

## The true “punching bag” behind Molière’s *The Middle-Class Nobleman*

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### Περίληψη

Το 1670 πρωτοπαρουσιάστηκε στο θέατρο των γαλλικών ανακτόρων ενώπιον του «Βασιλιά Ήλιου» Λουδοβίκου ΙΔ΄ η νέα κωμωδία-μπαλλέτο *Ο αρχοντοχωριάτης* (*Le bourgeois gentilhomme*), σε κείμενο του Μολιέρου και μουσική του Λυλλί, μόνιμου συνεργάτη του. Και οι δύο έπαιζαν επί σκηνής. Έκτοτε κανείς δεν έθεσε το ερώτημα εναντίον τίνος βάλλει το έργο. Ο παρών συγγραφέας αποφάσισε να το διερευνήσει για να καταλάβει, προκειμένου να συνθέσει υπεύθυνα νέα μουσική για παράσταση του Δημοτικού Περιφερειακού Θεάτρου Κρήτης, της μεγαλονήσου που κατά περίεργη συγκυρία συνδέεται άμεσα με την αφορμή της συγγραφής του έργου. Μελετώντας ιστορικές πηγές, γεγονότα, συνδέοντας τις καταστάσεις κι αναλύοντας σε βάθος από νέα σκοπιά το κείμενο μ΄ έμφαση σ΄ ορισμένες σκηνές, συμπέρανε ότι στόχος της ανελέητης σκληρής συγγραφικής σάτιρας ήταν ο ίδιος ο συνθέτης της αρχικής μουσικής του έργου, επειδή οι δύο είχαν εισέλθει σε περίοδο βαθειάς ρήξης για διαφορές προσωπικές οικονομικές και νομικές. Η έρευνα, με τα συμπεράσματά της για τη μολιερική επίθεση κατά του Λυλλί, κινείται στους άξονες της ιταλικής προέλευσής του, της απληστίας του, της παραχάραξης του ταπεινού οικογενειακού του ιστορικού και της κατασκευής ενός πλαστού ευγενούς παρελθόντος, καθώς και της γνωστής σ΄ όλους έκδηλης θηλυπρέπειας κι ανοικτής ομοφυλοφιλίας του, εγκύπτοντας σε λεπτομερείς ιστορικές, γλωσσολογικές, ετυμολογικές, πολιτικές και κοινωνιολογικές αναφορές. Η συνθετική ιστορική μελέτη γεγονότων που συνέβησαν στ΄ ανάκτορα και προκάλεσαν τη συγγραφή του έργου συνδυάζεται με κοινωνική μελέτη συνθηκών και συνθηγιών της βασιλικής Αυλής, με χυμώδεις αναφορές σε ήθη κι έθιμα της ευρύτερης βασιλικής οικογένειας και των αυλικών, ενισχυμένες με στοιχεία ανεκδοτολογικά και με σχόλια πιπεράτα. Γενικά επιχειρείται τεκμηρίωση της νέας αυτής πολύπλευρης δραματολογικής θεώρησης μέσ΄ από ένα αφήγημα πλούσιο σ΄ αυτούσιες πτυχές του έργου, του συγγραφέα, των συνδημιουργών και της εποχής, εν πολλοίς άγνωστες στο ευρύτερο κοινό.

## Summary

In 1670, the new ballet comedy *The middle-class gentleman* (*Le bourgeois gentilhomme*) premiered at the theatre of the French palace before “the Sun King” Louis XIV, on a text by Molière with music by Lully, his permanent collaborator. Both were acting on stage. Since then, no one has raised the question who is the real punching bag of the play’s aggression. The present author decided to research towards understanding it, in order to compose new music responsibly for a performance at the Municipal Regional Theatre of Crete, an island paradoxically connected directly with the initial impetus behind the play’s composition. By studying historical sources, events, linking the circumstances and analyzing in depth the text from a fresh viewpoint with emphasis on certain scenes, he concluded that the target of the playwright’s merciless hard satire was the original composer of the music for the play, because the two of them had entered a period of deep clash for personal, financial and legal differences. The research, with its conclusions regarding the Molièresque attack on Lully, moves on the axes of his humble Italian origins, his greed, the forgery of his family history through the construction of a fake past of nobility, as well as his widely conspicuous effeminacy and open homosexuality, by probing into detailed historical, linguistic, etymological, political and sociological references. The compound historical study of events that took place in the palace and motivated the writing of this play is combined with a social study of the palatine conditions and habits, with juicy references to the customs and etiquette of the wider royal family and the Court, enhanced with anecdotal facts and spicy commentary. The general attempt of this novel multifaceted teatrological viewing is the documentation through a narrative rich in authentic facts about the play, the author, the associate creators and the era, largely unknown to the general public.

**Keywords:** Louis XIV, Molière, Jean-Baptiste de Lully, Philippe d’Orléans, Anne of Austria, Mazarin, Süleyman, Cretan war, Siege of Candia, sabir (Mediterranean lingua franca), Reformation, *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, comédie-ballet, commedia dell’arte, Jourdain, Turkish masquerade, turquerie, the Italian vice, operatic monopoly, Paris Opera.

### *Turquerie*

The play *The middle-class nobleman* (*Le bourgeois gentilhomme*) was written and performed in front of the Sun King (Roi-Soleil) Louis XIV Dieudonné (= God-given) of France and Navarra, from the Capetic branch of the Bourbon house (maison de Bourbon), on October 14, 1670. Special mention needs to be made about the trigger of its composition. Barely a year earlier, the accreditation of Mütferrika ( $\approx$  excellency) Süleyman ağa as ambassador of Muhammad IV the Hunter (Mehmet 4 Avcı), Ottoman Sultan and Kayser-i Rum –Caesar of the Roman Empire, i.e. the one which we now call Byzantine– and Caliph of Islam, by appropriation of each and every secular and religious power following the Ottoman conquests of Constantinople and Mecca, respectively, was accompanied by some “scandalous” incidents. It seems that the superlatively skittish French king, wishing to impress the “semi-barbaric Easterner”, had reclined on his silver throne, had put on his most fancy clothes and all his jewellery and was shining like daylight because of the many diamonds embroidered on his golden little vest.

But Süleyman’s Ottoman temperament didn’t seem to get much impressed. The commissioned officer of the High Gate entered the throne room wrapped in a plain woolen coat, refused to bow before the sparkling Sun King, breathed out into his face his petty speech about coming in representation of the greatest monarch on earth, namely of the Sultan, and at the end left without so much as handing in a letter of accreditation, murmuring –rumours had it– that the “padişah’s” horse was clad in a more luxurious attire than the French sovereign. It was even reported that he said he had felt somehow offended, because he had taken all this showoff as a provocation.

The incident was the tip of the iceberg of a history of intense political discontent. The relations between the two states were tense because recently France had reinforced Venice by sending a military troop of thirty-one (31) ships and six thousand (6,000) men at the final phase of the siege of Candia, or “Great Castle” –nowadays Heraclion, Crete. This siege, the longest one in history, lasted a total of twenty-two (22) years. On land it was coordinated from the already conquered cities of the great island –from



Jean-Baptiste de Lully  
(1632-1687).

its Ottoman capital, Chania, and from Rethymnon–, while the Castle was getting replenished from the sea and resisting.

Just a little while earlier, within the same year of 1669, Candia had finally fallen, partly as a result of the desertion of a Venetian engineer who was made into a pasha and partly following the departure of the French force, a fact that had eventually driven the Franco-Venetian relations into a profound crisis. The Sultan was victorious, Crete was “Turkified” for the next three centuries and France herself did not escape grave losses of her own, along with one hundred thousand (100,000) Ottomans and thirty thousand (30,000) Cretans dead in total.

The French monarch had entered a period of political and war conflicts with other powerful European monarchies, namely with his kin. In an inspired manifestation of a sudden *Realpolitik*, he thought up a plan, among other things, of a manoeuvre of reviving an older French-Ottoman alliance. Thus, he summoned for the first Ottoman ambassador to be appointed to him from Constantinople, the capital city which then, and all through until about 1931, was officially called in Turkish *Konstantiniye*, alias also *Asitane* meaning *Reigning City* –of course not yet by any means... “*İstanbul*”.

Indeed, however, as far as European diplomatic morals went, Süleyman had conducted himself in an inappropriate and arrogant manner, in a way inferior to the commands of etiquette regarding the circumstances. Instead of filing an official diplomatic complaint, the French monarch, famed for his proverbial sense of humour, rushed first to banish Süleyman to... Paris –where he would excel, become extremely popular and introduce Parisians to coffee–, additionally forbidding him from ever setting foot again into country palaces, and, secondly, to commission the permanent courtier playwright and close friend of his, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, famous under his artistic alias of *Molière*, to compose a satirical play making fun of Turks.

Molière, with his insurmountable wit, seized the opportunity of presenting something extraordinarily entertaining, escalating the action towards the extensive scene of simulation and rôle-play, characterized as a *Turkish ceremony / masquerade* (*cérémonie / mascarade turque*). The scene reflects *turquerie*, the fad of Turkish exoticism that had taken over the French bourgeoisie since a while ago. Could an implicit pun have played an additional part in this turn of events, that words *turc* (= Turk) / *turquerie*, on one hand, and *truc* (= trick, gimmick) / *truquerie*, on the other, sound

almost identical? Is it possible for something like this to have failed to catch the attention of a wit with Molière's caliber?

### *Sultan meremet*

Since the middle of the previous century –the 16th–, the French, prone as they were to Asian charms –cf. *chinoiserie*–, kept getting spellbound and led into stylistically playing with various Islamic elements, which they often perceived as a tangle of things Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Egyptian, Berber and so forth. Concurrently, and perhaps within the same hazy context, a popular verbal expression was also going around very widely, according to which the Ottoman sultan was nicknamed “the Grand Turk”. Really, now, what does one mean when one says “a Turk”? It depends. Western Europeans, though, used to mean every Muslim of the East chiefly, who, as generally and roughly understood as being a citizen of the Ottoman Empire or subordinate to it, had Turkish as his language, whether first or second.

As far as our play is concerned, now, the entire historical context driving the plot into its riverbed presents particular interest: requiring a masterful dramatic technique on the part of the poetic author, it raises several issues, mainly historical and literary ones, for which I believe that specialist theatrical scholars have by far not yet uttered the final word.

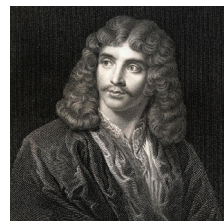
The main axis of the plot concerns the ridiculous pranks of a *nouveau-riche* character from the rising bourgeoisie of the *here* and *now* of the play's writing, who is zealously trying to monkey the external traits and –even worse– the culture and etiquette of “bluebloods”. Textiles merchant middle-aged well-to-do bourgeois Jourdain, overtaken by an obsession to become the same as the aristocrats of noble descent, imitates their manners in a clumsy fashion, wears their clothes and fantasizes that he is studying their knowledge. He recruits teachers of music, dance, philosophy and fencing, pays them handsomely and turns his home into a gathering spot for aristocratic cooks, tailors, musicians, dancers, you-name-it. His wife is disconcerting and tries to bring him to his senses, especially because the capable decadent lying exploiter and untrustworthy count Dorante has crept up on him and keeps flattering him and selling him false hope, telling him fairy-tales that he supposedly speaks in the palace about Mer. Jourdain's nobility and that he plays the middleman so that Jourdain can allegedly engage in love-making with his own mistress, the delicious liberal

widow Marquise Dorimène, while squeezing money out of him up regularly in the process.

Jourdain, in the meantime, wishing to marry off his daughter Lucile to a blueblood aristocrat, refuses to accept as son-in-law the well-off and handsome young bourgeois Cléonte, despite the mutual love of the young couple. Cléonte, however, has a demonic servant, Coviello, the authentic clown-like character of the *commedia dell'arte*, within the wider established typology of smart or even cunning slaves –cf. e.g. Xanthias and Carion in Aristophanes and then corresponding characters of the new Attic and Latin comedy. Coviello conceives a plan, not an unselfish one, since he himself is in love with the family maid, Nicolette –so as not to disrupt the class character involved in the case after all. He employs an Italian troupe, with which he has connections, masquerades himself as an Ottoman courtier and his master as a prince, the sultan's son, and all together now, pretending to be Turks, squeeze out Jourdain's consent for his daughter to marry that particular person. They set up a parody of a ceremony and bestow upon Jourdain the title of a “*mamamouchi*”.

In the original, the satire, with the expected dosage of exoticism, was expressed not in Turkish, but in the common mixed port-city idiom of the entire Mediterranean. This idiom, known as *sabir* or *lingua franca mediterranea* (= *Mediterranean Frankish tongue*), sounded very funny to the French and was understood, because of the common Latinisms in its vocabulary: largely a vulgar crude folk Italian up to about 80%, it has extra admixtures of old French and Occitan, Greek, Arabic and Turkish, Spanish and a little Portuguese, and uses an Arabic-style syntax.

The first and second performances were given at the Château de Chambord, way out of Paris, in the Loire valley. On stage, Molière –born in 1622 therefore forty-eight (48) years old– and his young wife Armande-Grésinde-Claire-Élisabeth Béjart –twenty (20) years old– playing, respectively, the main hero Jourdain and his daughter, Lucile. Together with them a man, André Hubert, doing the parts of the music teacher and of Mme Jourdain, as well as the composer of the music himself being on the stage; and that would be the permanent musician of the Court and for many years his collaborator, par excellence personality of the middle



Jean-Baptiste Poquelin,  
alias Molière (1622-1673).

French Baroque, Jean-Baptiste de Lully, playing the Mufti. The choreographies were composed by Pierre Beauchamp, third party of the group and permanent courtier associate. The parody of a genuine dervish ritual was dictated and supervised by knight Laurent d'Arvieux, at times a merchant in Smyrna (now İzmir), a traveler in Tunis, a Consul in Algiers and later in the nowadays brutally tormented Aleppo. He himself also designed the costumes, while the set was designed by the Italian designer and Court engineer Carlo Vigarani.

During the following month, the play was repeated at the theatre of royal palace Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. In total, six (6) performances were given in 1670. However, another twenty-eight (28) followed in 1671 and still eight (8) more in 1672, a fact showing great success en route.

### ***Comédie-ballet***

The Cretan-born Turkish *raison d'être* for the commission was masterfully wound together with a laughable dominant social phenomenon of the times, where the wealthy bourgeois were posing as aristocrats, spending money and inventing fake family histories. Just a little bit earlier, in 1666, for example, legal scholar and priest Antoine Furetière had published *The bourgeois novel (Le roman bourgeois)*.

Here, Molière, together with Lully and Beauchamps, put together the twelfth and most illustrious and emblematic example of a form invented and cultivated by themselves intensively for nine years: an entertaining and amusing comedy-ballet, initially in three and subsequently in five acts. The *comédie-ballet*, in essence a theatrical conception invented by the three of them, is described by some as a play with an abundance of music and dance and by others as a ballet where scenes of drama action are interspersed. I am only mentioning this in order to show how inseparably and mutually the spoken dramatic side of the play is connected to its musical and dancing aspect.

The authentic *Bourgeois gentilhomme* has therefore been conceived and registered in history as the crown-piece and sculpture of the *comédie-ballet*: it is a theatrical play with singing and dancing parts in the course and within the plot. But, as we have said, the dramatic solution is given by the intervention of a musical and dancing roaming company of Italian comedians. After the action is completed, the play comes to its finale by way of a

festive concert, within the course but after the conclusion of the plot, which is called *festival des nations* –in other words, a folkloric / ethnic festivity.

For the French public, the presence and artistry of Italian players was something very familiar. Wandering Italian troupes were running around all over the country, presenting popular comic shows, events and plays, especially from the living tradition of the *commedia dell'arte*. On top of all that, the leading company of the genre, simply known as the *Italian theatre* (*Théâtre-Italien*) or the *Italian comedy* (*Comédie-Italienne*), had had a permanent theatrical seat at the centre of Paris for several years, which they shared with Molière and his own company. The director and basic performer of the troupe was a Neapolitan, Tiberio Fiorilli, also known as Scar-amouche –from the character of the *commedia* which he had evolved and had been playing with a terrific success. Furthermore, from 1662 onwards, Louis had given these two companies the *Théâtre du Palais-Royal* as their permanent theatrical stage. Molière used to respect and admire Fiorilli and seek his advice until 1668, when the Italian artist left the country, initially returning home to Italy and leaving his team practically headless.

So, here, Molière is throwing around hosts of songs full of theatrical, mimic and dancing notes. One would easily characterize them as a musical revue almost: a crowd dressed in various traditional costumes are dancing and singing a number of songs in French dialects and idioms, plus two more in Italian and in Spanish, accessible to the French ear due to linguistic kinship. On the other hand, the pronunciation of the French language was much closer, then, to those of Tuscan (Italian), Piedmontese, Sardinian and Corsican, Occitan / Languedoc / Provençal and Catalan, Aragonese and even Castilian (Spanish) than it is today. We can be almost certain that that would bring huge roars of laughter to everyone in that palatine audience of largely provincial nobility.

### ***Historical background***

With this and that, however, the fundamental reasonable question has been back-staged, in an inadvertently derailing and sterile Cartesian fashion. If Süleyman had been the all-too-obvious target, why wasn't a side-splitting play of trendy satirical exoticism written? Why was such a good focal farce surrounded by such a heavy mantle, by such a disproportionately thick shell of a stylistic juxtaposition of nobility bourgeoisie, all



squeezed within an interlude? What is the essential historical frame of reference and, ultimately, whom does the central hero lay bare? I will express here a never-before-heard new historical-philological working hypothesis, that has not so far appeared in the bulky and involved literature on the subject.

In France, the hundred years 1550-1650 were marked by the many profound changes in the transformative course from the Renaissance to the French Baroque. A transitional period, it became characterized by an interactive affinity and influence coming from Italy, especially from Florence, by dynastic marriages and by many wars, inside the country and outside it.

Louis XIV the Great (le Grand), born in 1638, was crowned in 1643 at the age of five (5) years. During his boyhood, it was his mother, Anne, who had been commissioning him as a regent; queen Anne, fresh widow of his father Louis XIII, although named... Anne d'Autriche (of Austria) for dynastic reasons, was indeed a... Spaniard, while the country was essentially being governed by the French prime minister, cardinal Julius Mazarin, who was... Italian (Giulio Raimondo Mazzarino) –whence, perhaps, at least in part, the flood of Italianism in the country. Mazarin passed away in 1661, at which time the twenty-three-year-old occupant of the throne took over the essential governmental reins all by himself. He took up practising the prime-ministerial duties by himself, inaugurating a new type of institutional absolute monarchy, succinctly articulated in his indelible phrase “The state, it’s me” (“L’état c’est moi”).

Already during all the previous years of his reigning commission by Louis’s mother, the palace had struggled to assemble the power in the hands of the monarchy, by weakening the local nobles. They reacted. France went through a prolonged period of clashes, civil warfare and two rebellions, known as the *Sling wars* (*Fronde*, 1648-53). A primary part in all those clashes had been played by prince Gaston d’Orléans, brother of father Louis XIII, along with his daughter, Anne Marie Louise d’Orléans, duchess of Montpensier, known as “great damsel” (*grande mademoiselle*).

As he was growing up, the very young Louis XIV handled the situation in a way that showed his unusual, inherent political genius beyond all common measure. Having been born and raised at St. Germain, far away from the centre and from the palace of the Louvre, nineteen (19) kilometers outside of Paris to the west, he extended the building complex and there he

gathered, or fenced in I could say, all provincial nobility, bestowing upon them hospitality, spectacle and sound, food, fun, eroticism, libertinism, female concubines and male lover-boys, dances and festivals, tons of everything. This move worked for him so successfully, that he was also set up to create a huge new palatial complex with vast gardens at a similar country spot, a little further south, in the middle of nowhere: in Versailles, where he had inherited from his father very many acres of land, with a hunting pavilion inside.

From the beginning, he appointed his own chosen friend as minister / “czar” of finance: the faithful, cultured, capable and cooperative bourgeois Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Together they became patrons of art and culture. His majesty would organize successive events, which his guests were required to attend; he would remember perfectly well who was where and when and he would never miss who had been absent when and why. He went as far as passing an unprecedented law of *operatic “privilège”* –more properly known in history as a *monopoly*–, essentially banning presentations of theatrical or operatic shows with anything over two (2) singers or with a large orchestra of anything over six (6) musicians, by anyone and anywhere else except, initially, at the palace and wherever else he would grant special permission. In several of the performances, he himself in person used to dance or perform. Thus, the nobles gave up civil warfares and were observing gossiping and spying around on one another while having a fantastic time and they lived a sweet life to the personal advantage of the king: not as a star, not as a superstar, but indeed as the Sun of a new style and essence of absolute monarchy!

An extra pole and pillar in this permanent palatial festivity was his four-year-old younger ducal brother Philippe d’Orléans, whom mum Anne had raised as a daughter, and whom she used to call *ma petite fille* (= *my little daughter*, or *my baby girl*). The queen mother, having diagnosed the rather apparent tendencies of her second son towards effeminacy and homosexuality, kept encouraging them for her own personal reasons: since Louis, her first-born son, successor to the throne, would normally become king, she wanted to avert the possibility of a nightmare that the two brothers might at some later time come to collide and fight among themselves, with the horrific side-effect of split armies and civil wars: what France had indeed been experiencing as a whole, because of the conflict between her

own husband and his brother, Gaston. Thus, she encouraged Philip's feminine conduct by every means available. Gossip had even raged, spreading word, that when he reached adulthood, she herself made sure to provide him with a lover who would "corrupt" him. So, Anne, according to the rumours, turned to no other than cardinal Mazarin, the prime minister and, according to some chattering mouths, her lover and perhaps –indeed this has gone around too– Louis's true biological father. For her sake, Mazarin, according to the same rumours, provided a match for Philippe's "corruption" tossing in his own 17-year old nephew Philippe Jules Mancini, later duke of Nevers, who was therefore a year younger and an underaged youngster at the time.

Meanwhile, in Florence in 1646, a distinguished tourist, French nobleman Roger de Lorraine, Chevalier de Guise, was dazzled by a charismatic, thirteen-year-old harlequin baby carnivalist, kind of homely but still cute, whom he saw dancing on the street playing his violin. The boy, named Giovanni Battista Lulli, born to a local family, had just lost his mother. Roger took the boy with him immediately to France and gave him over to his own niece, first cousin of Louis and Philip, Anne of Montpensier – daughter, as we have said, of the notorious rebel uncle Gaston, and herself a plotting trouble-maker–, to serve her in the Court of the Parisian palace of the Tuileries as a chamberlain and for conversing with him in Italian for her own practice.

A storm of events followed. In 1652 the duchess told nineteen-year-old Gianbattista off. According to one source, she sacked him because he had written an offensive song about her, in imitation of the moans that she was emitting while she was squeezing her bowels at the toilet. The young man begged his protector to take care so that he would not be kicked out, and Roger got him into the palace. There, in the countryside, as a dancer and musician, he developed a close association with Philippe and found himself dancing in a ballet along with Louis. The king took a liking for him, admired him, naturalized him in December 1661, awarded him a title of nobility and appointed him chief violinist and chief musician of the palace, with his name mutated into Jean-Baptiste de Lully. Meanwhile, in 1654 the duchess was exiled for a three-year period, due to the second Sling, that "of the nobles".

In his new rôle, former Lulli and present-day Lully was just the right man for the occasion. Immediately he pulled up his sleeves and got himself

into innovating by enriching orchestral writing, introducing new instruments or exploiting old ones, composing a multitude of religious motets and other new musical pieces in fast *tempi*, banging on percussion, peppering up palace balls and writing, together with Molière, one comédie-ballet after the other, generously sprinkled throughout in rich and delightful scenes and interludes (*intermèdes* and *entr'actes*), all radiating with vibrant with music and dance.

However, it seems that round 1670 this theatrical collaboration suddenly turned sour, leading frontally into a precipitous unbridgeable rupture. Just a little while earlier, in the spring of 1669, a first operatic monopoly had been awarded to the newly established *Paris Opera Academy* and its inspirer poet Pierre Perrin, along with opera composer Robert Cambert. This event must have upset Molière and, much more so, Lully, who, at some earlier time, had set to music some “Neo-Latin” motets of Perrin’s.

It is most likely that both partners would have approached the king grumbling, I guess “behind the curtains”, but also separately, I would imagine. There was only one privilege to go, so only one of those two could possibly claim it, but a third party had already grabbed it. Therefore, each one of them had to exert pressure for it to be taken away from Perrin –because his having it was horribly inappropriate and unfair– and to be given to one of the two. It makes sense to suppose that one would be au courant to the other’s sneaky covert movements and that they would finally come to hate each other.

### ***Jourdain mamamouchi***

Right on time, Süleyman ağa’s impertinence comes up conveniently. While the two already soured collaborators are preparing the show, an orgy of behind-the-scenes gossip flares up about who is being made fun of –besides the obvious Turks of course. Most say that it is a general social critique, without a specific personal goal, but that the hero is schematic, that he has elements from many, and that many will discover different things about different people or even about themselves in the suggestive talk. From “circles”, sneaking whispers diffuse that the work mocks the mighty czar Colbert. I am sure the whispers were directed, since the thing can by no means be substantiated and would be sure to quickly fall apart on stage. I even suspect that Colbert must have been aware of the whispering. No

matter how much some old bitter stuff may have been lingering on, was it ever possible that Molière could make a fool of the minister, at the same time as he was trying to achieve things? In distraction, perhaps, Molière himself leaks out a rumour that the piece copies the mannerisms... of a neighbour of his.

And, oh, well, the music teacher is more or less a direct satire on Lully. This particular character, in any case, receives repeated shots as an empty innovator, exploiter and gripper, at the cutting edge between the good-natured joke and the roasting. The fun will come out as soft, because, at a crucial point, the two teammates concordantly ridicule Perrin and his pastoral “hogwash”, a fact reinforcing what I already mentioned: Jourdain’s ignorance and bad taste are scoffed with an uproar when he for a moment suggests as “pretty” a petty song about the heartless Janneton, a beautiful shepherdess lass like a sweet white little lamb, so to say – a genuine original verse by Pierre Perrin.

All in all, my new historical working hypothesis is completely different. During the feverish preparations, the rehearsals are reasonably separate for the prose under Molière and for the musical and dancing parts under Lully, burdened with the task of furnishing original music for a profusion of dancing scenes, as well as lengthy stretches of text which he is supposed to make into songs. Among other things, he has undertaken to set to music and sing himself an entire interlude on a supposedly hilarious lengthy stretch of verse with Turkish satire aiming at an obvious goal. No one can say for sure whether he got the underlying meaning of the text as it is laid out here below in the present text, whether he fell into the ambush, whether he did not catch the scent in the frenzy of his hurry, or whether he did catch it but underestimated it or considered it to be benevolent or reckoned that it might be malicious but he could handle it by burying it under musical notes and pirouettes.

Time was pressing. As it would properly suit the well-known procedural practices of exuberantly spectacle-loving Louis’ Court, all things ended up piling at the last moment within ten days: as is the standard practice in such



Jourdain, from *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* (première: 1670), engraving by L. Wolff.

cases, everyone runs about in a hysteria to get things ready on time. So, I do not think one had too much exposure to the other's rehearsals. We all also know how dress-rehearsals are done when time is pressing tightly: running about and "marking", as we say in the theatre.

But when performances follow, Lully will probably suffer the shock of his life, because, listening now to the dialogue of the scenes surrounding his own immediately before and after, although perhaps he might have thought that the basic joke on him would have been concentrated on the music teacher, and that it would have been within his powers for whatever else arose in order to cover it up and interpret it as he himself wanted, he will suddenly be mortified to discover something else: that the plan is gingerly prepared by the preceding premeditated prose, from the mouths and interpretations by Molière himself as Jourdain and by the actors he had taught, but also from the scene immediately following, where the offence is repeated in absolute focus. Not only is he himself, Lully, the central target of a multilevel merciless cunning Molière-style castigation, but he is also trapped to support it and suffer the humiliation in person, in a multiple sense, from performance to performance, whether he understood or did not understand, being a co-creator and performer and present on stage. And if he did not get it on his own, how could it be that "good friends" did not let him in on it?

### ***Humble origin***

A permanent underlying motif in Jourdain's act concerns his genealogy. Mme Jourdain, at some point in time quite a bit earlier, scolds him telling him to cut the lies and the crap that his father was a nobleman, since he was a merchant, just like her own. He replies her that, as far as his own father is concerned, it is misinformed people that say such things:

- *Si vostre pere a esté marchand, tant-pis pour luy; mais pour le mien, ce sont des mal-avisez* (modern spelling *malavisés*) *qui disent cela.* (III, 12)

Jourdain's obsession to counterfeit his family's history touches upon delusion when later, and always in the preparing stages preceding the Turkish masquerade, he is visited by servant Coviello, disguised as a Turk, "informing" him that he knew his father well and "assuring" him that the man was an aristocrat indeed. Jordan is "persuaded" and goes way beyond: what

people say, that he allegedly was a merchant, is malignant slander spread around by idiots. The entire scene is weaved around the imaginary paternal blue blood. Does the victim simply gain comfort, or is he drifting away by his fantasy and starts believing it himself, having begun to flip out and lose touch with reality?

- *Mon pere!* - *Oüy.* - *Vous l'avez fort connu?* - *Assurément.* - *Et vous l'avez connu pour gentilhomme?* - *Sans doute.* - *Je ne sçay donc pas comment le monde est fait.* - *Comment?* - *Il y a de sottes gens qui me veulent dire qu'il a esté marchand.* - *Luy marchand! C'est pure médisance, il ne l'a jamais esté.* (IV, 3)

For whom does the bell toll? After his wedding, in 1662, former Lulli, struggling by all means available to hide his humble origin by altering it, had not only changed his own name by gallicizing and refining it, but has also meddled with his father's name in retrospect: suddenly he baptized himself into a would-be "*John Baptist de Lully, esquire, son of Laurence de Lully, Florentine nobleman*", the last bit reflecting either his father or himself, according to how the cunningly ambiguous syntax would be conveyed, also silently confusing commonplace Italian *di* with aristocratic French *de*, sticking a posh-looking *y grec* in place of banal *i* and even slightly refashioning his prematurely lost mother's maiden name, actions that seemed to be received with a lot of cold and bitter feelings on the part of his father in Florence:

*Jean-Baptiste de Lully, escuyer, fils de Laurent de Lully, gentilhomme Florentin, et de Catherine del Seria* –others read *del Serta*.

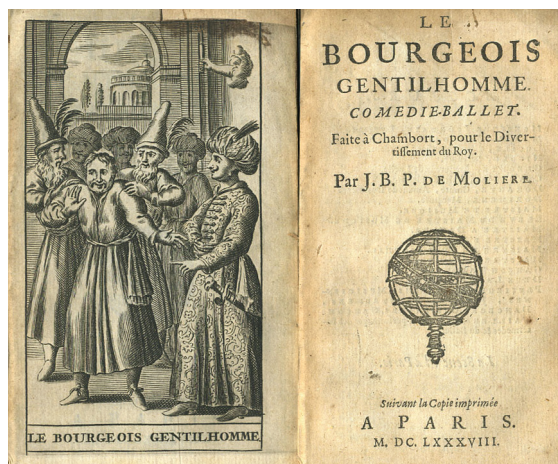
Because his father, of course, was a certain Lorenzo di Maldo Lulli, a Florentine bourgeois miller, at most and in exaggeration one could call him a flour-merchant, and his mother was a certain Caterina del Sera, a miller's daughter. For eight years, the Court was obviously giggling and gossiping behind his back, and behold, now, that Molière came to put him up on the stage as the Mufti, disguised into a Turk just like Coviello, and, face to face and before everyone, to shower him top to bottom, banging him with his disgrace, getting him to utter his own shame with his own mouth, with lines bordering on a sudden outburst of a tragic delirium.

Already in the interim dialogue scene, as some *sabir* pseudo-Turkish lines are heard and Coviello supposedly translates them into French, we

hear the phrase *Monsieur Jourdain, gentilhomme Parisien*, resounding just like a direct literal reference to Lully's conceited hot-shot self-appellation.

If only the pounding could have stopped here... We keep in mind that Lully's name was Battista / Baptiste –just like both Molière's and Colbert's–, and that his common rather affectionate nickname was *le grand baladin* (= *the great street-performer*).

In the key music-and-dance interlude with the parodied masquerade ceremony, then, wretched Lully, dressed as a fake Turkish Mufti by the script, goes on in a mirroring fashion into also dressing up Jourdain, also making him a fake Turkish *mamamouchi*: an “official title”, meaning the same as *paladin*, as had been announced to him in the said prior scene by fake Turkish resourceful servant and schemer Coviello. The word in French (likewise *paladino* in Italian) means knight, esquire (*écuyer*), nobleman, aristocrat, palatine, a further historical reference to Charlemagne's Court, where the term had enjoyed a very wide use. The puns about who the cross-dresser is, and indeed in many Italian-language repetitions, is now conspicuously burst open and exposed in the body of the masquerade, where some *sabir*, in a mish mash with a bit of Turkish and Turco-Arabic –*ioc, ioc, ioc* and *alecvert*, modern Turkish spelling: *yok, yok, yok* and *Allah ekber*–, is spoken sounding distinctly Italian in any case; or should I go even further into supposing that Lully would be speaking French with residues of an Italian accent, perhaps even very distinctly audible ones?



Frontispiece and titlepage of *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, from a 1688 edition.



For truth's sake, indeed, why should the fake Mufti jump out of a street troupe, and particularly out of an Italian one and mostly an Italian-speaking one according to the script –and not, for example, a Provençal one–, if no hint was implied about an Italian traveling folk homeless street-player-*baladin*– of the type of a roaming company jester / alien or immigrant or foreigner or trespasser? With the Mufti's very first line, the dialogue makes him speak his own baptismal name, Bat(t)ista, imbued with an extra tone hinting at a name-altering metonymy. The pun on him is certainly in the Greek language. The author, even though he did not know ancient Greek at the level of a classical philologist, he had however a thorough working knowledge of classical literature, as he used to derive from the Greek and Latin comedies and often gave his characters Greek symbolic names –e.g. Opsi. Therefore, he must have known just fine what *anabaptism* (rebaptizing, renaming) literally means –beyond, of course, the Protestant collective movement of radical reformers bearing this name.

*Dice, Turque, qui star quista, / anabatista, anabatista?* (IV, 5)

Indirectly he is made to suggest himself too, because, in French, *qui star quista* is an interrogative clause and sounds like *who / what is this one?*, but in Italian it is demonstrative and means something like *here he is*, or *here I am*, or even... *here she is*. Certainly, this satirical line involving the religious turmoil will continue, as real religious denominations follow, along with Molière-style insinuations regarding noisy theological movements akin to the Reformation further on to Protestantism and towards heresies. However, it seems like a second reserve of blows is starting to creep up here, below the waist this time, because something else, very specific, is already hatching in parallel, nurtured under this sudden shift towards the female gender: something convenient, masterfully wound together with the quasi-Italian *sabir* language, with the “Italian players”, with Lully's true Italian native origins, perhaps even with his conceivable (thick?) Italian accent, but, it would seem, with something else much worse as well.

### ***The “Italian vice”***

At this very time, on a social level, society was in a rumpus regarding issues related to the unexpectedly visible observed exacerbation of homosexuality and effeminacy: both as a cultural phenomenon and for its al-

leged ideological grounds. Perhaps the example had been set from the very beginning by the palace itself, in the tradition, according to narrations, of the manifestly effeminate and at least bisexual late father king Louis XIII. Rumours had been and were still raging about him that he had had a considerable line of male lovers and that he had systematically been neglecting his marital duties to his wife, Anne of Austria. Whichever the case, it was he who had introduced those fashions with wigs, bows and high-heel slippers.

Thus, beyond the climate associated with the effeminate prince Philippe, an entire social group in Paris had started engaging in these activities, without the older secrecy and hiding in the closet. Satire was going strong: its most frequent apparent goals were Philippe as well as Lully, both married with many children, yet obviously homosexual, effeminate, and, to a certain extent, almost transvestites, assisted to this by the convenient artistic pretext of stage actions and of ballet dancing.

In the meantime, an idea was widely circulating among the majority of the French people that homosexuality, male-to-male sexual relations and sodomism, decadent phenomena of the times, were imported from Italy, where involvement in such practices was supposed to be almost commonplace, which is why the French went so far as to call the whole scene *the Italian vice (le vice Italien)*. This thing came to tie in very conveniently for Molière. With his demonic ingenuity, he could now easily turn the whole situation against his collaborator, if he wanted, as deeply as he wanted, without anyone realizing beforehand, taking advantage of the brilliant opportunity: as far as Louis was concerned, Süleyman and the Turks would be the target of the blows; for himself, at the same time, under the particular pretextual mantle, Lully would be butchered up to pieces.

Let's watch the thing unfold even more under this dual prism. As we have just started saying a little while ago, word *Turque* –instead of *Turc*–, as it is written in French, and as it would have sounded then, belongs to the feminine gender. Soon after, things grow even more gross. The first religious denominations mentioned are certainly first-declension masculine adjectives normally ending in *-a* in Latin, as well as in Italian, perhaps slyly grabbing hold of the God-given occasion of name *Baptist* → *Baptista* → *Battista*. However, this is followed by many consecutive adjectives of the second declension also ending in *-a*, where this particular ending makes

them totally feminine: *pagana*, *Luterana*, *Puritana* (whose sound perhaps has a transparent suggestive target), *Bramina*, *Moffina*, *Zurina*, *Mahametana*, instead e.g. of *paganou*, *Luteranou*, *Puritanou*, *Braminou*, *Moffinou*, *Zurinou*, *Mahametanou*. The ending of “distorted version” *Paladina*, instead of e.g. *paladinou*, also sounds feminine, and this is coupled by clamorously female rhyming “name” *Giourdina*, instead e.g. of *Giourdanou* or, at least, *Giourdinou*. The Italian masculine indefinite article / numeral *un* = *a*, *one*, in its proper pronunciation and accent, sounds like its French feminine counterpart *une*. The verb *voler* means *to want* in Italian, but in French it means *to steal*, by sounding just as Italians pronounce French *voleur* = *thief*, with a cunningly placed noble *de* instead of a *di* – which would be the normal thing to put here – and with mother’s maiden surname *del Sera* inserted... evoking, as if to say, something to the multiple effect of (*Miss*) *Sera* / *evenings and mornings keeps begging me to make her via theft (a) Palatine, that de Jordana woman, that de Jordana woman*:

*Mi pregar sera é mattina: / voler far un Paladina / de Giourdina, de Giourdina.*

With *Turque* having in the course changed and become fixed as *Turca* throughout, with the female sex also established in Italian just in case anyone would miss the clue, the question emerges:

*Star bon Turca Giourdina?*

To the French ear, the Italian pronunciation of *bon* sounds in French as *bonne*, which means *a good girl* but also *a maid*: (*the question is:*) *will she be a good girl / a good servant girl that Turkish Jordana woman?* Immediately they are all engage in a repetitive “Turkish” delirium of syllables, where, over and over and quite clearly, they all call the name of the wide-reed ritual oboe-type pipe *balaban* – the one named *duduk* in Armenia –, in juxtaposition and to a degree of mutual confusion along with appellation *baladin*, apparently hammering on the well-known and unmistakable street-dancer:

*Hu la ba ba la chou ba la ba ba la da.*

The Mufti walks out and then back in to fetch the turban for the deceived leading character of the scene. He asks him then whether he is a *furba* =

*sly girl* and a *forfanta* (Italian *furfante*) = a cheater woman. The sound of all these words absolutely allude to the feminine gender as they sound both in French and in Italian and in any other Romance language of the wider region, and I think they come as too numerous to be ignored. But, why *furba* and why *forfanta*? Would it be my own fault, now, if I were to add further that the word *turbant*, pronounced then on purpose in the old French accent somewhat perhaps Arabic-like, would sound something like *thurbã(t)* or even *tþurbã(t)*, while Italian (and *sabir*) *turbanta* – next to each other in the conversation– all the way to *tþyrbþanta* under the appropriate director’s guidance? And are these not reminiscent, if appropriately enunciated, of so much as *birba* and *birbante* / cheater, impostor, masquerader? And how about the word *donar* –to give– in the phrase *donar turbanta*? How far is it from sounding directly similar to *donna* (*furfanta*), that is, *lady* (*sham*)? I suggest that here clearly the dramaturgist is winking at us, that in fact he has walked many extra miles flinging puns upon puns! Anyway, the Mufti *crowns* the hero *with a hat* and raises his “rank” by bestowing on him the (fake) “status” of a *mamamouchi*, while giving him guidance:

*Ti star nobilé é non star fabbola.*

The word *fable* in French is also ambiguous, with the dual meaning of *legend*, but also of a *laughingstock*. That is to say, then, (*the purpose is?*) *to be noble, and not to be a fairy tale / a stooge*. And in the verse immediately following, with a normal meaning of *take the sabre!*, the first word in French sounds like *pillard* = *pillager!*, *looter!* and perhaps the second one again suggests a slave-woman (Italian: *schiaiva*).

*Pigliar schiabbola pigliar schiabbola.*

Then the dervishes strike the initiate in a genuinely comedy-style “ritual” beating (“*sultan meremet*”) with sticks, and I do wonder whether this is in reference to the ultimately fatal *bâton* / *baston*, that is the long conducting stick of the orchestra director, which, in the dominant current version regarding historical fact, would ultimately, years later, turn out to be responsible for Lully’s death, in a notorious tragic freak accident –another story which is only too well-known...

*Dara dara dara bastonnara bastonnara bastonnara.*

Finally, in the next scene, in prose again, after Jourdain, reporting to his wife, repeats all the words of the previous scene, for the audience to consolidate them well and not miss anything so to speak, we hear something inimitable. Mme Jourdain –in fact a cross-dressed man–, genuinely “mis-hearing” her husband’s new title *paladin* as a *baladin*, asks him in malice if he is in the right age for dancing ballets:

- *Mamamouchi, c'est à dire en nostre langue, Paladin.* - *Baladin! Estes vous en âge de danser des ballets?* (V, 1)

Another blow below the waist, I say, because, whereas Louis XIV had stopped dancing due to his progressing age, Lully kept on. He is not even written down in the programme as a performer with his true name, but with a farcical alias in *commedia*-style: *Le Seigneur Chiacheron*. It does not mean anything in French. Yet, a year earlier, he himself had appeared in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, again by the duo, with this stage-name, except in Italian (*il Signor Chiacchiarone*), its meaning lying somewhere in between “lord big mouth” and “the old chatterbox”. These appellations also fit Jourdain like a glove. And one wonders how such a capacious, adventurous Italian-born go-getter could be swimming in such a sea of naïveté. Could he not see what she was setting to music? Was he so deeply excited? Did he come to realize it only too late, when he was already trapped? Is that why he has written such dull and dreary and bland and unappetizing and hysterical music for the scene so as to strangle the text, being the same man who used to compose so gracefully elsewhere? Was his discomposure to blame for the fact that in a performance he stumbled and fell into the harpsichord causing a terrible clatter? Did he not care? However, as far as I can tell, I have no knowledge of the international literary and dramatological community ever having written, recorded and tried to document any similar theoretical scenario.

But, really now, even dramatically, the ceremony seems to be leaking, if we do not presume that something else is crawling below its surface, inconspicuous yet transparent in its time. Why should a Mufti suddenly be slipped in with yet another excessively expensive costume, burdening the production, something that a roaming street troupe could not have normally afforded? It is, of course, possible that the dramatist may be injecting the situation of the traveling Italian company with those familiar and inti-

mate facts regarding his permanent friends in the *Comédie-Italienne*, wishing to fend off his ambitious and permanently settled ex-wanderer street-clown collaborator from there. Anyway, why does this Mufti walk out and back in to the stage four times, even if that is what the authentic ritual requires? Where is the joke in listing names of religious denominations if there is not *another* joke lurking underneath? As much as it all ties together instrumentally as structure and form, is it not dramatically haphazard for the players to thereupon stage a whole show for the sake of rehabilitated megalomaniac bourgeois Jourdain and for his whole family? And how can wandering Italian players sing, for example, in Gascon?

The part of the Mufti lands late in the plot like a meteorite, and is practically superfluous. It was obviously written specifically for Lully, who would normally have been conducting the orchestra until that point, then would have put on the costume, performed the interlude without instrumental accompaniment, and then, either after changing back to his clothes or – most probably, I would guess– always dressed as the Mufti, he would have grabbed hold of his fatal “bastonnara” stick again and gone on conducting the final act with the festival of nations. That is in all probability the reason for this strange dual casting, where, deliberately and with a special intent, the previous music teacher is not given the extra part of the Mufti, which would have been more natural in the flow of the show if someone else had to play the chief of ceremonies –e.g. Coviello–, but he is given the part of Mme Jourdain, as if the music teacher had just simply turned around and dressed up as a woman. And finally, in the prose sequences, what could there have been in the text at first, what would Molière have said in the first series of performances, what would he have added in the process, what would he have removed, what would he have changed after one or two years when he re-worked the text consolidating it in its “definitive form” which we have today? How would he have physically performed Jourdain, how would he have delivered the speech, what would he have exaggerated, whom would he have been hinting at, whom would he have imitated, whom would he have parodied, how loudly?

### ***Breach***

Anyway, if indeed laughingstock bourgeois gentilhomme mercilessly portrays Lully personally as a fraud and a scam and an impersonator and a de-

generate and a transvestite, the issue has its extensions. Molière ceremonially abolishes from himself the derogatory “cap” of the Court’s jester (*bouffon*), attached to him by his enemies, and sticks it atop Lully’s head.

New whispers and anxieties. Some were enthusiastic about the music, but others didn’t seem to be that impressed by it, because it was alleged to seem heavy –Molière’s meddling? His majesty, on the other hand, was again enigmatic and ambivalent at first about the text. He left Molière, melted down six years earlier by the adventure of *Le Tartuffe*, stewing for five whole weeks, during which time many people from the palace’s crowd, especially the ladies of the Court, were knocking the play as childish –Lully’s meddling? Until the king eventually resolved to issue his verdict that he had enjoyed this play more than any other one. As soon as the royal approbation was manifested, repudiating the critics and indirectly acclaiming the sneering, all the courtiers now were freely amused by both the farce and the satire at last, and found the whole thing very witty *ex post facto*.

The two formerly inseparable bitter enemies keep on cooperating for two more years, I would imagine by force of necessity and on pretext, probably through representatives and perhaps without even meeting face to face at all. The definitive rupture had even been announced by the poet when he had put a verse in the Mufti’s mouth with an insinuation to have no illusions, that constraints were over and that “that” –i.e. both the whole turn of events and more specifically that very scene itself literally– was the final clash:

*Non tener honta / questa star l’ultima affronta.*

And, while they continue to perform the play over and over again, without specific mention of who played whom each time, they put on two more new ones. However, the texts are also jointly signed by other authors too. Molière inaugurates or lays formally open his text-writing partnerships with the great dramatist Pierre Corneille, faithfully living in his shadow all these years uncomplaining –some in fact have unfoundedly attempted to pin on Molière for having extensively used him as a “ghost writer”. In addition, in June of the following year 1671, he writes, on his own, stages and plays a new three-act comedy with maximum debts to *Phormio* by Terentius and to the *commedia*, some kind of “over-refashioning” of Coviello, in plain prose without music this time: *Scapin the schemer* (*Les fourberies de Scapin*).

Until, in 1672, Lully manages to get his hands on the coveted operatic monopoly. Perrin –that fellow with the shepherdesses and the lambs– has torrentially collapsed financially from mismanaging his *Academy* and from scams on the part of associates. He is sentenced to incarceration for debts. Just at the moment of his arrest, and as he is being dragged to the Conciergerie dungeons, he receives an on-the-spot grandiose extravagant charge by Lully. Whether he likes it or not, Perrin sells off to him his exclusive privilege, along with the direction of the *Academy of Music*, in return for him to pay off his debts and assume the obligation of supporting him with a private pension henceforth.

Lully rushes into re-naming his new privileged acquisition into *Royal Academy of Music* (*Académie Royale de Musique*). Following that, he will engage himself into rabidly fighting several lawsuits by contenders –especially from other big French cities, Marseille first of all and then Lyon, Rouen, Lille and Bordeaux. Initially he will be victorious, only to start losing later when the balance tilts the other way. However, for a considerable time, the unique operatic scene in France will be presenting his own works only. At a later time, his academy will evolve into our well-known *Opéra de Paris*, and this is something that we owe him.

His greed will also incite him into something else too, for which we shall of course be grateful to him forever and ever. For granting permission for his music to be played, by legal right, from some point onwards, he will start issuing written permissions, establishing and charging performance fees. And this will constitute the beginning of modern *creator's copyrights* (*droits d'auteur*). In any case, he himself, having made all the right moves, will become filthy rich, over the years, through his monopoly and his copyrights.

Thus however, from the very beginning, he will have also legally confiscated the exclusive right of management over all those *comédies-ballets* that he had co-signed with Molière, who loses ownership of his plays from within his own hands.

Thereupon the situation goes overboard. Molière and Lully definitively turn into each other's *bête noire*, endorsing a bitter popularly attested warning that the best friends make the worst enemies. Furiously, the former asks the king for an exception to the latter's monopoly, which he achieves: he himself also secures permission to put on plays and dramas with many



singers and musicians. Lully is distressed, leaves the remote palace and settles in Paris, in a climate which is from ambivalent to cold, destined to evolve over the years into overt disfavour. Immediately Molière rushes to bring into the palace thirty-year-old Marc-Antoine Charpentier, also a homosexual; the younger composer will henceforth keep overriding the monopoly and playing anything that he wants. Immediately, they proceeded to putting on a repeat performance of *The forced marriage* (*Le mariage forcé*) and one or two more, throwing out the old music and replacing it with a freshly composed one.

The choice and rise of the young composer had been decisively influenced by the strong pressure that his patron lady had exerted; and that was royal cousin Marie de Lorraine, duchess of Guise, the very sister of Roger who had initially fetched Lully from Florence.

In the following year, 1673, Charpentier –forever now famous for the Eurovision theme drawn from his own *Te Deum*– will compose an elaborate incidental music for *The imaginary invalid* (*Le malade imaginaire*), compliant with the stringent form restrictions which Lully had established, including all the classic interludes. The project has a markedly similar structure of troupe and casting, and even of plot I would dare say, to *The middle-class gentleman*. It even has a fake disguised music teacher, around whom a parodied bucolic “Perrin-style” little duet is contrived again. Molière himself is in an acute crisis of his chronic tuberculosis, but also in a complete deep state of depression, with exacerbations of hypochondria. I believe that, in this last brave or desperate psychological stripping act of his, he marches all the way to making a grand tragic statement about appearance and essence, trying to show who is authentic and genuine and who is false and fake, who has been favoured and who has been wronged. He conceives of the only part he can now interpret, in his deplorable state, turning necessity into prerogative, by custom-tailoring the character to his own tragic measures. He will put the play on and interpret the hero with fever, with cough and with imminent attacks of veritable agonizing haemoptyses, all disguised as “black” comic trickery. He will breathe his last breath a few hours after the end of the fourth performance. No Roman Catholic priest will accept to give him last rites and final communion.

\* \* \*

## *Aftermath*

Molière's death also marked a disbandment for his company. Half of his actors retired, while the other half attempted to merge with the remnants of the Italian Players, setting up a new common successor company and preserving their Parisian theatrical stage. But little did they know that they were building towers in the sand. In the gloomy inimical climate of intrigues and personal conflicts, of challenges and redemptions which we have described, Lully barged in, hand in hand with Vigarani the engineer, waving a judicial court order to evict. He threw them out, forcing them to relocate elsewhere, legally depriving them –by virtue of the castrating restrictions of his monopoly– of the right to stage plays with rich music. Within the same year, 1673, he moved in and settled there himself with his own “Royal” Music Academy.

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Also see e.g. at: [https://books.google.gr/books?id=PcAHdxfnNkgC&pg=PA121&lp-g=PA121&dq=John+S.+Powell+le+bourgeois&source=bl&ots=mhgUsvct-GE&sig=2rFKBm2q7k7ax6xGWSFd\\_6iW-Z8&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CCQ6A-EwAWoVChMI\\_8mgqZv0yAIVhRQsCh2boAdw#v=onepage&q=John%20S.%20Powell%20le%20bourgeois&f=false](https://books.google.gr/books?id=PcAHdxfnNkgC&pg=PA121&lp-g=PA121&dq=John+S.+Powell+le+bourgeois&source=bl&ots=mhgUsvct-GE&sig=2rFKBm2q7k7ax6xGWSFd_6iW-Z8&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CCQ6A-EwAWoVChMI_8mgqZv0yAIVhRQsCh2boAdw#v=onepage&q=John%20S.%20Powell%20le%20bourgeois&f=false)
- Seifert Lewis C. “Masculinity and satires of ‘Sodomites’ in France, 1660-1715” at: Merrick Jeffrey, Sibal Michael (ed.) *Homosexuality in French history and culture*; 2012 Routledge.  
Also see at: [https://books.google.gr/books?id=Qa3aAAAAQBAJ&pg=PA52&lp-g=PA52&dq=les+sodomites&source=bl&ots=ff3gwyZ1mZ&sig=ACfU3U3txD-doY6xWGCGgdEX7TUTExXLhSw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiOzYbBm9LhAhX-FbFAKHbpDB\\_84ChDoATAGegQIBhAB#v=onepage&q=les%20sodomites&f=false](https://books.google.gr/books?id=Qa3aAAAAQBAJ&pg=PA52&lp-g=PA52&dq=les+sodomites&source=bl&ots=ff3gwyZ1mZ&sig=ACfU3U3txD-doY6xWGCGgdEX7TUTExXLhSw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiOzYbBm9LhAhX-FbFAKHbpDB_84ChDoATAGegQIBhAB#v=onepage&q=les%20sodomites&f=false)

### Main personalities of the times mentioned in the text

Laurent d’Arvieux, Anne d’Autriche, Pierre Beauchamp, Armande Béjart, Robert Cambert, Marc-Antoine Charpentier, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Pierre Corneille, Tiberio Fiorilli, Antoine Furetière, Gaston d’Orléans, Marie de Guise, Roger de Guise, André Hubert, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, Jean-Baptiste de Lully, Philippe Jules Mancini, Jules Mazarin, Mehmet IV Avcı, Molière, Duchesse de Montpensier, Philippe II d’Orléans, Süleyman ağa, Carlo Vigarani

### Places, institutions and events mentioned in the text

Académie Royale de Musique, Anabaptism, maison de Bourbon, Candia, Château de Chambord, Château de Versailles, Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Conciergerie, Cretan war, Crete, droits d’auteur, Fronde, Istanbul, Mediterranean lingua franca, operatic monopoly, Paris Opera, radical Reformation, sabir, siege of Candia, Théâtre du Palais-Royal

### Plays, typologies, authors etc. mentioned in the text

Aristophanes, baladin(s), Baroque, Baroque opera, bouffon, Le bourgeois gentilhomme, chinoiserie, coffee (esp. history of coffee: France), comédie-ballet, Comédie-Italienne, commedia dell'arte, Les fourberies de Scapin, French Baroque, French Orientalism, Jourdain, Latin comedy, Le malade imaginaire, Le mariage forcé, mascarade turque, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, New Attic comedy, opéra comique, paladin(s), Phormio, Renaissance, Le roi danse, Scaramouche, le Tartuffe, Te Deum, Terentius, Théâtre-Italien, turquerie, le vice italien

### Texts and scores

- Molière's full text in modern edition at:
  - <http://www.site-moliere.com/pièces/bourgeois.htm>
  - <http://www.toutmoliere.net/le-bourgeois-gentilhomme,46.html>
  - <http://www.youscribe.com/catalogue/livres/litterature/theatre/le-bourgeois-gentilhomme-2371822>
- Molière's full text in modern edition complete with Lully's score at:
  - <http://www.youscribe.com/catalogue/partitions-et-tablatures/art-musique-et-cinema/partitions-de-musique-baroque/partition-complete-le-bourgeois-gentilhomme-comedie-ballet-lully-1370958>
  - <https://musopen.org/sheetmusic/7484/jean-baptiste-lully/le-bourgeois-gentilhomme-lwv-43/>
  - <http://nicolas.sceaux.free.fr/lully/LWφV43LeBourgeoisGentilhomme.pdf>, an original version of the text as it was in its time, without modernizations in language or in spelling

### General websites

<http://sitelully.free.fr>, especially for the references:

<http://sitelully.free.fr/bibliographie.htm>

<http://www.comedie-francaise.fr/histoire-et-patrimoine>, see especially:

<http://www.comedie-francaise.fr/histoire-et-patrimoine.php?id=382>

<http://www.comedie-francaise.fr/histoire-et-patrimoine.php?lang=en&id=254>

<http://www.enotes.com/topics/moliere/critical-essays/moliere-vol-28>

<http://www.haendel.it/compositori/lully.htm> Episode “Molière l'imposteur” from

Franck Ferrand's television series *L'ombre d'un doute* of channel France 3, built around the conspiracy (?) theory that at least some of Molière's works have actually been written by Corneille as a ghost writer. More on this controversy via search on key words “Moliere Corneille ghost writer”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pq0knCV4Ncs> built around the conspiracy (?) theory that at least some of Molière's works have actually been written by Corneille as a ghost writer. See, also, the relevant episode “Molière l'imposteur” from Franck Ferrand's television series *L'ombre d'un doute* of channel France 3, at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pq0knCV4Ncs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4xuIRPIrno>: profound detailed radio analysis / narrative on Molière (sound only), from series *2000 ans d'histoire* of France Inter  
<https://dirtysexyhistory.com/2017/09/03/a-secret-gay-brotherhood-at-the-court-of-the-sun-king/>: a brief general instructive note by Aurora von Goeth

### Performances, motion pictures

- The historical museum-type dramatic revival. Versailles 2004, company *Le poème harmonique*. Directed by Benjamin Lazar, music by Jean-Baptiste de Lully; Vincent Dumestre: conductor.  
At: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKuUqsR4WOY>
- *Molière*, a film by Ariane Mnouchkine, 1978. Excerpts at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOoVJ2YMA\\_Q&list=PLHoFwR77S\\_I4rts-0rTic-z4L2\\_jmuuigq](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOoVJ2YMA_Q&list=PLHoFwR77S_I4rts-0rTic-z4L2_jmuuigq)
- *Le roi danse*, a film by Gérard Corbiau, 2000. At: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkMMNq7r2Zo&list=PL6835EA53783A1E0C>  
Impressive in its sets, costumes and artful elaborate choreography by Béatrice Massin, the film *The king dances* was released in 2000; it is a biographical cinematic picture focused on Lully this time, based on his biography by Philippe Beaussant, called *Lully or the sun musician (Lully ou le musicien du soleil*, see above). A noteworthy and commendable element in this regard is the detailed record of the conflict between Molière and Lully. In the film, one of the climaxes is placed precisely on the scene of the Turkish masquerade during the performance of *The middle-class nobleman*, where Lully appears to suddenly become clearly and painfully aware of his relentless shaming.  
A note with a summary and with special reference to the masquerade scene at: <http://h-france.net/ffh/classics/the-king-is-dancing-and-the-kings-way/>  
More specifically, a scene of the clash between Molière and Lully during the performance of the masquerade at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfoMY6JhmPw>
- *Lully l'incommode*, a documentary on Lully, 2009.  
At: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cb7xHMbXScY>

### The historical original incidental music for the play – an indicative selection

- Jean-Baptiste de Lully *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, LWV 43, suite.
  - Performance by the grand Baroque ensemble *L'orchestre du roi soleil*. Jordi Savall: conductor. At: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od1ZbV9rutI>
  - A symphonic transcription. French orchestra *Les siècles*. François-Xavier Roth: conductor. At: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PKcNZYIH6k>
  - Performance by Baroque group *Modo antiquo*. Federico Maria Sardelli: conductor. At: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDcBWHs43IzE>