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FELLOWSHIP FINAL REPORT

Food trade and professions in the Loire Valley during the Renaissance. A preliminary research

Francesca Pucci Donati^{1, 2, 3}¹ LE STUDIUM Institute for Advanced Studies, 45000 Orléans, France² Department of History, University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy³ Centre for Advanced Studies in the Renaissance (CESR) / CNRS, University of Tours - European Institute for the History and Cultures of Food (IEHCA) / La Villa Rabelais, 37000 Tours, France

REPORT INFO

Fellow: Dr Francesca PUCCI DONATI

From: Bologna University, Italy

Host laboratory in region Centre-Val de Loire: Centre d'étude supérieur de la Renaissance (CESR)

Host scientist: **Professor Bruno Laurioux**

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ABSTRACT

Food professions acquired great importance during the 15th century in Tours thanks to Louis XI, who established there the seat of its court. This specific topic has not yet been extensively investigated, except for the works of Bernard Chevalier, whose interest was mainly focused on butchers and their guild. Hospitality services (both private and public) in particular went through a large urban development, since the presence of the king's court attracted diplomats, ambassadors, foreign dignitaries, travelers, craftsmen and merchants, that needed to be fed and housed. In addition to that, the geographical position of the city, situated between the Cher and Loire rivers, stimulated trade and market. The rich archival documentation kept in Tours, dated back to the 15th-16th centuries, allows us to further research. The first phase of the project aims actually to deepen the study of the welfare sector.

1- Introduction

Past and recent studies on medieval and modern European cities show us the importance of urban history through its “turning-points”. It is the case of Tours between the reigns of Louis XI and François Ier, when it became the seat of the king and his court. At that time the city experienced a great economic and population increase never known before. Demand grew and consequently, supply. Food trade and professions were obviously positively influenced by the new trend. Evidence of that comes from the 15th-16th centuries documentary records kept at the municipal and departmental archives in Tours. Several data concern fishmongers, butchers, inn-keepers and their activities to supply the local government and the king's court. Bernard Chevalier studied some

aspects of this topic in his fundamental volume on the history of Tours. Other scholars continued and continue his work from different perspectives. Besides, the team of the programme REnumAR, promoted by the Centre d'étude supérieur de la Renaissance (CESR), offers a work in progress through the implementation of the database called *De minute en minute 2.0 (Renumar)*. This last is very useful for the consultation of both notarial and public deeds. Nevertheless, there is still much to do as concerns the documentation and its contents. A number of questions remains open, such as for example: How did food professions contribute to the urban growth? Which kind of relationship the innkeepers established with the local government and the king? Can we tell the story of someone of the actors involved in the hospitality sector?

2- Experimental details

The work we made at the archives of Tours can be divided into the following phases.

1) The initial phase entailed the analysis of a sample of documents from the middle of the 15th to the beginning of 16th century. The cross-checking information of both public and private sources highlighted the great relevance that the hospitality sector acquired in the economic and social life of the city. Evidence of that comes for example from a scroll in Latin of 1141, written by Henri, treasurer of the Chapter of St. Martin church. The last imposed duty on the retail sail of wine in Châteauneuf (a portion of the town). The document shows the role of the inn-keeper as a public officer.

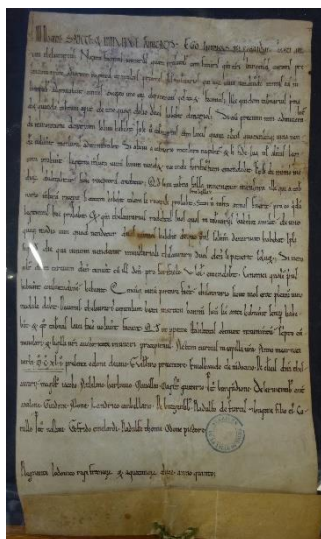


Figure 1.
Parchment, Latin,
1141 (AMT, AA 1).

2) The second phase consisted of creating a body of data on the basis of the public sources kept at the municipal archives (BB=the council's deliberations; CC= the accounts of the expenses made by the local government) as well as the notarial deeds, held at the departmental archives (series E, also available on the website www.renumar.univ-tours.fr).

3) The third phase aimed to examine in particular the deliberations and the accounts of the local government. They reveal that the hospitality world was composed by a various population: innkeepers often worked closely

with other crafts. Actually, they did business with bakers, butchers, fishmongers and often had a kitchen and cook who prepared food to serve customers. It also happened that innkeepers had an official role. It is sufficient to give an example. According to a document of 1446, December 27, *Jehan Navecte le Jeune* was a wine merchant and a supplier of the local government; he provided hospitality to the Master of the Court of Accounts of the king, sir *Christophe Paillant*, and was paid by the treasurer of the municipality. Besides, he invested money in a textile activity with his business partner.

4) The fourth phase was focused on the notarial deeds. The most ancient documents date back to the seventies of the 15th century; previous acts were lost. These sources are relevant for the research, since they often contain interesting information, such as the designation of the inns and hotels, in addition to the names of the operators or the owners. Actually, when we find the expression *à l'enseigne de* in a record, it always means that there is the name of the guesthouse. Besides, their localisation is indicated in a sufficiently precise way: it is usually mentioned the street, or a place very nearby, or even the parish to which they belong.

3- Results and discussion

The body of records represents the first milestone of the food trade and professions project. It allowed us to try to answer some questions (and to ask some new ones). We can summarise them as follows.

1) Quantitative data:

- 23 hoteliers/ innkeepers in Tours and its surroundings between 1465 and 1504;

- 2 markets in the city center: *Place du Grand Marché* (nowadays: *Place du Monstre*); *Place Foire le Roy* (next to *rue Colbert*);

- 6 parishes (of 16) had at least one structure that offered hospitality: *St. Symphorien-des-Ponts-de-Tours*; *Notre-Dame-la-Riche*; *St. Vincent*; *St.-Pierre-des-Corps*; *St. Simple*; *St.-Pierre-le-Puellier*.

- 20 inn's and hotels' names: *Trois Rois* (au faubourg de Notre-Dame-la-Riche); *Trois Rois* (rue du change); *St. Jean*; *Notre Dame*; *Lion-d'Or*; *La Chièvre*; *Trois Barbeaux*; *St. Christophe*; *Epine Fleurie*; *St. Catherine*; *La Serpe*; *la Tête-d'Or*; *La Grille*; *La Pomme-de-Pin*; *Mouton-d'Or*; *St. Marthe*; *Le Coq et La Pie*; *hostel du Tresteau*; *St. Georges*; *Cœur Navré*.



Figure 2. The ancient inn *Les Trois Rois* today, on the corner between *Place Plumereau* and *Rue du change*.

2) A visual interpretation of data (figures 3, 4 and 5):

- a table on the mention of innkeepers from 1465 to 1504 in the notarial records (it is a working in progress);

- a map within the indication of the two most important market places at the time and the chapels quoted in the documents (on the basis of Giraudet's Plan);

- a map of the inns mentioned in the records (on the basis of Giraudet's Plan). The majority of them were situated in *rue de la Scellerie* and the street that is called *rue Colbert*.

Year	Hotelier/Innkeeper
1465	Laurens de Marnay, Jehan Mesdes, Alain Besguigneau
1473	Berthelot Nobileau, Jehan de Poellé, Jehan Bellot, Jehan Nobileau
1474	Jehan Marchant dit Bauge
1481	Yvonne Delaroche, Jean Blondelou dit Deborbon, Jean Content
1484	Gilbert Billaud

1485	Yvonne de la Roche, Jehan Jourdain, Pierre Delamothe
1486	Jean Tortenoye, Jehan Jourdain, Perrin Hobereau le jeune, Jehan Deleau, Jehan Deleau
1492	Noël Tisserant, Glaude Senet, Julien Girault
1496	Julien Girault
1498	Denis Bonnete
1504	Guillaume Senet

Figure 3. Names of operators/owners of the inns in Tours, that are mentioned in the documentation between 1465 and 1504.

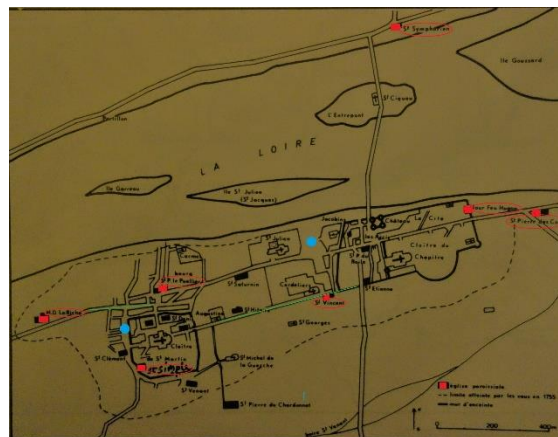


Figure 4. Market places (bleu), chapels (red) and streets with almost one inn (green).



Figure 5. Localization of the inns (red).

3) Quality data:

In order to draw much information as possible from the sources, we matched the names of the wine merchants from the accounts and the deliberations to those of innkeepers, attested in the notarial deeds (among them, we have commitments, acknowledgments of debt, duties, sales, leases, wills, power of attorney,

etc.). These last indeed are very useful because the job of the actors is almost always mentioned. Actually, the practice of declaring his own residence and profession was a way to give its own identity card. We also find the profession of people in some public documents, especially when the wealthiest and more influenced citizens are required to give a sum of money to the local government (loan “forced”), or in the case of supply contracts or procurement of duties. So, in this phase of the project, the basic idea is to focus on:

- the activities of the innkeepers inside and outside their workplace (are they always wine merchants or not?);
- the relationship between the innkeepers, the authorities (the local government and/or the king and his officers) and other operators of the food sector or craftsmen;
- duties and foodstuffs prices linked to the hospitality sector (market trend).

The methodological approach is the result of the discussion we made together with professor Bruno Laurioux and some other colleagues of the University of Tours and the CESR, such as professor Samuel Leturcq. As there is no evidence of documents clearly linked to the world of hospitality (such as for example, a innkeepers’ statute or a privilege of the king), we need to implement our quality data by making cross-checks with the different archival sources. We would like to give a couple of quick examples:

1) *Jehan et Tibauld Jourdain*, brothers and both gunsmiths, are active in Tours at the end of the 15th century (Giraudet, *Les Artistes*). In particular, we find the name of *Jehan Jourdain* in the accounts and the deliberations of the local government as well as in some notarial acts between 1461-86, including the list of the aldermen of Tours in 1473. He is defined *brigandinier du roi* in 1473 and 1481; *bourgeois de Tours* in 1485 and 1486; *hôtelier de Notre-Dame-la-Riche* and at the same time seller of houses in 1485 and 1486 (see fig. 3).

2) *Noël Tisserant*, hotel-keeper at the parish *La Riche*, rents a portion of his garden to *Michau*

Rouelle, baker in Tours, with the commitment to build a house equipped with a stone fireplace in four years (Act of 1492, January 17).

3) *Julien Girault*, merchant and innkeeper at the inn *Les Trois Rois* situated in the suburb of the *Notre-Dame-la-Riche*, has to return a sum of money to *Adam Pesneau*, pastry chef, for the delivery of white wine and oats. He will pay in instalments and give a woman’s dress and « *une patenostre de coural* » as a pledge (Act of 1496, January 20).

4) *Barthélemy Quartier*, merchant, signs a lease with Pierre Menant, knifemaker, for a house located in the *Grand-Rue* (close to the market), but he keeps the wine cellar to sell his wine during the following 18 months (Act of 1499, Septembre 18).

These few examples show us how much varied was the world of hospitality as well as the profile of people who worked on it for different reasons.

4- Conclusion

The first phase of the research project is not over yet. The creation of a sample of data and the definition of some interpretative keys were the basis for studying in detail the topic. Besides, the suggestions of our colleagues helped us to better direct the archival investigation. The resulting insights will be shared in workshops, in an international conference (2023) and in some publications, other than be visible on the website “Renumar – Ressources Numérique pour l’édition des Archives de la Renaissance” (<https://renumar.hypotheses.org>).

5- Perspectives of future collaborations with the host laboratory

Pucci Donati looks forward to continue the archival research in Tours and share the results with her colleagues of the Renumar project at the CESR. In this perspective, the second phase will be focused on the implementation of the body of data, by adding the records of the first

half of the 16th century. The idea is also to concentrate the attention on: 1) the hospitality offered by private individuals; 2) the accounts of the king's court for feasts and banquets and the role of the innkeepers in the supply; 3) food and food service in the inns of the city.

6-Articles published in the framework of the fellowship

During the 3 months stay we presented the work in progress at the following event:

“Food trade and professions in the Loire Valley during the Renaissance. A preliminary research”. Paper presented at Le Studium Thursday. Interdisciplinary monthly seminar, La Villa Rabelais, Tours, November 4, 2021.

7- Acknowledgements

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Digital source: Renumar: *De minute en minute 2.0* – Ressources pour l'édition des Archives de la Renaissance (www.renumar.univ-tours.fr)