Domestic Expertise: Literacy and Numeracy in the Eighteenth-Century Kitchen

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Long before it became fashionable to speak of the "consumer revolution" of the eighteenth century, Norbert Elias proposed that the eighteenth-century *hôtel* functioned as a "large organization centered on the consumption of goods."[1] The notion of the *hôtel* as a site of consumption has continued to draw the interest of scholars. Working from Norbert Elias' contention that Parisian elites were "involved in the structure of the city solely as consumers," Natacha Coquery has recently traced an exhaustive network of the *hôtel*'s merchants and purveyors as she seeks to characterize domestic spaces as sites of exchange.[2]

If the *hôtel* was a site of exchange, then its kitchen was one of its most important trading centers. Residential

[1] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 285.

[2] Elias, 45. Natacha Coquery, *L'Hôtel aristocratique: le marché du luxe à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998). More recently, Coquery has extended her analysis of elite housing beyond the owners' personal consumption to the public consumption of these same spaces through their "translation" into sites of public administration: Natacha Coquery, *L'Espace du pouvoir: de la demeure privée à l'édifice public, Paris, 1700-1790* (Paris: Seli Arslan, 2000).

kitchens processed vast amounts of raw materials, including food and fuel, and required the services of a veritable army of artisans just to remain functional. Yet owing to changes in residential architecture the vast majority of these transactions occurred out of sight of the *hôtel*'s masters. Kitchens had become increasingly isolated within the *hôtel* since the middle of the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century they were regarded as dangerous spaces best walled off from the rest of the *hôtel*. In the absence of masters' supervision, what mechanisms governed consumption in the kitchen? Archival evidence as well as contemporary representations suggest that servant cooks practiced bookkeeping to manage the finances of the kitchen.

Historians have largely ignored the economic role of servants in the *hôtel*. In part this neglect stems from a perception that only the wealthiest of households employed the kind of specialized servant–such as a secretary or majordomo–utilized for such tasks.[3] Yet in households of varying means, cooks independently managed the kitchen's finances. Further obscuring the role of cooks as managers of expenditures, historians have tended to conclude that servants were essentially illiterate. This paper challenges existing studies of servant literacy, which have invariably reached the grim conclusion that servants by and large could not read. Sarah Maza has, for example, found that French domestics were "for the most part illiterate."[4] Daniel Roche explains that for women in domestic service,

[3] Elias, for example, discusses only *intendants* or *maîtres d'hôtel* as directly involved in household bookkeeping: 284-87.

[4] Sarah C. Maza, *Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France: The Uses of Loyalty* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 52.

"the question [of literacy] did not even arise."[5] Bridget Hill suggests that servant illiteracy was a transnational phenomenon, confirming that much the same case existed in England.[6] The assessments of numeracy are even more discouraging. According to Keith Thomas, women in England were especially unlikely to be able to calculate, "lag[ging] behind in numeracy, perhaps even more than in literacy."[7] Patricia Cline Cohen asserts that the use of numbers ran counter to femininity, "unmaking" women.[8] Without disputing their overall conclusions regarding servant literacy, I would, however, suggest that within these broad swaths of illiteracy there existed dense pockets of literate expertise. As a result, sequestered within the eighteenth-century *hôtel*, kitchens functioned as sites of literacy and calculation.[9]

Inside the kitchen's walls, cooks engaged in sophisticated practices of accounting and calculation, managing the expenses associated with both nourishment

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[5] Daniel Roche, *The People of Paris: An Essay in Popular Culture in the 18th Century*, trans. Marie Evans (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 201.

[6] Bridget Hill, *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 226-27. Despite this assessment, Hill uses a few exceptional cases of servant writing as the basis of much of her book.

[7] Keith Thomas, "Numeracy in Early Modern England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 37 (1987): 113.

[8] Patricia Cline Cohen, *A Calculating People: the Spread of Numeracy in Early America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 142.

[9] Scholars who argue that kitchens hosted writing have relied on the relatively fragmentary record of manuscript cookery books: Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). I instead have studied archival kitchen records, which suggest a more functionally literate and calculating cook.

and sociability. Records of their accounts reveal a continuing effort not only to track kitchen expenses but also to demonstrate cooks' own financial probity.[10] Executed by domestics in the service of the household, cooks' writing provides unique evidence for literacy and numeracy among *le menu peuple*. By joining the history of the *hôtel* to the labor practices of servants, I hope to shed light on the exercise of skilled labor within residential space.

The Domestic Economy of the Eighteenth-Century Kitchen

Although long considered a nuisance, by the middle of the eighteenth century the kitchen had come to represent an outright threat to the health and safety of those who lived nearby. According to the architect Charles-Antoine Jombert, author of the 1764 treatise *L'Architecture moderne*, smoke from the kitchen's hearth and stoves "spoil[ed] and blacken[ed] paintings and gilding."[11] Other

[10] The T series at the Archives nationales [hereafter AN] contains household records swept into the archives during the Revolution when the papers of condemned or exiled nobles were sequestered. These records reveal an unrivaled snapshot of household finances during the late eighteenth century and include papers kept by cooks of the Biron-Binet, Bourbon-Busset, Broglie, Calonne, Coigny, Kerry, Lambesc, and Mirepoix households. I also have included records from the Joly de Fleury collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France [hereafter BN].

[11] Charles-Antoine Jombert, *Architecture moderne, ou l'art de bien bâtir pour toutes sortes de personnes* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, Libraire du Génie et de l'Artillerie, 1764), 113. "It is principally in this part [of the house] that we recognize whether an architect really understands the distribution of space, since it is just as inconvenient to keep the kitchens too close as to have them too far from the main part of the residence where the masters live. If they are too close, the bad odors that constantly blow out, along with dangerous charcoal vapors and the

architects lamented the odor of the foods cooking in the kitchen.[12] Wastewater and runoff exacerbated these noxious fumes, and even the kitchen's noise was increasingly insupportable. To limit the kitchen's harm, architects increasingly sought to isolate the kitchen within the *hôtel*, a project Reed Benhamou has labeled part of an effort to construct a "parallel world" of servant space.[13] Kitchens were moved to basements, distant wings, and occasionally even across the street from residences. When this approach ultimately failed to control the kitchen's chaos, designers then attempted to discipline the kitchen's interior space through architectural reform. Close attention to ventilation, spatial orientation, and internal organization could theoretically reduce kitchen pollution; according to the architect Le Camus de Mézières, even the styling of the kitchen's support columns could help to control the cook and his unruly staff.[14] The overarching objective was to impose order on an inherently disorderly space.

But the disorder of the kitchen sprang as much from its promiscuous contact with the outside world as from its

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smoke of cooking foods, penetrate into the living quarters where they spoil and blacken paintings and gilding."

[12] Louis Savot, L'Architecture françoise des bastimens particuliers. Composée par Me. Louis Savot [...] avec des figures et des nottes de M. Blondel (Paris: F. Clouzier l'aîné, 1673), 42; Sebastian Leblond, "Cours d'architecture qui comprend les ordres de vignole, avec des commentaires, les figures et descriptions de ses plus beaux bâtimens, et de ceux de Michel-Ange, etc.," ed. A.C. Daviler (Paris: Jean Mariette, 1710), 185*3.

[13] Reed Benhamou, "Parallel Walls, Parallel Worlds: The Places of Masters and Servants in the *Maisons de plaisance* of Jacques-François Blondel," *The Journal of Design History* 7: 1 (1994): 1-11.

[14] Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières, *Le Génie de l'architecture, ou l'analogie de cet art avec nos sensations* (Paris: Le Camus de Mézières, Benoît Morin, 1780), 191.

effluvia and architectural form. Kitchens required a constant infusion of supplies arriving from any number of vendors. A single kitchen could, for example, conduct transactions with over a dozen food purveyors. Meat, bread, and vegetables came from butchers, bakers, and greengrocers respectively. Creameries supplied eggs and milk. Specialized vendors sold items like oysters, which they even shucked onsite by the bushel.[15] Cooks bought wood and charcoal to fuel the kitchen's stoves.[16] They also occasionally handled wine purchases, supplying wine for their masters and for the consumption of other servants, a critical role since a wine allowance typically accounted for a substantial portion of servants' wages.[17]

In addition to goods purchased, a regular stream of artisans and their services ensured that the kitchen and its gear remained in good working order. Masons built and serviced stoves and hearths.[18] Ironworkers repaired stove grills and kept the kitchen's doors and pantries secure.[19] Painters periodically added a veneer of respectability, with

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[15] AN T 208/3 (7 Feb. 1788).

[16] AN T* 261/5 (1784-1787). For examples of individual wood and charcoal receipts, see AN T 261/1 (Dec. 1783 and Jan.1784).

[17] For a representative wine purchase receipt, see AN T 491/2 (11 Aug. 1779): "Recû de Monsieur de St. Martin [the cook] la somme de cents deux livres pour une pieces de vin que jay fournay pour Monsieur le prince Lambesc." Prevost, *chef de cuisine* to the Prince de Lambesc, received 150 livres per year on top of his 800 livres of base wages; wine thus comprised around 16% of his total compensation. For lesser employees, the wine allowance constituted an even greater portion of wages. For example, the *aide de cuisine* Reverard earned 100 livres for wine in addition to his 400 livres in ordinary wages (20% of total compensation), and Michel, the *garçon de cuisine*, was paid 72 livres for wine in addition to his 100 livres of base pay (about 42%). AN T* 491/2.

[18] AN T 491/3 (11 June 1782). AN T 261/1 (1786).

[19] AN T 261/1 (April-Nov. 1786).

architects typically recommending the color stone gray.[20] From time to time, the kitchen's courtyard needed weeding.[21] Most important among services were those of the coppersmith; kitchen tools required frequent tinning to protect food from coming into contact with copper surfaces and producing the dreaded resulting corrosion.

The influx of supplies was matched by an equally great outlay of money. In a period when many if not most transactions were handled by credit and when merchants in other areas of commerce could find themselves waiting indefinitely for compensation, kitchen debts were settled regularly, usually monthly, with cash.[22] It is not surprising to learn that in poor households food costs comprised the single largest expense; outlays in such residences could run to half of more of total income.[23] Even among far wealthier *hôtels*, kitchen costs remained staggering in relative terms. The Prince de Lambesc's kitchen for example accounted for nearly a third of all household expenses in 1775, running to 30,000 out of 109,292 livres.[24]

The kitchen's traffic extended beyond the provision of supplies and services, and not all transactions were licit. Servants from other households made deliveries or just lurked around.[25] Sarah Maza has described eighteenth-century kitchens as "noisy, convivial places, open to a

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[20] AN T 261/1 (1784-1786); Jacques-François Blondel, *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance et de la décoration des édifices en général* (Paris: Charles-Antoine Jombert, 1737), 83; Le Camus de Mézières, 192.

[21] AN T 491/2 (1779).

[22] Coquery, *L'Hôtel aristocratique*, 162-78.

[23] Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Les Femmes, le travail, et la famille*, trans. Monique Lebailly (Paris: Rivages, 1987), 78. Thanks to Nicolas Bachelet for this reference.

[24] AN T 491/2 (1775).

[25] BN MSS Joly de Fleury 2489 (1771).

stream of visitors."[26] Despite servant conduct manuals' admonishments to the contrary, cooks occasionally hired casual labor to work in the kitchen. In February 1788, for example, the cook Geux hired a dishwasher at the wage of one livre four sous per day.[27] Cooks also frequently assumed temporary staff for extraordinary functions such as holiday meals.[28] This crush of servants both familiar and strange opened the kitchen to a host of abuses. In his novel *Gil Blas*, Lesage depicts a majordomo, a secretary, and a cook all smuggling out delicacies to their "nymphs" via a subordinate kitchen boy's basket.[29] Conduct manuals likewise warn of pilferage under the guise of deliveries.[30] Louis-Sébastien Mercier relates a cautionary tale of a cook selling access to the kitchen of his mistress (the comtesse de Brionne) for a fee of twenty-seven francs per month. According to Mercier, the cook slipped his diner four dishes per day packaged in a tinned iron box.[31] Kitchen loss also could come from within the household; the 1752 engraving *L'Eplucheuse de salade* ominously warned its cook: Beauty, keep an eye on your eggs / This child will filch them / One day if you aren't cruel / She will take many more things from you.[32]

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[26] Maza, 143.

[27] AN T 203/3 (Feb. 1788).

[28] BN MSS Joly de Fleury 2490 (1770); AN T 261/1 (April 1787).

[29] Claude Petitfrère, *L'Oeil du maître: maîtres et serviteurs de l'époque classique au romantisme* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1986), 164.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Cited in Ibid.

[32] Jacques-Firmin Beauvarlet, *L'Eplucheuse de salade* (1752): "Prenez garde a vos oeufs la belle, / Cet Enfant les dérobera / Un jour si n'etes pas cruelle / Bien d'autres choses il vous prendra."

Fig. 1. Jacques-Firmin Beauvarlet, *L'Eplucheuse de salade*, 1752. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Although the kitchen was relatively isolated from the rest of *hôtel*, it formed the nucleus of an extensive network

of consumption radiating outward from its walls. Both licit and illicit, this exchange accounted for a substantial proportion of the *hôtel*'s expenses. Who managed this web of transactions and by what mechanism?

The Kitchen as a Site of Writing

Servant cooks in households of all sizes were prodigious writers, generating vast amounts of paperwork as they tracked and planned the daily consumption of the household's food. Their kitchens' records could range in form from loose sheets of paper to bound volumes. Some cooks kept their records on nothing more than odd scraps of paper. In this rather simple form, kitchen accounts typically took the name *mémoires*. At the opposite end of the organizational spectrum, other cooks maintained bound registers known as *livres de compte* or *livres de raison*, which often came with the sheets already printed with lines for entering individual transactions and totaling each page's sums. In the most elaborate cases, a cook might even keep separate account books for each of his master's dwellings. A certain Olivier, cook to controller-general of finances Calonne, maintained separate books for his master's residences at Paris and at Versailles during the 1780s.[33]

Despite the variety of forms taken by its material artifacts, the practices associated with kitchen accounting were relatively uniform. Cooks maintained concurrent registers of daily expenses, allowing their masters instantly to determine how money was being spent. These daily entries contained commonplace purchases like bread and meat as well as luxury items such as foie gras, truffles, and imported Gruyère and Parmesan cheese.[34] Rather than present their masters with a stack of diverse receipts

[33] AN T* 261/1-4 (1783-1784, 1786-1787).
[34] AN T* 261/1 (1783-1784).

scrawled by a variety of merchants, cooks condensed all the expenses into a single account for their masters' review. For example, the maréchale de Mirepoix's cook, Geux, prepared a single *mémoire* each month to summarize his expenses. Geux tabulated each day's petty expenses chronologically. For example, one day's entries read:

On the fourth [of February 1788]

truffles	10 livres
veal sweetbreads and brains	4 livres
white wine	2 livres 8 sous
double and simple cream	3 livres
chocolate	4 livres
dishwasher	1 livre 4 sous
ice	12 sous[35]

Here items from a variety of suppliers appear together on a single page. Costs for supplies mingle with labor expenses; a dishwasher had been hired to help in the kitchen. After itemizing the month's daily expenses, Geux then appended monthly receipts from his major suppliers, each of whom had provided his own running tally. In February 1788, these IOUs included purchases from the butcher, the fruit and vegetable supplier, the roaster, the pork butcher, the coppersmith, the grocer, and the oyster vendor.[36] Working from his records of daily petty purchases and the receipts of monthly major suppliers, Geux neatly drafted his account on a large folio sheet of paper. When finished, he folded it in half and tucked in his suppliers' receipts. Each month, he prepared his kitchen's *mémoire* in the same fashion.[37]

[35] AN T 203/3 (Feb. 1788).
[36] AN T 208/3 (Feb. 1788).
[37] AN T 208/3 (1788).

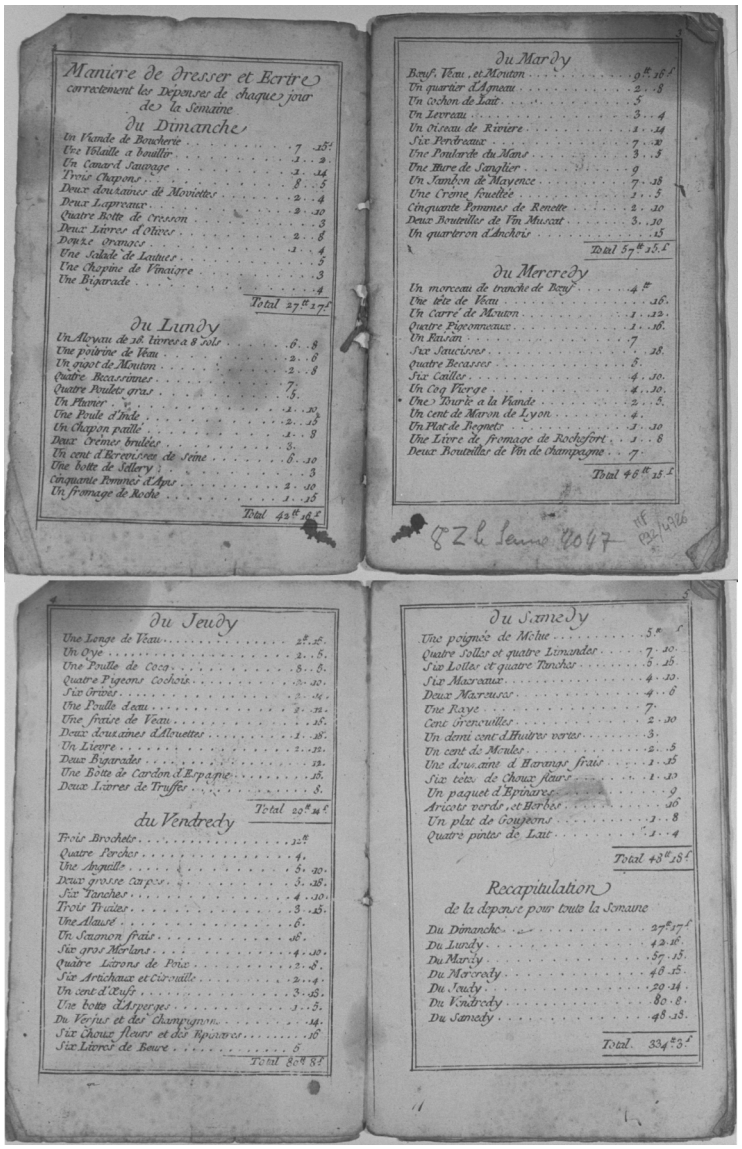

Fig. 2. Instructions for keeping kitchen accounts. *Livre nécessaire pour touttes sortes de personnes* (Paris: Mondhare, 1776), 2-5. Photos: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Keeping accounts in this fashion is precisely the method instructed by the 1776 handbook, *Le Livre nécessaire à touttes sortes de personnes*.[38] The book's lesson on kitchen accounting demonstrates to the reader how to itemize daily expenditures and carry running totals from page to page of his register. At the end of each week, expenses are consolidated into daily totals to reveal spending patterns. The book also includes a sample receipt from a cook shop, highlighting role of the cook as an arbiter between the transactions of the public market and the practices of private sociability.

To perform this accounting, cooks relied on numeracy as well as literacy.[39] Adding sums was of course necessary to provide running totals of expenditures, and cooks periodically subtracted from these totals the amounts reimbursed by their masters. Yet cooks also frequently performed more complicated calculations. For example, in some households, masters were particularly keen to monitor the consumption of meat. Madame de Kerry demanded that her cook provide a daily tally of the weight of meat used in the kitchen.[40] The cooks who served the comtesse d'Artois likewise calculated the amount of meat purchased and eaten each week. After noting the weekly total, the cook who served the comtesse then reckoned both the amount consumed each day and the portion per person.[41] This particular cook's registers reveal something of the complexity of the required arithmetic:

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[38] Le Livre nécessaire à touttes sortes de personnes (Paris: Mondhare, 1776).

[39] Unlike literacy, numeracy has received little serious attention. Two notable exceptions are Cohen and Thomas (notes 7 and 8 above).

[40] AN T* 451/2 (1787).

[41] The liturgical calendar divided days into *gras* and *maigre*, or fat and lean, to indicate when meat was allowed or prohibited.

> Observation on the consumption of butcher's meat
> The 37 pounds taken today are raw.
> The consumption this week is 32 pounds [with subsequent details by date]
> 32 pounds divided by ~~five~~ four days make ~~6 pounds 6 ounces per day~~ 8 pounds per day.
> There are five people in the kitchen and Felix makes 6, therefore this is one pound eight ounces per person.[42]

Here we encounter a cook actually in the act of dividing figures, not simply performing the relatively ordinary addition and subtraction of basic daily accounting. This cook needed not only to account for the varying number of servants dining during the week but also to remember on which days meat had been served. Because the Catholic church proscribed meat on varying days from week to week, cooks had to adjust their menus and calculations to follow the liturgical calendar. Such regular assessments of kitchen expenditures helped to determine the broader cost of maintaining the *hôtel*; by figuring the total expense of his mistress's servants, the cook helped her to know how much her retinue cost.

Documents such as account books of course point to the presence of literate cooks in the wealthiest households, but what about those servants whose masters' papers failed to enter the archives? Did other cooks know how to read, write, and calculate? Women are, for example, particularly underrepresented in the archival evidence of kitchen accounting; surviving account books overwhelmingly belonged to male cooks.[43] Despite this lacuna, I would suggest that women cooks were increasingly skilled in the

[42] AN T* 265/2 (1789).

[43] Since delivering this paper in October 2004, I have uncovered an extensive set of account books kept by a female cook serving the duchesse de Fitz-James. See AN T 186/44-46 (1785-1787).

practice of kitchen accounting.[44] Seventeenth-century domestic conduct manuals already assumed that cooks could read and write; as early as 1692, *La Maison réglée* urged women cooks to be "wise and of good conscience in the accounts where she reports her expenses."[45] In the 1724 verse the *Maltôte des cuisinières*, we encounter the process of learning to track kitchen costs, as one cook instructs her young charge in the ways of practicing creative accounting, to "shoe the mule" (*ferrer la mule*), or invent fictitious expenses.[46] At least some women cooks appear either incapable or untrustworthy when it came to actually putting pen to paper, since these particular women discuss a process where either a male servant (*laquais*) or the mistress of the household herself performed the actual notation of daily expenses.[47]

In contrast, by the middle of the century we can find depictions of women engaged in every stage of kitchen bookkeeping. The 1762 engraving "La Cuisinière," sometimes catalogued as "La Cuisinière écrivante," vividly depicts a female cook in the actual act of preparing her kitchen's books.

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[44] Cohen, 142, in contrast, argues that mathematics during the eighteenth century "unmade" women.

[45] [Audiger], *La Maison réglée, et l'art de diriger la maison d'un grand seigneur & autres, tant à la ville qu'à la campagne, & le devoir de tous les officiers, & autres domestiques en général. Avec la veritable méthode de faire toutes sortes d'essences, d'eaux & de liqueurs, fortes & rafraîchissantes, à la mode d'Italie* (Paris: Lambert Roulland pour Nicolas Le Gras, 1692), 133-34.

[46] Mules not requiring shoes is the joke.

[47] *La Maltôte des cuisinières, ou la manière de bien ferrer la mule. Dialogue entre une vieille Cuisiniere et une jeune Servante*, (Riom: G. Valleyre, 1724).

Fig. 3. Claude Duflos after a painting by Pierre-Louis Duménil, *La Cuisinière*, ca. 1762. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Leaning over a kitchen work table with quill in one hand, inkpot in the other, she carefully drafts her account. A basketfull of vegetables and leg of lamb, or perhaps a ham, resting nearby reveal that she has just returned from the market; presumably we catch her inscribing her most recent purchases. Papers from past or for future accounts spill forth from the table's drawer. This cook smiles serenely as she composes her record, completely at ease with the practice of accounting. At the bottom of the engraving a snippet of verse concludes with the lines: "She knows how to shoe the mule, / As well as a *maître d'hôtel*."[48] In the

[48] "De ses achats Nicole à sa Maitresse / Ecru le compte, et loin d'oublier rien, / Le fait avec tant de finesse, / Qu'elle sçait y trouver le sien. / Sans avoir le moindre scrupule / De gagner sur le casuel, / Elle vous sçait ferer la mule, / Aussi bien qu'un Maitre d'hotel."

1783 play *La Dinde du Mans*, we witness how cooks regularly presented their accounts for their masters to review. As Monsieur Grapeau reads his cook Babet's account, we have to wonder whether Babet, too, is padding her books. Grapeau reads, "Butter, eggs, beans, charcoal, beans, embers, matches, beans, water, salt, beans." After reviewing this list, he can only respond, "That's a lot of beans."[49]

As these examples suggest, by the second half of the eighteenth century, kitchen writing by cooks of either gender was not considered exceptional, other than in its potential for fraud. While only the wealthiest households could afford to hire male cooks, although occasionally a female cook was considered more desirable, more middling families tended to employ women in their kitchens. Like their male counterparts, however, these women possessed the technical skills to perpetrate fraud on their masters. Few contemporary observers worried whether cooks were literate and numerate; they fretted instead over the honesty and accuracy of cooks' numbers. Cooks quite simply were expected to be able to read, to write, and to calculate.

Employment advertisements testify to the importance of literacy and numeracy in the kitchen. By the time job ads for servants began to appear in the *affiches* during the 1750s, literacy was such a well-entrenched aspect of cooking that practicing cooks rarely even bothered to indicate whether they could read and write. In advertisements specifying the occupation as "cook" (*cuisinier*, *cuisinière*), less than eight percent mentioned any kind of reading or writing skills. In the event that literacy skills were requested for cooks, there often was a very specific reason. For example in 1779, a certain

[49] [Pierre-Germain Parizau], *La Dinde du Mans* (Paris: Cailleau, 1783), 13.

wigmaker Maury sought "a German cook, who only makes German food, but who knows French to do his accounting."[50] Only advertisements for more marginal employees tended to demand or promise literacy. For example, servants who claimed to know only how to do a little cooking (*un peu de cuisine*) were four times more likely to mention reading or writing skills, with nearly a third of their advertisements promising or demanding the ability to read or write.[51]

Calculating was similarly understood in employment advertisements to be an essential kitchen skill, and the kind of servant who promised numeracy was likely not a cook at all. These marginal applicants desperately sought to impress upon readers some sort of useful qualification, a shotgun approach that produced some very interesting advertisements. For example in 1783, there presented himself "A man of 32 years, good hunter, capable of destroying all sorts of wild beasts, who knows how to read, write, count, and who knows agriculture and the wood business, [who] would like to find a position matching his talents."[52] For cooks, literacy and numeracy were just assumed to be part of the job.

Derived from the Latin *domus*, in the eighteenth century "*domestique*" carried two meanings. As an adjective, it encompassed all that was "of the house or

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[50] *Petites affiches de Paris*, 3 Feb. 1779.

[51] Out of 105 *affiches* advertisements mentioning knowledge of "un peu de cuisine," thirty-two (30.5%) mentioned the ability to read or write. Of 208 advertisements for the position of "cuisinier" or "cuisinière" only 7.7% mentioned these skills. I base this analysis on a sample of 800 employment advertisements taken from the *affiches* of Bordeaux, Metz, Nantes, Rouen, Paris, and Toulouse.

[52] *Petites affiches de Paris*, 20 Jan. 1783.

belong[ed] to the house."[53] As a noun, it indicated a servant. In this paper, I have investigated the exercise of expertise at the intersection of both senses of "*domestique*"–as the skills used to manage the household and as practiced by domestics themselves.[54]

It is no coincidence that, according to the dictionaries of the *Académie française*, cooking went from something one "did" to something one "knew" during the eighteenth century. Over this period we witness a shifting definition of "*cuisine*" as it evolved from a place to an action and from an action to a form of knowledge.[55] Kitchen bookkeeping comprised one aspect of this evolution of a position of domestic servitude into a skilled occupation. By engaging in the practice of accounting, cooks exercised skills of literacy and numeracy, transforming the kitchen into a center of calculation.

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[53] *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie françoise, dedié au Roy* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1694), s.v. "Domestique." This aspect of the definition remained constant through five editions from 1694 through 1798.

[54] *Domestique* retained a strong whiff of servitude in any form; the related word *domesticité* described during the eighteenth century not family life but the state of being a servant.

[55] *Dictionnaire de l'Académie françoise*, s.v. "Cuisine;" *Le Nouveau dictionnaire de l'Académie françoise, dédié au Roy* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1718), s.v. "Cuisine;" *Dictionnaire de l'Académie françoise* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1740), s.v. "Cuisine."