular note are 7 *livres* for ‘*feu et pour la répétition et un*

91 Thierry, *Documents sur le Malade imaginaire*, pp. 57, 183.

92 *ibid.*, pp. 58, 193.

93 *ibid.*, pp. 171–74.

94 *ibid.*, pp. 175–82.

95 BMCF, R34, Petit Registre 1694–95, 22 April 1694.

96 La Forest’s *mémoire* also includes the provision of candles, which I have omitted. A *chopine* was half a *pinte*, at a time when a *pinte* was 0.93 of a litre. Each of the women consumed, therefore, almost half a litre of wine during their morning’s rehearsal.

97 Chevalley, ‘Registre d’Hubert’, p. 129.

98 See, for example, Registre 1674–75, 8, 10, 12, 15 June 1674. On days where the *cabaretier* is not explicitly mentioned, these expenses were no doubt subsumed into the general category ‘*frais*’.

99 *ibid.*

100 Registre 1679–80, 25 August 1679; Registre 1680–81, 2 July 1680.

101 Registre 1674–75.

102 *ibid.*, 10 February 1675.

déjeuner', plus 2 livres 18 sols to 'M. Massé pour du vin à plusieurs fois' on 17 February;<sup>103</sup> a *mémoire* for 'pain et vin fourni par M. Docquin' (bearing in mind that we now know M. Massé and M. Docquin to have been the same person);<sup>104</sup> and the payment, on 22 February, of the not inconsiderable sum of 134 livres 6 sols 6 deniers to the 'cabaretier pour des répétitions'.<sup>105</sup> Two days later, it was recorded that 'pain et vin' costing 13 livres 11 sols had been provided for 'les répétitions de *Circé* pour la musique, violons, marcheurs [dancers] et sauteurs'.<sup>106</sup> And M. Massé received a further 36 livres when the final expenses for the production were settled in March 1675.<sup>107</sup> *Circé* continued to be performed during the following season, 1675-76, when frequent payments to the 'cabaretier' are also to be found, plus 1 livre 'pour Ourties de vieux', 2 livres 5 sols to M. Massé 'pour une collation', and two payments to M. Docquin.<sup>108</sup>

### *L'Inconnu*

Following swiftly on from the success of *Circé*, the Guénégaud company produced *L'Inconnu*, a second machine play by Thomas Corneille and Donneau de Visé, during the latter part of 1675-76. Although this was on a somewhat reduced scale, it still required significant rehearsal, as the payments for refreshments attest. Thus, during the settling of the production accounts, 42 livres were paid 'au sieur Massé cabaretier, suivant et pour le contenu en son mémoire', plus 22 livres 'pour le pain et le vin des répétitions qui ont été faites chez M. Aubry'.<sup>109</sup> Jean-Baptiste Aubry was the brother-in-law of Armande Béjart (Molière's widow), who had lived with him and his wife, Geneviève following her bereavement.<sup>110</sup> This payment suggests, however, that she continued to reside there even after the death of her sister in July 1675, since she played the lead role in *L'Inconnu*, and any rehearsals held in Aubry's house would presumably have been for her benefit.

*L'Inconnu* opened on 17 November 1675, and again we find payments for refreshments during its first run – although far more infrequently than for *Circé*. We should also note payments for biscuits on two occasions,<sup>111</sup> which is in accordance with what we have noted above, since two young actors played a succession of roles and others appeared as *figurants*.<sup>112</sup> *L'Inconnu* was revived at the Comédie-Française in 1681, when payments were made for the 'vin des répétitions des danseurs',<sup>113</sup> and again in 1683, when we find a reference to the 'vin des danseurs'.<sup>114</sup> And at a further revival in 1691, 10 sols were again paid 'pour des biscuits'.<sup>115</sup> *L'Inconnu* also involved the consumption of food and drink on stage, and we will, therefore, return to it in the second section of this article.

### *Le Triomphe des dames*

The final work I will consider as a production 'case history' is Thomas Corneille's *Triomphe des dames*. This was premiered on 7 August 1676 and given eleven performances, up to 4 September,

103      *ibid.*

104      *ibid.*, 19 February 1675 v.

105      *ibid.*

106      *ibid.*, 24 February 1675. The term *marcheur* was frequently used in the account books to avoid mentioning dancers, since these were forbidden to theatrical companies by the terms of the *ordonnances* issued to favour the Académie royale de musique, then under the direction of Jean-Baptiste Lully (see Jan Clarke, 'Music at the Guénégaud Theatre, 1673-1680', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 12 (1990), 89–110).

107      Registre 1674-75, 22 March 1675 v.

108      *ibid.*, 17 May, 12 July, 8 and 18 October 1675.

109      Registre 1675-76, 19 November 1675 v, 26 November 1675 v.

110      Madeleine Jurgens and Elizabeth Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans de recherches sur Molière, sur sa famille et sur les comédiens de sa troupe* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1963), p. 193.

111      Registre 1675-76, 17 and 20 December 1675.

112      See Thomas Corneille, *L'Inconnu*, ed. by Jan Clarke and Matthieu Franchin, in *Théâtre complet*, ed. by Christopher J. Gossip (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2024), vol. VII, pp. 716–1056.

113      Registre 1681-82, 27 and 28 December 1681.

114      Registre 1682-83, 29 March 1683.

115      Petit Registre, 1690-91, 30 March 1691.

then withdrawn and brought back in a slightly modified form on 20 November. The first reference to its preparation occurs in the account books on 19 June 1676, when 12 *sols* were paid ‘*pour du vin de lundi matin pour la pièce nouvelle*’.<sup>116</sup> *Le Triomphe des dames* was the first of the Guénégaud machine plays where the company was obliged fully to adhere to the restrictions on the use of stage music imposed in order to favour Lully’s Académie royale de musique (i.e. only two singers who had to be members of the company rather than professionals external to it, six instrumentalists and no dancers).<sup>117</sup> It is, therefore, somewhat surprising to find the payment of 6 *livres* 10 *sols* on 28 June, ‘*pour les répétitions des danseurs et violons*’.<sup>118</sup> However, several of the *divertissements* that featured in *Le Triomphe des dames* included stately processions of characters, and it was no doubt the performers in these who were described as dancers. Payments to the *cabaretier* are recorded throughout the remainder of June and July, and a bill submitted by M. Docquin is pasted to the reverse of the page for 24 July 1676. This includes: ‘*Du samedi 25 juillet 1676 pour les danseurs 30 sols; plus pour les [Messieurs] 3 pintes et chopine à 8 sols valant 28 sols; plus pour la musique 2 pintes à 8 sols valant 16 sols; du dimanche 26<sup>e</sup> juillet pour les danseurs, 30 sols*’.<sup>119</sup> Sums continued to be paid to M. Docquin/Massé/the *cabaretier* even after the play had opened, with it being specified on 4 September that among the items supplied there was a ‘*biscuit*’, which was no doubt for the benefit of ‘*la petite Mlle Dupin*’ who, having enjoyed considerable success in *L’Inconnu*, also appeared in this production.<sup>120</sup> And another, largely illegible bill submitted by Docquin is pasted to the reverse of the page for 6 September.<sup>121</sup>

A second wave of rehearsals occurred in October and early November, as the company prepared to bring back the revised version of the play. Biscuits were provided on 22 November and 1 December (when it was specified that they were ‘*pour la petite*’), as well as on other dates in December.<sup>122</sup> And when the final accounts for the production were settled during the course of this same month, it was agreed to pay 52 *livres* 10 *sols* ‘*à M. Docquin cabaretier pour les buvettes des répétitions jusques au 17 du présent mois d’août suivant son mémoire*’.<sup>123</sup>

## MEALS

Not all payments for food and drink relate to productions. The companies would also provide meals for their members, either singly or as a group, particularly when they were engaged on company business. These could be *collations*, *déjeuners*, *dîners*, *soupers*, or sometimes just *repas*.<sup>124</sup> Particularly noteworthy is the payment on 28 December 1663 of 38 *livres* 8 *sols* ‘*pour la collation chez M. Molière*’, closely followed on the same day by 3 *livres* ‘*pour du muscat*’.<sup>125</sup> On two occasions in November 1664, the concierge Chrestien was paid for a *déjeuner*,<sup>126</sup> and La Grange was reimbursed 5 *livres* 14 *sols* for a *collation* on 29 August 1673, just over seven weeks after the opening of the Hôtel Guénégaud.<sup>127</sup> Similarly, Guérin d’Estriché received 6 *livres* 3 *sols* for a *déjeuner* on 28 October 1674, at a time when the Guénégaud company was embroiled in difficulties surrounding the contested

116 Registre 1676-77.

117 See Clarke, ‘Music at the Guénégaud Theatre’.

118 Registre 1676-77.

119 *ibid.*

120 See Clarke, ‘De Louison à Fanchon’.

121 Registre 1676-77.

122 *ibid.*, 6, 15 and 18 December.

123 *ibid.*, 1 December 1676 v.

124 For example, Registre 1673-74, 11 February 1674.

125 Monval, *Le Premier Registre de La Thorillière*, p. 97.

126 Le Second Registre de La Thorillière, 14 and 16 November 1664.

127 Registre 1673-74. On the negotiations involved in the leasing of the Guénégaud and the creation of the new company, see Jan Clarke, *The Guénégaud Theatre in Paris (1673-1680). Volume One: Founding, Design and Production* (Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1998).

production of *Circé*.<sup>128</sup> It may also have been in connection with these events that 20 *livres* 15 *sols* were paid for ‘un dîner d’hier pour la compagnie’ on 2 December 1674.<sup>129</sup> Other payments for meals include 3 *livres* 18 *sols* on 1 January 1677 for a *déjeuner* accompanied by ‘vin de mascon’ (presumably Mâcon),<sup>130</sup> and Champmeslé received 15 *livres* 10 *sols* ‘pour un dîner’ on 29 March 1680.<sup>131</sup> In the latter part of our period we find the following: 13 *livres* 12 *sols* on 10 November 1691 for ‘une buvette et dîner quand on fut chez M. de La Reynie [the Lieutenant of Police] où étaient MM. Rose, La Th, Pois et Dup’;<sup>132</sup> 10 *livres* on 24 July 1696 for ‘d’hier un déjeuner pour MM. Dancourt, Du Périer et autres chez Mme Sorel’;<sup>133</sup> and 25 *livres* on 22 February 1700, ‘pour un dîner à l’Alliance pour MM. Poisson, Du Périer, Baron, et Dufey’.<sup>134</sup> The Alliance appears, in fact, to have been a favoured destination, as we will see.

Sometimes meals were provided to people external to the troupe. Thus, when Mme Mécard submitted her accounts on 2 December 1678, they included ‘un souper donné à M. Deschamps le 13<sup>ème</sup> dudit mois’;<sup>135</sup> and on 21 January 1680, 7 *livres* 10 *sols* were paid ‘pour un dîner fait avec M. Fontaine’.<sup>136</sup> Of perhaps more significance is ‘un dîner avec MM. de I. et de V.’ for which 17 *livres* 2 *sols* were paid on 2 May 1679.<sup>137</sup> The gentlemen in question were Thomas Corneille (known as M. de l’Isle) and Donneau de Visé, and it may well have been at this dinner that the actors encouraged them to write the play based on the ‘affaire des poisons’ that would become *La Devineresse*.<sup>138</sup> And another dinner was given for the same authors after the creation of the Comédie-Française, for which La Thuillerie was reimbursed 20 *livres* on 3 January 1681,<sup>139</sup> shortly before their shortlived *Pierre philosophe* opened on 23 February.

A number of meals are also mentioned in documents related to the actors’ increasingly desperate search for new premises when the Comédie-Française was ordered to quit the Hôtel Guénégaud in 1687. Thus it was recorded on 22 April 1688 that ‘M. de Vigarani, M. D’Orbay, Le Moine, Bricart se sont assemblés avec nous pour examiner les plans de notre salle et bâtiments nouveaux [...]. On leur a donné à dîner à l’Alliance’. A subsequent note records that ‘quatre bouteilles de vin [...] ont été portées à l’Alliance pour le dîner que l’on a donné à M. Vigarani’. The first two gentlemen mentioned are Lully’s collaborator, Carlo Vigarani, whose presence is particularly interesting given the supposed rivalry that existed between the Comédie-Française and the Académie royale de musique, and the architect François d’Orbay, who designed the new theatre. Then, two days later when the carpenter Guerrier came to provide them with an estimate for wood, the actors took him afterwards for ‘une collation à l’Alliance’ with ‘deux bouteilles et du pain’, which he does not seem to have appreciated, ‘étant sorti brusquement’. Other carpenters came to give their estimates on 25 April, one of whom, ‘le sieur Petit’, was also taken to dinner at the Alliance, where those present consumed ‘trois bouteilles, du jambon, des raves et du pain’, the bill for which was only paid on 25 December.<sup>140</sup>

Unsurprisingly, refreshments were provided more frequently when members of the company were away from home. When the troupes travelled to entertain the court or other members of the aristocracy, their subsistence was taken into account. For example, La Grange

128     Registre 1674-75. On the circumstances surrounding the production of *Circé*, see Jan Clarke, *The Guénégaud Theatre in Paris (1673-1680). Volume Three: the Demise of the Machine Play* (Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2007), pp. 102-13.

129     Registre 1674-75. The *cabaretière* Mme Ourlies had received 2 *livres* 5 *sols* for a *déjeuner* on 30 November, but this is less likely to have been related to the *Circé* affair.

130     Registre 1676-77.

131     Registre 1679-80.

132     Petit Registre 1691-92. The actors in question were MM. Rosélis, La Thorillière fils, Paul Poisson, and Du Périer.

133     Petit Registre 1696-97.

134     BMCF, R43, Registre 1699-1700.

135     Registre 1678-79.

136     Registre 1679-80.

137     *ibid.*

138     This is not mere conjecture, since Thomas recorded in his preface to the play that he and de Visé had worked at the actors’ request.

139     Registre 1680-81.

140     La Grange, *État des premières dépenses*, pp. 42-43, 63.

noted with regard to a trip to Villers Cotterêts in September 1664 that *‘la troupe a été nourrie’*.<sup>141</sup> From roughly 1670 onwards, members of the troupe received a per diem of 6 *livres* per day while they were at court, with a total sum being paid subsequent to the trip and divided amongst those that had been there.<sup>142</sup> Thus, on 23 March 1670, La Grange noted the receipt of 468 *livres* *‘pour 81 journées de nourritures’*; and on 3 October of the same year, recorded that they had received 600 *livres* 10 *sols* *‘pour nourritures et gratifications’* following a trip to Chambord.<sup>143</sup> Such payments and divisions of the resulting revenue were also recorded in the Comédie-Française account books, where the company was also careful to note how many actors had been present at court during each visit.<sup>144</sup> And on 18 September 1681, it was further clarified that each actor received, in fact, 7 *livres* 10 *sols*: *‘savoir 6 livres pour ladite nourriture et 1 livre 10 sols pour la chambre’*.<sup>145</sup> That the receipt of such sums was considered a perk is indicated by the minute of the company meeting of 18 November 1689, where it was agreed that, when actors who were due to go to Versailles were replaced by other people (usually because they had to stay in Paris to perform another role), *‘[ils] auront les deux écus comme s’ils avaient été à la cour et les prendront sur les revenants bons et frais extraordinaires lors qu’on recevra les nourritures de MM. les Trésoriers de l’Argenterie’*.<sup>146</sup> And that such income was necessary to the members of the troupe is suggested by the fact that, on 15 March 1694, they stated that they had been obliged to borrow money because they had not received anything from the King for their food and lodgings while at Fontainebleau.<sup>147</sup>

Other references to meals at court are indicated in the following table:

Date	Location	Meal/reason	Recipient	Sum
11 Feb 1673	Saint-Germain	<i>repas</i>	La Grange <sup>148</sup>	
	Saint-Germain	<i>dîner ‘par la compagnie’</i>	La Grange	12 <i>livres</i> 5 <i>sols</i> <sup>149</sup>
25 Feb 1673	Saint-Germain	<i>dîner ‘par la compagnie’</i>	La Grange	17 <i>livres</i> 7 <i>sols</i> <sup>150</sup>
??? Apr 1673	Saint-Germain	<i>dîner</i>	La Grange, Du Croisy, Hubert <sup>151</sup>	
17 Oct 1673	Saint-Germain	<i>dîner</i>	Hubert <sup>152</sup>	
[1675]	Saint-Germain	<i>dîner</i>	Hubert <sup>153</sup>	
7 Jul 1676	Saint-Germain	<i>dîner ‘[pour] voir le roi’</i>		4 <i>livres</i> 10 <i>sols</i> <sup>154</sup>
4 Jun 1679	Saint-Germain	<i>dîner</i> <sup>155</sup>		
18 Jun 1679	Saint-Cloud	<i>collation</i>		2 <i>livres</i> 9 <i>sols</i> <sup>156</sup>
9 Jun 1681	Versailles	<i>‘pour achever de payer le dîner’</i>	Poisson	4 <i>livres</i> 18 <i>sols</i> <sup>157</sup>

<sup>141</sup> La Grange, *Registre*, I, 69.

<sup>142</sup> See Jan Clarke, ‘The Consequences for Molière’s Troupe of its Trips to Court, 1667-73’, in *Molière Re-Envisioned: Twenty-First Century Retakes; Renouveau et Renoulement Moliéresques: reprises contemporaines*, ed. by Mary Jo Muratore (Paris: Hermann, 2018), pp. 31–63, pp. 52–55.

<sup>143</sup> La Grange, *Registre*, I, 112, 118. See also 8 and 27 November 1670; 9 February 1672; 31 March 1680; 22 May, 25 September, 26 December 1681; 5 February, 27 June, 12 October, 29 December 1682; 2 March 1683; 31 December 1684, 26 November 1685 (I, 118, 131, 260, 263, 273, 280, 283, 295, 302, 307, 311, 344, 350).

<sup>144</sup> See, for example *Registre* 1680-81, 19 October 1680 v, 22 October 1680 v, 25 October 1680 v.

<sup>145</sup> *Registre* 1681-82, 28 July 1681 v.

<sup>146</sup> BMCF, R52\_0\_1686, Feuilles d’assemblée (1686).

<sup>147</sup> Feuilles d’Assemblée (1694).

<sup>148</sup> Thierry, *Documents sur le Malade imaginaire*, p. 315.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>152</sup> *Registre* 1673-74.

<sup>153</sup> *Registre* 1674-75, 26 March 1675 v.

<sup>154</sup> *Registre* 1676-77.

<sup>155</sup> *Registre* 1679-80.

<sup>156</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> *Registre* 1681-82.



Date	Location	Meal/reason	Recipient	Sum
23 Nov 1681	Versailles	<i>dîner</i>	Dauvilliers, La Grange, Du Croisy	11 livres 7 sols <sup>158</sup>
14 Dec 1681	Saint-Germain	<i>‘dîner le samedi 6 décembre’</i>		4 livres 10 sols <sup>159</sup>
23 Dec 1685	Versailles	<i>repas</i>		21 livres <sup>160</sup>
15 Jan 1687	‘à la cour’	<i>souper</i>		2 livres 13 sols <sup>161</sup>

Of particular poignancy in the above list is the payment of 4 livres 10 sols on 7 July 1676, ‘pour un dîner d’aujourd’hui à Saint-Germain voir [le roi]’. The Guénégaud company had earlier sent two of its members to Compiègne, where the King was engaged on a military campaign, to request his permission to use professional singers in *Le Triomphe des dames*, and it may well have been at this trip to court that they received his refusal.<sup>162</sup> The payment of 3 livres 16 sols on 9 August 1687 ‘pour un déjeuner du jour du voyage à Versailles’ would seem to suggest that refreshments were sometimes provided before setting off.<sup>163</sup> It is, though, perhaps possible to sense a certain degree of annoyance in the record of the 3 livres paid on 23 February 1694 for a ‘déjeuner de M. Champmeslé avant son départ pour le voyage de Versailles assisté de [Beaucassat ?] décorateur de la troupe’.<sup>164</sup> And more revealing than usual is the 3 livres 12 sols ‘rendu à M. Desmarest [...] qu’il avait payé pour M. de La Thorillière à un dîner à Essonne’.<sup>165</sup>

We also find occasional references relating to the distribution of food and drink at court. For example, at the company meeting of 31 January 1689 it was agreed that:

*Pour éviter la confusion que les laquais apportent dans la distribution des bouteilles à la cour il a été réglé que l’on fera un mémoire des acteurs à qui lesdites bouteilles seront distribuées en même temps que l’on fera le mémoire des carrosses et qu’on aura égard au nombre des acteurs pour la distribution des bouteilles. Et que [illisible] ne les donnera point aux laquais mais aux maîtres.*<sup>166</sup>

Other payments include 2 livres 2 sols ‘pour une bouteille de vin du jour de la cour et trois assistants’;<sup>167</sup> 24 sols ‘pour deux bouteilles de vin à la cour’;<sup>168</sup> and 1 livre 12 sols for ‘deux bouteilles de vin à Versailles et au postillon dû de Lavoy’.<sup>169</sup> And we should also note the 4 sols paid on 4 February 1699, ‘à Champagne pour du pain d’hier à la cour’;<sup>170</sup> and the 2 livres 11 sols 6 deniers paid on 9 December of the same year for items including ‘deux pains du jour de la Noce interrompue à Versailles’.<sup>171</sup>

## PLAY READINGS AND COMPANY MEETINGS

The company also provided refreshments for its members at play selection and other meetings. For example, the not inconsiderable sum of 42 livres 5 sols was paid to Dauvilliers on 7 July 1675,

<sup>158</sup> ibid.

<sup>159</sup> ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Registre, 1685-86. The size of the payment on this occasion suggests that the *repas* in question may have been for the whole troupe.

<sup>161</sup> This payment includes ‘la bouteille’ required for the performance of Baron’s *Coquette*, which was given on that occasion.

<sup>162</sup> On this episode, see Clarke, *Guénégaud III*, p. 326.

<sup>163</sup> Registre 1687-88

<sup>164</sup> BMCF, R31, Petit Registre 1693-94.

<sup>165</sup> BMCF, R33, Registre 1694-95, 20 December 1694.

<sup>166</sup> BMCF, R52\_0\_1689, Feuilles d’assemblée (1689)

<sup>167</sup> Petit Registre 1696-97, 18 December 1696.

<sup>168</sup> Petit Registre 1697-98, 21 November 1697.

<sup>169</sup> ibid., 1 December 1697.

<sup>170</sup> Petit Registre 1698-99.

<sup>171</sup> Registre 1699-1700. Dufresny’s *Noce interrompue* had been given at Versailles on 7 December (ibid., 6 December 1699 v).



*‘pour un repas fait avec la compagnie après la lecture de la pièce de M. Abeille’*.<sup>172</sup> Other payments related to play readings were made on 1 October 1682 and 2 January 1683;<sup>173</sup> 8 October 1691, when tea was provided at a reading of Dancourt’s *Bon soldat*;<sup>174</sup> on 16 November 1692, when those present were treated to a *déjeuner*;<sup>175</sup> on 10 April 1693, when *‘pain et vin’* were served *‘à la lecture de la pièce de M. Brueys’*; and on 18 April 1693.<sup>176</sup> And I have already had occasion to note the payment on 14 June 1696 of 19 *sols* *‘pour Procope pour le Médecin maréchal’*, and suggested that this might have been for a play reading.

Payments for refreshments (usually wine) at other company meetings, known as *assemblées*, occurred on 12 September 1680 and 29 March 1681,<sup>177</sup> and 24 June 1687, when a *déjeuner* was served.<sup>178</sup> On 4 July 1680, we find the payment of 6 *sols* for *‘le vin du compte’*,<sup>179</sup> which presumably refers to the balancing of the books at the end of that day’s performance. A final note with regard to company meetings concerns a food related joke inscribed in the account book on the reverse of the page for 27 December 1689, where the scribe puns egregiously on the homophones *‘amendé’* (fine) and *‘amande’* (almond): *‘Défenses à ceux qui font le compte d’oublier M. et Mlle Rosélis sur peine d’amende à la praline ou lisse au choix de la Crosnier’*.<sup>180</sup>

## CELEBRATIONS

As we have seen, it was sometimes decided to treat the whole troupe to a meal, and such occasions often give the impression of having been veritable celebrations. For example, on 13 January 1673, 44 *livres* were paid *‘pour un dîner aux Bons Enfants’*.<sup>181</sup> According to Albert de La Fizelière, this was one of the best *‘cabarets littéraires’* of the period, patronised by Boileau and Racine amongst others;<sup>182</sup> although, as we have seen, such an establishment should no doubt more properly be described as a *taverne*. Similarly, on 20 April 1684, it was recorded that *‘on a résolu de souper tous ensemble aux dépens de la compagnie mercredi au soir à l’Alliance et de dépenser 90 livres’*. But at the same time, evidently not wanting to get carried away, it was added that: *‘Les buvettes tant des répétitions que des représentations seraient retranchées’*.<sup>183</sup> The Guénégaud and Comédie-Française companies also shared a *galette des rois* on at least two occasions. Thus, on 9 January 1678, 22 *livres* were paid *‘pour le gâteau’*;<sup>184</sup> and on 5 January 1699, when a *‘gâteau des rois’* was shared out at the *assemblée*, the *fête* went to Mlle Godefroy and it was decided that they would all have a meal together on 2 February, where the King and Queen would go free and everyone else would contribute 6 *livres*.<sup>185</sup> Finally, as regards celebrations, on 11 November 1697, the company decided to spend 500 *livres* on public fireworks, wine and music in honour of the peace of Ryswick.<sup>186</sup> We might also include in this category, the purchase of wine *‘du jour de la visite du roi’*, when Louis XIV honoured the Palais-Royal

172      Registre 1675-76. Abeille’s *Coriolan* was premiered at the Hôtel Guénégaud on 24 January 1676.

173      Registre 1682-83.

174      Petit Registre 1691-92.

175      Petit Registre 1692-93.

176      Petit Registre 1693-94. I have, thus far, been unable to identify the play in question by Brueys, which may, of course, have been rejected.

177      Registre 1680-81.

178      Registre 1687-88.

179      Registre 1680-81.

180      Petit Registre 1689-90.

181      Chevalley, ‘Registre d’Hubert’, p. 105.

182      Albert de La Fizelière, *Vins à la mode et cabarets au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 54, 64.

183      BMCF, R52\_0\_1684, Feuilles d’Assemblée (1684).

184      Registre 1677-78.

185      Feuilles d’assemblée (1699).

186      BMCF, R52\_0\_1697, Feuilles d’assemblée (1697).

actors with his presence in July 1663.<sup>187</sup> Similarly, when a group of Turkish dignitaries visited the Comédie-Française in October 1685, 8 *livres* 3 *sols* 6 *deniers* were paid for ‘*menus frais et collation des Turcs*’.<sup>188</sup>

### PAIN BÉNIT

A final, perhaps somewhat oblique note with regard to the provision of comestibles by the troupe is that on at least two occasions, the actors presented the *pain bénit* to their local parish. This is defined by Furetière in his *Dictionnaire universel* as follows: ‘*Pain bénit, est un pain qu’on offre à l’Église pour le bénir, le partager entre les fidèles, et le manger avec dévotion*’. In March 1678, a number of items listed in the final settling of accounts for that season related to this action: 3 *livres* on 20 March 1678, ‘*aux décorateurs qui ont porté le pain bénit*’; 9 *livres* on 22 March 1678, ‘*à payer pour les pains bénits*’, plus 3 *livres* 4 *sols* ‘*pour achever de payer les pains bénits*’; and on 27 March 1678, 14 *livres* 9 *sols* ‘*pour les cierges des pains bénits*’.<sup>189</sup> Similarly, the Comédie-Française, at a meeting on 21 December 1682, recorded its intention to:

... faire la dépense ci-dessus pour le pain bénit que la compagnie rend à la paroisse à la messe de minuit, le pain bénit de 9 *livres*, à l’offrande 22 *livres* 16 *sols*, à l’œuvre un *louis d’or* ou 1 *livre* 8 *sols*, six *cierges* de demi-*livre* chacun, et une *cierge* d’une *livre* à la main, aux *bedeaux* un *écu*.

adding that ‘*Mademoiselle De Brie rendra ledit pain bénit*’.<sup>190</sup> And on 19 March 1682, the accounts submitted by Mme Maincar, who kept the company’s petty cash and liaised with tradespeople, included 42 *livres* ‘*pour les frais du pain bénit*’.<sup>191</sup>

### ONSTAGE

When considering the presence of food and drink onstage, we have similarly to be cautious with regard to our interpretation of the evidence, because here too we cannot always be certain as to how what was purchased was actually used. It is also important to bear in mind that I am discussing here evidence from the account books and other archival documents, rather than basing my analyses on the plays themselves – although these will obviously be brought in as necessary. This can cause some oddities, such as the almost total absence of Robbe’s *Rapinière* (1682), which according to the *Mémoire de Mabelot*, required the display of more foodstuffs than any other work listed.<sup>192</sup> I have broken the topic down into sections, and in each case have selected a number of plays that best illustrate the phenomenon described, with the dates of their first production being given in brackets.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>187</sup> Monval, *Le Premier Registre de La Thorillière*, p. 43. The King had attended a performance of Molière’s *École des femmes* and its *Critique* on 9 July 1663 (La Grange, *Registre*, I, 58).

<sup>188</sup> *Registre*, 1685-86, 22 October 1685. I have not as yet been able to identify these gentlemen, but they were clearly distinguished visitors, since 3 *livres* were paid the following day ‘*au carosse qui mena hier les Turcs*’.

<sup>189</sup> *Registre* 1677-78.

<sup>190</sup> Feuilles d’assemblée (1699).

<sup>191</sup> *Registre* 1681-82

<sup>192</sup> Specified items include ‘*une collation dedans une boîte ou montardier où il y a six bouteilles de rossolis garnies de rubans*’ and ‘*une bandoulière garnie de toutes sortes de gibier et un cochon de lait*’ (Pasquier, *Le Mémoire de Mabelot*, p. 338).

<sup>193</sup> Unless otherwise specified, these dates are taken from A. Joannidès, *La Comédie-Française de 1680 à 1900: dictionnaire général des pièces et des auteurs* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971).

## DRINKS

*Wine*

I will begin by considering drinks. Here again, the beverage most frequently provided was wine. It is perhaps not surprising that wine should have been purchased for the performance of Dancourt's *Vendanges* (1694),<sup>194</sup> where, in scene 5, Margot appears '*avec un pot et des verres*' so that Éraсте can try their product. However, although '*une bouteille de vin*' was purchased for his *Vendanges de Suresne* (1695) when it was performed in 1696,<sup>195</sup> and there is necessarily much discussion of wine in the play, there is no sign in the text of the consumption of wine onstage. According to Henry Carrington Lancaster, wine was, in fact, the motivating force behind the creation of each of these works, since he believes them to have been devised to celebrate the grape harvest.<sup>196</sup> Although in my view it is more likely to have been the arrival in the capital of the new wine. Further evidence to support this hypothesis is provided by Dancourt's *Eaux de Bourbon* (1696), for which wine was also provided,<sup>197</sup> and where an actress appears in the concluding *divertissement* '*avec une robe rouge de médecin, une bouteille à la main*' and sings in praise of the restorative properties of '*un petit doigt de vin nouveau*'.

Wine forms part of the final entertainment, too, in Dancourt's *Opéra de village* (1692), for which '*vin*' and '*deux bouteilles et deux verres*' were provided.<sup>198</sup> This work concludes with Pierrot and Thibaut singing '*la bonne chose que le vin*' (sc. 16), in an episode that would have made far more sense if each were holding a glass and bottle. Of particular interest, though, with regard to this production is the provision on two occasions of '*un verre de limonade*',<sup>199</sup> with it being specified on the first of these occasions that this was for 'M. de Sévigny'. Similarly, in Dancourt's *Foire de Besons* (1695), when M. Griffard orders '*qu'on apporte du vin et des sièges, et qu'on fasse comme il faut les honneurs de la Foire et de la nocé*' (sc. 26), what the company provided for the celebration on 18 September was '*deux carafes d'eau de groseille*' costing 10 *sols*, and '*limonade d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*' was paid for two days later.<sup>200</sup> Might it have been that some actors preferred not to drink wine on stage? The potential dangers of doing so are admirably spelled out in a note of 31 May 1687, which records that 1 *livre* 15 *sols* had been paid '*pour deux bouteilles d'hypocras* [spiced wine] *que l'on n'a point employées au Petit Homme parce que M. De Villiers était trop échauffé à les boire*'.<sup>201</sup> This was Raisin's lost play *Le Petit homme de la foire* (1687); and when it was given again two years later, a presumably more manageable '*bouteille de vin*' was purchased for 1 *livre*.<sup>202</sup> It is, however, striking that, in general, there appears to have been little substitution of one substance for another, for reasons of either economy or prudence, which is a topic to which I will return.

While wine features episodically in the above plays, it is more fundamental to the plot in two others: *La Coupe enchantée* by Champmeslé (1688),<sup>203</sup> and *Le Secret révélé* by Brueys and Palaprat (1690). In scene 6 of the former, Josselin tells Thibaut of a magic cup that is in the possession of the local lord: '*Quand elle est pleine de vin, si la femme de celui qui y boit lui est fidèle, il n'en perd pas une goutte; mais si elle est infidèle, tout le vin répand à terre*'. Later, when Tobie and Griffon try the cup, '*le vin se répand*' (sc. 17). Thibaut, on the other hand, refuses to drink, much to his wife's satisfaction, and

194     Registre 1694-95, 27 November 1694.

195     Petit Registre 1696-97, 23 September 1696.

196     Henry Carrington Lancaster, *A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century*, 9 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1929-1942), Part IV, p. 790.

197     Petit Registre 1696-97, 13 November 1696.

198     Petit Registre 1692-93, 20 and 22 June, 2 July 1692. See also the payment of 10 *sols* on 15 September 1693 '*pour du vin*' in connection with this production (Petit Registre 1693-94).

199     Petit Registre 1692-93, 2 November 1692; Petit Registre 1693-94, 3 December 1693.

200     Petit Registre 1695-96

201     BMCF, R20, Petit Registre 1687-88

202     Petit Registre 1689-90, 23 June 1689.

203     This work is frequently attributed to La Fontaine; see Lancaster, *History*, Part IV, pp. 488-90 on how this came about.

the play concludes with the assurance that the cup will be broken so as not to put more women to the test. It is, then, hardly surprising that 2 *sols* were paid ‘pour un demi septier de vin’ when the play was given on 4 November 1690,<sup>204</sup> and more wine was purchased for a performance on 10 September 1691.<sup>205</sup>

Spilled wine features too in *Le Secret révélé*, where the secret in question concerns the location of Angélique, who has been kidnapped. According to Lancaster, this play was inspired by and written for the comic actor Jean-Baptiste Raisin, who played the gardener Thibault.<sup>206</sup> In scene 19, Thibault and Colin are transporting a ‘quartaut’ [small barrel] of wine in a wheelbarrow, when they notice that it is leaking. Colin licks his fingers, then both drink, first from their hands and then their hats, before upending the barrel to get at the very last drops. They become so drunk that Angélique’s lover, Léandre, and his valet, La Rose, who drinks with them, have no difficulty in discovering that Angélique is, in fact, in Thibault’s garden; while the drunken gardener discusses a hypothetical battle strategy against the Bavarians, using ‘le vin répandu’ to represent the Rhine and the ‘quartaut’ his artillery (sc. 21). It is not surprising, therefore, that the daily expenses for this work included rather more wine than usual – ranging from 18 *sols* 6 *deniers* on 19 and 23 September 1690 (when a ‘cruche’ was also purchased), to 16 *livres* 6 *sols* on 27 and 29 September 1690.<sup>207</sup> We should also note the provision on 29 September of a ‘biscuit’, even though there does not appear to have been a child in the company.

Finally, in *La Dragonne ou Merlin dragon* by Desmares (1686), Merlin, in order to bring about a marriage between Pimandre and Isabelle, arrives with a company of dragoons at the home of the young man’s father, M. de La Serre, who plans to marry her himself. They wreak such havoc that the father is persuaded to agree to the marriage, on condition that the dragoons depart. Much of their misbehaviour has to do with food:

*Ils jettent les sacs d’avoine par la fenêtre du grenier; ils dépendent les andouilles de la cheminée; ils emportent le lard; ils ont coupé la gorge à notre grand coq d’Inde. Ils disent qu’ils vont mettre les poules, et Monsieur, toutes en vie à la broche, si on ne leur trouve de la viande. (sc. 17)*

But all this occurs off stage and is reported, and what the audience actually sees is, in fact, an elaborate drinking ritual, which Merlin describes as their ‘exercice’, and during which the dragoons perform in unison in response to his orders:

Prenez garde à vous, dragons, on va faire l’exercice. | À droite et à gauche, rangez-vous sur deux files.  
| À droite et à gauche, portez la main droite au broc. | Haut le broc. | Portez la main gauche au broc.  
| Posez vos brocs à terre. | Remettez-vous. | Portez la main gauche au bonnet. | Tirez vos verres.  
Portez la main droite au verre. | Portez le verre à la bouche. | Soufflez les verres. | Reprenez vos  
brocs. | Haut le broc. | Joignez les verres au broc. | Chargez. | Remettez vos brocs. | Haut le verre.  
| Ouvrez la bouche. | Portez-y le verre. | Tirez. | Retirez vos verres. | Prenez haleine. | Halte-là. |  
Les hautbois, préparez-vous. | Joignez les verres au broc. (sc. 21)

And when M. de La Serre protests that they are drinking all his wine, they simply recommence.

Inevitably, a large number of payments for wine are to be found in connection with this play: ‘trois demi-septiers’ on 15 November 1688 and 10 February 1689;<sup>208</sup> ‘un dragon extraordinaire avec chopine de vin’ on 20 June 1689;<sup>209</sup> ‘une chopine de vin et un dragon de plus’ on 9 January 1691;<sup>210</sup> and ‘trois pintes de vin à 12 sols’ in April 1693.<sup>211</sup> However, by far the most striking thing about this production

204 Petit Registre, 1690-91. A *septier* was eight *pintes* or almost seven and a half litres.

205 Petit Registre 1691-92.

206 Lancaster, *History*, Part IV, p. 713.

207 Petit Registre, 1690-91 and Registre 1690-91.

208 Petit Registre 1688-89; Petit Registre 1689-90.

209 Petit Registre 1689-90.

210 Petit Registre, 1690-91 and Registre 1690-91.

211 Petit Registre 1693-94, 26 April 1693 v.

is the number of glasses that were furnished: twenty on 21 May 1686, and twelve on 1 July 1686;<sup>212</sup> sixteen on 26 April 1689 (when it is specified that they were ‘*verres de fougère*’);<sup>213</sup> twelve on 9 January 1691;<sup>214</sup> twelve more on 15 January 1692;<sup>215</sup> and eighteen on 23 November 1697;<sup>216</sup> plus unspecified numbers on many other occasions. Not only does this suggest that there must have been breakages – and probably deliberate ones given that glasses were provided for successive performances (e.g. on 30 August 1690, ‘*pour des verres pour deux fois*’),<sup>217</sup> it also reminds us that companies not only had to provide food and drink but also the wherewithal to serve it, which is another topic to which I will return.

### *Soft drinks and coffee*

Having noted the purchase of soft drinks for plays where we would normally have expected to see wine, we turn now to consider a number of plays where soft drinks were *de rigueur*. The first of these is Molière’s *Comtesse d’Escarbagnas* (1672), where, in scene 2, the comtesse asks for a drink of water and, following some discussion with her *suivante* about that new-fangled invention the *soucoupe*, the glass containing the water gets broken. In fact, what seems to have been served is lemonade, for, when the play was given by the Hôtel Guénégaud company, sums were paid for ‘*linge, verre et limonade*’.<sup>218</sup> Similarly, in April 1689, the play’s daily expenses included ‘*un verre de limonade et le verre, 8 sols; linge et paniers, 10 sols*’;<sup>219</sup> and such payments continued (e.g. ‘*un verre et la limonade pour la Comtesse d’Escarbagnas*’).<sup>220</sup> All of which makes me wonder whether Parisian water of the time would actually have been drinkable.

Other plays featured the increasingly fashionable drink, coffee.<sup>221</sup> The first of these was Boursault’s *Fables d’Ésope* (1690), in Act I, scene 2 of which, Léarque offers Ésope a choice of two breakfast drinks, one old and one new: ‘*Peut-être le matin prenez-vous quelque chose: | Un bouillon, du café. Que vous plaît-il des deux?*’. Ésope is cautious: ‘*Avez-vous du café qui soit bon?*’, to which Léarque responds that his coffee is ‘*Merveilleux*’ and ‘*meilleur qu’à la cour*’. Ésope agrees to have some, saying that he likes coffee for its medicinal and invigorating properties: ‘*Il n’est rien de si bon contre le mal de tête. | Quand j’en prends le matin, je suis gai tout le jour*’; but is surprised when Léarque goes off to make it himself. Léarque’s daughter, Euphrosine, on the other hand, says that she rarely drinks coffee (I, 4) and Ésope has to persuade her to join him. According to Lancaster, this was the first occasion when coffee was drunk on stage.<sup>222</sup> When we look at the account book entries related this play, it may seem surprising that the company (to begin with at least) does not appear to have substituted any other liquid for what must have been an expensive and specialist commodity – even for rehearsals. Thus, on the day of the first performance, we find the payment of 5 *livres* 10 *sols* ‘*pour tout le café des répétitions et celui de la représentation d’aujourd’hui*’;<sup>223</sup> and payments for coffee, generally of 10 *sols* 6 *deniers*, occur at the majority of the subsequent performances.<sup>224</sup>

212 Registre 1686-87.

213 Petit Registre 1689-90. Furetière notes in his *Dictionnaire universel* à propos of *fougère* that ‘*elle sert principalement à faire du verre, après qu’on l’a réduite en cendre, à cause de la quantité du sel alkali qu’elle contient*’.

214 Registre 1690-91.

215 Petit Registre 1691-92.

216 Petit Registre 1697-98.

217 Registre 1690-91.

218 Registre 1680-81, 2 August 1680.

219 Petit Registre 1689-90, 19 April 1689 v.

220 Registre 1694-95 and Petit Registre 1694-95, 29 April 1694.

221 On the history of coffee in France, see Ina McCabe Baghdiantz, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism and the Ancien Régime* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008).

222 Lancaster, *History*, Part IV, p. 834, n. 3.

223 Petit Registre 1689-90 and BMCF, R24, Registre 1689-90, 18 January 1690.

224 For example, Petit Registre, 1690-91 and Registre 1690-91, 25 and 27 August 1690.

Having said that the company frequently displayed a certain literal-mindedness (if the script specifies coffee, then coffee will be served),<sup>225</sup> we do find occasional substitutions or supplements with regard to *Ésope*. Thus, on 31 January 1690, 8 *sols* were paid ‘pour une tasse de chocolat’;<sup>226</sup> and 10 March 1690, it was explicitly stated that 1 *livres* 13 *sols* had been paid ‘pour extraordinaire d’orçate au lieu de café jusques et compris demain’.<sup>227</sup> This is probably a deformation of ‘orgeat’, which is defined by the Académie-Française dictionary of 1762 as a ‘sorte de boisson rafraîchissante, faite avec de l’eau, du sucre, des amandes, et de la graine pilée des quatre semences froides’.<sup>228</sup> However, the 19 *sols* paid to Mme Cavreau ‘pour sorbet glacé à Ésope les 25 et 27 août’;<sup>229</sup> probably refers to refreshments for the company, rather than items required for the play. This may also be the case for the 10 *sols* 6 *deniers* paid ‘pour la glace des liqueurs’ on 13 August 1691,<sup>230</sup> which was evidently so unusual that it was felt necessary to add in the margin: ‘X bon article’. And in November 1697, we find evidence that at least some of these drinks were provided by the in-house *limonadière*, when 10 *sols* were paid ‘à Mlle Michel du jour d’Ésope’.<sup>231</sup> Finally, we should note the provision of ‘deux biscuits aux deux enfants’.<sup>232</sup> These would have played ‘Agaton, petit garçon fort beau, fils de Léarque’ and ‘Cléonice, petite fille fort laide, sœur d’Agaton’.

Jean-Baptiste Rousseau’s short play, *Le Café* (1694), on the other hand, is actually set in ‘une salle de café, meublée de plusieurs tables’, where the clients include a poet, ‘révant d’un côté auprès de deux joueurs de dames’; a sleeping *abbé*; and, on the other side of the stage, Coronis and La Sourdière, who ‘disputent ensemble assis, en prenant leur café’. It is, therefore, perhaps surprising that payments for the beverage are to be found in connection with only one performance: on 12 August 1694, when 10 *sols* were paid ‘pour deux tasses de café extraordinaires’.<sup>233</sup> Presumably a coffee allowance was normally included in the production’s daily expenses, which is why this payment was ‘extraordinaire’. And we should also note the payment of 1 *livre* 19 *sols* for ‘faïence rompue le premier jour à la petite pièce’.<sup>234</sup>

#### CROCKERY, LINEN AND GLASSWARE

We have already seen the large number of glasses required for *Merlin dragon*. Glasses were, in fact, purchased with great regularity – no doubt because they were so fragile. Among the earliest such entries are those in what is known as La Thorillière’s first account book, dated 26 and 29 June and 7 December 1663.<sup>235</sup> We also find a large number of references to ‘flacons’, which were bought,<sup>236</sup> exchanged,<sup>237</sup> and repaired;<sup>238</sup> and ‘carafes’,<sup>239</sup> although again it is usually impossible to know how and why these were used. Montfleury’s *Fille capitaine* (1671) even required *callebasses*, which unfortunately were broken and had to be replaced.<sup>240</sup> We should also note the purchase on 28

<sup>225</sup> We find this same literal mindedness in relation to Baron’s *Homme à bonne fortune* (1686), where first Moncade and then his valet, Pasquin, perfume themselves with *eau de fleur d’oranger*, causing the company regularly to purchase quantities of the product. See, for example, 3 March 1686 (Registre, 1685–86); 26 July 1691, when 16 *sols* 6 *denier* were paid ‘pour une chopine d’eau de fleur d’oranger’ (Petit Registre 1691–92); and 14 February 1699 (Petit Registre 1698–99).

<sup>226</sup> Petit Registre 1689–90.

<sup>227</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* (Paris: veuve de B. Brunet, 1762).

<sup>229</sup> Petit Registre, 1690–91 and Registre 1690–91, 15 September 1690.

<sup>230</sup> Petit Registre 1691–92.

<sup>231</sup> Petit Registre 1697–98, 12 November 1697.

<sup>232</sup> Petit Registre 1698–99, 14 February 1699.

<sup>233</sup> Registre 1694–95 and Petit Registre 1694–95.

<sup>234</sup> Registre 1694–95, 4 August 1694.

<sup>235</sup> Monval, *Le Premier Registre de La Thorillière*, pp. 37, 38, 90.

<sup>236</sup> For example, Registre 1684–85, 27 and 28 November 1684.

<sup>237</sup> For example, Registre, 1685–86, 3 October and 14 December 1685.

<sup>238</sup> For example, Registre 1687–88, 28 August 1687.

<sup>239</sup> For example, Petit Registre, 1690–91, 5 February 1691.

<sup>240</sup> Registre 1689–90, 9 July 1689. This work entered the Comédie-Française repertoire after having been created at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.



November 1689 of ‘12 assiettes, 6 cuillères, 6 fourchettes et 6 couteaux’,<sup>241</sup> and of the payment of 15 *sols* on 6 March 1693 for ‘blanchissage de nappes et serviettes’.<sup>242</sup>

With regard to specific plays, when Rosimond’s *Volontaire* (1676) was performed, sums were regularly paid ‘pour la vaisselle et le linge’.<sup>243</sup> This must relate to scene 9, where a *traiteur* and his employees appear ‘chargé [sic] de viandes et de bouteilles’ that will compose a *souper*, although there is no reference in the text to the food being actually consumed. We should also note the payment on 8 March 1676 of 28 *sols* ‘au cabaretier’ in connection with this work,<sup>244</sup> although again we cannot be sure whether this was for rehearsals or the performance. However, probably the most interesting serving item relates to Pierre Corneille’s *Rodogune*, where, in Act V, scene 4, Cléopâtre commits suicide by drinking poisoned wine that is brought to her in a ‘coupe’. When *Rodogune* was performed at the Comédie-Française in the late 1680s and 1690s, we find regular payments for the ‘louage de la coupe’,<sup>245</sup> and even on one occasion for the ‘louage de la coupe et soucoupe’.<sup>246</sup> And on 19 September 1690, it was specified that the *coupe* in question was ‘de vermeil’.<sup>247</sup> During the earlier seasons, the amount paid is 2 *livres* but, curiously, from 1698 onwards, this drops to 1 *livre*.<sup>248</sup> Given that *Rodogune* was performed between two and seven times per season between 1680 and 1700, it might seem strange that the Comédie-Française should have preferred to hire a cup rather than buy one of its own. And when Mme Maincar reported to the Guénégaud company, at Easter 1680, that she had spent 90 *livres* for a ‘tasse de vermeil doré’, this might have been for *Rodogune*.<sup>249</sup> On the other hand, companies did sometimes offer costly gifts, such as the two ‘gobelets de vermeil dorés’ the Comédie-Française gave M. Dionis, ‘premier chirurgien de Mme la Dauphine’, who had taken care of Raisin when he had been injured on his way to Versailles.<sup>250</sup> There is, therefore, no guarantee that Mme Mécard’s cup was, indeed, that of Cléopâtre. And even if it had been, it was clearly either lost or rendered unserviceable at some point, and the Comédie-Française opted not to replace it.

A final note on the question of crockery and glasses: the *petit registre* for 1689-90 includes on the page for the first performance of Aubry’s *Démétrius* (1689), a curious little doodle that resembles a carafe plus twelve circles in three rows that could very well represent glasses, adjacent to the description ‘frais extraordinaires’.<sup>251</sup> However, since the play is lost, we have no way of determining whether such items would, indeed, have been required for its performance.

## FOOD

### *Cheese in Molière*

Turning now to consider food onstage, I will begin with a section I have classified as ‘cheese in Molière’, and which would appear to enjoy the status of a standalone category, given that there is no mention of cheese in connection with any other author. The first such example occurs on 10 May 1676, when 5 *sols* were paid ‘pour fromage’ for *Le Dépit amoureux*.<sup>252</sup> This presumably relates to Act IV, scene 4, where Gros-Jean and Marinette return the gifts each has given the other, culminating in the following declaration from Gros-Jean:

<sup>241</sup> Feuilles d’assemblée (1689).

<sup>242</sup> Petit Registre 1692-93.

<sup>243</sup> For example, Registre 1675-76, 10, 13 and 15 March 1676.

<sup>244</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>245</sup> For example, Petit Registre, 1690-91, 5 July 1690.

<sup>246</sup> Registre 1689-90, 3 February 1690.

<sup>247</sup> Registre 1690-91.

<sup>248</sup> For example, Petit Registre 1698-99, 25 July 1698. On 15 May 1699, this sum is paid for the ‘soucoupe’ (Registre 1699-1700), which is presumably an error or omission.

<sup>249</sup> Registre 1679-80, 7 April 1680 v.

<sup>250</sup> BMCF, R52\_0\_1688, Feuilles d’assemblée (1688), 5 April.

<sup>251</sup> Petit Registre 1689-90, 10 June 1689.

<sup>252</sup> Registre 1676-77

J'oubliais d'avant-hier ton morceau de fromage;

Tiens: je voudrais pouvoir rejeter le potage

Que tu me fis manger, pour n'avoir rien à toi.

*Le Médecin malgré lui* constitutes another instance, for when it was performed on 28 November 1690, 2 *sols* were paid '*pour du fromage*';<sup>253</sup> and we also find payments for cheese at performances on 8 February 1692 and 24 November 1699.<sup>254</sup> This would no doubt have been required for Act III, scene 2, where Sganarelle gives some very special cheese to Perrin:

Sganarelle: Tenez, voilà un morceau de fromage, qu'il faut que vous lui fassiez prendre.

Perrin: Du fromage, Monsieur?

Sganarelle: Oui, c'est un fromage préparé, où il entre de l'or, du corail, et des perles, et quantité d'autres choses précieuses.

Perrin: Monsieur, je vous sommes bien obligés: et j'allons li faire prendre ça tout à l'heure.

More curious, though, is the payment of 1 *livre* 2 *sols* for '*papier, paille, fromage, etc*' on 4 November 1698,<sup>255</sup> when Molière's *Sganarelle ou le Cocu imaginaire* was given with Dancourt's *Chevalier à la mode*, since I have not been able to identify a need for cheese in either of these works. And again, I would suggest that such payments stem from a certain literal-mindedness – particularly since there is no evidence that the cheese in question was actually eaten, so that it could, presumably, have been represented by some kind of prop.

## FEASTS AND SNACKS

### *Le Festin de pierre*

There are, of course, a number of plays where food plays a fundamental role, perhaps chief among which is *Le Festin de pierre* – Thomas Corneille's verse adaptation of Molière's prose play, which entered the Guénégaud repertoire in 1677. A number of entries in the account book relate to the provision of food in connection this work. These include payments to the *cabaretier*, M. Massé/Docquin,<sup>256</sup> including some where it is explicitly stated that he had supplied refreshments for the rehearsals.<sup>257</sup> Bread and wine were also provided on performance days,<sup>258</sup> and probably constituted refreshments for the workers who must have been employed on the production, given that it involved six different decors. The food for the feast, on the other hand, is referred to as the '*repas*',<sup>259</sup> or, later, as the '*festin*',<sup>260</sup> or the '*collation*'.<sup>261</sup> Thus, we find in the statement of the daily *frais extraordinaires* at the time of the play's first production: '*repas, 3 livres*', and '*pain et vin, 15 sols*'.<sup>262</sup> Of particular interest, then, is the payment during the play's preparation of 25 *livres* '*au nommé M. Jumel pour les viandes contrefaites du Festin*'.<sup>263</sup> And when when Mme Mécard submitted her accounts on 21

<sup>253</sup> Petit Registre, 1690-91 and Registre 1690-91.

<sup>254</sup> Petit Registre 1691-92; Registre 1699-1700.

<sup>255</sup> Petit Registre 1698-99.

<sup>256</sup> For example, Registre 1677-78, 11 May 1677.

<sup>257</sup> For example, Registre 1676-77, 17 January 1677.

<sup>258</sup> *ibid.*, 12 and 16 February 1677.

<sup>259</sup> For example, *ibid.*, 11 May 1677.

<sup>260</sup> For example, Petit Registre, 1690-91, 23 June 1690 v.

<sup>261</sup> For example, Petit Registre 1693-94, 3 July 1693 v.

<sup>262</sup> Registre 1676-77, 28 February 1677 v.

<sup>263</sup> *ibid.*, 12 February 1677 v.

August 1677, they included 25 *livres* ‘pour les viandes feintes du Festin de pierre’.<sup>264</sup> It is clear, then, that some of the feast was designed to be eaten – necessarily, since a stage direction describes how Sganarelle ‘prend un morceau dans un des plats qu’on apporte, et le met dans sa bouche’ (Act IV, scene 7) – but that the remainder was just for show. This demonstrates that, if the company may have been literal-minded in its use of cheese, it was capable of more theatrical (and presumably cost-saving) solutions in other areas.

From 1685, the daily expenses of *Le Festin de pierre* also included 5 *sols* ‘au maître d’hôtel’,<sup>265</sup> which presumably refers to the person who served the feast.<sup>266</sup> This person is also mentioned in the daily expenses of *Le Festin de pierre* in 1690, which were as follows: ‘pour le festin, fleurs, pain et vin’, 3 *livres* 5 *sols*;<sup>267</sup> and in 1694, these had risen to 4 *livres*.<sup>268</sup> The 1682 Brissart engraving of the feast shows a roast chicken in prime position; it is interesting then to see that, on 12 October 1692, 1 *livre* 5 *sols* were paid ‘pour une poularde’.<sup>269</sup> A final thing to note in connection with *Le Festin de pierre* is the large number of glasses that were purchased from 1690 onwards, sometimes to replace ones that had been broken,<sup>270</sup> but otherwise as part of the regular expenses of the production.<sup>271</sup> This leads me to surmise that it was part of the stage business incorporated into the play that one of the characters – almost certainly Sganarelle – broke his glass in fright at the appearance of the statue.

Another play to which a *festin* is integral is, of course, Molière’s *Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670). In 1672, the daily expenses for ‘bougie, chandelle et collation’ ranged between 7 *livres* 12 *sols* and 10 *livres* 10 *sols*,<sup>272</sup> although sometimes these were paid weekly, in which case they ranged between 13 *livres* and 14 *livres* 5 *sols*.<sup>273</sup> We should also note the payment on 21 August 1672 of 1 *livre* 10 *sols* for ‘le linge de la collation’; on 16 August 1672, it was specified that the ‘vaisselle et linge’ on that occasion had been provided by the box-office manager, Mme Provost,<sup>274</sup> and similar payments continued throughout the remainder of that season. Payments of note at the Hôtel Guénégaud in connection with *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* include 4 *livres* 4 *sols* to the *cabaretière* Mme Ourlies on 11 September 1674.<sup>275</sup> And on 21 June 1676, it was recorded that the ‘frais de la collation’ were 1 *livre* 2 *sols* 6 *deniers*.<sup>276</sup> This proved, however, to be a little low, for, on 26 July 1676, 2 *livres* 6 *sols* were paid for the ‘surplus de la collation’,<sup>277</sup> and the cost of the ‘collation’ was listed at 2 *livres* 10 *sols*, plus 10 *sols* for the ‘linge de la collation’ in the statement of the production’s *frais extraordinaires*.<sup>278</sup> The cost of the *collation* in the latter years of our period settled at between 3 *livres* 5 *sols* and 3 *livres* 10 *sols*,<sup>279</sup> which interestingly does not represent a major reduction since the Palais-Royal and Guénégaud days.

In September 1677, it was specified that the *collation* for the play was provided by the company’s concierge (and later *décorateur-machiniste*), Dufors, at which time the cost was 3 *livres* 10

264 Registre 1677-78.

265 Registre, 1685-86, 16 January 1686.

266 A *maître d’hôtel* is also listed in the document published by Henry Carrington Lancaster as *Actors’ Roles at the Comédie Française according to the Répertoire des comédies françaises qui se peuvent jouer en 1685* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1953), where he conjectures (wrongly) (p. 52) that this term may describe Sganarelle, who is unaccountably missing from the cast list. It is, though, unlikely to refer to the ‘laquais’ La Villette, since that was a speaking role and the *maître d’hôtel* received only 5 *sols* per performance, which was the going rate for a simple *figurant*.

267 Petit Registre, 1690-91, 23 June 1690 v.

268 Petit Registre 1693-94, 9 February 1694 v.

269 Petit Registre 1692-93. The *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* of 1694 defines *poularde* as ‘une jeune poule engraisée’.

270 For example, Registre 1690-91, 5 September 1690.

271 For example, Petit Registre 1693-94, 30 August 1693.

272 Chevalley, ‘Registre d’Hubert’, 24 May 1672 (p. 12), 16 August 1672 (p. 45).

273 *ibid.*, 29 May 1672 (p. 14), 21 August 1672, p. 47.

274 *ibid.*, pp. 45, 47.

275 Registre 1674-75.

276 Registre 1676-77.

277 *ibid.*, 16 October 1676 v.

278 *ibid.*

279 Petit Registre, 1690-91, 23 September 1690 v; Petit Registre 1689-90, 30 June 1689.

*sols*.<sup>280</sup> And twenty years later, Dufors was paid on 23 February 1697 for organizing the ‘*blanchissage du festin du Bourgeois*’.<sup>281</sup> Returning to 1677, we also find a payment on 17 September of 4 *livres* 8 *sols* to M. Massé,<sup>282</sup> which may have been for the rehearsals of the dancers, since these are listed prominently in the account of the daily expenses given at that time by La Grange: ‘*Frais ordinaires de surcroît nécessaires pour la représentation de chaque jour, en danseurs, musique, assistants, festin, etc., 34 livres*’.<sup>283</sup> And on 16 October 1682, it was specifically stated that the wine provided had been for the ‘*répétition des marcheurs*’.<sup>284</sup> And finally, we must not forget the intriguing payment of 4 *livres* 18 *sols* 6 *deniers* on 10 May 1698 for ‘*deux mains de papier, de la paille, et six œufs payés aux frais d’hier*’,<sup>285</sup> on which day *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* had been given.

While on the subject of Molière, we should note that *L’Avare* may also have included a collation, since the expenditure on 3 June 1672 included 4 *livres* 15 *sols* ‘*pour les nourritures*’,<sup>286</sup> and on 16 July 1693, 7 *sols* were paid ‘*pour pain et vin*’,<sup>287</sup> although again this latter payment may have been for refreshments. But if food were provided, it would no doubt have been required for Act III, scenes 7 and 8, where Harpagon apologises to Mariane for not having provided ‘*un peu de collation*’, and Cléante responds that, supposedly acting on his father’s behalf, he has ‘*fait apporter ici quelques bassins d’oranges de la Chine, de citrons doux et de confitures*’, which will be served in the garden.

### *L’Inconnu*

An outdoor *collation* features too in *L’Inconnu* by Thomas Corneille and Donneau de Visé, which was premiered at the Hôtel Guénégaud in November 1675. This occurs in Act II, scene 7, when an elaborate tableau of pastoral and mythological characters is a means of presenting a *collation*, largely composed of fruit, to the heroine and her guests, and I have suggested that this was intended to be reminiscent of the various *collations* that featured as part of the *Divertissement de Versailles* of 1674 as described by Félibien.<sup>288</sup> It is curious, then, that there is no reference to food in the list of the daily expenses for *L’Inconnu* at the time of its creation or in the following seasons, although we do find payments for refreshments on 29 May 1676 and 27 January 1679,<sup>289</sup> which were probably for rehearsals for revivals. We know, though, that there must have been a *collation*, how much it cost, and also that at one point it featured chocolate (the drink), because the Comédie-Française decided on 22 November 1688 ‘*de retrancher la collation de l’Inconnu et de payer les 3 livres 5 sols qui ont été dépensés la dernière fois qu’on a joué la pièce à la charge qu’on ne dépensera plus en chocolat ni autres choses à l’avenir*’.<sup>290</sup> This was at a time when the company was desperately economising to put aside sufficient money to build a new theatre, and chocolate was clearly considered an unnecessary luxury. Nevertheless, when *L’Inconnu* was given on 25 March 1691 (two years after the new theatre had opened), it was recorded that ‘*sept verres de limonade et quatre tasses de café*’ had been provided.<sup>291</sup> And coffee was provided at least twice more, on 3 and 27 October 1691,<sup>292</sup> plus, on the last of these occasions, ‘*rosade*’, which was a rose flavoured beverage. We also know that, in accordance with the text, the *collation* included fruit, since payments for ‘*fleurs et fruits*’ were recorded several

280 Registre 1677-78, 14 September 1677 v.

281 Petit Registre 1696-97.

282 Registre 1677-78.

283 La Grange, *Registre*, I, 197.

284 Registre 1682-83.

285 Petit Registre 1698-99.

286 Chevalley, ‘Registre d’Hubert’, p. 16.

287 Petit Registre 1693-94.

288 André Félibien, *Les Divertissements de Versailles donnés par le roi au retour de la conquête de la Franche-Comté en l’année 1674* (Paris, J.-B. Coignard, 1674), in *Les Fêtes de Versailles: chroniques de 1668 et 1674*, ed. by Martin Meade (Aubenas: Dédale, Maisonneuse et Larose, 1994); see Jan Clarke and Matthieu Franchin, ‘Introduction’, in Corneille, *L’Inconnu*, pp. 732–33.

289 Registre 1676-77; Registre 1678-79

290 Feuilles d’assemblée (1688)

291 Petit Registre, 1690-91.

292 Petit Registre 1691-92.

times, such as on 21 December 1691,<sup>293</sup> when it was again accompanied by chocolate, since 2 *livres* for ‘*du chocolat pour l’Inconnu*’ were paid to the the *limonadière*, Mlle Michel, the following day.

### *A flurry of comedies*

In fact, many more comedies required *collations* than is generally supposed. These included Rosimond’s one-act comedy, *La Dupe amoureuse* (1670), which had been premiered at the Marais theatre and brought to the Guénégaud by actors from that troupe when the Guénégaud company was founded. This work is largely organized around a *souper* that the elderly Polidore offers to Isabelle. It is prepared for in scene 6, when Polidore sends his valet, Gusman, to order the meal from the *traiteur*. In scene 12, he orders that it be served and, in the following scene, is assured by a ‘*garçon de cabaret*’ that all is ready. A veritable *coup de théâtre* occurs in scene 14 when, by means of a scene change, ‘*la chambre paraît, et le souper est servi*’. Polidore, Gusman and the ‘*garçon*’ discuss the quality of the wine, which they all taste. The meal is, though, interrupted by the arrival of Isabelle’s lover, Lidamant, disguised as a jealous cousin, causing Polidore to rise from the table. Carrille (Lidamant’s valet) claims to find the *souper* suspicious, and Isabelle protects Polidore and Gusman by pretending they are her servants. Lidamant and Carrille then proceed to eat all the food and drink all the wine, leaving nothing for Polidore and Gusman, with the former being ordered to serve them and the latter having wine thrown in his face (sc. 16). In the Guénégaud account books, we find in connection with this production, payments for the ‘*collation de la petite pièce*’ on 11 and 14 April 1679,<sup>294</sup> plus, on the second of these occasions, a reference to the ‘*vin des répétitions*’.

Unfortunately, we have no textual information regarding the next play I will consider: the anonymous *Gentilhomme meunier*, which was premiered at the Hôtel Guénégaud on 9 January 1679, and which does not appear to be extant. It is clear, though, that it also featured a *collation*, since 1 *livre* 1 *sol* were paid on 4 June 1679 for the ‘*collation de la petite pièce*’, and 2 *livres* 4 *sols* on 1 September 1679 for the ‘*collation de la petite pièce pour deux fois*’.<sup>295</sup> The account books do, in fact, tell us rather more than this for, on 13 June 1679, 4 *livres* were paid ‘*pour une boîte de sapin pour enfermer le bassin de fruits*’, and Mme Mécard’s accounts included 45 *livres* for ‘*le bassin de fruit du Gentilhomme meunier*’.<sup>296</sup> This would seem to suggest that, like the ‘*viandes contrefaites*’ supplied for *Le Festin de pierre*, this fruit too was ‘*feinte*’, although it may well have been supplemented with genuine fruit that could have been eaten during the performance.

The next play I will consider rejoices in three titles; it is Poisson’s *Pipeurs ou les femmes coquettes*, which is also referred to in the account books as *Fructus belli*. It was premiered at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1670 and entered the Comédie-Française repertoire in 1680 at the time of the union of the troupes. Flavio, an Italian living in Paris, thinks his wife, Flavie, is wasting his money, and a *collation* she offers to her friends constitutes a major feature of the work’s dénouement. In Act V, scene 4, Flavie’s servant, Aymée, describes to her mistress what she has prepared:

un vin de Bar-sur-Aube.

Et du vrai Saint Thierry; d’un dindon à la daube

Avec des pieds de porc à la sainte Menchou,

Un saucisson.

Flavie gives precise instructions as to how the meal is to be served: ‘*vous ferez en sorte qu’on ne fasse qu’un plat, et que l’on nous apporte, | La table toute prête, et verre, et vin dessus.*’ Then, ‘*Quand je t’appellerai; tu viendras le servir; | Avec l’hypocras, les eaux, la limonade*’. However, when her friends arrive, all they

<sup>293</sup>        *ibid.*

<sup>294</sup>        *Registre* 1679-80.

<sup>295</sup>        *ibid.*

<sup>296</sup>        *ibid.*

want to eat and drink is ‘*des cornets* [wafers] [...] *avec de l’hypocras*’, because, according to Sainte-Hermine, ‘*la viande me fuit*’ (sc. 5); at which news, Aymée is not best pleased: ‘*Il est jeudi, voilà de la viande perdue*’ (sc. 6) (because since the Middle Ages, Catholics had not been permitted to eat meat on Fridays). In the following scene, the table is brought in with the refreshments as requested, and the women discuss the wine:

Flavie: Aimes-tu l’hypocras, ma bonne!

Aminte: Hé, qui le hait?

Flavie: Ce n’est pas moi.

Sainte-Hélène: Ni moi.

Sainte-Hermine: J’en bois comme du lait.

This must, presumably, be a comic exaggeration, given that this was the beverage that caused problems for De Villiers when he had to drink it on stage. Flavie issues the order: ‘*Servez les abricots, et le mets suprenant*’, which turns out to be a dish full of her husband’s money, which fortunately, he manages to seize, just as the women are about to help themselves to its contents, thereby regaining control of his household. Entries in the account books relating to *Les Femmes coquettes* include an unspecified sum for the ‘*vin de la répétition [et] collation de la grande pièce*’ on 17 October 1680;<sup>297</sup> 2 livres 5 sols ‘*donné pour les liqueurs*’ on 1 October 1692, and 8 livres 3 sols for ‘*deux soucoupes et [pour] blanchir les bassins*’, plus 9 sols ‘*pour deux bouteilles et des plumes*’ on 5 October 1692.<sup>298</sup>

Poisson’s *Fous divertissants* (1680) also included a *collation*; and a ‘*festin*’ is one of the requirements specified in the *Mémoire de Mabelot*.<sup>299</sup> Payments in this respect include 1 livre 18 sols on 15 November 1680 for the ‘*vin de la collation*’.<sup>300</sup> This scene was clearly popular because Dancourt later used it as the key episode of his one-act comedy *Le Bon soldat*, which we will consider in a moment. A collation featured too in Brécourt’s *Noce de village*, which had been premiered at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1666, and which entered the Comédie-Française repertoire in 1682. This was not, though, as significant as in some of the other works we have considered it, with it merely being stated in the text that ‘*on fait paraître une table servi rustiquement*’ (sc. 6). Nonetheless, payments of 2 livres 5 sols or 2 livres 10 sols were made for the ‘*collation*’, ‘*le festin de la noce*’ or ‘*un déjeuner*’ at several performances in 1682 and 1689.<sup>301</sup>

Dancourt’s *Bon soldat*, adapted from Poisson’s *Fous divertissants*, was premiered at the Comédie-Française in 1691. As in the source text, Angélique is about to marry the old and jealous M. Grogard, despite being in love with and loved by Léandre. M. Grogard departs on business, and Angélique is alone in his house with her servant, Jacinte, when a soldier arrives, who has apparently been billeted on them. He asks for his *souper*, but has to go to bed hungry, because, as Jacinte tells him: ‘*Nous n’avons pain ni vin*.’ (sc. 12). Shortly afterwards, a *rôtisseur* arrives with wine and meat that have been sent by Léandre, and Jacinte tells him to take it all (‘*deux oiseaux de rivière, | Un levraut, deux faisans, trois perdrix*’) into the kitchen (sc. 14). Léandre arrives and he and Angélique are about to eat when they hear a knock at the door and the latter orders that the whole table, complete with food, be put into a ‘*grande armoire*’. Grogard enters and wants to eat but is told that they have nothing. Upon which, the soldier re-appears and claims to be able to order the devil to bring him food:

297 Registre 1680-81.

298 Petit Registre 1692-93.

299 Pasquier, *Le Mémoire de Mabelot*, p. 336.

300 Registre 1680-81.

301 Registre 1682-83, 24 October 1682; Petit Registre 1689-90 and Registre 1689-90, 13, 15 and 17 October 1689.



Démon, qu'en cet instant se trouve en cette armoire,  
 Deux oiseaux de rivière, un levraut, trois perdrix,  
 Et que ce rôl là soit le meilleur de Paris,  
 Qu'on ajoute à cela deux faisans, je te prie. (sc. 17)

The servants bring the table and food from the *armoire*, plus wine and glasses, and they all tuck in, after which the table is removed and the love plot is resolved, thanks to further intervention by the soldier. Given the significance of food here, it is not surprising that the information in the account books is more detailed than is often the case. Thus, among the items for which payment was made on 10 October 1691 were a '*poulet, 15 sols*'; a '*tourte, 20 sols*'; and '*fleurs pain et salade, 9 sols 6 deniers*'.<sup>302</sup> Subsequently, though, there is only mention of the '*collation*'.<sup>303</sup> We might also mention that here, as in *Les Femme coquettes*, the table is brought on and taken off stage already laden, whereas in *La Dupe amoureuse* it is revealed by means of a scene change. These are clearly different responses to the problem of how best to serve a meal on stage and then clear it away, which *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* solves so brilliantly.

Another one-act play to feature food is Regnard's *Bourgeois de Falaise* (1696). It is, though, slightly different, since the episode is primarily decorative and is not directly related to the plot of the play. In scene 2, a *rôtisseur* and a wine merchant arrive to deliver goods for a wedding feast: '*M. Grasset, tenant un plat de rôl; M. La Montagne, tenant un panier de bouteilles*'. The *rôtisseur* expresses his pride in his wares:

Voilà douze poulets à la pâte nourris;  
 Autant de pigeons gras, dont les culs sont farcis;  
 Poules de Cùx, pluviers, une demi-douzaine  
 De râles de genet, six lapins de garenne;  
 Deux jeunes marcassins, avec quatre faisans:  
 Le tout est couronné de soixante ortolans;  
 Et des perdrix, morbleu! d'un fumet admirable.  
 Sentez plutôt. Quel baume!

Merlin is unimpressed, responding that all his meat comes from the '*plaine Saint-Denis*' and that he keeps rabbits in his cellar. This does not, though, stop him from helping himself to a couple of partridges. He next accuses the wine merchant of covering his bottles excessively thickly and proceeds to demonstrate his point: '*Il défait une bouteille couverte de trois ou quatre osiers, en sorte qu'il n'en demeure qu'un fort petit*', before slipping three bottles into his pockets. Payments related to this production include 6 livres 10 sols '*pour du ruban et des bouteilles*', 2 livres '*pour du vin et augmentation des robes et poulets*', and 1 livre '*pour des poulets*'.<sup>304</sup> The payment on ribbon is unusual in this context and causes me to wonder whether it might not have been used to simulate the 'osier' with which the bottle Merlin undoes was covered.

<sup>302</sup> Petit Registre 1691-92

<sup>303</sup> *ibid.*, 12 and 14 October 1691.

<sup>304</sup> Petit Registre 1696-97, 14 and 19 June, 16 July 1696.

### Sweetmeats

Having examined plays that required the provision of meals, I would now like to consider two plays that required not meals but sweets. The first is Baron's *La Coquette ou la fausse prude* (1686), where, in Act IV, scene 17, Cidalise tries to bribe the Petit Chevalier (played at the creation by Baron's own son) by the offer of: '*des confitures tout plein vos poches, et un louis d'or, pour aller jouer à la paumé*'. In January and February 1687, these '*confitures*' seem to have consisted of candied chestnuts, for we find payments of 11 *livres 15 sols* for '*frais extraordinaires de la pièce et marrons*', and of 4 *livres 10 sols* '*pour une livre de marrons et un carosse*'.<sup>305</sup> Elsewhere, though, they are simply referred to as '*confitures*'.<sup>306</sup>

*La Coquette* also featured wine when, in Act V, scene 8, Pasquin helps himself to a bottle, which is identified in the following scene as being '*de Champagne*'. And when, in scene 11, Céphise faints, he offers her '*un peu de vin de Champagne*'. Payments in this respect include 3 *livres 9 sols* '*pour trois bouteilles de vin pour les trois jours*' on 31 December 1686,<sup>307</sup> and the expenses for the play listed in April 1689 also included '*une bouteille de vin*'.<sup>308</sup> That the wine the company purchased was (at least some of the time) Champagne, is indicated by the list of the play's expenses in August 1690, which includes 1 *livre 3 sols* for '*une bouteille de vin de Champagne et un verre*'.<sup>309</sup> However, on 3 August 1696, we find a payment of 5 *sols* for '*une carafe de limonade*',<sup>310</sup> which may have been a substitute, although this would seem unlikely given the context of the scene.

In Act V, scene 1 of *La Coquette*, Marton instructs Pasquin to help her lay the table: '*Va prendre le couvert qui est dans cette armoire*'. He responds, '*Combien apporterai-je de couverts?*', to which the answer is five. These '*couverts*' were hired by the company, which paid 3 *livres* '*pour quatre fois de couvert*' on 1 January 1687.<sup>311</sup> *La Coquette* was given at court in 1689, at which time 15 *sols* were paid '*pour le couvert de La Coquette à la cour*'; and it was also found necessary to pay 19 *sols 6 deniers* '*pour une manne et un panier pour mettre le couvert*'.<sup>312</sup> Finally, having said that the Petit Chevalier was originally played by Baron fils, it is interesting to see the conjunction of two payments in April 1693, when the frais included 2 *sols* for a '*biscuit*' and 3 *livres* for Lolotte.<sup>313</sup> This was Charlotte Desmares, the niece of and later successor to Marie Desmares (Mlle Champmeslé), who began her career as a child actor, and who presumably played the role of the Petit Chevalier '*en travest*'.<sup>314</sup>

The final play I will consider is Hauteroche's *Dame invisible ou l'esprit folet* (1684), in which Angélique and Lisette play tricks on Scapin and Pontignan by means of a secret door. During one of these episodes (Act II, scene 7), they take Scapin's money and fill his purse with sweets, of which Lisette has a convenient supply: '*J'ai d'anis bien musqués une boîte remplie*', causing Scapin to exclaim when he discovers the substitution: '*On a tout nettoyé, | Mon argent et le vôtre en dragée employée*' (sc. 9). The Académie-Française dictionary of 1694 reminds us that *anis* '*se dit aussi, d'une dragée où il y a de la graine d'anis*'. *Anis de Verdun*. *anis commun*. *anis musqué*, and we repeatedly find payments for '*dragées*' in connection with of this work,<sup>315</sup> and, more rarely, to '*confiture*', and '*confiserie*'.<sup>316</sup>

305      Registre 1686-87, 22 January, 5 February 1687.

306      Registre, 1688-89, 7 September 1688.

307      Registre 1686-87.

308      Petit Registre 1689-90, 26 April 1689 v.

309      Petit Registre, 1690-91, 12 August 1690 v.

310      Petit Registre 1696-97

311      Registre 1686-87.

312      Petit Registre 1688-89, 16 and 30 January 1689.

313      Petit Registre 1693-94, 14 April 1693 v.

314      We also find Mlle Lolotte's name in the account book for this season in connection with Pradon's *Régulus* (ibid., 30 June 1693), which suggests that she may also have taken over from Baron fils the role of '*le jeune Attilius*' in that work.

315      For example, Petit Registre 1689-90, 6 May 1689 v; Petit Registre, 1690-91, 17 August 1690.

316      Petit Registre 1693-94, 1 July 1693 v, 21 July 1693 v.

So, what conclusions can we draw from this survey of the presence of food and drink in the lives of those companies for which we have records? To my mind, a number of things stand out. The first of these is what I have deemed a kind of literal-mindedness in the provision of items to be consumed on stage, so that only occasionally do we find the use of artificial food as a prop, or even the substitution of other substances. Second, it seems to me that drinks in particular (both on stage and off) became increasingly sophisticated as the period progressed, with the introduction of chocolate and coffee (and even Champagne), which no doubt reflected the society within which the Comédie-Française was embedded. Third, and perhaps related to this, is the fact that the consumption of food and drink seems to have become a feature of many plays (and *petites pièces* in particular) during the 1690s, which suggests that such scenes were popular with audiences, and Dancourt seems to have led the way in giving them what they wanted. However, far more striking than all this as far as I am concerned is the extent to which the companies 'looked after their own' and showed consideration for the working conditions of their employees (both members of the acting company and backstage staff), in ways of which workers in many modern enterprises (including universities) can only dream.<sup>317</sup> Perhaps there was also something cynical (and again not unfamiliar) in the provision of refreshments at meetings as a way of encouraging people to attend, but I am above all heartened to see our actors' willingness to eat, drink and socialize together, and even share jokes, around the all-important matter of food and drink.

Jan CLARKE  
Durham University

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<sup>317</sup> I have previously commented on the 'social provision' aspect of theatre companies' activity when considering pensions and the availability of employment opportunities in old age (see Jan Clarke, 'Gender Equality and the Role of Women Theatre Professionals in Late Seventeenth-Century and Early Eighteenth-Century France', in *Towards and Equality of the Sexes in Early Modern France*, ed. by Derval Conroy (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 152–830).



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