Courses de Testes et de Bague
and the
Cultural Legitimization
of
Louis XIV’s Personal Rule, 1661-1671

Nicholas MacNeill Nelson
Professor Darin Hayton
May 2nd, 2008
Acknowledgements:

Writing acknowledgements is strikingly easy—many people who deserve to be mentioned leap immediately to mind—and is yet quite difficult. How, after all, can one possibly put into words the effect, influence, and inspiration of one’s peers and mentors? The ancients would often begin their work with an appeal to the muses, a call for the help and guidance of those without whom any work could not exist. The muse-hail tradition has evolved, faded, but perhaps one of the best of the modern invocations reads:

State your intentions, Muse. I know you’re there.
Dead bards who pined for you have said
You’re as bright as flame, but fickle as the air.
My pen and I, submerged in liquid shade,
Much dark can spread, on days and over reams
But without you, no radiance can shed.
Why rustle in the dark, when fledged with fire?
Craze the night with flails of light. Reave
Your turbid Shroud. Bestow what I require.

But you’re not in the dark. I do believe
I swim, like squid, in clouds of my own make,
To you, offensive. To us both, opaque.
What’s constituted so, only a pen
Can penetrate. I have one here; let’s go.
-Neal Stephenson, The Baroque Cycle

I must thank my advisor, Darin Hayton, for his unceasing demand for nothing less than perfection in style and content. His guidance, encouragement, and willingness to read material with far too many commas has been instrumental in the evolution of my work and the support of the red pen industry. His critiques and questions, often blunt, have just as often forced me to reconsider the very foundations of my argument. I hate to admit it, but those reconsiderations have always been for the better. He is a historian whose passion for the past shines through.

For the opportunity to spend so much time considering the past rather than facing the future, I can only thank Susan Clark of The Economist for her trust and willingness to give me a chance. The luxury of knowing where I will be in the coming year has allowed me to focus on my work far more than I would have otherwise been able to, despite what must have seemed an incessant stream of questions and emails from me.

Without the support of my close friends (and especially a few in particular—no names needed) my work would have been impossible. They have provided the inspiration and what can only be described as the imperative to make my work more than just another history of a time long gone by (I can only hope I succeed). At the same time, however, they have stepped in at the right moments to remind me that there exists a world beyond that of my desk lamp, that the present matters just as much, if not more, than the past I am so drawn to. So to my friends I give credit for inspiration and perspective, which are so often at odds. Their excellent friendship, work, counsel, patience (and impatience), and willingness to supply and drink copious amounts of coffee, has been invaluable.

Lastly, although most importantly, I must thank my parents, to whom I owe not only my education and all that I am, but my utter and irrational love of the written word. Without their support, example, and understanding none of my work over the past four years, let alone this piece, would exist. For them I write and work as I do.

The thanks and credit have been only partially given I am sure, difficult to express to their full extent. Nonetheless the muse-hail has been sounded, the pen found and grasped. And so:

“I have one here; let’s go.”
NMN, May 2008
Table of Contents:

I. Introduction 1
   The Legacy of Centralization and Social Instability before 1661 4
   The Personal Rule of Louis XIV and the Assertion of Order 9
     An Alternate Court: Fouquet and Vaux-le-Vicomte 10
     The King’s General Assertions of Power 14

II. Cultural Control and the Formation of the Académies 16
   The Motive and Brief of the Petite Académie 16
     The Grand Carrousel of 1662 17
     The Cabinet du Roi 26
   The Académies, their Structure and System 30

III. Courses de Testes et de Bague: Construction, Structure & Theory 33
   Construction of Courses de Testes et de Bague 33
   A Note on Mechanisms of Transmission 39
     Emblematic Devices and their Authority 39
     Meaning of Color and Nationality 47
   The Audiences 49

IV. The Definition of Society: Character Roles 57
   and their Power Dynamics in Courses de Testes et de Bague 57
   The Role and Character of the King 58
   The Role and Character of the Nobility 62
   The Role and Character of the Academicians 65
   Three Characters, Three Roles 67

V. Conclusion 69

VI. Appendix 73

VII. Bibliography 89
   Primary Sources 89
   Secondary Sources 90
I.

Introduction

In the final months of 1670, the Imprimerie Royale of France published a book in folio entitled *Courses de Testes et de Bague Faittes Par Le Roy et par Les Princes et Seigneurs de sa Cour En l'Année 1662*.¹ Seven hundred copies were printed and bound in red leather, four hundred in French and three hundred in Latin.² The book recorded in great detail exactly what its title stated: “Running at the Head and at the Ring, by the King and by the Princes and Seigneurs of his Court in the year 1662.”³ Rhetorically framed by its dedication as an educational text in kingship for the dauphin, the book was about a tournament: its pageantry, its participants, and their costumes.

On June 5 and 6, 1662, Louis XIV held a tournament at the Tuileries palace.⁴ Later known as the Grand Carrousel, fifty-four noblemen and the king himself took part in the event.⁵ The fifty-five participants were divided into five quadrilles, representing the Romans, Persians, Turks, Indians, and American Savages.⁶ The king and the four highest ranking noblemen were the Chefs of the five quadrilles. The audience was comprised of members of the French Royalty, the English

---

³ See Figure 1, Appendix.
⁴ The former gardens of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, one of Louis’s cousins who had been exiled for her involvement with the Fronde in 1652. Cetre et al., 126.
⁵ By the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, actual jousting in tournaments was exceedingly rare, if present at all. Competitors ran at targets (modeled on the heads of Turks-the Testes) or a suspended ring (the Bague) with their lances or other weapons, rather than at other competitors. Riding skill and form was as equally, if not more, important as military skill.
⁶ “Quadrille” is the present first or third person conjugation of the verb “quadriller,” “to square.” In the above sense a quadrille is a unit of horsemen.
queen, foreign ambassadors, and the public of Paris. Each morning a long procession of the quadrilles wended its way through Paris to the tournament grounds. The entire event was as much a performance as an actual contest of military skill. Even as a performance, however, the Carrousel drew on a long tradition of tournaments as both peace-time training exercises and demonstrations of military might.

While the book’s purpose was ostensibly to provide a record of the tournament for the benefit of the dauphin, within Courses de Testes et de Bague was encapsulated a coherent model of power relationships that was meant to define the French court. The book embodies the values and ideals of an ongoing centralizing and absolutist project to legitimize the king. When Louis declared his personal rule in 1661, he took control over a country that was severely wracked with social and political tension. As a young, inexperienced king, he possessed little secure power. To strengthen his position, Louis had to continue the centralization policies he had inherited from the Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin, but in such a way as not to antagonize the already restive traditional nobility. The remedy lay in the discipline of the nobility through cultural influence and re-definition, although direct political action remained an option. The Carrousel of 1662 was one such example of cultural power. Courses de Testes et de Bague in turn re-interpreted the Carrousel,

---

7 Perrault, Courses de Testes et de Bague, 4.
9 Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) was the primes minister under Louis XIII. Cardinal Mazarin (1602-1661) succeeded him, and continued after Louis XIII died in 1643. Between 1643 and 1661, Mazarin had great control over the government. His protégé, Colbert, took his place as advisor, if not as minister, to the Louis XIV (who had declared himself prime minister).
augmenting the cultural-political messages asserted by the event, and made those messages more widely available and permanent.\(^\text{10}\)

Powerful hierarchies of cultural patronage and control coalesced around the men who worked on the book. While work on the book was begun before the majority of the académies (which governed the intellectual life of France) had been incorporated under the direction of the king, by the time the book was finished no intellectual or cultural activity existed outside of those state institutions. During the eight years it took to create *Courses de Testes et de Bague*, the five men responsible for it, Charles Perrault, Esprit Fléchier, Israel Silvestre, François Chauveau, and Gilles Rousselet, became or already were members of those académies.\(^\text{11}\) The director of the Imprimerie Royale, Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, was also integrated into the académie system. In addition to presiding over the king’s printing presses, and thus the production of any official pamphlet or book, he was the official printer of the Jesuits.\(^\text{12}\) Mabre-Cramoisy and the five academicians, commoners (albeit elite), wielded a significant amount of power behind the public sphere of politics. They were directly responsible for the mediation of the king’s centralization efforts through cultural propaganda and artistic patronage.

*Courses de Testes et de Bague* delivered a clear articulation of appropriate power dynamics within French society at a time when those dynamics were uncertain. The book’s content asserted a coherent model of an ideal absolutist court, one which cherished the values of a god-king: undying loyalty, honor, and courtliness. The book explains how these values were assigned to the


\(^{11}\) Perrault and Fléchier were members of the Académie Française, while Silvestre, Chauveau, and Rousselet were members of the Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture.

three main actors in the continuing centralization of government and power under Louis XIV: the
king himself; the aristocracy; and those who were mediating the shift in power, the academicians.

Constructed over the course of almost a decade, the book also helps illustrate the role of these
academicians in society. Through a study of the book’s content and intended audiences, the
manner in which the model of society was propagated by the académies emerges. The history of
the book’s inception, construction, and content is one which embodies all the tensions of the time
between the monarchy and the old nobility because of centralization, the efforts to legitimize the
king, and the means of executing that centralization and legitimization.

The Legacy of Centralization and Social Instability before 1661:

Louis XIV’s need to centralize the government and secure his power continued the efforts
undertaken since Richelieu under Louis XIII. The rhetoric of centralized, absolutist government
had changed little between the time of Richelieu and the time of Louis’s majority. The emphasis in
all efforts to legitimize the king was the strength and reputation of his personal character:
Richelieu wrote that reputation was the single defining feature of a successful monarch,13 and
Mazarin and his protégé Colbert went to great lengths to strengthen the child king’s image as an
independent, powerful ruler.14 Despite the efforts to legitimize the young king, the reforms
required to centralize the government aggravated an already threatened landed and traditionally
militaristic aristocracy, the traditional source of influence in France.

Increased financial burdens on the nobility as well as the infringement of their traditional
rights caused significant tension between the throne and its nominal supporters. Richelieu’s need

13 Lisa Jane Graham, “Fiction, Kingship, and the Politics of Character in Eighteenth-Century France,” Mystifying the
Monarch: Studies on Discourse, Power, and History Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere, eds. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam
University Press, 2006), 142-143.
to raise money to support military campaigns during the Thirty Years War as well as the centralization project led to the increased venality of offices: in 1515 there were roughly four thousand positions of office. Over the next century and a half the need for funds enlarged office holding positions tenfold. The traditional nobility, known as the nobility d’épée (“of the sword”), took offense at this for two reasons: the increase in offices encroached on their traditional authority, and the creation of noble positions which were, legally speaking, equal in rank brought into question their very notion of what it meant to be noble.

As far the nobilité d’épée were concerned, the new members of the nobilité de robe (“of the robe”) were forced upon a social structure and system on which the traditional balance of power rested. Nobility was traditionally defined by three characteristics. Nobles were fundamentally military in nature, existing to support the king in time of war; noble families were expected to be ancient, and so well connected; and nobles were meant to gain their power and influence by right of inheritance. A newly-created nobleman could not, by very definition, pass this test of eligibility. Venal office holders and the nobility de robe were not military in any sense, because they lacked any training and did not go to war. Their families had emerged out of relative obscurity, generally unable to trace themselves for more than a generation or two. Thus, in the view of the nobilité d’épée, any power power inherited by or granted to the nobilité de robe lacked credibility because it had no ancient lineage to support it, and when it could be traced, the venality of the rank quickly became apparent.

Along with the creation of new offices and members of the nobility, Richelieu began stripping power from the landed aristocracy, removing the vestiges of their already declining

military power and importance. The aristocracy, already uncertain of their role and position because of the changing nature of one of their defining purposes, warfare, was wary of these reforms. 17 Richelieu removed the military governors, wrested control of important fortresses, had others torn down, and restricted the manufacture of weapons. 18 The tension arising from the creation of new ranks and offices or military restrictions was not helped by other, more symbolic encroachments on noble rights. In 1626, just a year before he took control over the fortresses, Richelieu banned dueling. When the ban was ignored by much of the nobility, he arrested and executed a high ranking member of the nobility for violating it. The execution was seen as a direct affront to traditional noble values and rights, and it further polarized the government (as symbolized by Richelieu) and the nobilité d’épée. 19

By the time of Richelieu’s death in 1642, there were no more necessary offices to be created (although redundant offices continued to be invented), and no more taxes that could be levied. Mazarin was hard put to raise money for the ongoing war efforts. Nonetheless financial demands by the government, drastically higher than they had been historically, kept growing. By 1642, spending necessitated by military campaigns and state centralization had already quadrupled from levels thirty years earlier. Between 1642 and 1647, under Mazarin, these costs again almost doubled, rising to 123 million livres.20

The continued financial burden under Mazarin made the traditional nobility restless and discontent. The unrest was compounded by the ill health of Louis XIII, and, despite the birth of Louis XIV in 1638, there was significant concern amongst the nobility about the viability of the

17 Mettam, 72.
19 Mettam, 76.
20 Ladurie, 89.
royal line. In 1643, when Louis XIII died, and the government passed into the hands of Anne of Austria (Louis's mother) and Mazarin, doubts grew even stronger. Neither the queen nor the cardinal was French, and both were therefore distrusted. Mazarin, aware of the aristocracy's unrest, had Louis XIV portrayed differently after the death of his father. The young king assumed the royal mantle, and sat for portraits wearing armor even though he was only five, with the intention of emphasizing his dynastic inheritance. The image of an independent ruler worthy of his throne despite his youth was created in 1643, and began the construction of the public Louis XIV, the nascent absolutist Sun King.

Mazarin had reason to worry. Tension between Mazarin and Anne of Austria on one side and the various factions on the other flared. Citing defense of traditional rights, the French parlements, nobility, and clergy revolted in rapid succession. Known as the Fronde, the series of revolts had a lasting effect on Louis's conception of an ordered, unified state. Propaganda efforts on behalf of the king, however, were successful, for at no point during the Fronde was Louis himself attacked. Rather, Mazarin and Anne of Austria were the targets of the dissenting nobles and parlements. These two factions, the one representative of traditional military power, the other of traditional administrative and judicial control, were together the conservative forces in French society and politics. Any movement towards a more centralized government under the king was also an act of disenfranchisement for these two power groups.

In the face of ever-rising costs, ever-disappearing sources of funds, and expressions of hostility from both the nobility and the parlements, Mazarin and Anne of Austria lowered the salaries of various office holders (who had bought the offices in the first place). The effect was

21 Burke, The Fabrication of Louis XIV, 40.
22 Ladurie, 101.
immediate: the country’s parlements reacted violently, led by the chief body among them, the Paris parlement. Various factions of the nobility used Mazarin and Anne’s interference with the rights of the parlements as an excuse to reassert aristocratic authority in the “defense” of the throne of France (supposedly under the thrall of the foreigners, Mazarin and Anne). The ensuing five years would see the unrest shift from a matter of political prerogatives granted to parlements to include outright political maneuvering and fighting between factions of the nobility themselves and non-violent unrest amongst the French clergy. By 1655, however, unrest had largely died down if tensions were still running high. The Frondeurs were exiled, imprisoned, or rehabilitated, although still unhappy with their marginal success of imposing some limitations on the still centralizing government.23

The passing of the Fronde and outright hostility with various factions of the nobility did not solve Louis’s problems. The royal treasury was still empty, the Prince de Condé, a former loyalist general turned frondeur, was still a threat abroad, and the provincial parlements were still uncomfortable with central control. Mazarin’s death in 1661 allowed the old tensions to resurface. The hated prime minister was gone, and with him went the force which supported Louis XIV. Starting in 1661, Louis had either to prove himself a capable independent ruler, reforming and reunifying (i.e. continuing to centralize) France, or to fail and succumb to a nobility that, despite appearing docile, still had considerable influence and power. Succumbing would have meant not the loss of the throne, but instead becoming a figurehead rather than an actor. Louis’s marriage to the enfanta of Spain and the birth of his heir in that same year, lent him credibility. Nonetheless his position and actual legitimacy were still very weak.

---

23 Ladurie, 120.
Louis’s role as king was not only being questioned on the political front. Indeed, one of his greatest rivals for influence, patronage, and power was competing in the cultural arena as well as a political one. Fouquet, one of Surintendents for Finances since 1653, had been actively surrounding himself with an alternate, rival court funded by the fortune he had amassed while managing the country’s failing finances.\textsuperscript{24} Louis, for whom disorganization and confusion were anathema (an attitude he formed during the years of the Fronde), characterized the problem of alternate power sources as disorder, a problem to be rooted out for the sake of the very survival of country and monarchy. The mechanisms which supported these sources of disorder could be appropriated, recycled, and used by Louis to support the throne even as those sources were removed. Appropriation and co-option of rival power sources and their integration into the centralized government were recurring methods of control.

The Personal Rule of Louis XIV and the Assertion of Order:

I began, therefore, to cast my eyes over all the various parts of the state, and not casual eyes, but the eyes of a master, deeply struck at not finding a single one that did not cry out for my attention.... Disorder reigned everywhere. My court, in general, was still quite far from the sentiments in which I hope that you will find it. People of quality, accustomed to continual bargaining with a minister who did not mind it, and who had sometimes found it necessary, were always inventing an imaginary right to whatever was to their fancy.... \textsuperscript{25}

-Louis XIV, Mémoires

Louis’s memoirs reflect the situation of disorder and uncertainty he inherited with the death of Mazarin. The memoirs were written between 1661 and 1667 from the king’s notes by Colbert and a court historian named Périgny.\textsuperscript{26} The work was secret, meant to be given to the dauphin as an explanation of Louis’ actions and as a treatise on kingship. Louis, after writing the

\textsuperscript{24} Ladurie, 154.
\textsuperscript{26} Louis XIV, Paul Sonnino, trans, 4-5.
words above, discussed specific problems with the country’s finances, the church, the justice system, and the body of the nobility themselves. The main concern of the king was, at least as recorded for posterity in his notes, to bring his court under his direct control and restore the finances of the country. Indicative of his paternalistic approach to government and his country, he also cast his reforms in a light of aid for the lower classes, who appeared to be unjustly affected by the disorder amongst their betters. The king was not merely a man, but also the living embodiment of the country and all that was holy in it. The poor condition of his people caused by a decentralized government and a weak king reflected directly on Louis himself. By situating the threats to his own power as having an adverse effect on his people, Louis appealed to a long rhetorical tradition that supported the drive for centralization. Not only was paternalistic order necessary for better control of the country, it was necessary for the very good of the people themselves. The king was not only bound by duty to fix what he considered wrong, but also inherently hurt by the lack of a stable society at any level. The recurring theme in the memoirs is the notion of order: a properly organized, central government, a unified society, a docile and loyal nobility are all for Louis indicative of a well ordered country. His actions and goals can be understood as a quest to achieve order and stability in both government and society.

An Alternate Court: Fouquet and Vaux-le-Vicomte:

Louis began the move towards order and organization with the arrest of the Surintendent for Finance, Nicholas Fouquet, in September of 1661 for treason. By 1661 Fouquet was at the height of his power. Where the king’s treasury was empty, Fouquet was the epitome of wealth.

---

27 Apostolidès, 11-12; Ernst H. Kantorowicz, The King’s Two Bodies: a Study in Medieval Political Theology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 256.

28 Geoffrey Treasure, Louis XIV (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 70-73. Fouquet would not, after a three year trial, be convicted of treason. Instead, he was exiled for “careless administration.”
(personally keeping the government from going completely bankrupt). Where the king controlled little or no patronage of the arts, Fouquet controlled all. Indeed, many of the artists who would later become famous royal clients started their careers working for Fouquet. He had even bought, occupied, and manned a fortress in Brittany for his own personal use.\textsuperscript{29} The Surintendent was confusion and disorder incarnate, a man who rivaled the power and influence of the king, a man who presumed too much.

The sins of Fouquet were many. Two particular mistakes, however, cost him his position and brought an almost wholly fabricated charge of treason upon his head that would place him in prison for the last fifteen years of his life. His first mistake was entering a rivalry with Colbert, who had also been given responsibility for the finances of the king. This rivalry had begun before the death of Mazarin, but had only been exacerbated by the minister’s death: both Colbert and Fouquet had positioned themselves as the Cardinal’s successor.\textsuperscript{30} The second more important sin was directly challenging the king’s social and cultural authority with the construction of the palace Vaux-le-Vicomte, and hosting an extravagant fête there in August of 1661. Vaux-le-Vicomte and its surrounding collection of artistic work-houses was a direct affront to the king. Fouquet’s palace was more extravagant and expensive than the king’s own palaces. The building campaign was finished in less than six years at great expense.\textsuperscript{31} Fouquet commanded greater material wealth and influence than the king of France, the Dieudonné. The demonstration of power made the cultural challenge political as well.

\textsuperscript{29} Andrew Trout, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 36-37. The possession of this fortress was in direct contradiction to the efforts to remove military power from the nobility by Richelieu four decades before. The rapid renovation of the fortress was cited, among other things, in the case against him. (Treasure, 72)

\textsuperscript{30} Trout, 36-37.

\textsuperscript{31} Jean-Christian Petitfils, Fouquet (Saint-Amand-Montrond: Perrin, 1999), 179.
Fouquet gathered around him works of art from Italy which he had sent his brother to collect. What he did not buy, he had had made. He gathered about him the elite of French intellectual life: artists, writers, anyone with cultural significance or ability. The emphasis was on extravagance, quantity, and only then taste or quality. Instructions to his brother, in Italy during 1656, were to pass by the most expensive or finest sculptures, and to buy only the “passably good” works in France. The aim was to impress with quantity, for no one yet had the taste to discern “passable” from “good.” In a nearby village, Fouquet created a tapestry workshop and installed one of the finest artists of the day, Le Brun, along with several very well known assistants, two hundred and ninety workers, and nineteen imported weavers from Flanders. Fouquet had created a self-sufficient source of cultural capital, beholden to no one but himself. Versailles, not yet renovated, was no comparison.

The final, ultimate mistake, however, was in throwing a fête for the opening of the palace and the gardens. Although Vaux-le-Vicomte had officially opened on July 11, 1661, the king had not attended. Louis visited a month later, on August 17. The king arrived, immediately toured the house and the gardens, examined the art, and finally consented to dinner only after the sun had set. Ostentatious as the house and grounds were, dinner was the most decadent part of the fête. Fouquet served rare delicacies from thirty buffets, for eighty tables. There were 1,440 napkins, 6,000 gold plates, and 432 gold platters. The staff was clothed in vermilion uniforms made specifically for the occasion. The guests returned to the garden for a play commissioned from Molière, with a set designed by Le Brun, and a concert with music by Lully. The display of wealth

---

12 Petitfils, 172.
32 Petitfils, 172.
33 Petitfils, 185.
34 Petitfils, 356.
and resources was quite threatening to a young king still very concerned with his own position and authority.

Following Mazarin’s death, and given the instability and tension present in elite society at the time, this event was nothing less than an act of utter hubris, emphasizing all that Fouquet could achieve better than the king. The king, it was said at the time, was so incensed at the opulence, that he immediately ordered Fouquet’s arrest. In August, Fouquet was at the height of his power. By the end of September, he would be ruined, awaiting trial.

Fouquet’s fête may or may not have been the direct cause of his arrest and trial on fictitious charges of treason. Actual treason by Fouquet is doubtful, but his arrest removed a rival for both the king and Colbert in politics and culture. Fouquet was, in many senses, the prime source of direct competition in artistic, financial, and political patronage for the king. The appropriation of Fouquet’s property and influence speaks for the patronage that he had controlled. Within three months of Fouquet’s arrest, the architects responsible for Vaux-le-Vicomte had been instructed to renovate Versailles (partially following unused plans for Vaux), and trees from Vaux had been uprooted and transported to the new gardens of the king.\(^{35}\) The belongings of Fouquet, in particular the tapestries he had commissioned, were appropriated, along with the men who had created them, for the king’s collections.\(^{36}\) In the coming years the circle of artists and writers supported by Fouquet was incorporated into the nascent académies, for with the loss of their original patron, the intellectual capital of France was without income until the king and Colbert stepped into the breach and dispersed the first ‘gratifications’ in 1663.\(^{37}\)


\(^{36}\) Goldstein, 78.

\(^{37}\) Goldstein, 85.
The most dramatic of the confiscations made by the king was that of Fouquet’s emblem, the sun. Le Brun, in designing the decorations for the building, painted a personified sun, clothed in gold, crowned in laurel, surrounded by the planets. Madame de Scudéry, writing of the decorations, said: “The sun represents... [Fouquet] according, in my opinion, his great actions, [he has] done everything, [is] seen by all, [has] done good for all and still works incessantly for the good and order and amelioration of the universe.” The symbol that would become emblematic of Louis’s entire reign, synonymous with the man himself, was taken from Fouquet.

The King’s General Assertions of Power:

Fouquet was just one example. He was the extreme case of a nobleman with too much influence, who demanded reining in. Louis also turned his attention to the reformation of aristocracy as a whole. The extreme venality of offices had lead to an expansion of the nobility. Louis had commented on the state of the nobility as a whole in his memoirs. In doing so, he echoed the concerns held for a long time by the old, landed aristocracy of France, who were incensed by the sale of offices and titles by Richelieu and Mazarin, which had diluted their traditional power. The discontent of the old nobility, expressed during the Fronde, was still very much a concern of the king and his advisors. The memoirs show an interesting attention to agreement with the old nobility, an effort to avoid outright disagreement with the noble factions still existent. The king was not in a position politically or socially, despite official rhetoric, to directly challenge the nobility as a whole or individually. He had to have sufficient cause to attack competitors. Fouquet could be denounced for treason and removed from power, but could not be

---

38 Petitfils, 183. “Le soleil représente... [Fouquet] qui, selon l’étendue de ses grands emplois, fait tout, luit partout, fait du bien à tout et travaille continuellement pour l’utilité et l’embellissement de l’univers.” Quotations with the original provided in footnotes are translated by the author.
removed for financing Vaux-le-Vicomte or patronizing the arts and thus exerting power over politics through culture. When Louis acted to “reform” the nobility, he was in effect renouncing all that had helped finance his government, and allying himself with those who supported what amounted to a weakening of royal power: “The least of the defects in the order of the nobility was the infinite number of usurpers in its midst, without any title or having a title acquired by purchase rather than by service.”

To combat the falsification of titles and to mollify various factions of the old nobility, Louis began a purge of the nobility in 1661, aimed to remove all those who lacked a legitimate claim to title (and also to increase tax revenue by collecting from those who had falsely claimed exemption). The effort had mixed results, and was re-promulgated in 1664.

Successful or not, the message of the purge was clear. Louis wanted to reform relations between the monarchy and the old nobility, but the emphasis was on unification rather than antagonism. The effort emphasized rights and powers, duty to the king and just governance of the land. The message, however, achieved little on a wider scale in providing legitimization for the young king. Removing the most offensive of the influential nobles, Fouquet, and attempting to cleanse the ranks of the aristocracy did not a king make. The next decade’s cultural propaganda efforts under the direction of the new académies would succeed where the initial direct action had failed. One of the most explicit articulations of the new efforts to come from the académies was the book *Courses de Testes et de Bague*.

---

39 Louis XIV, Paul Sonnino, trans, 25.
40 Mettam, 204.
41 Norbert Elias in his chapter “The sociogenesis and development of French court society as functions of power shifts in society at large” spends considerable time discussing this need for ordered unification. Louis, although an absolutist king in the making, was by French tradition also the ‘first nobleman’, and so depended on the health and existence of the French nobility to exist himself. Elias, *The Court Society*, 147-148.
II.

Cultural Control and the Formation of the Académies

The newly-institutionalized intellectual production of France was embodied by the académies, whose sole purpose it was to support Louis’s effort to legitimize his own throne, centralize the government, and create a court culture that maintained the new, weak position of the French aristocracy. The cultural project that would achieve those goals, of which the appropriation of Fouquet’s possessions and clients was merely a part, would be directed by Colbert through a hierarchy which was institutionalized by the académies. These new académies, heirs of Richelieu’s Académie Française, would be controlled by a group of five men, a committee that was named the Petite Académie and later reformed as the Académie des Inscriptions. Two members of the Petite Académie were instrumental in the creation of Courses de Testes et de Bague.

The Motives and Brief of the Petite Académie:

The Petite Académie coalesced around two separate cultural projects: the Grand Carrousel of 1662 and the Cabinet du Roi. While the Carrousel had been planned and executed almost a year prior to the incorporation of the académie, it would in many ways set the agenda for the academies’ actions and efforts as the primary example and articulation of ideal court power structure espoused by Colbert and Louis XIV. The Carrousel embodied the purpose of the projects that the Petite Académie would undertake in material form throughout its existence. The engravings that became the Cabinet du Roi, also begun before the académie was formed, grew in part from the Carrousel. The members of the Petite Académie, in control of both the expansive Cabinet du Roi project as well as the work that would become Courses de Testes et de Bague, found themselves, if not defined, certainly operating within the brief articulated by the Carrousel itself.
and adopted by the Petite Académie. The motives and purposes of the Carrousel of 1662 and the Cabinet du Roi defined the Petite Académie and its work. The Petite Académie governed the intellectual production of the Académies.

The Grand Carrousel of 1662:

Louis XIV, in the memoirs he meant for the political education of his son, wrote of the Carrousel:

I would not dwell with you, my son, upon a carrousel that took place at the beginning of the summer [unless, because] your life having necessarily to include these sorts of things as well as greater ones, it were not desirable to indicate to you what legitimate use may be made of them.  

By positioning the Carrousel as having agency, Louis defended the next several pages of his work, explaining that the Carrousel was in fact a very powerful political tool. The Carrousel was inherently such a tool, for it was organized by Colbert, directed by Louis himself, and announced months before its actual date.

The original motive behind the Carrousel was a complicated matter, reflecting the power struggle between elements of the old nobility and the centralizing forces under Louis XIV represented by Colbert. The comments made by the king in his Mémoires pour les Années 1661 et 1666 reflect neither the contemporary reports of the Paris Gazette nor the rivalry between Colbert and de Louvois (a close companion to, and another advisor of, the king) which precipitated the final extravagance of the Carrousel. Indeed, there is a certain irony in that the Carrousel, a manifest symbol of political and social unity between the king and his nobility, found its original motivation in a rivalry between an aristocrat and a man who was of the elite bourgeoisie. Ironic, yes, but true to the event’s purpose- even the political maneuvering which began the planning process reflected the struggle for power between nobility and centralizing government that the

Carrousel represented. Louvois, of the old nobility, was challenging Colbert, of the new bureaucracy, for power and influence in the court. Although the Carrousel was originally a means of embarrassing Colbert and so restoring power to the old nobility, Colbert was able to appropriate the fête for the government’s purposes.

The rivalry between Louvois and Colbert caused Louvois to support the planning of a tournament initially suggested by Louis XIV in March of 1660 in celebration of his wedding, despite a complete lack of funds to pursue it at the time. Colbert, approached by Louvois in 1661, had no choice but to present the plan to Louis and, when asked about the cost, to dramatically over-budget by approximately one hundred percent. Louvois had counted on the virtual bankruptcy of the government and Colbert’s lack of wealth to make the event a failure. Colbert, however, made his own agreements with the financiers who had purchased the right to tax the country for the king, and raised the money, escaping the trap laid for him by Louvois. In doing so, Colbert starting a process that would result in what would become the epitome of all court tournaments in the years to come as well as the symbol of unity that would be exploited by the academicians.

Despite all of the maneuvering between Louvois and Colbert, no public or official explanation for the Carrousel was given until the 18th of March, 1662, printed in the Paris Gazette. The Gazette, the officially-licensed newspaper of the monarchy, was the only vehicle for such announcements. Although Colbert had been organizing the Carrousel for almost two years and had already notified the royal courts of Europe of it, the Paris Gazette provided the only explicit

---

43 Cetre et al., 126.
explanation of the motive behind the event. Even so, the description was fleeting, and only suggestive of the long term preparation then underway. The first actual dispatch included in the *Paris Gazette* is more concerned with the smaller contest that took place on the 16th of that month: “On the 16th, the King, who is preparing a magnificent Carrousel, which will be part of the continuations of the Celebrations of the Peace, returned to the Riding School of the grand Stable, with the Principle members of his Nobility, magnificently mounted and clothes....” Nonetheless, the smaller day-long contest was connected directly with the planned Carrousel three months in the future. A little over a month later the king and his companions, “from whom the Quadrilles will of [the king’s] Carrousel will be composed,” again went out to practice. A week and a half after that, on the 3rd of May, the king and his companions for the Carrousel, now officially selected, “marched towards the Place where the Courses will take place, in the same order that they will appear in on the day of the Event.” Three weeks later they returned and repeated the performance and practice.

The language in which the Gazette introduced the preparations for the Carrousel, an event which would warrant its own special edition, removed some of the importance later granted to the Carrousel. The Carrousel was a part of the continuing celebrations of peace according to the Gazette, as were the practice events which were in preparation for the main event. The smaller events were themselves open to the public, granted their own independent influence. However, as the lesser events took place, their public was educated in the language that would be required to

45 *Paris Gazette*, 160. “Le 16, le Roy, qui se prepare à un magnifique Carrousel, lequel doit faire la continuation des Divertissements de la Paix, retourna au Manège de la grande Escurie, avec les Principaux de sa Noblesse, magnifique montez & vetus...”

46 *Paris Gazette*, 412.

47 *Paris Gazette*, 436. “de ceux qui doivent composer les Squadrilles de son Carrousel,”; “marchèrent vers la Place où se seront les Courses, dans le mesme order qu’ils parestrent au jour de ce Diverstissement.”

48 *Paris Gazette*, 557.
interpret the main event. In 1685, a pamphlet was published prior to a tournament held by the dauphin, explaining the purpose and meaning of the devices and costumes, interpreting the event for its future audience.\(^{49}\) The earlier, open events and reports in the \textit{Gazette} served the same purpose, providing the background knowledge required to understand the messages embedded within the main Carrousel itself.

The reports emphasized the prizes given to those who did well in the smaller events, the people who awarded the prizes, and most importantly, the glory of the king which was articulated by his every action:

\begin{quote}
[Louis XIV], whom good fortune inseparably accompanies, to crown all his actions, had the glory of winning the Prize, causing unparalleled joy amongst all the participants, who could not help but admire his excellent bearing and demeanor.\(^{50}\)
\end{quote}

The emphasis of the language within the quotation is not on the success of the king, but on the glory of that success and the “unparalleled joy” which it causes. No less important is the connection between the king and “good fortune” which “inseparably accompanies” him. The audience of the small event itself was educated in the form and structure of the event, and those who would ultimately participate in the Carrousel. The audience of the \textit{Paris Gazette} was, in turn, instructed in the interpretation of the event as well, given the vocabulary with which to understand and discuss the forthcoming events.

The \textit{Gazette}, known for its unusually terse and concise prose, tells us little of the Carrousel until the report from the 5\(^{th}\) of June, the first day of the event. Even on the 18\(^{th}\) of June, when a special nineteen-page report on the two-day event was published, the \textit{Gazette} does not explain the

\(^{49}\) \textit{La Brillante Journee ou Le Carrousel des Galans Maures}. (Paris: La Veuve Blageart, 1685).

\(^{50}\) \textit{Paris Gazette}, p. 260. “...ce Prince, que la bonne fortune accompagne inséparablement, pour couronner toutes ses actions, eut la gloire d’emporter le Prix, avec une joie nomparelle de tout l’Assamblée, qui ne pouvoit assez admirer sa bonne mine & son adresse.”
Carrousel, even then preferring to vindicate its choice to publish such a description rather than the choice of the king to hold such an event. A brief comment regarding the “Celebrations of the Peace” is the only explanation given. The Carrousel’s inclusion with other events suggests that there was far more going on at the time, and that the Carrousel, while magnificent, was not the only fête happening. Despite the usual conservative writing on the part of the Gazette, two aspects of the forthcoming Carrousel are apparent: the utter extravagance of the entire affair and the participation of the select of France’s nobility, which was emphasized by the unusually descriptive language used to describe them. The extravagance and the select participation was accentuated because of the earlier reports of tournaments. The actual event was in form well understood, because the longstanding tradition of tournaments as well as the preparatory events had been taking place for some time. What set aside the main Carrousel, then, was not the horsemanship or military skill, but the scale of the proceedings: the costumes, the participants, and the pageantry.

As for the special edition comprised solely of the description of the Carrousel (issue number 68), the anonymous author justifies himself by saying that, “It is not just that only one city... should have part in a Spectacle which merits being seen not only by the Nations which are there represented, but by all the Nations of the World.” It was his duty to the glory of Louis, then, that was his motive to publish such a complete report on the event- that the event was meaningful was a given, assumed. Indeed, the event was worthy of the entire world’s attention, not merely that of Paris, or even the “nations” which rhetorically bowed before the king.

51 The occurrence of tournaments as both fêtes and methods of military training is well documented. The audiences of the Carrousel of 1662 and its preceding events would have been familiar with what to expect in the events. Apostolidès, 41; Castelluccio, 13.

52 Paris Gazette, 557. “Il ne seroit pas juste qu’une seule ville... eust eu part à un Spectacle qui méritoit d’estre vu non seulement des Nations que l’on y a représentées, mais de toutes les Nations du Monde.”
the king as articulated by the Carrousel demanded a record of the event, and the world was due an explanation of Louis’s, and therefore France’s, power.

Not until the king, in preparing a book explaining his actions to his son and heir, addressed the tournament as a fundamentally political action was any justification beyond the existence of a continuing set of divertissements in celebration of peace. The Carrousel was only efficacious when publicly understood to be a celebration, a fête, and not a political manifestation of the king’s own ideals and goals. The event had to be understood as an unconscious reflection of society, rather than the construction of an ideal one. The nobility had to be seen to inherently honor the king because of their position, not through any coercion by the government. The memoirs, despite their disputed authorial responsibility, constitute an excellent, “official” set of motives behind the Carrousel. Louis focuses on three points: public events are of “legitimate use” in achieving political stability (as a public articulation of unity under a paternal king); there is a traditional and beneficial close connection between the king and his people which can be accessed through those public events; and a king’s reputation and standing can be heightened by participation in properly executed events. The three points echo Richelieu’s emphasis on personal character as an important part of a functioning monarchy, a metaphorical lynchpin of the entire government and society.53

Louis’s first point, that such festivals were of use, serves to explain why he turned to a discussion of the Carrousel. In the midst of discussing the political situation and the manner in which he was reforming the royal finances, Louis turned to the Carrousel as an example of a legitimate means of influence and reform. He defended this move, and framed the coming pages through the lens of the event: “I would not dwell with you, my son, upon a carrousel that took

53 Graham, 142-143.
place at the beginning of the summer [unless]... it were not desirable to indicate to you what legitimate use may be made of them.” Louis was aware that he was moving from a discussion of traditional political issues (foreign legations, wars, and finances) to something that could be considered relatively trivial. And yet, despite that movement, he firmly understood the political and social wealth embodied in such festivals. That Louis labeled “these sorts of things” as a “necessity” was and is telling: political tools were not limited to the political sphere, but merge with articulations of society and the court.

The influence of festivals like the Grand Carrousel of 1662 was due to, theoretically at least, the traditional and somewhat paradoxical connection between the king and the people of France. The king, at once separated from his people by an “almost infinite difference in birth, rank, and power,” is still inherently part of a common “community of justice.” The chief characteristic of the French monarchy, wrote Louis, “as far back as we can go in our history... is the free and easy access of the subjects to the prince.” The “free and easy access” created an alternate intersection of power, one which operates outside the bounds of aristocratic politics. He continued:

I was obliged to preserve and cultivate carefully whatever, without diminishing my authority and the respect that was due me, bound my people, and especially persons of quality, to me by affection.... The people... enjoy a spectacle which, basically, is always aimed at pleasing them, and all our subjects, in general, are delighted to see that we share their tastes for what they do best. We sometimes hold their minds and their hearts more effectively by this, perhaps, than by rewards and by favors...

54 Louis XIV, Paul Sonnino, trans, 101.
55 Or, in this case Colbert understands the need to have the king rhetorically state his understanding.
58 Louis XIV, Paul Sonnino, trans, 102.
This connection, this relationship between the king and his people granted Louis the power to manipulate that interaction and so achieve his particular goals by appearing directly in front of his people. Where political maneuvering was impossible, the king could exert influence in another manner, one which would not antagonize the nobility and would, if anything, generate more loyalty in all those who were involved. The Carrousel was an example of this alternate maneuvering to achieve political goals. The king could not publicly move against the old aristocracy as a whole, but he could appear with them publicly, and through the structure of that event re-define their purpose and place within society and politics.

The effects of exercising power through festivals were not limited to a domestic audience. Such demonstrations of social power and expenditure of resources could be successfully interpreted by foreign courts regarding both the health of the state and the personal qualities of the ruler:

...and in regard to foreigners, when they see that a state is otherwise flourishing and orderly, what might be considered as superfluous expenses make a very favorable impression of magnificence, power, wealth, and greatness upon them, aside from the fact that physical dexterity, which can only be maintained and confirmed by this, is always becoming in a prince and produces a favorable estimate of his hidden qualities. 59

Accordingly, the audience of the Carrousel included, among other foreign delegations, the queen of England, given a place of honor alongside the queen of France and other members of the royal family. Nearby sat various, “Ambassadors and Foreign Ministers”. 60 Colbert had seen fit to invite most of the important royal courts of Europe, publicizing the Carrousel well before its execution. 61

59 Louis XIV, Paul Sonnino, trans, 102.
60 Perrault, 4.
61 Castelluccio, 22.
Integral to the interpretation of the Carrousel and similar events is the concept of the “double corps” of the king, at once king-as-man (temporal) and king-as-state (effectively immortal). The identification of the French kings with their country, in varying combinations of religion and national terms, had been occurring since the early fourteenth century. The conception of the king had been fused with the Roman concept of patria, mixing loyalty to the king with religious, moral, and ethical imperatives bound to one’s homeland. The king, as both a religious and political leader, was the literal “head of the realm,” the embodiment of all that was France.

Louis, in commenting that foreigners would interpret the Carrousel and his own deportment, was stating that by performing well he was at once affirming his own personal ability to rule, as well as the worthiness of France as a nation to exist and be respected. As king of France, and therefore representative of the entire nation, Louis received homage from the rest of the Carrousel’s participants. The participants represented the best and most ideal of the French nobility as well as the “nations” to whom they were assigned. Thus both the French nobility and most of the known world were publicly, if symbolically, seen to bow before the French king. The submission of the world was not an option, it was declared by the Carrousel and witnessed by both the French nobility as well as the delegations from other courts, in effect legitimizing the declaration.

The motive behind the Carrousel took on a completely new dimension when placed in context of political and social manipulation by the king. The festival was not just a celebration of

---

62 Apostolidès, 11-12.
63 Kantorowicz, 251-252.
64 Kantorowicz, 232.
65 Kantorowicz, 256.
peace, or merely a demonstration of equestrian ability. The Carrousel was, especially for the king, a coherent statement of royal power that was interpreted on a number of different levels by several different audiences. Especially in the context of the Memoires, the Carrousel cannot be considered anything less than a calculated performance which situated both the king and the noble participants in a certain way. The publicly-stated motives found in the Paris Gazette, then, are inherently part of that performance, a calculated choice governed by the motive only stated privately by the king or Colbert. The different versions of the motives (publicly a celebration of the peace, privately an articulation and assertion of Louis’s power and absolute monarchy) were not mutually exclusive, but nonetheless any decision governed by political necessity drastically alters the interpretation of the entire event.

The Carrousel itself, however, was not itself wholly responsible for the formation of the Petite Académie. While the motives behind the Carrousel comprise the founding philosophy and approach of the académie, another project following on the Carrousel would form the foundation for the académie as well as the material included in Course de Testes et de Bague. That project was the massive effort known as the Cabinet du Roi.

The Cabinet du Roi:

Two members of the future Petite Académie were involved with the second formative project and directly responsible for the direction of its content: Charles Perrault, the future secretary of the committee and protégé of Colbert, and Jean Chapelain, Colbert’s advisor in all literary and artistic matters. The project responsible for the shaping of the Petite Académie (and

---

66 Chapelain, although not directly responsible for any of the content included within the Cabinet du Roi or Courses de Testes et de Bague, was the longstanding authority on French writers and literature. His supervision was integral to the creation of any work.
thus Courses de Testes et de Bague) was the Cabinet du Roi, a collection of nine hundred and fifty-six engravings in twenty-three folio volumes. This collection, started sometime between late 1661 and October 1662, was completed over the course of the following eight years. The first copies came off the presses in early 1670, almost six months before the printing of Courses de Testes et de Bague was begun. The final collection included engravings of famous buildings, monuments, battles, festivals, medals, and the Carrousel of 1662.

The Cabinet du Roi is important in the history of the académies and their work, for through it Perrault and Chapelain, as instrumental actors in the creation of Courses de Testes et de Bague and members of the Petite Académie, were introduced to a group of artists who came under Perrault’s direct control. Some of these artists were later responsible for the work in the in Courses de Testes et de Bague. The pre-existing work that comprised the Cabinet du Roi, especially relating to the Carrousel, provided a body of material that could be exploited and extended to serve parallel purposes. Although their work in the Cabinet du Roi is wholly unrelated to that in the Carrousel book, the two men who were responsible for many of the engravings in Courses de Testes et de Bague, Chauveau and Rousselet, became connected to the Petite Académie and its later projects.

Between late 1662 when court artist Israel Silvestre was commissioned to engrave scenes from the Carrousel and mid-1663 when the Petite Académie began meeting, Perrault was given control over the entire Cabinet du Roi effort. During that time period, Perrault either introduced the project to the académie at its inception or in his position as secretary of the committee was granted the power over the project. In either case the Petite Académie was explicitly identified as the body to direct the Cabinet du Roi project.

---

The motive behind the collection of engravings was clear: to make a recording of all that embodied the glory of Louis XIV and the French Monarchy. The project began to coalesce in its final form in December 1667, when all the existing engravings and plates were moved to one location. The decision to print the entire collection together in identically bound folio volumes was not made until late 1669 or officially ordered until late February 1670.\(^6\) In a letter to Perrault and the king’s librarian dated February 22, 1670, Colbert wrote:

> It is necessary to revise all that we are engraving at the beginning: animals which the anatomy and dissections have already been done plants, idem. antique medals of the Cabinet du Roy devices and medals for the King busts and statues of His Majesty scenes carrousels, tapestries, royal houses and generally all the other things of the same nature.

> It is necessary again that the revisions of are such grandeur that they powerfully embody their original grandeur, so that at the end of each year, we can create a volume of all that is already done of the kinds of work...\(^6\)

The evolution of the Cabinet du Roi project, if anything, suggests a much more organic maturation of the Petite Académie around pre-existing efforts.

The institutionalization of the arts and the attention paid to the legitimacy of the artists are suggested by the social standing of Chauveau and Rousselet and the professional history of

---

\(^6\) Grivel, 181-182.

\(^6\) Grivel, 186-187. “Il est nécessaire de réduire tout ce que nous ferons graver à l’advenir: des animaux dont l’anatomie et dissection aura esté faitte des plantes, idem. des médailles antiques du Cabinet du Roy des devises et médailles pour le Roy des bustes et statues de Sa Majesté des tableaux des carrousels, tapisseries, maisons royales et généralement toutes les autres choses de mesme nature.

Il faut désja les réduire toutes d’une grandeur telle qu’elles puissent composer des volumes d’une grandeur égale affin qu’à la fin de chaque année, nous puissions composer un volume de tout ce qui aura esté fait de toutes ces sortes de travaux...”
their involvement with both the Cabinet du Roi and the Courses de Testes et de Bague projects. The two men were admitted to the Académie Royal de Peinture et Sculpture on the same day, the 2nd of June, 1663, within five months of the creation of the Petite Académie. Rousselet, at least, immediately began work on the Cabinet du Roi. Both men, by late 1664 or early 1665, would be working on Courses de Testes et de Bague. Their induction into the académie at the same time and their subsequent assignments was provocative, suggesting that the men gained their official acknowledgement through the necessity of the Petite Académie. Whether their induction to the académie of painting was coincidental with their future work, however, is beside the point. Rather, the collection of recognized, officially sanctioned and controlled talent by Perrault (and therefore Colbert) is indicative of the growth of the académie system and cultural oversight of the government.

The execution of the two projects followed by the incorporation of the Petite Académie belies an internal and, in terms of posterity, unspoken centralization of culture that is shown elsewhere (the removal of Fouquet as both a politically and culturally influential figure) that, after 1663, was officially institutionalized by the creation of a series of more specific académies. Where the Carrousel itself served as the motive and catalyst for future work of the Petite Académie, the Cabinet du Roi provided the force to gather the appropriate pool of talent about the men who were in charge of cultural propaganda and projects. The two early projects, when considered together, provided the basis for the cultural efforts of the newly formed académies for the coming decade which were directed by a small group of men working directly under Colbert.

---

70 Whether this was because of talent or not is unclear. Rousselet’s work comprises the smallest part of the entire work, merely the title page. He had, however, named his ninth son (born in October of 1662) for Colbert, giving the boy the name Jean-Baptiste Rousselet.
The Académies, their Structure and System:

The Petite Académie met for the first time on the 3rd of February, 1663. Between 1663 and 1674 the process begun by Colbert with the formation of the new académie was continued. He implemented a comprehensive plan to manage the cultural production: the Petite Académie was founded in 1663, the Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture was reformed in 1663 (although it had been originally created in 1648), the Académie Française de Rome and Académie des Sciences were founded in 1666, the Académie d’Opéra was founded in 1671 (but reformed into the Académie de Musique in 1672), and finally the Académie des Spectacles was planned, but never incorporated, in 1674. The chronology of the academies shows a growing specification in the needs of the king and Colbert. The process of institutionalization began with the need for general oversight (solved by the creation of the Petite Académie), moved to the reformation of existing académies, and only then moved to the creation of new ones.

The first new académie, the Petite Académie, although given a specific and particular brief (the creation of inscriptions, medals, and emblems), had a vast amount of control and reach considering that it was composed of only five men. Their task was nothing less than to “direct the intellectual life of France,” despite their very specific official brief and prerogative. The Petite Académie was the clearing house for all major works and projects glorifying the king. What the five men who comprised it did not themselves create, they edited and revised before passing on to Colbert for final approval.

---

71 A. Fabre, Chapelain et Nos Deux Premières Académies (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1890), 425.
72 Burke, The Fabrication of Louis XIV, 50-51.
73 Apostolidès, 30. “...diriger la vie intellectuelle de la nation.”
74 Burke, 58-59.
Although the first articulation of the new académie program, the five member committee was not the first académie to be founded. The Académie Française, model and progenitor of all subsequent ones, was founded in 1634 by Richelieu to standardize and control the French language as part of his centralization process. To control language meant control over the intellectual life of France by dictating the legitimization process for writers. In 1648, the Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture had been founded in response to a series of professional disputes rather than a coherent state program. Likewise, in 1661, the Académie de Danse was created because of an internal political dispute within the Académie Française and the personal interest of the king rather than cultural planning by those in power. The Académie de Danse and the Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture, after the foundation of the Petite Académie, were incorporated into the overall hierarchy that governed the creation of cultural projects, although final control over all musical enterprises remained with Lully, rather than Colbert.

In November of 1662, prior to the Petite Académie’s creation, Colbert had asked Jean Chapelain, an influential member of the Académie Française from its inception, to write a report on the state of the Académie and its members. The report, when finished, analyzed every member of the académie and commented on their individual utility to the government. Although Chapelain’s specialty was literature, his report covered more than just the membership of the Académie Française. The result, then, was a comprehensive statement of both the current situation and the options available to Colbert for the immediate future. Colbert’s reaction was swift. Shortly thereafter he formed the Petite Académie. Chapelain’s report was “the prelude to the act of

---

75 Graham, 143.
76 Fabre, 425. Although, depending on the source, Chapelain may have volunteered the report on his own.
77 Apostolidès, 26
creation of that illustrious Company.” The committee would thereafter meet weekly, usually on Wednesdays, to discuss their work and conduct official business. Colbert’s first priority was the organization and centralization of the intellectuals of the country about the Petite Académie, an imposition of royal will and order on the intellectual capital of France. Only after the incorporation of the Petite Académie did Colbert turn to specifics: the re-organization the Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture and, after 1666, the formation of new académies as they were deemed necessary. By the mid 1670s, the resulting structure of control over the intellectual and artistic output of the country would be all powerful and comprise an almost total monopoly of patronage in France. The king, via Colbert and the Petite Académie, had imposed order and direction where before there had been no unified cause. Art was to work for the king and his cause, and nothing else.

78 Fabre, 415. “le prelude de l’acte de naissance de l’illustre Compagnie.”
III.

*Courses de Testes et de Bague: Construction, Structure & Theory*

The académie system, working from the Carrousel of 1662 and Cabinet du Roi material, created *Courses de Testes et de Bague*, a book which not only recorded the tournament itself, but captured the ideals which the inherently ephemeral event embodied. While the fête itself lasted only two days, the book was a permanent re-articulation of the messages posited during that short time, allowing those messages to continue to be efficacious.\(^{79}\) The book’s construction history, as well as its structure, shows that the creation process was not a simple one. The material was evolving until it was sent to the presses in late 1670. The chronology also indicates which sections of the book are most saturated with the values and ideals of Louis, containing the messages that re-defined the French court.

**Construction of Courses de Testes et de Bague:**

The creation of the material included in *Courses de Testes et de Bague* took eight years; it was begun in 1662 before the book was even planned and finished in 1670. During this period Chapelain wrote his report on the Académie Française, the Petite Académie was formed, and the académie system was instituted. The construction of the book was a long-term and influential process, and provided a foundation around which institutionalized culture would coalesce.\(^ {80}\)

The components in *Courses de Testes et de Bague* correspond in a rough manner to the individual work of Perrault, Silvestre, Chauveau, Rousselet, and Fléchier. When examined this way,

---


\(^{80}\) The book’s influence also affected its creators, Rousselet and Chauveau, the two engravers responsible for a majority of the plates in the book, were inducted into the new académie system as *Courses de Testes et de Bague* got underway, although at that point the material was still combined with the Cabinet du Roi project. Fléchier gained enough recognition through the inclusion of his Latin poem to become tutor to the dauphin. Shortly after the book was finished, Perrault was formally admitted to the Académie Française.
four sections composed of ten chapters (with attendant engravings) become evident: The first section is related to the book itself, containing the dedication to the dauphin by Perrault and the introduction of the book - a defense of the topic and explanation of the Carrousel as a whole; the second section is concerned with the structural and presentational nature of the Carrousel, the description of the order of the march with Silvestre’s matching engravings, followed by five chapters devoted to each of the five quadrilles (detailing the various costumes and devices of each of the participants); the third section is a description of the events themselves, an overview of June 5th (the Courses de Testes) and June 6th (the Course de Bague), along with descriptions of the prizes won on each day; the fourth and last section is solely comprised of Fléchier’s poem, Circus Regius, sive Pompa Equestris Ludouici XIV. Despite the careful organization of the book the chronology of creation was unrelated to the final structure.  

Of the material that is included in Courses de Testes, and indeed a large fraction of the total cost, the first engravings to be commissioned were ordered in October 1662 from Israel Silvestre. Silvestre finished the ten engravings he was responsible for in 1664, and was paid, between 1662 and 1665, 10,800 livres for his work. These ten engravings, along with their preparatory studies (which are inferred by the description on Silvestre’s first payment), took approximately two years to complete. Silvestre’s engravings are the largest in Courses de Testes et de Bague, recording the venue of the tournament, the march of the quadrilles, and the events themselves.

---

81 The following chronology and details of component cost is compiled from: Grivel, 182-186; Castelluccio, 29-31; and Cetre et al., 147-151.

82 Establishing the value of the livre and the value of the work done by the creators of Courses de Testes et de Bague is difficult. As a guideline, however, the average intellectual supported by the government received between 500 and 2,000 livres a year. When Colbert distributed the first gratuities in 1663, ninety-eight men were given 77,500 livres- an average of 790 livres per man. This means Silvestre’s two year fee was quite substantial, although not unheard of. David T. Pottinger, The French Book Trade in the Ancien Regime 1500-1791 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 85, 351-352.

83 See Figures 3, 6 and 7, Appendix.
Two other portions of the future book had also been started by 1665. One of these works, the Latin poem in epic verse, was the last piece to be created without the specific intent of inclusion in the book, while the other, Chauveau’s engravings of the devices and costumes, represented the beginning of the separate project that became *Courses de Testes et de Bague*.  

Apparently unasked, Fléchier had, by June 9, 1663, begun the Latin poem that would eventually conclude *Courses de Testes*. Chapelain, in a letter to Colbert on that date, wrote: ““M. Fléchier is working [on another project] and has suspended work and his intention of the completion of his grand latin poem about the Carrousel...”” Fléchier, then twenty-five years old, would not be paid for this work when he finally completed it.

Chauveau began his engravings in 1664, but would not be paid until December 17, 1668. Considering the amount Silvestre was paid for his ten engravings (large though they were), Chauveau’s fee of 3,436 livres was surprisingly small for the eighty-five engravings for which he ended up being responsible. Silvestre had created the large perspective views of the tournament (three in all) as well as the seven engravings that detailed the order of the march (which take up four double-page spreads in *Courses de Testes*), while Chauveau had engraved the thirty costume pages as well as the fifty-five devices of all the participants. Rousselet received his payment at the same time as Chauveau, December 17. He had engraved the title page, a bust of Louis XIV with the tournament grounds in the background. For this he was given 500 livres.  

The majority of the text that would accompany these engravings had been commissioned or completed by 1668. Perrault had started his descriptions of the Carrousel in 1666, although his

---

84 For Chauveau’s work, see Figures 4, 8, 10-17, Appendix.
86 See Figure 2, Appendix.
work bears great resemblance to the description of the Carrousel published in the Paris Gazette almost two weeks after the event itself, suggesting that Perrault relied heavily on this early work to write his own. This work was finished by December of 1668, because that month Fléchier was selected by Perrault and Chapelain to translate Perrault’s work into Latin. The translation, the last portion of material that would comprise the final book, was finished in late 1669. The total cost of the work by this date was 14,736 livres, of which almost three-quarters went to Silvestre, while the remaining quarter was split rather unevenly between Chauveau and Rousselet.

The total project, including all the engravings and writing, print run of four hundred French copies and three hundred Latin copies, including the custom illumination by Bailly for Louis, cost between 28,000 livres and 35,000 livres, depending on the actual cost of production. The project, from Silvestre’s initial commission to Bailly’s completion of the colored presentation copy, took just over a decade, not an inconsiderable amount of labor.

There is one important divide in the material included in Courses de Testes et de Bague, the shift from the use of recycled material to the creation of original material. There is not a particular date for this shift, but Chauveau’s work, begun sometime in 1665, signaled the change. 1665 is the only year that can in certainty be labeled as the beginning of the Courses de Testes et de Bague project as separate from either the Cabinet du Roi project or other, independent efforts like that of Fléchier.

---

87 10,800 livres to Silvestre, 3,436 livres to Chauveau, 500 livres to Rousselet, 900 livres to Bailly, and between 18 and 25 livres per copy of the book itself (approximately). Another way to consider this total cost: in September of 1661, Colbert records that the household costs of the king were 654,500 livres. Even assuming the book’s total production cost was 35,000 livres, a decade’s worth of work was still just over five percent of just one month’s budget for the king. Lettres: Instructions et Mémoires de Colbert: Vol. 7, Clement, Pierre, ed. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1882), 193.
More important, however, is the nature of the change in content, for, by the differences in content, Perrault and Colbert’s motives for the book are made clear. The work created before 1665 was not sufficient to achieve the goals of the Petite Académie or wider project of creating a centralized, absolutist system around Louis. The decision to create *Courses de Testes et de Bague* signals this insufficiency. The massive engravings by Silvestre, poem by Fléchier, and even the text that Perrault edited and revised from the account in the *Paris Gazette*, could not support the encoded messages and ideals present in the Carrousel which Louis found so useful to explain to his son. The new, original material consisted of details of pageantry and the key for their interpretation: the costumes, the emblematic devices carried by the participants, and Perrault’s dedicatory text. Within this new material the absolutist ideology rests, embodied within the personal details of the participants rather than description of the event itself.

The text by Perrault, the descriptions of the entry and the events, is useful because it was written late in the construction of the book and provides insight into the construction process. His descriptions were very derivative of the accounts which appeared in the *Paris Gazette* and act as contextual material, a vehicle for the later details contained within the original work. Similarities between the Perrault’s text and the *Gazette* are too strong to miss:

*Courses de Testes* (Perrault):

The General Marshal of the Camp... was dressed in Roman style, in clothes embroidered with gold and silver, on a base of satin the color of fire, the embroidery the same, all garnished with an innumerable quantity of Rubies, his Helmet was decorated with rich stones, & shadowed by a great bouquet of feathers, were also the color of fire...  

---

88 Nor is this the first place in the text where there are almost direct parallels between the two. Perrault’s introduction is strikingly similar to passages in the *Paris Gazette*. Perrault, 2; *Paris Gazette*, 557.  
89 Perrault, 5. “Mareschal de Camp General... étoit vêtu à la Romaine, d’un habit en broderie d’or & d’argent sur un fonds de satin couleur de feu, les brodequins de même; le tout garny d’une quantité innombrable de Rubis, son Casque étoit enrichy de pierreries, & ombragé d’un grand bouquet de plumes, aussi couleur de feu...”
Perrault undoubtedly relied heavily on the contemporary account of the Carrousel to construct his own description, suggesting that late in the creation process the men involved (effectively the Petite Académie) were still looking for material to surround Chauveau’s engravings and Perrault’s dedication. The book, then, had no final form up until the moment it was printed, but was rather an ongoing project. The hurried addition of recycled material reinforces the importance of the original engravings of devices and costumes. However, the need for the late addition of material also means that components of the book, whether original or derivative, depended on each other. While the work revised from the Gazette and the engravings by Silvestre did not contain any of the embedded messages that the original work did, each was wholly ineffective without the other. The original material was meaningless without the context and support provided by the derivative and recycled content, even though that content did adequately propagate the necessary ideology.

The role of the derivate material aside, we must in the original work of Chauveau (who engraved the costumes and devices), Rousselet (who engraved the title page), and Perrault (who framed the entire work in his dedication to the dauphin), look for the motive and message of the book. For the set of ideals encapsulated within the book, however, they needed to be accessible to multiple audiences, encoded in such a way that they would be efficacious to each audience. In this regard, the visual nature of the book was well suited to the task, providing a carefully controlled

---

90 Paris Gazette, 559. “Le Mareschal Duc De Gramont, comme Mareschal de Camp general, estoit à la teste, vestu comme à la Romaine…. Il avoit un habit en broderie d’or & d’argent, sur un fonds de satin couleur de feu, les Brodequins de mesme, le tout garni de quantité de rubans, un casque enrichi de pierreries, & ondoyé d’un fort beau bouquet de plumes, aussi, du couleur du feu...”
although flexible medium in which to illustrate, literally, the important parts of the Carrousel, which had embedded messages.  

A Note on Mechanisms of Transmission - emblematic devices, colors, and common knowledge:

The ideals and values asserted by *Courses de Testes et de Bague* depend upon a common visual knowledge. Without this knowledge, the interpretation of the material most saturated with the messages so valuable to the work’s intended audiences is impossible. The visual content created specifically for the book, the engravings of the emblematic devices and costumes, existed to achieve what the pre-existing media could not: propagate the glory of Louis XIV, the values of his court, and the legitimacy of both.

**Emblematic Devices and their Authority:**

The use of symbolic material is very exact in *Courses de Testes et de Bague*. There are ten pages devoted to the engravings of the emblematic devices worn by the participating nobleman, each accompanied by an explanation on the facing page. Chauveau was responsible for engraving all fifty-five of the devices, which he did with great care and detail. This is not surprising, for within the collection of devices was encapsulated the majority of the ideals being disseminated by the book. The emphasis placed on the devices is clear, for they form a large part of the book’s content. Indeed, the sections which outline the costumes and devices of each of the five quadrilles competing in the tournament comprise more than half of the entire book. Emblematic devices were powerful tools, representative of both the ideals and the real world influence exerted by their owners. Their power stemmed from a common education based in symbolism, often used by the Jesuits. In Europe, and especially seventeenth-century France, the nobility were educated by the

---

Jesuits. An understanding of how to approach different emblematic forms as a language unto itself was quite widespread.  

Devices were a specific form of emblem adopted by noblemen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and acted much like a personal motto or seal. A nobleman’s device was comprised of an allegorical combination of a paired image and motto. Paired, the image and motto were meant to represent some aspect of the bearer’s character, loyalties, aims, or desires. Simplicity in form was valued, although this simplicity was supposed to grant greater profundity to the meaning of the device. The mottos were rarely in the vernacular, but most often written in Latin and occasionally Italian. Devices were found everywhere, incorporated into architecture, interior design, clothing, portraits, and, in the case of the 1662 tournament and the subsequent book in 1670, incorporated into festivals and publications.

The exact role devices play in representing a particular nobleman is varied because devices were the public statement of a private goal or ideal in an intentionally obscure manner. Devices theoretically had a relatively straightforward purpose. They were meant to embody the character of an individual, expressing his personal character in, preferably, a witty and deft manner. Menestrier, man older contemporary of Perrault and long standing member of the Académie Française, wrote: “The Device is only the image of the designs and the enterprises which define us.”  

The apparent inclusion of personal “aims, desires, [and] intentions” in a public format draws questions of the message’s validity as a personal statement rather than prescribed statement of personal values which would parallel the official court values. The two options are not necessarily mutually

---

exclusive, although the potential subjugation of the personal statement to the expected, or indeed promulgated, “personal” statement is important as it indicates a court retinue that was not only inherently conscious of the ideals its members were espousing, but also the potential exploitation of that awareness. The use of devices in court festivals, such as the Carrousel of 1662, was even more suspect. Devices carried in such events were often created specifically for that event, and used only the once.\textsuperscript{94} The body of devices as shown in \textit{Courses de Testes et de Bague} was not necessarily an accurate representation of the men who carried them. Rather, the men lent their names and social positions to a group of devices that was, by and large, supplied to them by the organizers of the event.

Devices were recognized as ideal mechanisms of education because of their embodiment of values and virtues. Bouhours, a Jesuit and contemporary of Perrault, explicitly states:

\begin{quote}
\textit{... if I were to instruct a young Prince, I would do it by use of the Device. I would paint all the devices which Princes carry, & those [devices] which were used by them in diverse circumstances. I would to that [collection] add the devices of great men, not only to make them all known to the young Prince; but also to inspire him by their example.}\textsuperscript{95}
\end{quote}

The connection between the character or virtue of a prince and his device is worth emphasizing because it reinforces the ability of devices to inculcate the values of a ruler in an audience. The use of devices, according to Bouhours, could also inspire their audience, in the above case a future king, not just teach him the proper courtly values. This inspiration was worth just as much as the lesson in courtly value from the devices.

\textsuperscript{94} A fact directly stated by the author of the 1685 pamphlet for the Carrousel of the Dauphin.

\textsuperscript{95} Daniel S. Russell, \textit{The Emblem and Device in France}. (Lexington: French Forum, Publishers, 1985), 65. \textit{“... si j’avois à instruire un jeune Prince, je voudrois le faire par la Devise. Je ferois peindre toutes les devises que les Princes on portées , & celles, qui on été faites pour eux en diverses rencontres. J’y ajouterois les devises des grand hommes; non seulement pour les faire connoistre tous au jeune Prince; mais encore l’animer avertu par leur example.”}
In seventeenth century France there were particular theoretical foundations for devices. The process of creation and interpretation of devices was highly formalized and widely known. Most important was the understanding that the message inherent to the device was firmly grounded in the future. Devices did often refer to past deeds, but always reformulated those actions in such a way to reflect future behavior. The message was not only anticipatory, it was indicative of intention or desire. The device had nothing to do with past actions, but suggested, theoretically, future ones. Furthermore, the subject matter of these intentions was controlled, “... [French theorists] tended to reserve the device for the expression of gallant messages..., noble thoughts and virtues, or heroic enterprises, which could be classified as ‘‘généreuses.’” Devices were conscious creations by their authors, designed to evoke a particular aspect of a person’s declared “character.”

While devices were reserved for the court aristocracy, they found their roots in wider traditions. Emblems and enigmatic paintings are useful comparisons to devices, despite their more “common” use, because of the close relationship between the three. Where emblems and enigmatic paintings were intentionally designed and used to educate the people from their inception, devices were not. Devices could be educational, but they were not explicitly designed to be so on their own. Their purpose was, first and foremost, to represent a particular nobleman’s own, “noble thoughts and virtues...” Devices could function on their own, singly. Emblems however were almost always published in collections to provide a meta-lesson or moral. Taken in a collection, the sum message of devices would provide a pedagogically useful meta-message, a collection of characters and virtues worth emulating. Bouhours’s suggestion to create a collection

---

97 Russell, The Emblem and Device in France, 66.
of all the devices carried by princes to provide an education for a particular prince reflects the collective power of devices. Bouhours is consciously borrowing from emblematic tradition by suggesting the use of a collection of devices.

Devices and emblems differ only in a few ways: emblems are inherently used and recognized as pedagogical tools for the literate and semi-literate masses, while devices are limited to the nobility and are not traditionally meant for pedagogical purposes. Their similarities are more important, however. Each relied on the use of symbols to convey a higher meaning through a combination of image and text in the device where the sum was greater than its parts. The union of image and text was often cast in terms of “body” and “soul,” respectively, lending an almost spiritual power to the combination.

Enigmatic paintings are more complex than either emblems or devices. The paintings were designed in such a way as to conceal their hidden message or identity from anything other than a careful examination. Because of this, they were used as examples of learning by Jesuits. The performance of interpretation exhibited a student’s learning and educated those who attended. The emblems’s equivalents to this public exhibition were the wildly popular emblem books, which contained collections of emblems for the reader to decipher and learn from. The Jesuit education, which so many noblemen received, depended in part on this education through symbolism. Indeed, the education through the examination and discussion of pictures during the “formative years” of the nobility must have affected any interaction with art or symbols in their

---

98 Montagu, 310.
100 Russell, The Emblem and Device in France, 48.
101 Montagu, 307; 312.
102 Montagu, 316.
adult life. The device, then, rests in a tradition, shared with the emblem and the enigmatic painting of public display for pedagogical or didactic purpose. From the emblem was borrowed the tool of a collection of material, while from enigmatic paintings was borrowed the necessity of an elite education to gain access to the encapsulated message within the device.

That devices embodied a given set of ideals, that they may be considered an accurate representation of the values of the time, and indeed were, mean little in pedagogical terms if the devices had no inherent authority to declare themselves worth noticing. Official seals, a standard of authority for centuries, operated using a similar remote authority as emblematic devices. Seals were, in effect, a replacement for someone missing who had need of being physically represented to legitimize an act or statement. A seal was capable of representing the authority of presence, to bring a physical embodiment of a person where that person was not.

Devices, although not specifically meant for that same purpose, access the symbolic authority used by seals, and therefore execute authority in a parallel manner. A device, then, represents not only the ideals and values of the nobleman who carried that device, but the authority of that nobleman himself. A collection of devices, representing the king’s collected retinue as well as that retinue’s desire to be associated with the king, becomes something larger than merely a set of ideals and messages, but the symbolic collected authority of the represented noblemen acting in concert.

The acceptance of the authority of seals is important to the study of devices because of the legitimacy of character that a seal imbued in a given document. The legitimacy of a seal was important because the document was neither written in a language the typical nobleman knew, Latin, nor was the creation of the document actually executed by the nobleman himself. The

---

103 Montagu, 307.
“author” was only an author in theory and legality. The seal, then, aided the identification of the author within a document, representing the nobleman in a permanent way within a document of which he was only technically the source.

The concept of identity that was inherent to the seal is equally as important as the necessity for authority in a seal. Seals, traditionally, had some form of portrait incorporated in them, representing whomever the seal identified. The accuracy of the portrait, however, was not one of physical likeness. Authors of documents would identify seals as their own images, declaring that seals were legitimate likenesses of themselves despite the lack of any “realistic physiognomy.” The symbolic identity expressed by the seal is more important than its physical likeness to the owner of the seal. The symbolic identity expressed by the seal placed the owner of the seal in his particular location within society. Devices operated in a similar manner. Devices had no physical likeness of their bearer incorporated into their design. Rather, the symbolic portrait of the bearer’s character was incorporated. The bearer and the symbolic portrait of his character can be considered synonymous, despite the lack of any physical similarity, just as seals, although unrealistic, were considered legitimate likenesses of their owners.

The replication of the seal reaffirmed the owner’s relation to society as well. The ability for consistent replication was a necessary asset of a seal, for without it, the seal had no purpose, no authority, and no identity. With each replication the seal gained some agency over its owner. As the seal became to be identified with the owner, the owner became identified with the seal. The recognition of the seal as a particular likeness of a particular person also operated in the reverse; the recognition of a particular person as a likeness of a particular seal was just as important. The

105 Bedos-Rezak, 1507-1508.
106 Bedos-Rezak, 1528-1529.
owner of the seal became a “warranted replica” of the seal. The seal governed the very identification of its owner, reinforcing the message which it was intended to represent: the very identity of its owner. The seal, in other words, educated its owner, forcing him to maintain his official image.

The authority and theory which govern a seal’s very legitimacy can be applied to devices, and so explain why collections of devices were effective tools for the education or indoctrination of the seventeenth-century French royal court. Where seals reinforced social position, devices can be understood to reinforce social values and ideals. Where seals were placed on legal documents, charters, and official correspondence, devices were displayed prominently by members of the court, included in portraits, architecture, furniture, clothing, and in the case of the 1662 tournament, painted on each nobleman’s shield. Seals and devices were fundamental objects of identification of a person’s character, role, and intentions. In many ways similar to the traits displayed by the eleventh century seals, devices could reaffirm their owner’s supposed intentions or ideals to the point where they could control their owner. As the bearer of the device became identified with his specific device, so he became identified with its specific content, and in effect, so its content became associated with him. A collection of devices merely expanded on these traits, drawing from the wider tradition of emblems and enigmatic paintings: it provided a summary of the values and ideals at court while simultaneously reinforcing that summary with the very authority of the court itself.

107 Bedos-Rezak, 1529-1530.
108 Devices, as limited to the nobility, inherently reinforced social position although that was not their primary function. Seals, however, were used to reinforce social position actively, as they were adopted by more and more people legitimize personal station.
Meaning of Color and Nationality:

The devices included in *Courses de Testes et de Bague* were not the only encoded messages that could be interpreted by those possessing the proper education. Menestrier, writing in 1669, drew specific attention to both the “nations” represented by the five quadrilles as well as the colors that they wore, as good examples of how the material could be exploited. Both the color schemes and the assumed national identities were, for the elite spectators, full of meaning. Indeed, the two were interrelated and mutually supportive.

The doctrine of color is explained by Menestrier in his tract *Traité des Tournois, Joustes, Carrousels, et autres Spectacles Publics*. The entire work covers all forms of public festivals, but spends particular time with the colors of costumes, which are closely affiliated with devices. The Jesuit, across four pages, lists the standard accepted interpretations of various color schemes: the combination of white and blue signifies courtesy and wisdom, pale yellow stands for treason and deception, and violet and gray represents the strongest loyalty.\(^{110}\) How widespread this body of knowledge was unimportant. Rather, the fact that there were very particular theories behind any given color combination used in a public event declares both a greater attention to detail than might otherwise be assumed and a thought that, despite the obscurity of some of the interpretations, a portion of the audience would be able to understand what was being said through the costumes.

The five quadrilles were all given particular national identities which were represented by the costumes worn by the participants. The colors accorded to each nation reinforced the nationality’s perceived traits. There was an implicit hierarchy directly related to the social positions

of each member of the quadrilles. Thus the king’s own quadrille, the Romans, were placed at the top of this hierarchy. The colors of the Roman quadrille were red and black, symbolizing that the king and his quadrille were the “envy of the world,” drawing on the tradition of the Roman empire as well as stating the position of the king.111 The king’s quadrille also had some of the more famous family names of the time, all governors or nobles in positions of great power. The other quadrilles had similar meanings. The Persians, headed by Monsieur, the king’s brother, wore white and red (related to the king’s black and red) to symbolize the great venerability of their civilization (literally “seen and raised above the others”). The Turks wore blue and black, reflecting their duplicity and danger: Menestrier identifies those colors as “simulated defiance, affected simplicity.” The Indians wore yellow and scarlet (“temporal wealth”), representing their rich civilization, known in Europe for its relative opulence. Lastly, the Americans, representative of the unknown and mystery, wore green and white for “virtuous/virgin youth.” Where the majority of the quadrilles wore costumes that were decadent but based on European court costumes, the Americans wore fanciful gear made of fish scales, rode “unicorns,” and had helmets made of dragon’s heads.112

The five quadrilles represented all of the known and unknown world as understood by the French court: the dignity and power of the Roman empire, the otherworldly mystery of America, the threatening, barbaric concept of the Turkish empire, the sagacity and age of the Persians, and the decadence of the Indians. The Carrousel, both during its actual execution and in its official record, was a meeting of the world. The meeting, however, had a definite meaning and purpose, outlining the structure and ideals of an absolutist and centralized French court and the roles of all that court’s members. The portrayal of the king and the participating nobility was a clear

111 Castelluccio, 24.
112 Castelluccio, 24-25. See Figure 5, Appendix.
articulation of all that the king was attempting to institute through political reforms and cultural controls via the académies. *Courses de Testes et de Bague* provided an accurate model for all power relationships within the court, detailing the acceptable ideals and attitudes for the nobility and clarifying the roles and characters that were allowed to participate in French politics and society. The book was, because of the agency of its content, ideally suited for addressing its targeted audiences.

The Audiences:

*Courses de Testes et de Bague* had four audiences, all of whom shared the same basic education, and all of whom received the same basic message from the book. Perrault, in his dedication, specifically identifies only two of them. The other two are implicit. The most important audience, the audience to whom the book is explicitly directed, is the dauphin. Although Perrault also mentioned the king, the rhetorical presence of the dauphin provided the book the legitimization it required to exist as a pedagogical work. The last two audiences, the domestic and foreign nobility to whom the book was given, were the true target of the book’s makers. The dauphin, only nine years old when the book went to press, was too young to understand most of the information the book contained, while the king already knew what the book was articulating. Therefore, the nobility were the ones who were the most open to the book’s set of ideals and messages of courtly culture and politics. Nonetheless, the flexibility of the book’s material is impressive, and each audience provides insight into how the content functioned.

Perrault uses the dauphin to position and explain the work through an interplay between the characters of the dauphin and the king. The dedication outlines what the dauphin is expected to understand and what he is allowed to actually learn through the operative agency of a book, a
clarification useful only to the implicit noble audiences. The book was given a mediating role by the dedication, the entire work permitted only to describe what the dauphin must already know as the son of the king and to provide an introduction to the art the dauphin must publicly be seen to learn, the art of kingship (i.e. the traditional chivalric skills- warfare and courtliness).

The messages share a basic commonality: the king is the arbitrator, role model, and ultimate example of all the virtues and ideals encapsulated within the book. The legitimacy and primacy of the king is unquestioned, portrayed as a timeless constant. Indeed, without the assumption of complete and absolute power and perfection within the person of the king, the entire dedication fails. The king is cast as the ultimate example and source of glory. The book’s pedagogical power is therefore dependent on the king’s claim to educational authority. Perrault is able to place within the mind of the book’s titular audience, the dauphin, as well as the minds of the tacit audiences of the book, the domestic and foreign nobility, an understanding and interpretation of the book as an educational device, albeit one containing far more information than Perrault directly admits.

The order in which the importance of these audiences, and indeed the order of the explicit and implicit educational messages appear, is crucial. The dedication opens with the recognition of the king as the primary source of all worthy education. The structure of the dedication allowed Perrault to introduce the book’s educational task implicitly, and wait to state that the book can be used in such a manner. The king was, the book states “the most glorious and the most useful to imitate...”113 The use of “glorious” in conjunction with “useful” is interesting because Perrault connected glory and functionality within the public person of the king. Not only was the king’s appearance and reputation worth imitating, but within this appearance and reputation there was

---

113 Perrault, 1. “le plus glorieux & and le plus utile d’imiter..."
also functionality and purpose. The king was, therefore, the primary source of all worthy actions and lessons which served both the glory of the king himself (and therefore France) but also the functionality and responsibility of the position of king. The king was equated with tradition, stability, and order. Here both the image and the métier of the king were emphasized and paired such that neither took precedence although the sum of the two was implicitly greater than the parts.

The initial gesture towards the king is followed by the implicit lessons that are included in the book. Although still couched in terms of combat, the virtues stressed by Perrault are those that the dauphin will inherit by divine right, those necessary to command the respect of his future officers and enemies. These skills and virtues are a fundamental part of the dauphin, given to him without question or effort: “from the Blood from whence you were formed You are already granted courage...” Given automatically as these skills and virtues are, the dauphin is still expected to be formed by and in the image of the king, but in such a way to supersede the king in both image and function, with the aim to, “cultivate in your Royal Person [the dauphin] the hopes of the premier Kingdom of the World.”

Only after asserting the primacy of Louis XIV and outlining the dauphin’s assured future as, “the embodiment of the hopes of the foremost kingdom in the world,” did Perrault explain to the dauphin that it was too soon yet to participate in the actions in which he should so assuredly succeed. Perrault outlined the method by which the dauphin would learn and become accustomed to combat, each qualification providing an additional level of mediation. The dauphin was too young to go to war, too young to participate in festivals, and too young to have seen the festival that

114 Graham, 142-143.
115 Perrault, 1. “comme le Sang dont Vous estes formé Vous en a déjà donné le courage...”
is recorded in *Courses des Testes et de Bague*. In each case, the lessons learned were transmitted by the physical act of seeing the event or skill to be learned, which in turn reinforced the book’s visual material, in particular the emblematic devices. The dependence on sight allowed the book to stand in as a replacement for all three more preferable options. Within, stated Perrault, can be found “useful instructions, & those shall form in you an admirable Prince, for whom grand adventures are reserved.”[117] Between the inherent dignity and influence that is the birthright of the dauphin and the knowledge imparted by the book (as the only available source for the knowledge and experience usually gained in war and in contest), all that was required of a glorious and functional king could be learned.

The dauphin’s role as an audience was a rhetorical one, one which framed the book in a certain way for the other audiences. The book, by claiming to contain information directly useful for the heir to the throne, claimed knowledge that would in turn be useful for members of the nobility by asserting traits worth adopting, although to a degree worthy of their rank. That claim, however, was impossible without introducing Louis into the relationship. Not to do so was presumption on the part of the book’s makers and the book itself. By placing all responsibility for the dauphin’s education in the person of the king, Perrault avoided the problem of the academician’s social position and avoided any confusion by declaring that the book’s power came directly from the king. The authors avoided any mediating role for themselves, left the book to fill that role, positioned it as a mediating educational resource stemming directly from the king.

Perrault established the king as an independent audience by including the character of Louis into the introduction. Louis was not educated by the book’s information (to be so would be

[117] Perrault, 3. “des instructions utiles, & de quoy former en Vous ce Prince admirable, à qui tant de grandes aventures sont reserves.”
to diminish his character), but including the king at the beginning of the book included him in the understanding people had of the book itself and not just the ideals encapsulated within its pages. The association of the king with the book was more important than the actual interaction of the king and the book. Unsurprisingly then, the king was given a presentation copy of the book for his personal collection. Although the book had been sent to the presses in late 1670, Bailly, the artist responsible for illuminating the king’s edition, did not finish for a full year, delaying the presentation until early 1672, or perhaps 1673.\textsuperscript{118} Kept in the library at Versailles, the book was apparently a prized work, one which Louis would return to examine every so often.\textsuperscript{119} The king’s possession of a specially illustrated copy affirmed the book’s importance to the other audiences, as the king was the ultimate arbiter of taste and culture, and simultaneously ensured that no member of the court possessed a copy that was more lavish than the king’s.

Copies of the book were also given to each of the important nobles that took part. Some of these men in turn had the book hand-colored, although not as beautifully as the copy made for the king by Bailly.\textsuperscript{120} The distribution of the book to both the domestic and foreign nobility is quite well established. The participants received their own editions, and editions were sent abroad. The book resides in libraries in Venice, Vienna, Dresden, and Munich.\textsuperscript{121} Copies were rumored to have traveled to China with Jesuit missionaries. Like the Cabinet du Roi project, Courses de Testes et de Bague was designed to emphasize the splendor and power of Louis XIV’s court. The book was, after all, designed to propagate the ideals of the court on both sides of France’s borders. Two editions

\textsuperscript{118} Castelluccio, 31.
\textsuperscript{119} Castelluccio, 31.
\textsuperscript{120} Cetre et al., 148-149.
\textsuperscript{121} Saunders, “Spreading the Word: Illustrated Books as Political Propaganda in Seventeenth-Century France,” 81; Cetre et al., 149.
were printed, one in French, the other in Latin, to make its content more accessible. The book’s existence in various European court libraries affirms the book’s cultural propaganda purpose. Where the Cabinet du Roi and the book parted ways was the detail with which *Courses de Testes et de Bague* examined its subject, the Carrousel, and the conscious situating of the book as an educational tool (explicitly directed towards the dauphin, implicitly towards the nobility).

The primary distinction between the last two audiences, the domestic and foreign nobility, is the manner in which they approached the book. The book’s content postures in such a way that declares itself to be reality. To the domestic nobility, this ideal “reality” was something to be aspired to, worked towards. The ideal “reality” was the epitome of order and unification between king and aristocracy, with everyone in their appropriate place as dictated by society (i.e. the king’s ideal court). For the foreign nobility, however, the “reality” was not something to be aspired to (except in that the French court society was fashionable), but it was something to respect, a representation of something that existed for the French as *fait accompli*. The domestic nobility, in reading the book, placed themselves within the social structure that the book postulated, measuring themselves and their position within a system that they knew and understood. The foreign nobility looked onto a unified social structure that the book declared and saw not themselves, but an image of the entire French court society and power relationships. The good conduct of the king reflected a well-organized society and government. The king himself knew, and stated, the relationship between his own bearing and that of France, “...physical dexterity, which can only be maintained and

122 A Latin edition was required to make the book accessible to the wider European audience. Vernacular French was still uncommon, while Latin was the “chief diplomatic language.” The shift in Europe away from Latin towards vernaculars for official or intellectual work was under way, but a Latin translation of any book ensured that almost any foreign court could read it. Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), 45.
confirmed by [Carrousels or other games], is always becoming in a prince and produces a favorable estimate of his hidden qualities."124 Because any reference to Louis's success was implicitly a reference to France's, Louis was at once legitimizing himself and his country by comporting himself properly and with good form.

The importance of the king's physical appearance and actions, as well as those of the nobility, mean that the visual format of Courses de Testes et de Bague was ideally suited to the dissemination of the ideals encapsulated within it. Even in this flexible medium, the work still required a common education to be interpreted. As widely spread as the book was, it was still limited to an elite readership (all four audiences were, after all, noble or royal) who could understand that there were messages within the book and understand how to engage with those messages. As discussed above, the material created for the book itself (the engravings of the costumes and emblematic devices) represented the content which was responsible for the propaganda created by the men of the Petite Académie.

The original content of the book, accessing the symbolic power of emblematic devices and the traditional associations given to nationalities and color combinations, constructed for its audiences an ideal system of values applicable to three character roles: the king, the nobility, and the unrecognized academicians. The audiences of the book were instructed in the hierarchical power relationships within the French court by the articulation of those three character roles and their interactions within the framework of Courses de Testes et de Bague. The book was therefore able to assert an ideal absolutist court centered on the king. It declared publicly the appropriate relationship between the king and the aristocracy, while simultaneously obscuring the role of the men who shaped and mediated that relationship from the outside of traditional power.

124 Louis XIV, Paul Sonnino, trans, 102.
relationships, the academicians, even as they helped construct and legitimize the centralized government of Louis XIV.
IV.

The Definition of Society: Character Roles and their Power Dynamics in Courses de Testes et de Bague

Through the text, devices, and other engravings in Courses de Testes et de Bague, a very specific power structure that culminates in the body of the king is defined, describing both the individual roles within that structure as well as how the characters in those roles are expected to interact. There are three main roles present within the book, the first two explicitly a part of visible and admitted French society and the third implicitly placed in a position of subservient yet powerful mediation between the explicit roles. The first two roles are occupied by the king and the nobility. The third is occupied by the academicians, who are absent from the material within the book, but whose presence is inherently felt, if not consciously admitted.

The public, visible power structure that the book describes (one which the Carrousel originally posited in 1662) is defined by a tension between the explicitly included groups (the king and military aristocracy) and those implicitly excluded (the academicians). The book, as a source that rhetorically places itself as a record of a particular event and time as well as a pedagogical source, defends its inherent ideology not through attack on the contemporary situation, but by assertion of fact upon that situation. Courses de Testes et de Bague describes and re-interprets the Carrousel, and in doing so translates and re-interprets history itself.\textsuperscript{125}

The assertion of the roles and power structure by Courses de Testes et de Bague operates in two stages: first by defining the roles themselves and then by placing them within the posited social

\textsuperscript{125} Mary Douglas, in \textit{How Institutions Think}, has much to say on this process. In particular, I am indebted to her chapter “Institutions do the Classifying.” Two particular quotes are worth mentioning: “Institutions systematically direct individual memory and channel our perceptions into forms compatible with the relations they authorize.” (92), and “What constitutes deviance cannot be asserted until the dimensions of conformity have been delineated.” (98) Mary Douglas, \textit{How Institutions Think} (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 91-109.
and political hierarchy. Although these two stages overlap, as the book simultaneously describes and emplaces the various roles, their duality is necessary for the book’s utility. The definition of each role, explicit or implicit, is fundamentally required to understand the ideal relationships of power that the book asserts.

**The Role and Character of the King:**

The role and character that Louis is purported to play is constructed directly through the description of his participation (the size of his contingent, the extravagance and wealth of his costume, the meaning of his device) and indirectly through the instructions that the dauphin is expected to receive on how to emulate his father and be a good king. The king’s character is one that is paternal, orderly, skilled in all the necessary arts, yet above direct competition (despite his actual participation), a role worthy of the utmost respect and deference. The king is portrayed by *Course de Testes et de Bague* as infallible, perfect, and yet reachable and visible.

The king’s infallible position is established by Perrault’s dedication, the royal device and its relationship with the other devices, and the portrayal of the king’s costume. The dedication grants the character of the king pedagogical worth through “His” mere presence and reference, the device

---

126 In his memoirs, Louis addressed the need for skill in various arts, but the danger in excelling in any of them: “... if we could reach this perfection [in a given art] it would indicate a degree of attention and care unworthy of us, which can only be given by neglecting much more important things.... Allow your some of your subjects to surpass you in these sorts of things, but let none be your equal, if possible, in the art of governing....” Louis XIV, Paul Sonnino, trans, 103.

reinforces that influence through its declaration of overarching power and importance, and the appearance of the king in Roman dress appeals to a tradition of imperial power and epitome of classical culture. Together, the three representations of the character of the king define and place him at the pinnacle of the very system he was trying to define and create.

Perrault opened his dedication to the dauphin by locating the dauphin, as well as the book, in relation to the king: “Monsieur... it is given that of all the models which You have proposed for your education, the King is that which for You is the most glorious and the most useful to imitate...” Perrault next stated his obligation to recount all of Louis’s “great actions.” From the opening lines of the book, the king assumed a position of complete pedagogical worth. The position is constant, glorious, and useful; its emulation necessary for any prince wishing to be successful, its respect necessary for any courtier without condition. To be king, according the dedication, was to embody all the virtues: Courage, Valor, Moderation, and Prudence. The king, like the title page of Courses de Testes et de Bague (which immediately precedes the dedication), is placed upon a pedestal as an example for all. As he opened the dedication, Perrault also closed it, appealing to the grand destiny of the dauphin and the imperative that the “the entire World recognize in You a worthy Son of Louis XIII.” The authority of Louis was a given, without qualification. The framework of not only the history of the Carrousel, but of the very set of messages which the book contained, is founded on the synonymous association of Louis and the traits of an ideal monarch.

128 Apostolidès, 67. See Figure 4, Appendix.
129 Perrault, dedication. “Puisqu’il est constant que de tous les modeles qui Vous seront proposez pour vôtre Education, le Roy est celui qui Vous sera toujours le plus glorieux & le plus utile d’imiter...”
130 Perrault, dedication.
131 See Figure 2, Appendix.
132 Perrault, dedication. “& que toute la Terre reconnoisse en Vous un digne Fils de Louis XIII.”
Where the dedication left off, the device of the king replaced it, continuing to assert in both physical and metaphorical terms the king’s innate superiority and perfection. Louis’s device for the tournament was a sun with the motto, “As I saw, I vanquished.” If the meaning was not already clear, the accompanying text further clarified it: “It is not easy to find a Corps of a Device which is more appropriate for the King than the Sun, ... the number of ideals [literally: proprieties] illustrated [in the device] is almost infinite.” Just as important as the actual motto, however, is the relationship between Louis’ device and the others on the same page (and indeed throughout the text). The three devices that immediately follow the king’s are indicative of many of the rest, using the sun as an integral part of their composition. The Comte de Vivonne’s device is a “shining mirror” reflecting the sun’s rays. The description is explicit: “The shining Mirror contains within itself from afar the light of the Sun, and reflects it... it is the perfect symbol for the gratitude of this Chevalier for the favors that he has received from His Majesty...” The device of Vivonne not only reinforces the power of the king’s device, but much like Perrault’s dedication grants the king all responsibility for the chevalier’s success and power.

The next device after de Vivonne’s is a laurel tree in the sun, combining the traditional Roman symbol for victory with the power of Louis as represented by the sun. The motto is blatant:

133 Perrault, 27-28. The motto appears in Latin and is then translated into French: “Ut Vidi, Vici” to “Aussi-tôt que j’ay veu j’ay vaincu.” Although the motto was new, it is worth remembering that the symbol itself was appropriated from Fouquet in 1661. A version of the device appears throughout the book, filling blank pages. See Figures 10 and 11, Appendix.

134 Perrault, 27-28. “Il feroit mal-aisé de trouver un Corps de Devise qui convint mieux au Roy que celuy du Soleil, veu le nombre Presque infinly de convenances illustres qui se rencontrent entre ce Grand Prince, & ce bel Astre...” Madame de Scudery’s quote about Fouquet’s device is strikingly similar, “‘The sun represents...[Fouquet] according, in my opinion, his great actions, [he has] done everything, [is] seen by all, [has] done good for all and still works incessantly for the good and order and amelioration of the universe.’” (see p. 14, above)

135 Of the fifty-four nobles who participated in the Carrousel, twenty two carried devices that explicitly incorporated the sun in their design. A large proportion of these were carried by the men within the king’s own quadrille.

136 Perrault, 27-28. See Figure 8 and 9, Appendix, for the following discussion of the devices of the king’s quadrille.
The third device follows a similar pattern, although this time explicitly including the pedagogical power granted to Louis as well. The device itself is an eagle in mid-flight, looking at the sun. The explanation: “One knows that Eagles test [or improve] their young by exposing them to the rays of the Sun...” Of the remaining devices which incorporate the sun in their design, both the eagle and the mirror themes are repeated several times. The collection of the mirror, the laurel, and the eagle presents an unmistakable message: the king is the source of all glory, victory, and improvement. The king is illustrated as both physically and metaphorically above the aristocrats who participate. The aristocrats, by carrying such devices, acknowledge publicly that the king is in that position.

If the devices were not enough, the king is also dressed as a Roman emperor, although unsurprisingly, because his device draws on classical allusion, the motto explicitly identifying Louis with Caesar. Although the visual reference would have been noted by all who saw the Carrousel, the book takes no risks: under the image of the mounted king is written, “Le Roy, Empereur Romain.” If that were not enough, the explanation of his device states, “therefore this Grand Monarch does not need to be present to vanquish his enemies. This is well and joyfully proclaimed by the words: Ut Vidi, Vici, which are an allusion to the motto of Julius Caesar: veni, vidi, vici.” The connection of the two was not idle improvisation. Indeed, Louis was not merely connected to Caesar; the two were combined creating a new, ever-more impressive, Louis-August. Louis could, by literally casting himself as a French king and a Roman emperor at the same time, appeal to an

139 Perrault, 25-26. See Figure 4, Appendix.
140 Perrault, 28. “…ainsi ce Grand Monarque n’a besoin que de sa preference pour sa vaincre ses enemis. Ce qui est heureusement exprimé par ces mots, Ut Vidi, Vici, qui sont allusion à ce mot de Iules Cesar, veni, vidi, vici.”
141 Apostolidès, 67.
ancient, well-respected tradition without sacrificing any of the new authority which he was attempting to legitimize.

The extravagance with which Louis proclaimed himself a Roman emperor was in and of itself vital to the character role as well. Dress was nothing less than a political tool itself, signifying rank, right, and authority.\(^{142}\) *Courses de Teste et de Bague* takes great pains in describing the elaborate costume worn, not only by the king, but by all the participants, noble or otherwise. The amount of detail allowed for the king’s Roman dress was, however, almost twice as great as the rest, a statement of the superiority and importance of not only Louis, as a man, but of king/emperor, as a role.

The character “Louis XIV” that the book portrays was defined in its role by its introduction, its device, and its costume. The man himself, the actual Louis XIV, was less important than the character which he is purported to be. The book asserted a king who was invulnerable, omnipotent, and ideal, not a young man still attempting to construct his authority and legitimacy. This was a role that the king was able to play in 1662, but that role was in turn interpreted and identified as fact by the book itself eight years later.

**The Role and Character of the Nobility:**

The counterpart to the role of “Louis XIV” is the role of “Loyal Noble” played by the fifty-four other participants in the tournament. Just as the book asserted the character of Louis, it asserts the character of the nobles. Where, however, the character of the king is first defined in its infallible role by the dedication, the character of the nobility is only defined in the actual description of the event, and only then via the king’s agency. Perrault wrote, “His Majesty chose

---

\(^{142}\) Philip Mansel, *Dressed to Rule: Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 1-5; 55-56.
then the most famous Nations to form the five quadrilles, gave each a chef, & ten chevaliers....

Then His Majesty named the adventurers of each quadrille, set the number of officers, and regulated the gear, the costumes, & the livery [of each].”

The quadrilles, varyingly called “splendid,” “superb,” and “magnificent,” were so because of their relationship to the king through his decisions regarding their makeup and appearance. The participants were the pick of the aristocracy, and their appearance and organization was personally ordained by the king himself. They could be nothing but an ideal representation of an ideal nobility which owed their glory and position to the king alone.

The participants having been introduced as the ideal collection of nobility, the collection of their devices becomes all the more important. The king’s device placed him in a position of omnipotent power. The devices as a whole not only continue this hierarchical structure, but also embellish it. The ranking of the quadrilles and their chefs, although implied by the order in which they appear in the book and the men themselves, is reiterated by their devices. Thus, the device of Monsieur, the king’s brother and chef of the second quadrille (the Persians) has for a device the moon with the motto, “The sun alone is greater than I.”

The chef of the third quadrille, the Turks, has a crescent moon with the motto: “He increases when he is looked upon,” with the explanation that:

As the crescent [moon] becomes more and more bright when it is facing the Sun, so the Prince who takes it for his device, wanting to make it understood that the King

---

143 Perrault, 2. “Sa Majesté choisit donc les Nations les plus celebres pour en former cinq Quadrilles, composées chacune d’un Chef, & dix chevaliers.... Ensuite Sa Majesté nomma les Aventuriers de chaque Quadrille, arrêta le nombre des Officers, regal les equipages, les habits, & les livrées.”

144 Perrault, 5-7.

holds all his grandeur and all his influence, he recognizes that his glory is augmented in proportion to the favorable attention he receives from His Majesty.\textsuperscript{146}

The crescent refers to the symbol associated with the Turks themselves, as well as continuing the hierarchy of emblems already stated. The chef of the fourth quadrille, the Indians, has only “A grand star” for his device, unworthy of a planet or more visible feature in the sky.\textsuperscript{147} Not until the fifth quadrille does the progression cease: the Duc de Guise, Chef of the American Savages, carries a device that is firmly of the earth, a lion defeating a tiger. The motto, however, still places him within the overall hierarchy, “I aspire to greater things.”\textsuperscript{148} Lowly he may have been, but his device proclaimed his wish to succeed and gain a place in the sky. The hierarchy of devices works on two levels, structuring the rank of the men themselves as well as structuring the importance of the nations represented. In both cases, Louis XIV, as either man or as the incarnation of France, remains the ultimate source and arbiter of power.

Having again reasserted the hierarchy below Louis XIV, the devices turn to the other values and ideals of the court beyond merely loyalty and devotion: military valor, courtliness, and respectful ambition. These three values fall into certain image tropes, the devices incorporating fires burning, arrows or javelins flying, weapons and armor at rest, or animals in mid-act. For the most part, the messages are very militaristic, proclaiming the bearer’s readiness for war. Despite the differentiations in actual composition, the fundamental value within all the devices is loyalty, whether to king or, in at least one case, to courtly love. The devices of the third quadrille are an excellent representative sample of the entire collection. Apart from the device of the Chef, de

\textsuperscript{146} Perrault, 44. Latin motto: “Crescit ut Aspicitur.” As translated into French: “Il augmente selon qu’il est regardé.”

\textsuperscript{147} Perrault, 52. The motto translates as: “Light which comes from one more grand [than I].” Latin: “Magnus de Lumine Lumen.” French: “Lumier qui vient d’une plus grande.”

Condé, there are five devices with a plant motif, two devices with a weapon motif, one device with a lion, and one device with a mirror. With the exception of the two weapon devices, all the devices depend upon the sun for their correct interpretation.\textsuperscript{149} All eleven devices draw on the power of the king to situate themselves within their own collective context.

The nobility are fundamentally defined as, although similar in virtue, lesser than the king. The book declares a unified, homogenous, court aristocracy undyingly loyal to king and therefore country. The role of the character “Louis XIV” and the character “Noble” are explicitly stated and placed in relationship to each other. Missing, however, are the academicians, the men responsible for the creation of the book which asserts their exclusion from a power dynamic between the king and his aristocracy.

**The Role and Character of the Academicians:**

Implicit in the assertion of an ideal social structure by *Courses de Testes et de Bague* is the mediation of the book’s creators, the academicians. The importance of that mediation, however, is disguised. The book, with the exception of Perrault’s dedication and some of Silvestre’s engravings, grants no authorial responsibility. Rather, the creators removed themselves from their own creation to grant it authority. The work is presented as a coherent whole, delivered up from the presses fully formed. As men, characters possessing visible agency, the creators of the work have erased themselves.\textsuperscript{150} Their work is incorporated into a greater one, possessing their cumulative influence and power and yet more, accessed by appealing to a rhetoric and power rooted in royal and

\textsuperscript{149} See Figures 16 and 17, Appendix.
aristocratic tradition. Only by removing themselves could the authors grant their work any legitimacy and power over men who were socially more powerful.

There are only three times in the entire work that an author’s name appears: Rousselet’s name carved into the base of the column holding Louis XIV’s bust on the title page,\textsuperscript{151} Perrault’s name at the end of the dedication,\textsuperscript{152} and Silvestre’s name at the bottom left of one of his engravings of the march of the quadrilles.\textsuperscript{153} The locations of these three names provide a clear indication of the allowable public role the three academicians were allowed to have in an articulation of an ideal society. The men did not possess any form of power, but were rather mere interpreters or recorders of fact.

Rousselet was not granted power through association with the engraving he created. Instead he became a part of that engraving, fictionally responsible for a column and bust which never existed. In terms of the book, he had no role whatsoever. Rousselet was a part of the book, rather than responsible for part of the book. Silvestre is granted slightly more authorial recognition: his name is not incorporated into a fictional engraving, but rather appears attached to a representation of an actual event. Silvestre, however, was more renowned than Rousselet, and his name acts as a certification of legitimacy. Silvestre also claimed no power, agency, or influence from his engraving- unlike Rousselet’s work, Silvestre’s subject actually existed and was seen to exist by higher ranking members of court society. Silvestre was merely the method by which the event was recorded for posterity.

Only Perrault was allowed to actually speak and situate himself explicitly. As has been discussed above Perrault, despite being the author and manager of a majority of the book, granted

\textsuperscript{151} See Figure 18, Appendix.
\textsuperscript{152} See Figure 19, Appendix.
\textsuperscript{153} See Figure 20, Appendix.
Louis all pedagogical credit. Perrault positioned himself as merely a source of introductory explanation, outlining the use of the book (for which he provides no explanation of creation), and the messages within it. When it came to explaining his own position the protégé of Colbert became, “Your very humble, very obedient & very loyal Servant, Perrault.”

The academicians’ public role, the character admitted by the book itself, is fundamentally separate from their actual role, or indeed their actual character. While the actual role of the academicians is at least partially accessible, the actual character is not. Within the purpose of the book (and ironically, the assumed motive of the creators), the public role of the academicians is, however far more important. The author construct is the character that fits (although not explicitly stated) within the asserted social model. Just as the character of the king and the character of the participating nobility are fictions created to define particular roles within the book, so the accessible character of the academicians from the book itself is fictitious.

Three Characters, Three Roles: the interaction of the three actors in Courses de Testes et de Bague:

Taken together, the three characters portrayed by Courses de Testes et de Bague declare a specific, ideal hierarchical relationship between the king and his nobility as well as defining how the mediators of that relationship are to be understood. The hierarchy asserts the absolutist Louis XIV, a king that is the fount of all influence, knowledge, and power within French society. The nobility is portrayed as loyal and subservient, yet still powerful sources of legitimization. The academicians, in an effort to avoid disturbing the king-nobility relationship, are portrayed by their

---

154 Perrault, dedication. “Vôtre tres-humble, tres-obeissant & tres-fidelle Serviteur, PERRAULT.”
155 William Irwin, “Intentionalism and Author Constructs.” The Death and Resurrection of the Author? William Irwin, ed. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 191-195. Irwin’s discussion of difference between the author (actual) and what he names the ‘urauthor’ (or construct author) and their relative accessibilities is a vital differentiation in the discussion of public, stated roles and actual agency of the academicians.
very non-portrayal. Society and its politics were, in the world of Courses de Testes et de Bague, limited to the king and his aristocracy. The academicians played no part in it, had no role in the power relationships that exist between king and nobility.

The power relationships of the French court and society as actually embodied within Courses de Testes et de Bague, however, were different from the ones which the book asserts. Rather than limited to the king-noble interaction, the book represented a very powerful mediation between and of the two character roles. The academicians mediated not only the traditional interaction of king and the aristocracy, but also the very roles and definitions of each. As a tool of the king, the academicians controlled far more than just the conception of appropriate social and hierarchical relationships surrounding Louis XIV. Colbert, and beneath him Perrault, Chapelain, and the other members of the académies, controlled Louis’s own public role and character, something far more important than the personal character of the king. In the construction of the ideal relationship between the nobility and the king, the academicians constructed the roles of each, editing out their own role as they progressed.
Conclusion

Courses de Testes et de Bague is the intersection of the posited fictional ideal court that Louis was in the process of creating and the means by which he was attempting to legitimize both himself and that court. The book contains not one model of power dynamics, but two. Only the first model was explicitly admitted and described. The explicit model is the ideal, absolutist court as articulated by Courses de Testes et de Bague through its collection of emblematic devices and other material. The second, implicit model of the system of power dynamics is accessible only through the construction history of the book and the académie system. Only in the model implied by the interaction of the book’s material and its context are the academicians permitted their powerful mediating role. The book allows access to these two parallel, yet overlapping hierarchies, the explicit one constructed for public consumption, the implicit one instituted to mediate the shaping of society and politics into a centralized, absolutist state.

The book that Perrault and his colleagues created could discipline and instruct its domestic audiences in their interactions with each other. It asserted control over the relationships between the king and his nobility through the definition of their respective roles and attitudes by using the rhetorical audience of the dauphin as an explanatory and legitimizing force for the work. At the same time, however, the book declared the same set of ideals and values regarding the power structure within the French court as fact and reality to the foreign audiences of the work. The unification that was placed upon the domestic audiences was declared to the foreign audiences.

The dual focus and applicability of the messages within Courses de Testes et de Bague was possible because the book co-opted and appropriated power it did not inherently have.
Constructed by the academicians, the book in and of itself had no influence without the legitimacy invested in it by association with the king and his nobility. Like the Carrousel before it, the book’s agency depended on the reputation and power of the men it was describing and disciplining. The book was able to exert control not by direct attacks on the nobility, but rather by the very re-definition of the ideal concept of nobility and the assertion of that ideal as fact.

As a young king, Louis’s power did not have the firm foundation necessary to exercise direct political action to forcefully centralize the country and disenfranchise the nobility to secure his throne. The only option was the re-definition exercised in Courses de Testes et de Bague and the académie system as a whole. By using the rhetoric and traditionally recognized symbols of the nobility, the academicians were able to recast the French court. Just as the king depended on the nobility for his power (he was after all, the first among the nobility) the nobility depended on the monarchy for their own identity. The king could not forsake or ignore the aristocracy. His authority was inextricably tied to their existence. He could, however, dictate their presence and participation in their own re-definition because of their inherent need for a monarch to legitimate their own power.

The Carrousel which took place in 1662 depended on the participation of fifty-four nobles. Without the attendance of the nobility, the Carrousel and its portrayal of the king was meaningless. The nobility, obligated to take part, were also obligated to play the characters assigned to them. Many of the devices carried in the tournament were designed especially for the event. The Carrousel dictated the characters that were required to take part in it, and defined their roles within its context. All it required were bodies with sufficient reputation to fill those parts. The

---

fifty-four nobles played those parts, assigning their personal reputation to the identities created by the Carrousel.

_Courses de Testes et de Bague_ augmented the process of re-definition and assertion that the Carrousel had begun. The Carrousel’s impact was inherently limited because it lasted only two days and therefore was only accessed by a finite number of people. The book was not limited by the bounds of time or location. It also offered the ability to emphasize certain aspects of the Carrousel, those which were most saturated with the ideology of centralization and absolutism. The academicians were able, through the medium of _Courses de Testes et de Bague_, to selectively re-interpret and re-articulate the original event. They achieved this emphasis through a focus on aspects of the pageantry, the devices and costumes, although the work was cast as an educational text in kingship. The collective authority of the nobility, originally made apparent through long processions and their very presence, was reinforced in the book by the ranks of their noble devices. Where during the actual event it was the presence of the nobility that supported the king’s project, in the book it was the ideals supposedly held by the same nobles that supported the message of the book. Orderly ranks of men their horses were replaced with orderly ranks of names and their ideals.

The manipulation of the collective noble authority by Perrault, Fléchier, Silvestre, Chauveau, and Rousselet is indicative of the wider cultural project directed by the académies. The parallel explicit and implicit power hierarchies that _Courses de Testes et de Bague_ embodies applies to the wider institutionalization of culture. The academicians, although very influential through their manipulation of culture, were for all public intents and purposes unseen. Their work asserted and defined the interaction between the king and his subjects, and hid the mediation of the men who
created it. The academician “character” was one who was only allowed to portray “fact,” or provide a humble dedication or explanation of the king’s power and influence. Rousselet was inserted into the scenery of the book, given responsibility for a non-existent pillar and bust (and therefore not the book), Perrault was allowed to sign a dedication as an “obedient servant,” and Silvestre signed the bottom of one of his engravings in miniscule text. The artists and intellectuals who made up the académies, although well known, were only powerful inasmuch they granted the power of their work to the king and denied their own agency.

Encapsulated within Courses de Testes et de Bague, then, is not only the idealized articulation of the centralized and absolutist court sought by Louis XIV and his minister Colbert, but also the entire system and theory they mobilized to achieve that vision. The work, completed over the first decade of Louis XIV’s personal, independent rule, grew alongside a new system of institutionalized cultural control, the académies. The men who created the book were also the creators of the mechanism that culminated in the epitome of absolute monarchy: the Sun King, the God-Given, Louis XIV. Within the book was encapsulated a state system and the means by which that system granted itself authority. Courses de Testes et de Bague, despite positioning itself as a mere record of the Carrousel eight years prior, defined, propagated, and supported the very framework which gave members of the French court their very role and identity, as well as asserted the legitimacy and authority of the young Louis and his kingdom to the world.

157 See Figures 16, 17, and 18, Appendix.
VI.

Appendix:

Note: the actual dimensions of the book are approximately 41cm wide by 59cm tall.

Figure 1- Title Page:
Figure 2: Title Page Engraving:
Figure 3: March of the Quadrilles (first page)
Figure 4: The Costume of Louis XIV:
LE DUC DE GUYSE, ROY AMERIQYAIN.

La cuirasse étroit de peau de Dragons, dont les deux cotes se rencontrent sur les épaules, vont si loin les manches, dont celle de destus étroit de brocart ver, rebordé de même que l'habit, et celle de deffous de toile d'argent qui defendait jusque sur le poignet, étroit lèce d'un bresaeur de groves Emeraudes, et les jonques de Dragons faisoient des lambrequins, le tout chargé d'une broderie de perles & de rubis, ainsi que les brodequins.

Sur la coiffure qui estoit un morion d'or, rampoit un Dragon de même métal, qui sostenoit deux cercles de brillants d'or, chargés de plumes vertes & blanches, furmontées de trois bouquets de plumes en Aigrette, d'où fortoient trois malets de Feron, qui donnoient quatre pieds de hanteur à cet habillement de tete, duquel une queue de plumes encore defendoit sur le dos du Chevalier.

Son Chemisette estoit d'or garni de pierres, le foueur à la Chinoïde entichy de meme, il portoit une malette d'armes à alies dorées, & découpées à jour, dont le bâton estoit encorcé d'un Serpent au naturel.
Figure 6- The Carrousel of 1662, the Quadrilles Before the Competition:
Figure 7: The Carrousel of 1662, Courses de Testes:
DE VISES
DES CHEFS ET DES CHEVALIERS
DES QUADRILLES
DE VISES DE LA PREMIÈRE QUADRILLE
PREMIÈRE DEVISE
DV ROY.

I. DEVISE.

II.

DE COMTE DE VIVONNE.

III.

DE COMTE DE SAINT-AGNAN.

IV.

DE COMTE DE NAVAILLES.

V.

DE COMTE D'ARMAGNAC.

Voir suivant.

Voir suivant.

Voir suivant.

Voir suivant.

Voir suivant.

Voir suivant.

Voir suivant.

Voir suivant.

Voir suivant.

Voir suivant.
Figure 10: Device of Louis XIV:

Figure 11: Alternate Device of Louis XIV:
Figure 12- Device of Monsieur:

Figure 13- Device of de Condé:
Figure 14: Device of d'Anguin:

Figure 15: Device of de Guise:
Figure 16- Other Noble Devices (Third Quadrille, Chef and first four Chevaliers):
Figure 17: Other Noble Devices, cont. (Third Quadrille, last six Chevaliers):
Figure 18: Detail of Rousselet’s Signature on Title Page Engraving (Figure 2):

Figure 19: Perrault’s Signature in the Dedication:

Figure 20: Silvestre’s Signature on the Engraving of the Marche (Figure 3):
Primary Sources:


Menestrier, Claude-François, Traité des Tournois, Joustes, Carrousels et Autres Spectacles Publics (Lyon: Jacques Muguet, 1669).


This work is also available in the British Library Renaissance Festival Book collection, “Tournament with running at the ring and at the head, held in Paris by Louis XIV. (Paris: 1662),” http://special-1.bl.uk/treasures/festivalbooks/BookDetails.aspx?strFest=0061

Secondary Sources:


Duindam, Jeroen, Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994).


Fabre, A., Chapelain et Nos Deux Premières Académies (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1890).

Feyel, Gilles, La “Gazette” en Province à Travers ses Réimpressions, 1631—1752: une Recherche (Amsterdam : APA- Holland University Press, 1982).


Mansel, Philip, Dressed to Rule: Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).


→, Emblematic Structure in Renaissance French Culture. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).


