

4 TAVERN KEEPERS

Taverns were public space but they were also commercial space, indeed some of the oldest commercial space in Europe. Studies of the commodification of food and lodgings in medieval taverns and inns suggest that they were seen as a harbinger of a new and troubling kind of commercialism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹ There was nothing new about selling drink by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, yet the function of these spaces was still evolving, as their customers drew less from travellers and the elites and increasingly from the working populace. The growing consumerism of urban populations had led to a proliferation of taverns and their growing role in popular culture. One consequence was the growth in the regional wine trade in France, as large cities like Paris drew on more and more of the country to keep it supplied with wine. The wine trade also became more sophisticated, as brokerage services emerged in cities and the countryside to facilitate this supply.² By the eighteenth century, tavern keepers could acquire wines from all over the country without having to leave Paris. Yet tavern keepers still faced a variety of challenges.

This chapter looks at the sites of public drinking and, in particular, at the merchants who provided it. For them, the wine trade meant not only acquiring, storing and paying for wine but also attracting and dealing with the customers who consumed it. Customers came looking for wine but also, and increasingly, for forms of leisure and entertainment. They sought games, music, dancing and, above all, space in which to do what they wanted. Perhaps inevitably, this created some tension between what the tavern keeper was selling and what customers thought they were buying. In this chapter we will see several examples of this tension provoked by games and music, but the most consistent theme is the struggle to control the space. To this tension over authority must be added the expectations and pressures of public authorities.

As the police and the government had made perfectly clear in a steady stream of edicts and ordinances, some of which were reviewed in the previous chapter, they held the tavern keeper responsible for his tavern and its customers' behaviour. They spelled out the hours they wanted him to close for the night and during services. They identified precisely the disreputable and dangerous people

who must never have access to the tavern. They expected the tavern keeper to monitor his customers' sobriety and to dole out drink accordingly. And if the customers fought or quarrelled, the tavern keeper had to report it to the local constabulary. Finally, the tavern was selling a potentially toxic substance that had to be kept salubrious as well as properly taxed, measured, and accounted for. The tavern represented many dangers to ordered society, and the forces of order expected assistance from the tavern keeper.

Of course, the tavern keeper was in an impossible situation. Customers paid for drink, so selling drink paid the bills. We have already heard one tavern keeper confess that he paid the bills best by ignoring the edicts; the same logic was obvious to all of them. The business was challenging in many directions. They kept a stock that was expensive and perishable. Good management sometimes required them to manipulate the wine for its own storage; it often tempted them to adulterate it for greater profit. They served a clientele that lived by small loans, an economy of small-scale credit that circulated in the absence of paper money. Customers hoped to drink on credit and tavern keepers hoped to draw customers by offering credit. Even keeping tabs on a bill during an afternoon of drinking could provoke disputes over the counting. This was obviously a delicate balancing act.

But the contradictions went much deeper. Customers bought space with their drink, a place to drink and gather and talk and relax. If they were regulars they stopped thinking of the space as a temporary rent and they treated the tavern as their own. From long practice they assumed a right to control its space. As a consequence, the tavern keeper frequently clashed with customers over the extent of his authority. The classic case was, unsurprisingly, the closing hour. Police patrols routinely recount the groups hammering at tavern doors for admittance, long past closing time, or the tavern keeper calling for their assistance to eject a customer. What is more surprising is how strongly the customers resented it. Rather than accepting the publican's legal obligation to abide by the ordinances, they accused him of playing favourites, of allowing some to drink late while excluding others. Similar fights erupted over gambling. The statutes prohibited gambling but left the status of friendly chess or card playing ambiguous, as indeed it was. Customers routinely played against the tavern bill, certainly a mild form of gambling and one that promoted consumption and reciprocity. Tavern keepers normally turned a blind eye, and were deeply resented for intervening.

The enforcement of closing hours or gaming was simple compared to exerting other kinds of control. Tavern keepers seem to have been no more adept at telling who was drunk than we are today. However, their efforts to limit drinking in even the most egregious cases met with quick outrage. Nor was the list of disreputable people so frequently invoked by the police transparently obvious. A single woman, or two together, risked suspicion; at least one tavern keeper

simply refused to serve any woman. Yet we find many women on their own and with friends in taverns. The records suggest, indeed, that tavern keepers made little effort to exclude classes of people, whether drunk or suspicious. They did target certain people, however: those they knew to be abusive or disruptive. The records show that some customers actually made a point of abusing a tavern keeper verbally and even physically. The motivation appears to have been jealousy in many cases, in others a fight over the bill, and the friction was quite personal. Then the tavern keeper learned, to his frustration, just how hard it was to exert real control over his shop. Enemies insisted on entering and threatening them and they jeered when asked to leave. 'I am in my own home in a tavern' said some, or 'I am master in the tavern when I pay' said others. Some customers became violent and abused the tavern keeper, though the murder of a keeper in this collection (p. 177) is highly unusual. Tavern keepers had to resort to physical persuasion, however, and might be assisted by other customers or turned to the guard and night watch to bail them out. The law was definitely on their side, but they also had to worry about public opinion and were acutely aware of their reputation and ability to attract customers.

Notes

1. A. Cowell, *At Play in the Tavern: Signs, Coins, and Bodies in the Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999).
2. T. Brennan, *Burgundy to Champagne: The Wine Trade in Early Modern France* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

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The Keeper's Trade

Selling drink was a business that required supplies, credit and space. Increasingly, over the eighteenth century, it appears to have required more formal entertainment. These features appear in this section, devoted to the business side of public drinking. A full discussion would start in the vineyards and follow the wine down rivers and roads to the wholesalers and brokers in Paris and thence into the tavern's cellars, but that is a different book.¹ Instead we will look quickly at what went on between the retail trade and the wholesale supplier, at least when it appeared in the police records. We will see that it all had to be paid for and so had ample opportunity to cause problems of credit, trust, and reputation.² Wine merchants needed to pay their suppliers, if only partially, tavern keepers needed to keep a stocked cellar but also needed to extend credit to their customers, everyone was looking for credit. Thus the first example (pp. 111–14) plunges us into the complexities of financing a tavern's wine supply. The second example (pp. 115–16) suggests even more entrepreneurial behaviour, at least on the part of one of the most successful tavern keepers in the century, Jean Ramponneau, who gained a reputation for selling his wine cheaper than elsewhere in the suburban guinguettes. It is not clear what had gone wrong in the business arrangement he had made with the man renting his tavern, but the testimony suggests that he was concerned about the quality of the wine that was being served.

There were also frictions with other retailers, particularly rivals on the same street. Taverns competed with each other through the credit they offered and through their reputation. The third example below (pp. 116–18) also illustrates the importance of knowing a tavern's customers and competing for their trade. The tavern keeper is even sending his assistants out to persuade other taverns' customers to patronize his own tavern. There are other examples, like the fourth one in this section (pp. 118–19), of tavern keepers waging a campaign to discredit their neighbours and rivals.³ But the tavern sold more than drink. The space was part of the price of a drink, but it should not be ignored; and in the fifth case below (pp. 119–20), the quality of the space came into sharp focus, when the walls also served as an assault on a neighbour's reputation.

Notes

- 1 Ibid.
- 2 There is a growing literature on early modern credit, for example: P. T. Hoffman, G. Postel-Vinay, and J.-L. Rosenthal, *Priceless Markets: The Political Economy of Credit in Paris, 1660–1870* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000); C. Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
- 3 T. Lockett, 'Hunting for Spies and Whores: A Parisian Riot on the Eve of the French Revolution', *Past & Present*, 156 (August 1997), pp. 116–43.

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The Keeper's Trade

AN, Y 9663 [a]

The year 1761 Monday 22 June 7:30 PM [in the evening] before us Antoine Charles Cressy King's Councilor Commissioner at the Châtelet of Paris in our hotel

Has appeared Nicolas Fenet wine merchant of Paris living on the rue de Charenton faubourg St Antoine at the image St Fiacre who told us that for three years he has done business with the Sr Gautier wine merchant who is accustomed to furnish him wines, that in these circumstances when the Sr Gautier has some wine at the port he notifies the declarant who goes to choose what is suitable, that the Sr Gautier has them delivered to him and some days after he comes to the declarant's to settle the price on the basis of his other sales and receives letters of exchange from the declarant, dated at three, four, five, and even six months; that one of feasts of last Pentecost the declarant having learned that the Sr Gautier had some wine newly arrived at Charenton he went to see it with several merchants but the Sr Gautier had them understand that this wine had a destination and promised to furnish them some at the first loading, he agreed in particular with the declarant that then he would give him six gold louis¹ in cash to help pay for the entry taxes and would furnish letters of exchange for the surplus as accustomed; consequently last Saturday the Sr Gautier's wife having notified the declarant he went to the port to get six barrels of wine but the Dame Gautier persuaded him to take twelve on the basis of fifty livres per barrel, she received six gold louis from the declarant on account and for the rest she agreed that she or her husband would take letters of exchange payable half on 20 August and half on 20 September next, that the declarant took away these wines on this basis; yesterday morning the Dame Gautier having come to the declarant's and having explained that she had made a mistake and had delivered him five barrels of wine for his brother the declarant agreed with her that she had only to send it back to her place and he would owe her so much the less, but instead of sending back only these five barrels, the Dame Gauthier came herself today at 9:00 AM

to the declarant's while he was absent and made a most scandalous scene crying publicly that she would take back her wine because the declarant was going to go bankrupt; in vain the declarant's brother to whom she addressed herself tried to make her hear reason by pointing out that she had already received six gold louis on account, that it was at her instigation that his brother had taken so much wine, that he only wanted six barrels and it was she who had forced him to take more, that finally that she could get the letters of exchange that his brother had promised her whenever she wanted them; in spite of all these explanations she continued her scene said that the declarant and his brother were only thieves, rogues, villains that she was going to get the guard and the commissioner, she left one of her assistants in the declarant's tavern with two carts ... then she returned to say that she was going to M. the Lieutenant Civil, ... finally at 4:00 in the afternoon she came back with a bailiff and the guard forcibly carried off the twelve barrels in question wickedly spreading about among the people who accompanied her that the wine was spoiled; and since such a strange violent and scandalous procedure in any case without basis can only be the result of a premeditated design to make the declarant lose his honor and reputation and remove from him all the trust that he needs for his commerce he has the most pressing interest in having redress for it ... signed

Investigation mad by us Antoine Charles Cressy King's Councillor ... at the request of Nicolas Fenet wine merchant of Paris about the contents of the complaint he lodged with us last 22 June against the Sr Gautier and his wife wine merchant in execution of the ordinance of M. the Lieutenant Criminal of 30 June annexed to our note in which investigation we have listened each one separately and in secret to the witnesses summoned by our ordinance by the writ of the Sr Jean Pierre Raffy bailiff at the Châtelet on 3 and 8 July after having taken their usual oath as follows

Saturday 4 July 1761 in the morning

Joseph Gruel 27 years old sculptor living on the rue de Charenton faubourg St Antoine has sworn to tell the truth, shown the writ given him yesterday by the said Sr Raffy declares he is not a relative, ally servant or domestic of the parties the complaint having been read to him

Deposes that last Monday 22 June at 9 or 10:00 AM finding himself in Fenet's tavern he saw a woman in the shop who was making a lot of noise and seemed to be very angry, that the deponent curious to know what this woman wanted, took the pretext of coming to get a bottle of water in the shop where he heard Fenet's brother who was saying to this woman, who told you that madame? To which she responded, the one who told me is not far from here, the deponent noticed that there was a man dressed in grey at the entry to the shop, but does not know if he was in the company of this woman who also said that it was very bad very miserable, that she wanted her wine or her money, or he would see fine sport;

that Fenet's brother who was then alone in the shop tried to go draw some wine from one of several barrels that had not yet gone down to the cellar and was in a room next to the garden, but this woman opposed him saying that she did not intend to have him draw any more of her wine, that enough had already been drawn, and she proposed an assistant that she had with her to guard it. ... the same day at 4:00 in the afternoon while working and having heard some noise in the street he went out and went to Fenet's place at whose door was a guard, that on entering he found a robed official who called himself a commissioner with whom the deponent entered Fenet's cellar ... signed

Claude Delatre 29 years old locksmith living on the rue de Charenton has sworn to tell the truth, shown the writ given him yesterday by the said Sr Raffy declares he is not a relative, ally servant or domestic of the parties the complaint having been read to him

Deposes that Monday 22 June at 3 or 4:00 in the afternoon finding himself in Fenet's tavern he saw a women enter who went to speak to a tavern boy who was near the cellar, then she left the shop very angry saying of Fenet that he was a beggar a villain, that about an hour later he saw the guard and a robed officer who called himself a commissioner arrive ... signed

Jean François Moulinet 50 years old master starch maker living on the rue de Charenton ...

Deposes that Monday 22 June at 9:00 AM in Fenet's tavern he saw a woman arrive who appeared very unhappy and who was saying to Fenet's brother that she wanted her wine or some good bills and she wanted to know whom she was dealing with, that nevertheless if the Sr Dupont would answer for him she would leave her wine ... signed

François Gerard 36 years old wine merchant living on the rue de Charenton ...

Deposes that ... 9:00 AM finding himself in Fenet's shop where there was then only his brother at the counter, he saw a woman who seemed very angry, that having seen a cart arrive at the door, the deponent asked why, Fenet's brother answered to remove some wine that my brother bought Saturday to which the deponent observed that they should at least wait for the one who had bought it to be present and having tried to make some observations to this woman she told him that Fenet was a villain, a thief, a bankrupt and that he had tried to trap her, that Fenet's brother having pointed out to her that she had already received six louis on account, she admitted it but she said she would eat it in costs, the deponent seeing this woman still angry and continuing to insult Fenet went on his way ... signed

Mathieu Saddon 30 years old cabinet maker living on the rue de Charenton ...

Deposes ... then this woman who was very angry said that Fenet was a villain, a thief and that she had learned by a letter that had been written to her that he was going to go bankrupt, and that he had only bought this wine to resell

it at a knockdown price to other merchants; that Fenet's brother having again observed that she could not take the wine back since she had received six louis on account and she had agreed with his brother to receive the rest in letters of exchange as he was accustomed to giving her or he would honor any withdrawals that she would make on him as he had never failed to do, the woman admitted to having received the six louis but said that she wanted the rest in cash and that they were rogues and villains, ... that the same day at 4:00 being again at Fenet's the deponent saw a bailiff of the city arrive with the guard and the woman in question ... signed

Denis Berson 25 years old baker living on the rue de Baffroy faubourg St Antoine ...

Deposes that Monday morning entering Fenet's tavern he saw a cart at the door and found a woman in the tavern who seemed very angry and was making a great scene, ... that Fenet's brother observed that she had already received fifty ecus on account and that they had owed her much more than that at other times than they presently owed and that she had never lost anything ... the deponent recalls that this woman said that it had been reported to her that Fenet had only bought this wine to resell it to some merchant, and that in fact he could not possibly resell it at eight sous since it was worth ten or twelve ... signed

Thursday 16 July 1761 ... has appeared ... to be heard Marie Edmée Blandin wife of Jacques Gautier wine merchant 43 years old native of Auxerre living in Paris rue Ste Croix de la Bretonnerie after oath ...

Said that among the twelve barrels of wine that she furnished Fenet there were seven for his brother in law, that Saturday when the wine was brought by Fenet, having promised to pay cash during the day to the amount of 350 livres for the seven barrels of wine belonging to his brother in law, and the respondent having waited uselessly the Saturday for Fenet who had only given her six louis, and who was supposed to come back in the evening to give the rest of the sum of 350 livres, she went the next day Sunday to the brother in law at Fenet's place to take back the wine from his brother in law, since Fenet had broken his word, that having asked Fenet for the payment of 350 livres, he was not able to pay and he agreed that the next day Monday they would take the seven barrels of wine claimed by his brother in law, consequently she went the next day Monday to Fenet's with a carter, but they would not let her remove the barrels, and the respondent having noticed then that the wine was not yet taken down to the cellar, and that they had already drunk more than fifty quarts, she wanted to take back not only the seven barrels of his brother in law, but also the five belonging to her by returning to Fenet the six louis that he had paid on account, but Fenet or his brother persisting still in refusing she went to the bureau of the city ... signed

AN, Y 9663 [b]

The year 1761 Sunday 24 May 8:00 PM before us Jerome Abraham Porquet ... has appeared Sr Jacques Etienne Martin wine merchant caterer living on the rue Platriere at the chene d'or St Eustache parish and keeping the house and tavern rented to him by lease signed before a notary with clauses and conditions therein by Jean Ramponneau¹ of the basse Courtille at the sign of the tambour; who has told us that although he is in litigation before the court of the Parlement with Ramponneau ... nevertheless to the detriment of a ruling that forbids the parties to take any actions outside of the court, Ramponneau collusively sprang upon the declarant a judgment in absentia at the Châtelet, by which he took it in his head to have the declarant's furnishings, goods and merchandise in wine seized in his absence at the tavern in the basse Courtille, and executed by Ramponneau...²

Investigation ... 27 July 1761 ...

Marie Noel Nivolet wife of Jean Baptiste Rouget master shoe maker living on the rue Culture St Catherine St Paul parish 49 years old ...

Deposes ... that Sunday last 24 May having gone with her husband and son ... to la Courtille they entered the place of the Sr Martin to eat there and having asked for a bottle of wine they were at first refused and it was only upon their remonstrances that they already had a bill and could not be refused that during this time they saw the man named Ramponneau who was ascending from the cellars with a brace and bit in his hand that meanwhile they were given some wine and the two men who were drinking with Ramponneau having left Ramponneau passed into the garden with an individual who they learned was a guardian named by the court in Martin's house and they were arguing a lot, that after dining the deponent returned to Martin's with the Sr Bertaut her husband and her son that they were given very bad wine, that the Sr Martin having returned at 3:00 they complained to him about the bad wine they had been given, and that Martin having gotten into a great argument with Ramponneau he gave them some better wine, and that Monday morning having accompanied one of their friends who was going to Calais they went by the Sr Martin's to have a drink, and they saw the court guardian leave and go to Ramponneau's brother ... signed ...

2. Claude Bertaut day laborer living on the rue fontaine le Roy at la Courtille St Laurent parish 40 years old ...

Deposes ... that the Sunday 24 May having business with his shoe maker at Belleville they entered the Sr Martin's tavern kept hitherto by the man named Ramponneau, that they were at first refused drink but having seen two individuals who were having a drink at the counter they said they shouldn't be refused any more than those people there, that finally they were served a drink and that

while they ate they saw the man named Ramponneau ... declares he does not know how to write or sign ...

3. Marie Françoise D'hivert wife of Claude Bertaut day laborer living on the rue fontaine le Roy at la basse Courtille St Laurent 45 years old ...

Deposes ... that that evening having come to sup in the same tavern she saw Ramponneau arguing a lot with an individual that she learned was the guardian in the house; deposes in addition that in the middle of the same week at 4:00 in the afternoon passing in front of the Sr Martin's door to go to her baker she heard some noise in the tavern, that having entered she saw a tavern assistant who was arguing with an individual and grabbed a pitcher of wine from his hands that he had drawn from the cellar to take to the place of the Sr Ramponneau ... does not know how to write or sign ...

5. Anne Therese spouse of Charles Malherbe master wig maker living on the rue fontaine le Roy at la basse Courtille 24 years old ...

Deposes that 24 May having made plans with several of her acquaintances to go walking at Belville they wanted to eat at the Sr Martin's at the tambour and that having asked they were refused drink, but having pointed out that two men were drinking at the counter they were also given some, that in the interlude the deponent having gone to the counter to speak with the guardian whom she had seen established the day before at the Sr Martin's she saw the Sr Ramponneau who was coming up from the cellar with a brace and bit in his hand and his stockings and shoes full of wine that he went to drink with the two men at the counter ... that the deponent believing she had left a little dog at the Sr Martin's she knocked at the vintner's door at 11:00 in the evening that she met the Sr Ramponneau who spoke a great deal to the vintner who answered him I promise you rely on me that to her they answered that there was no dog shut up anywhere, that she left and the next morning having come to have a drink at the Sr Martrin's she saw the assistant tavern keeper who stopped a man who was ascending from the cellar with a pitcher in his hand and that having had the wine in the pitcher tasted in the presence of many people and compared with the wine that he was giving everybody there was found a very great difference, that she did not stay to see the rest ... signed

AN, Y14611³

The year 1691 28 August 2:30 PM before us François Dubois ... has appeared Etienne Berger wine merchant living on the rue de la Harpe at the corner of the rue des Cordeliers who has lodged a complaint with us and says that he took into his service the man named François Godefroy as a tavern assistant who lived in his residence for about a year and left him a month ago that he had been lured

away from his service by Richard Le François his neighbor also a wine merchant who took him into his service as a tavern assistant (without the consent or permission of the plaintiff) in violation of the regulations and statutes of their guild which expressly forbid it and for which reason there is a suit pending in the chamber of M. The King's prosecutor, to revenge himself for this and because the Le François knows that Godefroy has a perfect knowledge of all the ["pratiques"¹ is crossed out] companies who go to drink and eat at the plaintiff's and of all the guilds and other bourgeois to whom he furnishes wine; he is keeping Godefroy against the order and customs of the statutes in order to attract all the above regular customers [pratiques], and sends him continually to their homes to solicit them to go to or send for wine at Le François' place that he even sends him to solicit them at his door and notably today about an hour ago Godefroy was passing in front of his shop and seeing some neighbors enter he told them on the door step not to go in, that they should go to his master's place, that the wine was better there, to which the plaintiff finding himself offended, told Godefroy to keep going and that he should not come insult him in this fashion at his door after having eaten his bread, but instead of Godefroy stopping and having some respect for him he lost his temper and insulted him calling him a bugger of a dog ... and give him several punches and kicks ... signed

... 29 August 1691

Hubert Bardon mason living on the rue de Grenelle St Sulpice parish 50 years old ...

Said that ... yesterday morning at 9 or 10:00 while at a workplace he has on the rue de la Harpe near St Cosme, the man named François who used to live at the place of Berger the wine merchant near St Cosme came to find him at the workplace, begged him to go to the tavern where he presently lives and to bring his workers, that he would give him credit both for himself and for his workers and give him good wine, to which the deponent responded that he would not do it because he was integrated [ingrainé] at Berger's place ... signed

The year 1691 28 August about 3:00 PM ... has appeared Richard le Francois wine merchant living on the rue de la Harpe at the hermitage who has lodged a complaint with us and says that about an hour ago François his assistant having gone to take a quart of wine to the Community of St Cosme and passing in front of the tavern of Berger also a wine merchant who lives on the above rue de la Harpe at the corner of the rue des Cordeliers he ran after him and very angry because he was bringing wine to the Community he grabbed his quart full of wine marked with the plaintiff's name and then he took him by the hair and gave him several slaps ... and since this behavior is very violent and Berger is keeping his quart and its wine that it is out of vengeance for him furnishing wine normally to all the priests of the Community of St Cosme and that every

day he causes similar quarrels that he even takes the bottles and pitchers from the children who come to his place to get wine ... signed

AN, Y 10993

Wednesday 22 April 1750 ... has appeared Jean Flagné lodging house keeper and beer seller and Elizabeth Collard his wife living on the rue and parish of Ste Marguerite faubourg St Antoine, who have lodged a complaint with us against the wife of the beer seller named Nampon living on the grande rue du faubourg St Antoine near the rue Ste Marguerite and say that for about three months that they have begun selling fruit and beer, Nampon's wife from commercial jealousy has not stopped spreading a quantity of insults against their honor and probity, saying to all that the plaintiff was a villain, a rogue, a miserable person, a bankrupt whom she did not expect to stay three months in his shop since he could not keep himself in any profession, that the plaintiff and his wife to whom a number of people have reported these invectives (and who themselves have heard them in passing before the shop of Nampon's wife who liked to insult them) had always dismissed them in their certainty that it was only his trade as beer seller that provoked it since before the plaintiffs' establishment Nampon's wife had only shown them daily courtesy and friendship; that last Wednesday in the morning Nampon's wife having need of a laborer named l'Enfant Trouvé who was drinking with a comrade at the plaintiff's had come to his door to ask for him which the plaintiff had immediately told the laborer, he had answered the plaintiff that he had no business with Nampon's wife and that she was too good a payer; that the plaintiff having indeed reported these same words to Nampon's wife who was busy looking at the sign the plaintiff had had painted on his shop and making fun of it to all the neighbors, she was at first furious with the plaintiff whom she again insulted and having then seized a broom that was attached to the shop threw it at the plaintiff who had the advantage of protecting himself from it, seeing which Nampon's wife who had at the same time taken hold of a small board which was on the side of the plaintiff's shop and served to hold some red eggs that were on display most of which she broke and with which she tried to hit Flagné who have warded it off Nampon's wife then threw it at the plaintiff's face where it made several scratches which having excited the plaintiff he had the weakness to give a blow to Nampon's wife who only being able to avenge herself with words even though he had no intent to harm her, had again insulted him and had sent her daughter to find Nampon in order to hurt Flagné who was obliged to retire for fear of indeed having a row with Nampon; that since Wednesday Nampon's wife has not stopped her behavior and the plaintiff having gone out Monday last in the evening to buy some goods, Nampon's wife having seen her from afar had threatened her and seemed to want to come at her,

but Nampon having noticed he had the prudence to make his wife go home; that yesterday at 2:00 in the afternoon the plaintiff having passed in front of Nampon's wife's shop with one of his friends to go drink a bottle of wine at the *ecu de Bretagne* on the *grande rue*, this friend who knew about the uproar that Nampon's wife had done to him had the imprudence as he looked at Nampon's wife to ask the plaintiff if it was not that woman who had also scratched him to which the plaintiff who was a bit dazed with the wine he had drunk with a number of people had indeed replied yes. With that Nampon's wife began to insult the plaintiff calling him a galley slave and branded with the *fleur de lise*, to which the plaintiff stung by this behavior answered Nampon's wife with some words in reply to the insults that she made and left and since the plaintiffs have the intention of pursuing Nampon's wife for a formal apology for the insults that she has made and to stop them continuing they have made the present complaint ... declare they do not know how to write or sign ...

AN, Y 15055

To M. the Lieutenant Criminal

Marie Genevieve Poittevin widow of Jean Denis Godefroy bourgeois of Paris guardian of Georges Godefroy her only son 21 years old, and Georges Godefroy minor, humbly appeal, saying that the fruit and beer seller named Bertrand and his wife who live in a house next to the one whose principal tenant is the supplicant on the *rue Neuve St Martin*, to cause pain to the supplicants and to insult them have taken it upon themselves to have painted in their shop where they provide drink and on the plaster, a figure of a man who represents Georges Godefroy and which is made like him, at the feet of which figure they have had written these lines,

the Sr Godefroy musician, hunchbacked, hooded, and badly built, ready to drink and never drunk, greedy pig, and glutton, they are like the carriages for they are never happy, to drink to the symphony, always from large glasses, yappy little dog [with] a nice tail

so that all the people from the neighborhood who go drinking at Bertrand's see this figure read the writing which is at its feet recognize Georges Godefroy in it which is a most appreciable affront to him ... signed

11 June 1751

The year 1751 Saturday 12 June 8:30 AM before us Louis Trudon ... has appeared M. Charles François Pinson prosecutor at the *Châtelet* and Marie Genevieve Poittevin widow of Jean Denis Godefroy bourgeois of Paris guardian of George Godefroy her only son 21 years old and of George Godefroy minor, Who have brought and put in our hands the present request to M the Lieutenant Criminal by the widow Godefroy and her son ...

And in consequence to execute the ordinance we have immediately proceeded to the rue St Martin before a house where Bertrand and his wife live whose door entering the shop is open in which shop having entered we have found a woman who told us her name is Marie Jeanne Calland wife of François Bertrand a journeyman potter and fruit seller, whom we have had hear the subject of our visit ... we have observed that in the shop are painted on the walls different figures of men and women and of characters and among others on the wall at the back of the shop on the right near a glassed in door the figure representing a man with twisted limbs and hunchback holding a violin in hand and the archer above a little dog also painted above the wall and the feet on has left limb (and a glass of beer also painted across from the figure) on both sides of which figure is written what follows the Sieur ... [*sic*] musician, hunchbacked [etc] ... we have also observed that in place of the blank word which is found after that of the sieur there appears to have been written the name of Godefroy as much as there still remains the tail of the G and that of the Y first and last letter of the name Godefroy. Our observations thus finished M. Pinson has requested a certificate that Bertrand's wife in our presence said in a loud and intelligible voice that there is more than one Godefroy in Paris, requests us also to ask Bertrand's wife since when the word Godefroy which was after the sieur written on the wall was erased ... to which question Bertrand's wife declares that the name Godefroy which was written on the wall was erased by her husband the day before yesterday in the morning and replaced with chalk ...does not know how to write or sign ...

Y 15348

The year 1751 Monday 14 June 8:00 AM before us Thomas Joseph Jean Regnaudet ... has appeared François Bertrand fruit seller selling beer living on the rue Neuve St Martin St Nicolas des Champs parish who has lodged a complaint with us against the man named Godefroy minor son of the widow Godefroy living on the above rue Neuve St Martin ... and says that the plaintiff having wanted to have his shop repainted about two weeks ago arranged to have it done by an individual painter known under the name of Raphael living on the rue de Beauregard across from the church of the Bonnes Nouvelles, to whom the plaintiff was all the better addressed since this painter is the one that the whole neighborhood employs most willingly because of the emblems with which he decorates his works on which most often he places a little musician all sketched with body and limbs with the name Godefroy to which the plaintiff paid no attention since he knows no one of this name and since this same figure thus sketched is placed in nearly all the paintings of the wine and beer taverns and guinguettes both in the faubourgs St Martin and St Denis ... but having noticed

that this figure provoked laughter and criticism about some neighbor even some of his neighbors who often drink beer at the plaintiff's having brought Godefroy to his place under the pretext of showing him his portrait, the plaintiff without waiting for Godefroy to take things as a concerted mockery against him had immediately had this figure erased with all the more reason that Godefroy who has the misfortune to be distorted in his limbs lives along with the plaintiff on the rue Neuve St Martin, and thought there would be no more question of this occasion but the plaintiff was most surprised when last Saturday 11 June ... 9:00 AM the commissioner came to note all the figures that had been painted either outside or in the plaintiff's shop, about which this commissioner made a report ... signed

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Services

In addition to selling wine, tavern keepers faced popular pressure, apparently mounting during the century, to provide other services and entertainments. Customers entertained themselves with a variety of games, many of which were supplied by the tavern keeper. Cards were potentially a police problem, as we have seen, but chess or chequers were common and, if the tavern had space, there were outdoor games. Tavern keepers had to balance these attractions against the consumption activities that actually made them money, and the examples below show some of this tension. In the first case, the tavern keeper objects to customers playing rather than drinking, though the violence of his actions suggests a deeper issue. In the next example, the fight over the checkers game seems also to have been the catalyst of more serious tensions between customer and publican. The witnesses are united, however, in condemning a café keeper who is not sufficiently deferential or willing to leave his customers alone.

Music and dancing were also powerful attractions, giving particular advantage to the exurban taverns surrounding the city that had begun to emerge at the end of the seventeenth century. These *guinguettes*, as they were known, could spread out in the more open spaces outside the city and offer large dance halls and gardens. But the dancing was an entrepreneurial operation that could turn sour, as the third example discussed below illustrates. Examples in later chapters will return to the subject of music and dancing, and we will see that the musicians had long played an important entrepreneurial role in providing entertainment in taverns in the city and the suburbs. Here we see the calculus of the tavern keeper, who recognizes the advantages of this entertainment but is trying to protect the reputation of his tavern and achieve the proper environment for the clientele he seeks to attract. In the next, fourth, example the publican again objects to customers who are paying too much attention to the entertainment, this time the dancing, and not enough to the drinking.

Tavern keepers provided other services simply by having the space for people to gather. In the fifth example, the tavern had enough room to host the forty or so people attending a wedding feast. What follows is a curious fight over contractual obligations but also, most fundamentally, about controlling the space.

The tavern keeper also appears to be violating all the ordinances establishing a closing hour, presumably because this is a private party. It is harder to explain the hours of the café in the sixth example, which has stayed open all night. Indeed it appears to be offering customers, many of whom work in the main city market nearby a place to go to get warm and sleep during their often nocturnal work schedule. This seems to have been accepted by the police, who are called in for a theft but take no issue with the café's hours.

Copyright

Services

AN, Y 12308

The year 1701 Wednesday 7 September 8:00 AM before us Martin Boursin ... have appeared François Poilot apprentice mason and Claude Devins his wife living on the rue Charlot who have lodged a complaint with us against René Brijon a tavern keeper and Catherine Baudoyen his wife and say that last Sunday the plaintiffs having been with three of their friends playing skittles in front of Brijon's tavern who had furnished them with the skittles and the wine that they were drinking at his place he was very surprised that Brijon under the pretext of complaining that the plaintiff and his friends were not drinking enough and that they were more attached to their game than to drinking came and brutally insulted them and even called him and his friends rogues saying that they were bugging beggars, that at the same time Brijon's wife came and taking her husband's side had also called the plaintiff a rogue, having heard which the plaintiff's wife who lives near Brijon also came and having made some objection to Brijon and his wife and let them know that they were wrong to insult her husband instead of excusing themselves they called her a bitch and a whore and threatened to assault her if she and the plaintiff did not leave ... does not know how to write or sign ...

AN, Y 12956

The year 1753 Monday 22 October 11:30 PM ... has appeared Sr Adrien Lainé sergeant of the watch and guard at the guard post of St Honoré who was asked to proceed with his squad to the corner of the rue Fromenteau at a café, where he found an individual who complained to him that he had just been struck by one of the café assistants, so he brought them before us ...

Has also appeared the plaintiff who says his name is Charles Forelle a master wig maker living at the rue St Thomas du Louvre St Germain l'auxerois parish who told us that while taking a cup of coffee with his companions at a lemonade seller's at the corner of the rue Fromenteau across from the Opera, the said assis-

tant lemonade seller came and embraced a lady in the plaintiff's company (who the plaintiff told us was his spouse), that the café assistant trying to do it again, the lady told him to leave and did not want to put up with a second embrace; that the plaintiff was playing a game of checkers with one of his friends, and the said café assistant wishing to keep an eye on their way of playing the plaintiff told him to let them finish their game tranquilly, upon which the café assistant grabbed the checkerboard from his hands and gave him a slap that he wanted to leave to bring back the watch, that the café assistant followed him up to when the watch came in and seized him ...

And having brought the arrested individual forward he said his name was Jean Morenne a master lemonade seller living on the rue St Honoré at the corner of the rue Fromenteau and told us that today at 10:30 two men and the wife and sister of one of them entered his place and asked for two bavarian creams and two cups of coffee, that Morenne was closing his shop and while he was outside the two men took a checkerboard and played that Morenne returned to his shop and took the checkerboard from them (telling them that he could not let them play since it was after hours) that the men told him he was a damned brute, and they made several threats saying that Morenne would pay them, but he had neither threatened nor struck them ... told Lainé to let Morenne go.

Investigation made by us François Merlin ... 31 October 1753. At the request of Charles Forel a master wig maker accuser against the master lemonade seller named Morenne respondent

1. Pierre Mazon master wig maker 35 years old living on the rue de la Ferronnerie Sts Innocents parish ...

Deposes that Monday 22 October at 11:00 in the evening the deponent having supped at the home of the Sr Forel a master wig maker living on the rue St Thomas du Louvre and having left with him and his spouse and another lady (who is a midwife named Mme Charmarti) they found a café open at the corner of the rue Fromenteau where they entered to take a cup of coffee, they asked for a half flask of liquor, that the lemonade seller served them that they also asked for a checkerboard to play for who would pay for the half-flask, that after the lemonade seller had served the deponent and his company he closed the shutter of a window next to one of the ladies of the deponent's company that in passing next to this lady he embraced her, and after having closed the shutter he tried to do it again at which the lady pushed him away with her hand and told him that would be for tomorrow but not for today; that an instant later the said lemonade seller took the half flask which was on their table and got ready to pour some for these ladies at which the deponent told him to leave these ladies alone and that when they wanted some he would serve it, that while the deponent was playing, the lemonade seller checked on their way of playing, that Forel told him several times to leave them alone to finish their game and at that the lemonade

seller pinched Forel's arm who said to him will you finish; that the lemonade seller suddenly took the checkerboard with one hand and with the other hit Forel, who told the lemonade seller I will have vengeance from the law that two individuals who were drinking in the café got up and said to the lemonade seller that he was an insolent to mistreat a man with so little reason, that it was too strong on his part, that one of the two individuals left without saying anything and went looking for the watch, that while he was looking for the watch the deponent having given un ecu of 6 livres to the lemonade seller to pay for the expenses he had made with his company; asked for the change at least ten times before he got it back and the lemonade seller did not even want them to leave; that the watch came and led them to our hotel ...

2. Thomas Vincent Bligny 33 years old master painter living on the rue St Antoine St Gervais parish ...

Deposes that Monday 22 October at 11:30 the deponent entered a café on the rue St Honoré at the corner of the rue Fromenteau with one of his friends that he saw a company of two men and two women; and having each asked the lemonade seller for a bavarian cream which he served them; the lemonade seller closed his shop and the deponent's friend told the deponent that he had just noticed that the lemonade seller passing next to one of the two women, who were at a table behind the deponent, had embraced her, that an instant after the deponent heard the words Monsieur leave me alone, which having made him turn around he saw the lemonade seller who held a flask of liquor in his hand and wanted to pour some, that one of the two men wanted to take the flask from his hands and that his stool fell over, at which the lemonade seller told him in an impertinent tone pick up your horse, that then he sat down at a table near the one where the two men were playing and was criticizing their way of playing which obliged one of the men to tell him to take himself to his counter which was his place; that the lemonade seller immediately got up and took the checkerboard with his left hand and gave a violent slap with his right hand to one of the men; the one who just received the slap said to the deponent's friend M. you heard the slap; and he got up along with the other people in his company; that the deponent while paying for his bill reproached the lemonade seller that instead of trying to maintain good order in his house he made trouble, and one of the two men drew an ecu of six francs from his pocket, and gave it to the lemonade seller to pay for their bill, but he took a very long time to return the change and since the doors of the café were closed, the lemonade seller was unwilling to let them leave nor even the deponent and his friend, the deponent does not know for what reason, having nevertheless let the deponent and his friend leave the deponent having heard the commotion continuing went looking for the watch that having entered with the watch the deponent was insulted by the lemonade seller who called him a j.f. and who said that he had gone to get

the watch as an act of vengeance, since he had complained on taking his bavarian cream that it was not good; that the deponent accompanied them to our hotel

3. Therese Lucassau 23 years old wife of François Charmartin surgeon living on the grande rue du faubourg and parish of St Laurent ...

Deposes that Monday a week ago at 11:00 the deponent was with the Sr Forel his spouse and the Sr Mazon a master wig maker and all four leaving Forel's home where they had supped together, they had entered a café on the rue St Honoré at the corner of the rue Fromentau, that they asked for two cups of coffee and two bavarian creams, that after they took them they asked for a half flask of liquor, which the master lemonade seller served them; after which he came to close the shutters of a window at which the deponent was leaning that the lemonade seller passing next to the deponent embraced her and on retiring after closing the shutter tried to do it again, that the deponent told him that that would be for tomorrow that it was too late, after that the lemonade seller took the half flask of liquor and wanted to pour some, that the Sr Mazon got up and told him that he could serve it himself and that he needn't bother, and took back the flask which he returned to the icebox; that in getting up Mazon had knocked over his stool, seeing which the lemonade seller told him to pick up your horse if you had held it by the bridle it would not have fallen; that then the lemonade seller placed himself next to Forel and having given them a checkerboard an instant before, watched them play while he criticized at length on their way of playing, that Forel and Mazon told him several times to leave and go to his counter where his place was, and that finally the lemonade seller pinched Forel on the arm, after which he took the checkerboard with his left hand and with the back of his right stuck him a violent slap; that Forel told him he was a brute an insolent person who was wrong to mistreat him, and that he was too violent for his trade; that Mazon who had given the lemonade seller an ecu of six livres to pay the bill asked him for the change more than twenty times before the lemonade seller returned it that he did not even want to let them leave and told one his assistants to fetch the watch to take these people; that two men who had each just drunk a bavarian cream at a table beside that of the deponent and her company left the café and one came back an instant after with the watch, that the individual made many reproaches to the lemonade seller that instead of maintaining good order he sought quarrels with those who came to drink ...

4. Jean Elie Leconte 49 years old ecuyer of M the duc de la Valliere living at the home of Msgr the duc de la Valliere Place du Carouzel St Germain l'auxerois parish ...

Deposes that Monday last 22 October at midnight the deponent entered the shop of the lemonade seller on the rue St Honoré at the corner of the rue Fromentau (with the Sr Bligny master painter), he saw two men and two women who occupied a table in the café, on which there were empty carafes and some

glasses, that as soon as the deponent entered he noticed that the master of the café approached the individuals' table and asked one of the two women to move so he could close the shutter of a window, that in passing next to the woman the lemonade seller embraced her, and that after closing the window he did so again, that the woman said something to him that the deponent could not hear; that at that moment one of the two men gave an ecu of six livres to the lemonade seller and that the lemonade seller had immediately served them a flask of liquor, and that an instant later the lemonade seller brought them a checkerboard, that the two men played, that the lemonade seller stayed near them and watched them play, and told them something that the deponent could not hear but he heard one of the two men who was saying par bleu M. leave us alone for our money we deserve to be, go away to your counter its your place that at that instant the lemonade seller grabbed the checkerboard from them with one hand and with the other gave a violent slap to one of the men (who told the lemonade seller that he was a brute and addressing a word to the deponent said M. you have heard him well) that the individuals asked for the change from their ecu, that they wished to leave and that the lemonade seller opposed their going and gave them trouble about returning the change, that the lemonade seller did not even want to let the deponent or his friend leave; that finally having succeeded in opening the café door the deponent left with his friend whom he left ...

AN, Y 15180

The year 1751 Wednesday 18 August 10:00 in the morning ... has appeared Jean Cormay wine merchant caterer on the rue des Poissonnieres above the rue Bergere St Eustache parish at the sign of the croix blanche, who has lodged a complaint with us against the violin player named Husson, his wife, the widow Jouet sister of the Husson's wife, and the mother of Husson and the widow Jouet living all together rue des Poissonnieres at the home of a sculptor on the city sewer; and said that for nine months the plaintiff has kept the house of the croix blanche where he daily receives companies of well behaved people, and bourgeois who come to drink, and have fun at his place honestly and tranquilly, that in the beginning when he was first established in the house, Husson came to find him and sought permission to come play violin at his tables to divert the people who come to his place, which he had allowed Husson to do, with the aim of helping him earn his living, and that of his wife and his children and the rest living with him under his responsibility, that for about six months Husson who is very given to wine and to drunkenness, often caused trouble for the plaintiff, causing quarrels and scandals, that the plaintiff having taken him back several times could not accommodate him or his wife, or the widow Jouet and his mother who followed him everywhere, and supported him, and took his side against reason, sharing

with him his excesses of drunkenness and intemperance, that in such circumstances the plaintiff would have fired him long before, and also the women in his following, fearing some extreme behavior and scenes on their part, and on the other hand wishing to keep the peace in his house which is so much more essential to his trade since good society stops coming out of annoyance from being always on the verge of seeing some disturbance occur, that Husson seduced by the desire for the money he made at the plaintiff's from playing his violin refused to leave, and had told him several times that he would play at his place in spite of him, and on this occasion the plaintiff saw himself exposed to different insults, taunts and mockery by Husson and the women in his group, and from other women whom these women brought, that the women had even made a plot to get drunk on brandy as they explained in proper terms, to come cause a disturbance as they have done at his place, that several days ago, the plaintiff having wished to eject Husson's wife and her suite, the plaintiff's seventeen year old son having tried to make them leave, Husson's wife grabbed him by his private parts and twisted them which hurt him a lot, so that in her ferocity the plaintiff was obliged to seize her by the neck to make her let go, and she poured out insults and threats against him; that Husson's wife boasted that if the plaintiff sent her husband absolutely away, she would spread the word that they were killing and assassinating at his place, and that they buried the bodies in the garden, and that his house was an open brothel and other things to disparage his house, that Husson's wife and other women from the neighborhood who are market women whom she stirred up sometimes even stand near the plaintiff's house and try to chase people away who come to spend money at his place by the bad things they say like the above and since it is in his interest to have the peace and tranquillity in his house that he has always hoped for, for the good of his business and for good order and to expel Husson, his wife, her sister, and her mother and so to free him from the disorders they cause, since they boasted they would not leave his place except by force and by the police, he has come before us to lodge the present complaint signed

AN, Y 15180

The year 1751 Sunday 24 October 8:30 in the evening ... Has appeared ... sergeant of the watch and the guard of the Porcherons ... requested by a wine merchant keeping the tavern called the grand salon on the rue des Martyrs at the Porcherons to proceed to his place because of six people who were drinking there and who were insulting other people, so he proceeded there and in the main room of the tavern he found the six people indicated by the tavern keeper who were drinking all six very peacefully at a table, one of whom was blowing a hunting horn, about which individuals no one was complaining except the wine

merchant and a woman he learned was his wife, and the tavern keeper entreated him to arrest the six people who were themselves complaining of having been insulted by the tavern keeper and his wife, and asked to go before a commissioner to lodge their complaint and the tavern keeper had demanded to be arraigned before the office of Montmartre, and the declarant had accompanied both the six people and the tavern keeper before us to hear their cases and complaints ...

Has appeared the tavern keeper ... named François Doysant wine merchant living on the rue des Martyrs at the Porcherons at the Image de Notre Dame des Anges, the house commonly called the Grand Salon, who lodged a complaint with us against the six people, who are servants according to Doysans, and told us that this evening at 7:30 the six servants came to his place and went up to the room where there are dances, and stood at the entrance door of the room looking at the dance, and stayed there about a half hour without asking for a drink, that one of the plaintiff's assistants named Pierre had wanted to pass by the door of the room to wait on some tables, and they had called him a scamp which the plaintiff having heard, he responded that there were no scamps there, and that if they were not happy they had only to bugger off, that three of the six wore the same blue uniform and the biggest of these three told him he was insolent, and then all six had asked for a bottle that one of his assistants served them at a table in the room while the plaintiff stayed in his kitchen having sent his wife to keep his counter in the room from the plaintiff's fear of quarreling with the six individuals, that a moment after he heard someone cry for the guard in the room, that without knowing why they had called for the guard, he had closed the door between the kitchen and the room, and went looking for the guard squad at the Porcherons and asked them to come back ... he had found the six individuals peaceful at a table, and he had learned from his wife that during his absence the six had said they would throw her out the door, and in this state he had asked the sergeant to arrest the six who themselves complained on their part against him and asked to be brought before a commissioner to make their complaints, that his wife had tried to stop the plaintiff from having the six arrested, and since the servants had insisted on wanting to come make their complaints, the plaintiff asked to be brought before the jurisdiction of Montmartre ... signed

Have also appeared the six people mentioned in the sergeant's declaration and Doysan's complaint ...

Protais Pidoux porter of the Countess de Choiseul living in her hotel in the cul d sac St Hyacinthe on the rue de la Sourdiere, another ... named Lauren Lapotre coachman in the service of the Countess de Choiseul ... , another ... named François Lacombe houndsman in the service of the Marquis de la Capelle Biron living on the rue des grands Augustins ..., another ... named Simon de Saint, lackey of the Sr de Croisy equerry of the King, and two others ... lackey and coachman in the service of the Sr de Croisy ... named François St Martin ... and

François Leroy ... who have lodged a complaint against Doysans ... and said that they had all gone to drink a bottle at the tavern of the grande sallon, that they had entered and looked at the dancing while waiting to ask for a bottle, that the tavern assistant Pierre passing brusquely among them had stepped on St Martin's foot ... signed with the exception of Lapotre and Lacombe ...

AN, Y 9666

The year 1761 Thursday 29 October 2:15 AM before us Louis Trudon ... sergent of the watch at the post of the grande rue du faubourg St Antoine in front of the abbey has led five people arrested by him in the tavern at the sign of the tambour on the above grande rue du faubourg at the request of the wine merchant keeping the tavern, the people making up a wedding party, being in the tavern having a quarrel with the wine merchant and his assistant because of his refusal to replace in full the candles¹ serving to give light for the assembly and one of the individuals having thrown a pewter pot at the assistant's head which drew blood ...

At that moment has appeared the Sr Jean Poirier a wine merchant living on the grande rue du faubourg St Antoine at the sign of the tambour, who has lodged a complaint with us against the people present before us and others of their company, and said that yesterday at about 4:00 PM the individuals and others of their company, men and women, came to his tavern to take a meal for the wedding party of the Sr Grelot a wood merchant living on the rue de Charenton the above faubourg, following the agreement made with them; that with the company assembled, it was served a supper about 7:00 PM; that after having supped at about 11:00 the company began to dance as it had before the supper; that after about an hour and a half some candles having been used up, he furnished some new ones amounting to eighteen, which did not satisfy the individuals and on his refusal to give them more, there was a quarrel with the individuals and the quarrel growing, the individuals hit him and his assistant and one of them that he cannot recognize threw a pewter pot at the head of his assistant named Godinet which wounded his forehead ...

There also appeared Sr Augustin Lenieps a negotiant living on the rue du Hazard butte St Roch in the house of the Sr chevalier Lambard his brother in law, Sr Louis Alexandre Videcoq master cookshop keeper keeping the hotel des trois maures garni on the rue du Hurepoix, Alexandre Laseigne, watchmaker living in the house of the Sr Laseigne his father a horse merchant on the rue de Zacarie, Etienne Durand a journeyman foundry worker working for the Sr Leclerc master founder on the rue de la Ferronnerie and living at the cloister St Opportune, Jean Laurent a journeyman tinsmith living at the Sr Moreau tinsmith in the clos de l'abbaye St Martin, Marie Louise Chavignat, daughter 18 years old of the Sr de

Chavignat surgeon and Catherine Goy, daughter 22 years old of the Sr Goy merchant hosier living on the grande rue du faubourg St Antoine next to the tavern of the tambour, who in protesting the complaint made above, lodge a complaint on their part against the Sr Poirier and his assistant named Godinet and say that having agreed with the Sr Poirier to pay him twelve livres for the candles furnished to the company until daylight if necessary and to replace them, the candles failing at about 1:30, some of the candles furnished by Poirier having been used up, they asked him to replace them which he refused, that insistently asking for the replacement of the candles that were out, Poirier told them that instead of giving them some, he was going to extinguish and have extinguished those that were still lit, which caused a brawl between them and the Sr Poirier and his assistant, which came to blows that they do not know and did not see by whom the pot in question was thrown at the assistant's head, there being at least forty people in the assembly; that Poirier having requested the squad of the watch of the faubourg; which having come arrested at Poirier's request the plaintiffs without distinction and brought them before us and since the accident only happened through Poirier's fault and because he did not keep his word to furnish sufficient candles and even to replace them until daylight they lodge the present complaint ... signed with the exception of Jean Laurent who says he does not know how to write or sign ...

... we have sent the parties away to appeal their complaints ...

Investigation ... 5 November 1761

1. Jean Poirier, wine merchant living on the grande rue du faubourg St Antoine at the sign of the tambour 36 years old ...

Deposes that last Monday 26 October he received at his place the Sr Grelot a wood merchant living on the rue de Charenton faubourg St Antoine and his new spouse married the same day with the people he had invited to his wedding party where had them served a meal for dinner that the company left at 1:00 after midnight after having danced very peacefully without anything to complain about having agreed to come back the following Wednesday for the day-after-the-wedding feast, that the Wednesday 28 October the Sr Grelot and his wife and the other people composing the assembly Monday came to the deponent's at about 4:00 in the afternoon to dine there; that they were served dinner about 7:00 having danced before, that the company left the table about midnight, that then one of the people whose name he does not know who was tall and called himself a negotiant came to find him in a cabinet near his counter and came to ask him for some candles to augment the eighteen that had been furnished, that having responded that when those that had been furnished were used up he would give some others, the person withdrew and rejoined the assembly, that an eighth of an hour after another person came that the deponent knew was the Sr Videcoq cookshop keeper living on the rue du Hurepoix, to find the deponent

in the cabinet and speaking to him said in these terms: Monsieur wiseguy [le drole] so you do not wish to give us some candles; that he answered as he had to the first that when the first were used up he would give them others; that the person replied you are a jean foutre and at the same time hit him, that his assistant named Gaudinet who was in the counter seeing him attacked left it to come to his aid and got a punch in the stomach from the Sr Videcoq which forced him to return to the counter, that at the noise the first person came back took the deponent by the collar and pulling on it ripped his jacket and his flannel waistcoat; that the tall person barring the door of the cabinet where the deponent was, blocking the view of the Sr Videcoq, he heard at that moment something fall in the counter and Gaudinet cry out, ah I am dead; that he left the cabinet where he was to find out what happened and having come to his assistant, he told him that the Sr Videcoq had thrown a pewter pot used on the counter at his head the blow could not have been made by another, the deponent having been in his cabinet with the tall person, the deponent's wife and his mother in law when the pot was thrown ... that seeing his assistant considerably wounded he sent for the squad of the watch at the post across from the abbey St Antoine, which having come the deponent asked the sergeant to arrest the Sr Videcoq, the tall person, which he did with three other people of the company and led them before us in our hotel where he came with his assistant Godinet and maintained in our presence that it was the Sr Videcoq who had thrown the pot, which the Sr Videcoq denied, that Gaudinet having finally fallen from his wound, he lodged a complaint with us both for himself and for his assistant ... signed

2. Jeanne Jacqueline Dalliet wife of Jean Poirier wine merchant ... 29 years old ...

Deposes that ... the company having supped at 11 or 11:15 continued to dance and was furnished eighteen new candles by the deponent's husband; that about 12:30 one of the people from the company of a tall height that she knew was a negotiant without knowing his name came to ask her husband who was in a cabinet next to the counter with the deponent and her mother to give them some more candles, that the deponent's husband replied that they had enough and he left; that some moments after another person from the assembly of small height, who she knew was named Videcoq a cookshop keeper came to the same cabinet where her husband, the deponent, her mother and her husband's mother who had come in the meantime were, and Videcoq entering the cabinet said to the deponent's husband M. wiseguy so you don't wish to give us some candles he responded as he had to the first person that there were enough and even more than needed there being two that were burning at the bottom of the garden in a cabinet whose door was closed and he had the key in his pocket; that the Sr Videcoq repeated to her husband that he was a wiseguy and a jean foutre and that

he deserved a slap and at the same time gave him one; that the tall person who accompanied Videcoq took her husband by the collar ... signed

3. Marie Catherine Morichon widow of Silvain Dallier journeyman mason living on the rue St Bernard faubourg St Antoine Ste Margueritte parish 60 years old ...

Deposes that ... she was there to lend him and her daughter Poirier's wife a hand ... that after having supped about 1:00 AM and the company wishing to start dancing again Poirier brought eighteen candles to the room where they were dancing to renew those that were out from those that he had already furnished; ... M. wise-guy so you don't want to give us some candles; that Poirier's wife told the deponent to go tell the shop assistant named Gaudinet who was in the room where they were dancing to come take the candle; that Godinet came right away to the cabinet door, she following him, Gaudinet said to the person who was with the Sr Poirier his master and the other person in front of the cabinet door, what M. you beat my master in his house, having received a slap from the short person ... signed

4. Françoise Robinot widow of Silvain Grelot a saddler living on the rue de Charenton faubourg St Antoine Ste Margueritte parish 64 years old ...

Deposes that the Wednesday 28 October at about 12:30 she left the room ... where the wedding party of the Sr Grelot was going on to warm herself in a little cabinet in the tavern near the counter; that having entered the cabinet she found the Sr Poirier, his wife and his wife's mother with whom she warmed herself, ... that Poirier's wife asked him why he refused to give some candles it not being a question of more than a livre, that Poirier answered his wife that he would not give any and did not want to give any, that the second person came again to ask for some candles which was equally refused, that after he told Poirier to give him some for money which Poirier again refused saying he would rather blow out those that remained, which made the person say to Poirier you [vous] reason badly one does not speak like that to honest people and at the same time gave him a slap seeing which the deponent quickly left the cabinet ... does not know how to write or to sign ...

On 19 November 1761 ... has been summoned to be heard Alexandre Videcoq master cookshop keeper 29 years old native of Paris ...

Said it was not he who sought the quarrel and who asked for candles, that it was the Sr Maufra of Nantes who being in charge of the account went to ask the wine merchant for new candles explaining to him that they had paid twelve francs of it, that the unjust refusal of the wine merchant caused the quarrel in which he came to speak politely to the wine merchant, and to ask him to give some new candles offering to pay him again and in addition to the twelve francs already given, that the wine merchant far from agreeing to these reasons, began to say furiously that he would not give them, that he was even going to extin-

guish all those that were lit; upon which the respondent left the wine merchant and returned to report to the company, that then the whole company having come back to the wine merchant, they all entered the wine merchant's shop at the same time, and at this moment the assistant was hit on the head, but the respondent does not know where the blow came from he assures us it did not come from him and does not know the author ... signed

AN, Y 12953

Investigation by us François Merlin ... 9 January 1752

1. Jacques Canonville sergeant of the watch ...

Deposes that the 3 of this month at 6:00 AM the deponent ... was requested to proceed to the café of the Sr Simonneau lemonade seller at the corner of the petits piliers des halles across from the rue de la Tonnellerie, that he went there and went up to the room on the second floor whose door was opened to him by a person whose name he has learned is Guichard a fruit and orange seller who complained to the deponent that his watch with a silver case had been robbed while he was sleeping at a table where he had drunk with his friends, that this watch could only have been stolen by one of the people who were in the room, and that as soon as he had realized this he had seized the door of the room to stop them from leaving, upon which the deponent looked on the ground all about the room with a light but he could not find the watch, that there were about fifteen people more or less in the room who were drinking at different tables and got up from their tables so the deponent could search them, that in fact the deponent searched about eight or nine, that he also searched Guichard, without being able to find anyone who had taken the watch, that finally having come to the table where the person arrested wearing black was and where there were still another four or five people who told the deponent that they did not know this person and that they were not drinking with him, the deponent noticed that this person was drunk and did not get up from the stool where he was sitting, had the person stand up to be searched that having searched him in front of the whole company he found the watch that Guichard recognized as having been his in the left pocket of his jacket, ...

2. Sr Gaspart Salavin fruit and orange seller 35 years old living on the rue de la Cordonnerie St Eustache parish ...

Deposes that ... at 3 or 4:00 AM the deponent having entered with the Sr Guichard and Margnet called Gillet in the café of the Sr Simonneau ... and having gone up to the room on the second floor they were served a cup of anisette, that after having drunk this cup of anisette together Guichard went to sleep and the deponent was happy to talk with Margnet and other people while Guichard was sleeping, did not notice if some one approached Guichard or not while he

was sleeping; that Guichard having awakened at 5:00 in the morning and left the room for his needs, and having returned shortly after he amused himself at different tables and then came back to the table where the deponent and Gillet were that then Guichard having searched in his pocket to see what time it was could not find his watch upon which the deponent said loudly to the whole company that the watch had to be found among those who were in the room, ... signed

3. Sr Jacques François Guichard fruit and orange seller 37 years old living on the rue de la Chanverrierie St Eustache parish ...

4. François Rigal merchant goldsmith 36 years old living on the rue Comtesse d'Artois St Eustache parish ...

Deposes that 3 January at 3:00 AM the deponent entered the café of the Sr Simonneau who had him go up to a room on the second floor where there were a lot of people, that he was served a half cup of anisette which he drank alone at a table where he stayed until 6:00 in the morning, ... signed

8. Sr Augustin Baudouin clerk at the canal of the Essonne and Malherbes rivers 31 years old living on the rue St Martin ...

Deposes that ... at 3 or 4:00 AM the deponent entered with the Sr Guichard, Salavin, and Margnet called Gillet the place of the Sr Simonneau lemonade seller, that they asked for a pint of anisette which was served them in a room on the second floor; that Guichard Salavin and Margnet were a little drunk and left the café of Leguet under the petits piliers de la Tonnellerie where the deponent had met them, that there were lots of people in the room at different tables ... signed

sity Press, 1984); J. Merrick, *The Desacralization of the French Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); A. Farge, *Subversive Words: Public Opinion in Eighteenth-Century France* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); L. J. Graham, *If The King Only Knew: Seditious Speech in the Reign of Louis XV* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2000). In fact, the police had been concerned about discussions of ‘affairs of state’ in taverns for decades and had made a concerted effort to report on such talk in cafés during the 1720s; Robert Darnton, ‘An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris’, *The American Historical Review*, 150:1 (February 2000), pp. 1–35. But the attack on the king reported here went beyond the discussions of earlier tavern talk and was particularly scandalous.

AN, Y9663[a]

1. *six gold louis*: From 1726 until the French Revolution, the monetary system stabilized to the following values: a louis d’or [gold] was worth 24 livres; an écu (silver) was worth 6 livres; and various copper coins were worth less than a livre. There was no coin worth a livre, which was a money of account.

AN, Y9663[b]

1. *Ramponneau*: Of course, Jean Ramponneau (1724–1802) was rather a star in the eighteenth century, as we saw in the second chapter. The son of a barrelmaker from the Nièvre province, he probably came to Paris through the networks of provincial wine merchants described earlier. His tavern, the Tambour Royal, in the Courtille suburb became a triumph of marketing, both for its prices and for its reputation as a place to visit. The paintings on the walls of this tavern figure in prints from the time and became a model for other taverns to emulate, as we will see in the fourth example of this section. At the time of this case, Ramponneau had just gained even greater notoriety the previous year because of a suit brought against him by a theater manager for whom he had agreed to perform and then had backed out. His success was such that he would buy another tavern in the following decade, the Grande Pinte, which would be even larger and become even more famous and leave the Tambour Royal to his son but, as this case suggests, he first rented it out to another wine merchant to run. However, there appear to have been some disagreements about its operation.

AN, Y14611

1. *pratiques*: The language of this example is particularly rich in its depiction of customer and credit relations. The word ‘pratiques’ that is crossed out refers to habitual clientele and the word ‘compagnie’ that replaces it is discussed in the introduction to Chapter 6. The word ‘engrené’ that the mason uses to describe his prior relationship with the plaintiff implies both ‘begun with’ and ‘interlocked with’ and probably refers both to habit and to credit.

AN, Y9666

1. *candles*: With this example we are reminded of the other items sold by a tavern keeper along with the wine and the space. Other examples mention the heat of a stove; here we see the light that allowed people to stay after dark. Indeed this wedding party was staying well after normal closing hours and appeared to have made plans to stay through the night. The tavern keeper effectively tried to end their festivities by refusing to light them, but the plaintiffs claim he had agreed to see them through until morning. We are left to wonder why he did not simply call in the watch to have them evicted.

AN, Y12956

1. *a bugger and a thief: cambrouse* seems to refer to ‘travailler en cambrouse’ = voler.

AN, Y10143

1. *Taconnet*: One of the pleasures of this text is finding the playwright Toussaint Gaspard Taconnet (1730–74) performing, as it were, one of his comedies in real life. In addition to working as a stagehand and actor, he wrote plays and farces about common people, some of which take place in taverns.
2. *fruit seller*: As will be fairly obvious from the report, fruit sellers also sold brandy and their shops were public drinking places too.

AN, Y10040

1. *perish under the rod*: The phrase here, ‘perish under the rod [perir sous le baton]’, clearly has a more complex resonance and probably refers to the extremely degrading and painful execution by breaking someone on a wheel. The breaking, of the limbs and the stomach, was done with a rod, or baton, after which the felon was left to die on a wagon wheel. See R. M. Andrews, *Law, Magistracy, and Crime in Old Regime Paris, 1735–89* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 385.
2. *Academie de Lagueriniere*: Although Pierre Goubert, in *The Ancien Régime French Society, 1600–1750*, p. 154, says that the word ‘escuyer’ or ‘chevalier’ was almost always a sign of nobility, it is hard to be certain in the context of a riding Academy whether that is what the word means. The Academy de Laguérinière refers to the riding academy established by François Robichon de La Guérinière who, in 1730, had been named Directeur du Manège des Tuileries.

AN, Y14518

1. *farms*: Without knowing precisely what the plaintiff’s role in the King’s tax farms was, the date of this case, coming only a few months after the crash of the Mississippi Bubble at the end of 1720, and the language of the insults suggest that he was involved in the speculations provoked by this event.

AN, Y9666

1. *St Denis*: The village of Ile-Saint-Denis lay only 9 km to the north of Paris. In 1793 it had only 385 inhabitants.
2. *M. de Saint Florentin*: Louis Phélypeaux, comte de Saint-Florentin (1705–77) was secretary of state for the Maison du Roi at this time and so responsible, among other things for clerical issues.

AN, Y1254

1. *drawn the king*: The practice of ‘drawing the kings’ or discovering a token baked in a ‘Kings’ cake’ is still common. The person who finds the token becomes the King and when the King takes a drink all cry out ‘The King is drinking’ and follow suit. It is normally a convivial practice. The fight here had to do with the real King forcing guilds to buy new guild offices of juré (a guild official) and auditor that he had created in order to raise funds.

AN, Y1004

1. *drink with your group*: This example is also about physical and social space in a tavern, where the phrase ‘drink with your party’ was a warning to respect the relative privacy of a group in the public space of a tavern. According to the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*, 4th edn (1762), ‘On dit proverbialement et figurément à un homme qui se mêle de parler à des gens qui ne parlent pas à lui, Parlez à votre écot.’ The significance of écot is discussed at the beginning of chapter 6.

AN, Y10147

1. *Monday 11 May 1750*: The chronology of this example is confusing but both parts come from the same case file and are, indeed related, though almost a year apart. The GrosPierre in the first case is clearly the Grandpierre of the second case.

AN, Y10228

1. *St Louis*: It helps to know that a bourgeois of Paris who produced his own wine had the right to sell it retail, so St Louis is not a wine merchant but he is a tavern keeper. The accused, Morand, is identified as a pigment grinder and a sergeant in the militia of the battalion of Corbeil.
2. *slaps*: The phrase is *donner des jarretiers* which, according to the *Dictionnaire du bas-langage* (Paris: L.Haussmann, 1808), 2:61, means ‘donner des coups de sangle ou de mouchoir sur les jambes: c’est ce que les ecoliers appellent donner du vinaigre’.

AN, Y10146

1. *master of the embankment*: The phrase *maitre de berge* refers to the men who handled the arrival of massive shipments of logs floated down the Seine to Paris and collected at the ports; see Fréminville, *Dictionnaire ou traité de la police*, pp. 513–14.