
”Barbin et compagnie,” or How a 1673 Contract Phrase Reconstructs the Authorial Molière

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Résumé

In his 1998 book *La Carrière de Molière*, Caldicott claimed that Molière’s daring claims regarding his authorial rights caused a backlash against him in the publishing industry, organized by a cabal of *libraires* led by Claude Barbin. The 1673 contract registered the playwright’s general royal privilege for all his works to ”Barbin et sa compagnie”. But additional documentary sources show that the ”compagnie” reference is not the ”cabal” of Molière’s former publishers but Denis Thierry himself, the guild syndic registering the royal privilege and Barbin’s partner. So, we can no longer continue to view Molière as embattled by the book trade. Instead, a far more nuanced and interesting portrait of the early modern author emerges: Molière (especially once deceased) becomes a figure actively created by publishers in the tumultuous and competitive world of the 17th-century book trade.

Mots-Clés: Molière, Barbin

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