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'The Despair of his Tutor': Latin as Socioeducational Marker in Les Trois Mousquetaires

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The Despair of his Tutor: Latin as Socioeducational Marker in *Les Trois Mousquetaires*

Emily A. McDermott

A significant motif in *Les Trois Mousquetaires* is to communicate the four heroes' differing natures through their differing relationships with the Latin language. The separate academic pedigrees thus suggested for the three actual musketeers, Porthos, Athos and Aramis, each represent one of the major educational models of early 17th century France: the courtly academy, private tuition and the Jesuit *collège*. In the case of the up-and-coming d'Artagnan, by contrast, Dumas proffers less a type of 17th century education than an updating of the social values of that period to coincide with those of his own time. The successes of this musketeer-in-training hold out the promise that talent, work and virtuous effort will be rewarded through upward mobility. The fact that the author has chosen to transmit this hopeful message partially through the vehicle of Latinlessness speaks volumes, both about the place of Latin in the curriculum over the centuries and about the role of Latin as socioeducational marker.

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In his historical novel, *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, published serially in *Le Siècle* from March to July, 1844, Alexandre Dumas adopts several gimmicks to highlight differences among his four swashbuckling heroes. One is to illustrate the principals' character-types through their choices in manservant,

another through a catalogue of the furnishings of their living quarters. A third is to communicate their differing natures through their differing relationships with the Latin language.

The musketeers are all for one and one for all, but each has distinct characteristics of taste and behavior. Porthos, the most flamboyant in dress and manner, is a man of "*habitudes aristocratiques*" but from the beginning is assigned a comic role.[1] He is boastful, vain and prone to mendacious self-aggrandizement (promoting his *roturière* mistress to duchess and camouflaging a wound from a lost duel as a sprained knee). When we first meet him, he is wearing a velvet cloak, despite summer weather, to hide the fact that his baldric is gold only in the front; he has to affect a cough to explain his "need" for the overly warm cloak (ii.37, iv.58). He is always one step behind his friends' stratagems; they call him a *niais* (ix.129) and either ignore or hush him.[2] He is the type who "*parlait pour le plaisir de parler et pour le plaisir de s'entendre*" (vii.103). He is, finally, the emphatic non-scholar of the group: "*il parlait de toutes choses excepté de sciences, excipant à cet endroit de la haine invétérée que depuis son enfance il portait, disait-il, aux savants*" (vii.103). There seems to have been enough Latin study in his educational background

[1] Alexandre Dumas, *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, ed. Charles Samaran (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1966) [hereafter abbreviated "*LTM*"], vii.104. Subsequent chapter and page references will be cited within the text.

that he can at least project "*l'air de comprendre*" the little "*bribes de latin*" that his more scholarly companion, Aramis, tosses out in conversation (xxvii.355). Nonetheless, we are left in little doubt that the smattering of classical learning forced on the youth has left little imprint on the adult.

Athos, by contrast, epitomizes the aristocratic ideal of social grace so ingrained as to seem innate.[3] He is a man of few but effective words – words that say precisely "*ce qu'elles voulaient dire, rien de plus*" (vii.102). Simple in dress and taste as well as speech, he still overshadows his showier comrade: "*avec sa simple casaque de mousquetaire et rien que par la façon dont il rejetait la tête en arrière et avançait le pied, Athos prenait à l'instant même la place qui lui était due et reléguait le fastueux Porthos au second rang*" (vii.103).[4] He is of "*probité…inattaquable*" (xxvii.355), and his word carries the greatest moral authority of all the musketeers, as Aramis's thrust during a spat with Porthos

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[2] For apt examples, see the sections where in bafflement he protests d'Artagnan's abandonment of M. Bonacieux to the Bastille (ix.129) and where he struggles haplessly to understand Athos's posing of dead bodies to deter an attack (xlvii.574-578).

[3] Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: the Education of the Court Nobility, 1580-1715* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 69, summarizes this aristocratic ideal: "…given the increasing prevalence of the myth of the natural superiority of nobles, the key to social grace became to make art and learning appear effortless and natural."

[4] The author's reference here to the toss of Athos's head reflects the 17th century French aristocratic emphasis on physical grace. Athos has obviously benefited by the careful regimen of physical education described by Motley as designed "less to develop force and stamina than to mold posture and gesture, to restrain and coordinate movements, and to invest the body with appropriate social significance" (Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat* [above, n. 3], 141).

makes clear: "*vous savez que je hais la morale, excepté quand elle est faite par Athos*" (ii.41). Also contributing to Athos's "*grand air*" (vii.103) is the lightness with which he carries the attainments of a disciplined classical education – an education so ingrained that he not only smiles along with Aramis's Latin witticisms but even corrects his occasional grammatical lapses: "*deux ou trois fois même, au grand étonnement de ses amis, il lui était arrivé, lorsque Aramis laissait échapper quelque erreur de rudiment, de remettre un verbe à son temps et un nom à son cas*" (xxvii.355).

To cap Aramis's Latinity is no mean accomplishment, for Aramis is the accidental musketeer – the one who fancies himself only a temporary dallier in *affaires du monde* – "*mousquetaire par intérim, mon cher, … mousquetaire contre mon gré, mais homme d'Église dans le Coeur*" (vii.107). Beyond the frequent Latin tags that fail to nonplus Athos, he spends his spare moments dabbling in theological disputation and Latin translation: "*Aramis s'excusa sur un commentaire du dix-huitième chapitre de saint Augustin qu'il était forcé d' écrire en latin pour la semaine suivante, et qui le préoccupait beaucoup*" (xix.243).[5] He has a

[5] It is tempting to identify this reference to an unspecified 18th chapter in Augustine's work with *Confessions*, Book I, chapter 18, which says in part: "*Vide, domine deus meus, et patienter, ut vides, vide, quomodo diligenter observent filii hominum pacta litterarum et syllabarum accepta a prioribus locutoribus et a te accepta aeterna pacta perpetuae salutis neglegant …*" (John Gibb and William Montgomery, eds., *The Confessions of Augustine* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927]): "Look, Lord my God, and look with patience, when you see how carefully the sons of men observe the conventions of letters and syllables received from speakers before them, yet care not for the eternal covenant of abiding salvation received from you." If this

habit, during social engagements, of looking at his watch and taking his leave prematurely to consult a casuist or write up a thesis (vii.108). When a wound leaves him unable to accompany his friends on a mission, d'Artagnan, tongue-in-cheek, advises him to amuse himself by teaching his manservant the rules of prosody (xxvii.353-354). At one point, depressed by his weakened condition and disconsolate over a love affair gone bad, he determines to give up the adventurous life once and for all, for holy orders. In a drily satirical chapter ("*La Thèse d'Aramis*"), he debates at some length with a Jesuit *abbé* whether he should undertake a *thèse dogmatique* supporting the proposition, "*Utraque manus in benedicendo clericis inferioribus necessaria est*": "Clergymen of the lower orders should use two hands in giving benediction" (xxvi.337), or one on a theoretical (*idéale*) topic: "*Non inutile est desiderium in oblatione*": "Regret is not without value in making offering to God" (xxvi.339). The whole scene will turn out to have been a send-up when, upon receipt of a letter from the lover who has seemed to snub him, the aspiring *abbé* drops the idea of holy orders abruptly and happily returns to his more adventurous vocation. There is probably also sly suggestion that his departures from company to pursue his scholarly efforts cover other (amatory) pursuits.

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identification is correct, Augustine's suggestion that focus on the niceties of usage and grammar blinds one to the verities of a virtuous life would set the stage cleverly for the thematic contrast (to be discussed below) between Aramis's tendency to niggling scholasticism and d'Artagnan's significantly-Latinless heroism.

Nonetheless, this musketeer is definitely characterized as a self-conscious scholar of Latin and theology.

The case with d'Artagnan is very different. This under-twenty Gascon has made his way to Paris and, after initial misadventures that culminate in his having appointments to duel Athos at noon, Porthos at one o'clock and Aramis at two, attaches himself to these three as protégé and musketeer-in-training. He is of respectable family but has set out on his long journey to Paris with only fifteen crowns to his name, on a horse of such humiliating appearance that it lands him in the first attempted duel of the novel. The specific key to d'Artagnan's characterization is his temperamental kinship with his fellow countryman, the chief of musketeers de Tréville, who similarly began his career "*sans un sou vaillant, mais avec ce fonds d'audace, d'esprit et d'entendement qui fait que le plus pauvre gentillâtre gascon reçoit souvent plus en ses espérances de l'héritage paternal que le plus riche gentilhomme périgourdin ou berrichon ne reçoit en réalité*" (ii.29). In other words, d'Artagnan fits the paradigm of a man whose innate character and abilities will allow him to rise above his original station.

D'Artagnan's chief personality traits are his fiery Gascon spirit and his strong wits. The author's first sketch of his physical appearance informs us that he has high cheekbones, "*signe d'astuce*" (i.10), and "*l'oeuil ouvert et intelligent*" (i.11). The intelligence readable in his physiognomy is proven repeatedly and emphatically throughout the novel. Not only does he easily

assume a leadership role among his older companions – to such a point that he is generally described as the true protagonist of the novel[6] – but the author also inserts frequent, direct comments on his acuity into the text. Even on short acquaintance, Athos credits him with being the smartest of the heroes: "*J'ai toujours dit que d'Artagnan était la forte tête de nous quatre*" (ix.122) – a sentiment echoed again in much the same words five pages later. Such compliments are repeated again and again: "*Le Gascon est plein d'idées*" (ix.125); "*Le Gascon est le diable! … rien ne lui échappe*" (ix.126); "*J'ai toujours dit que ce cadet de Gascogne était un puits de sagesse*" (xx.251).

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His quick-wittedness is attested when Aramis, in an attempt to hide from his friends a dalliance that has indirectly occasioned his scheduled duel with the newly-arrived d'Artagnan, prevaricates, "*Moi, je me bats pour cause de théologie*" (v.71). Picking up the cue with lightning swiftness, d'Artagnan gallantly corroborates the lie: "*Oui, un point de saint Augustin sur lequel nous ne sommes pas d'accord*" (v.71). A keenly perceptive Athos remarks to himself: "*Décidément c'est un homme d'esprit*" (v.71). D'Artagnan's spontaneous adduction of Augustine as the crux of this fictive theological debate reveals at least a modicum of scholastic awareness. The salubrious effects of schooling

[6] Samaran, in Dumas, *LTM*, vi, for example, comments that "*[sa] personnalité éclipse toutes les autres, ce qui eût justifié peut-être un titre comme celui-ci:* D'Artagnan et les Trois Mousquetaires." Cf. Walter Jens, ed., *Kindlers Neues Literatur Lexikon*, vol. 4 (Munich: Kindler Verlag, 1988), 949, which labels d'Artagnan "*den eigentlichen Helden des Romans*"; Jean Molino,

are evident again when the author applauds him as an Archimedes in calculating sums (xxviii.386).[7] His attainments in Latin, however, do not match up to his math skills.

D'Artagnan's lack of Latin proficiency is treated by the author so insistently that it can be characterized as a significant, though minor, leitmotif in the novel. The subject is raised first during an interview between d'Artagnan and M. de Tréville. Spotting Queen Anne's diamond ring on d'Artagnan's finger and assuming it has been given to him by a spy of the cunning Richelieu, de Tréville gropes for the appropriate Latin quotation, and we are treated to the author's first comment on d'Artagnan's deficiency in the tongue of Virgil:[8]

> *–… Prenez garde, mon cher d'Artagnan, ce n'est pas une bonne chose que le présent d'un ennemi; n'y a-t-il pas là-dessus certain vers latin… Attendez donc…*
> *–Oui, sans doute, reprit d'Artagnan, qui n'avait jamais pu se fourrer la première règle du rudiment dans la tête, et qui, par ignorance, avait fait le désespoir de son précepteur; oui, sans doute, il doit y en avoir un.* (xxiii.291)

"Alexandre Dumas et le roman mythique," L'Arc 71 (1978), 64: *"il y a bien un personnage principal, et c'est d'Artagnan…; malgré le titre, il n'y a qu'un héros."*

[7] Although Samaran, *ibid.*, *ad loc.*, suggests that d'Artagnan's arithmetic here is (ironically) faulty, David Coward, ed., in Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) [hereafter abbreviated *TTM*], 664 (n. on 290), restores him to Archimedean status by simple recalculation of the value of the *pistole*.

[8] The pertinent Latin passage, quoted just below in Dumas's text, is a nugget from Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.49: "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*" ("I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts").

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We are thus presented with a kind of paradox: the clever youngster who can make neither head nor tail of his Latin instruction.

This casual glimpse into d'Artagnan's "learning fingerprint" is not left alone. Dumas returns to the subject again, to further droll effect, when d'Artagnan arrives at the inn where he has left a grievously wounded Aramis, only to find his friend touched by grace (xxvi.333), "*détaché des choses de terre*" (xxvi.335) and on the road to ordination. Entering Aramis's sick-chamber, d'Artagnan finds him deeply ensconced in Latin conversation with a Jesuit and his curate. As before, d'Artagnan is too smart to betray his lack of comprehension: "*D'Artagnan, dont nous connaissons l'érudition, ne sourcilla pas plus à cette citation qu'à celle que lui avait faite M. de Tréville à propos des présents*" (xxvi.337). Aramis, however – taking mercy on his friend, while the author concomitantly takes mercy on the reader – proceeds to provide French paraphrases for all quoted Latin. A little later, seeing further telltale signs in his friend's demeanor – "*D'Artagnan s'ennuyait profondément*" (xxvi.337) – Aramis goes even further toward accommodation: "*Parlons français, mon père, dit-il au jésuite, M. d'Artagnan goûtera plus vivement nos paroles*" (xxvi.338). D'Artagnan accepts the offer gratefully but continues to cover his educational deficiency by claiming fatigue as the reason for his difficulties: "*Oui, je suis fatigué de la route … et tout ce latin m'échappe*" (xxvi.338). When the clerics have left, he will speak a little more frankly to his friend: "*quant à moi, j'ai à peu près oublié le peu de latin que je n'ai jamais su*" (xxvi.343). Complete candor is

reserved, however, for his unspoken thoughts: "*il lui semblait être dans une maison de fous, et qu'il allait devenir fou comme ceux qu'il voyait. Seulement il était forcé de se taire, ne comprenant point la langue qui se parlait devant lui*" (xxvi.340). His impatience continues to grow till finally he has chewed his fingernails down to the quick (xxvi.342), and a parting Latin quotation by the *abbé* turns his thoughts violent: "*Que la peste t'étouffe avec ton latin! dit d'Artagnan, qui se sentait au bout de ses forces*" (xxvi.342).

What is the significance of this Latin leitmotif? It would surely be bizarre for a novelist of the present era to set out to characterize his heroes according to their varying classical attainments. For Dumas, however – as, indeed, for the peoples of western countries generally from the Middle Ages to the second half of the 19th century – a person's relationship to the classics was a handy index not only to his educational attainments, but also to his social, political and economic place in society.

Dumas's novel emphatically presents us with four separate educational typologies: Porthos as the thick-headed aristocratic buffoon, Athos as the exquisitely educated and refined *seigneur*, Aramis as avid theologian and *littérateur,* and d'Artagnan as an underschooled but up-and-coming man of action. It is the purpose of this study to delve more deeply into this characterology, to see first what cultural facts can be extricated from it, and then what light these facts in turn cast back on the novel. This

approach necessarily requires a triple analytical perspective: we must simultaneously be aware of and discriminate among (a) the historical reality of social and educational conditions in the France of Louis XIII[e]; (b) the extent to which Dumas himself, at a remove of more than two hundred years, knew and appreciated this reality; and (c) the extent to which subsequent social and educational developments, culminating in the author's own 19[th] century reality, impinged anachronistically upon his characters' world. This triple

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perspective might seem to need ratcheting up to quadruple, quintuple, even sextuple complexity, if we had additionally to take comprehensive account of (d) the historical personages from whom the four musketeers took their names; (e) the (pseudo-) *Mémoires de M. d'Artagnan* written by Gatien de Courtilz that provided Dumas with the jumping-off point for his novel's plot (*LTM*, *preface*, *3-4*); and (f) the historical synopsis prepared for Dumas's benefit by his collaborator, Auguste Maquet.[9] Mercifully, however, we may

[9] To give just a modicum of background: the historical prototype for d'Artagnan was Charles de Batz, born in Tarbes in 1615 (ten years before the start of *LTM*'s action); he was a career soldier and musketeer under Mazarin, as well as sometime governor of Lille. First put into writing by de Courtilz (an army captain who may have known him), he took on his present dashing image only when adopted by Dumas. Though the author explicitly presents d'Artagnan's family as impoverished old aristocracy (i.e., of the *noblesse d'épée*), De Batz's family is characterized by Samaran as "*bourgeois jouants aux gentilshommes*," their descent being actually from "*un simple marchand*," their claim to nobility resting on a falsified title (Samaran, in Dumas, *LTM*, xxvii). Dumas also adopted the pseudonyms Athos, Porthos and Aramis from de Courtilz, but the characters he has made of them are purely his own inventions. Though shadowy historical personages do lie behind these three names in de Courtilz (all Gascons, unlike their counterparts in *LTM*, two of them even cousins of M. de Tréville), Dumas evidently knew nothing of them (Coward, in Dumas, *TTM*, xxi; cf. Kari Maund, Phil Nanson, *The Four Musketeers: The True Story of D'Artagnan, Porthos, Aramis & Athos* [Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2005], 77). Rather, he cloaked *his* musketeers in richly detailed and divergent personalities that suited his own particular authorial aims. On de Courtilz, see Maund, Nanson, *Four Musketeers*, 125-142; Coward, in Dumas, *TTM*, xiv-xxii, and numerous of his explanatory notes (609-663 *passim*); Samaran, in Dumas, *LTM*, xiv-xx, who also treats of several other contemporary literary sources from which the eclectic Dumas drew; on which, see also Richard Parker, "Some Additional Sources of Dumas's *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, *Modern Philology* 42 (August, 1944), 34-40. On Maquet and the extant ninety-nine pages of his *LTM* synopsis (covering the action from the conversation of Richelieu and Milady overheard by the musketeers to Milady's execution), see Samaran, in Dumas, *LTM*,

relegate the latter three to the status of interesting conundrums, not fully pertinent to Dumas's literary characterology, nor, for that matter, to judgment of his novel as literature.[10]

By first describing the educational options available in the first half of the 17th century, though, then matching fiction to these facts, we will be able to sketch with some confidence a more detailed academic and social pedigree for each of the author's fictional heroes. We will find that his academic

xx-xxiv; Coward, in Dumas, *TTM*, xiii-xiv; André Maurois, "*Qui a écrit* Les Trois Mousquetaires?," *Historia* 289 (1970), 150-162; Maund, Nanson, *Four Musketeers*, 164-165.

[10] Stowe has noted – deceptively simply, but aptly – the sea change brought about by Dumas's decision to move the historical setting of his novel to a time when his hero's real-life counterpart was a young child: "Thus lifted from his proper historical context and placed in another one, d'Artagnan becomes a fictional creation. The events in which this fictional d'Artagnan participates were real ones, as he was a real person, but because his role in them is an imagined one both characters and events now partake of a new reality, that of the novel" (Richard S. Stowe, *Alexandre Dumas Père* [Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976], 69). Coudert makes the same point, in an apostrophe to the hero himself: "*Car vous êtes une authentique création romanesque, et, à ce titre, il convient de vous laisser chevaucher librement entre l'imaginaire et le réel*" (Marie-Louise Coudert, "*Lettre à M. D'Artagnan*," *Europe* 490/491 [February/March, 1970], 75). The lack of literary pertinence of the minutiae of the proto-d'Artagnan's life has not, however, dampened scholars' prosopographical interest. A long line of books has looked into the "*vrai*" d'Artagnan, beginning just two years after the novel's publication with Eugène d'Auriac, *D'Artagnan, capitaine-lieutenant des mousquetaires* (Paris: Baudry, 1846), including Charles Samaran, *D'Artagnan, capitaine des mousquetaires du roi: Histoire véridique d'un héros de roman* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1912) and Armand Praviel, *Histoire vraie des Trois Mousquetaires* (Paris: Flammarion, 1933), and culminating (for the moment) in two 21st century studies: Maund, Nanson, *The Four Musketeers* (above, n. 9), and Roger Macdonald, *The Man in the Iron Mask: The True Story of the Most Famous Prisoner in History and the Four Musketeers* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005), which breaks the mold by concluding that d'Artagnan and the Man in the Iron Mask were one and the same.

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typologies of Athos, Porthos and Aramis show surprising historical awareness concerning educational options in the 17th century, while at the same time making transparent the function of classical erudition as a socioeducational marker. By contrast, his trope of d'Artagnan's Latinlessness anachronistically accentuates the hope, innate to both him and his 19th century readership, of advancement based on personal merit, rather than on accidents of birth.

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During the Renaissance, starting in Italy, two separate educational ideals – those of chivalric education for the nobility and of a strictly literary education aimed at aspiring ecclesiasts – had been fused into a single "doctrine of courtesy," with noble families demanding a full humanistic literary education (with Latin as the language of instruction) joined with instruction in courtly manners, the arts of warfare, and physical accomplishments.[11] As the Renaissance moved northward, and over the course of the 16th century, the great European universities founded in the Middle Ages for the primary purpose of educating ecclesiasts and state functionaries, and with a mission to be socioeconomically universalist, found themselves increasingly populated by young sons of noble families, newly

[11] Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, published in 1528, was the prime expression of this doctrine. See, for example, H.C. Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911 [repr. 1970]), 115. For discussion of Castiglione's reception in France, see Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's* Cortegiano (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), esp. 81-98.

convinced of the value of a scholastic component to their preparation for roles as leaders of society.[12]

Two factors especially affected the reception, interpretation and assimilation of the Italian ideal by 16th-century France. The first was the characteristically military, anti-intellectual cast of the old French nobility (of which Castiglione's Count Ludovico laments: "*… i Franzesi solamente conoscano la nobiltà delle arme e tutto il resto nulla estimino; di modo che, non solamente non apprezzano le lettre, ma le aborriscono; e tutti e letterati tengon per vilissimi omini; e pare lor dir gran villania a chi si sia, quando lo chiamano* clero").[13]

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[12] See J.H. Hexter, "The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance," in Id., *Reappraisals in History: New Views on History and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1961), 49-61; Maria Rosa Di Simone, "Admission," in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, ed., *A History of the University in Europe,* vol. II: *Universities in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800),* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 311-325; cf. William Frijhoff, "Graduation and Careers," in de Ridder-Symoens, *History of University*, 386-393. On the original character of the medieval universities, see, e.g., Walter Rüegg, "Themes," in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, ed., *A History of the University in Europe,* vol. I: *Universities in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 21 (concerning the universities' practical social role, and its complicated relationship with the more ideal goal, *amor sciendi*); and Rainer Christoph Schwinger, "Admission," in de Ridder-Symoens, *History of University* I, 172 (on their universal accessibility).

[13] Carlo Cordié, ed., *Opere di Baldassare Castiglione, Giovanni Della Casa, Benvenuto Cellini*, vol. 27 of *La Letteratura Italiana: Storia e Testi* (Milan, Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi, n.d.), I.xlii.71. For more on the tendency of the *noblesse d'épée* – much-vaunted in contemporary sources – to disdain academic study, see, e.g., J.H. Hexter, "The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance" (above, n. 12), 46-47. The bourgeoisie was likelier to seek education for the advancement it could provide; George Huppert, *Les Bourgeois Gentilshommes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 60, goes so far as to assert identity between *le moyen de parvenir* and "*scientia*, the formal learning of the humanist schools which were founded,

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This prejudice rendered the *noblesse d'épée* uncommonly resistant both to humanist ideals and to the new notion of enabling their sons, through a scholastic education, to take on the kind of high administrative and legal positions in government that were burgeoning as the character and military needs of society were changing. The second contributing factor was the condition at that time of the University of Paris.

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From the time of its founding in the early 13th century to the mid-16th century, this venerable institution had held a virtual monopoly over secondary education in France. Over the course of the 16th century, however – at just the time that universities in other European countries were attracting an increasingly aristocratic clientele – a number of problems had besieged the Sorbonne, including the protracted Wars of Religion begun in 1562 and near anarchy among the University students themselves (to the point that University life in the latter half of the century was punctuated not only by rowdiness and riots, but even by murders, arson, hangings, and frequent acts

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endowed, administered and staffed by the notable bourgeois…to accomplish what wealth alone could not: they were to teach the bourgeois to live nobly." As these wealthy bourgeois families entered the ranks of nobility, whether through usurpation or *anoblissement*, they naturally brought their positive view of a classical education with them. By the beginning of the 17th century, partly through the intercession of these "new nobles," the lines between the different classes' normal career paths had been muddied, with many bourgeois serving in military careers and a growing number of aristocrats seeking to prepare themselves for positions of public leadership through study; see, e.g., Davis Bitton, *The French Nobility in Crisis, 1560-1640* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), 31-33, 45-48, *et al.*

[14] Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (above, n. 11), 184-185; cf. 2, 26.

of Parlement aimed at curbing student outlawry). As a result, the University at the turn of the 17th century had fallen into near-extinction, such that its "lecture-rooms had been converted into stables where the soldiery lodged their horses or in which farm animals were kept. Some of the buildings had been burnt down or damaged during the civil disturbances, and such parts as remained were occupied by persons who had no connection with the University but who lived on college premises along with their wives and children."[14] Instead, French students were (in some combination) prolonging private tutelage at home and swelling the ranks of the new academies for nobles and of secondary schools *(collèges)* run by religious orders.

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French *académies d'armes* sprang up and flourished from the end of the 16th to the mid-17th century, in response to a call by such notables as Montaigne (who in turn was responding to Castiglione)[15] for a more

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[15] Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier* (above n. 11), 76.

[16] Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat* (above, n. 3), 97. Fuller discussions of academies may be found, e.g., in Kate Van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 37-44, who acutely affiliates the movement toward academy instruction with the nationalizing efforts of the French crown to subordinate to itself the still-volatile, feudally-based *noblesse de l'épée* and – through the cult of civility and manners – to "align their behavior with that favored at court" (40); Ellery Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 174-201; Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (above, n. 11), 115-117; William Boyd, *History of Western Education* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1968), 261-264; Marie-Madeleine Compère, *L'Éducation en France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Société d' Édition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1976), 168-171, 181-185; Motley,

utilitarian, or "realistic," approach to the education of nobles than was offered by the traditional scholastic curriculum. The first was the celebrated academy of Antoine de Pluvinel, riding-master of Henry IV, established in 1594 next to the Louvre in Paris. In these academies (mimicked by the Germans, beginning in 1648, under the title *Ritterakademien*), the traditional literary education was deemed too bookish for young noblemen destined for careers in military and public life; the scales were tipped instead toward "a curriculum based on useful knowledge and a pedagogy consistent with social grace, producing not pedants but aristocrats able to use knowledge in conversation..., and to apply their learning in military and political life."[16] Here, rigorous intellectual training was de-emphasized. Although the learning of a modicum of Latin was considered a *sine qua non* of gentlemanly attainment, the language of instruction was French, and strict Latin

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Becoming a French Aristocrat, 123-168; John E. Wise, *The History of Education* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 241-242, 268.

[18] Boyd, *History of Western Education* (above, n. 16), 263.

philological training, like theoretical mathematics, was jettisoned in favor of modern languages and literatures, applied mathematics and history and geography. Preponderant stress was laid on activities that were seen as rounding out the gentleman's physical and social graces, cultivation and military expertise: riding first and foremost, then fencing, martial exercises and dancing, as well as manners, deportment, drawing and music.

The desired product of the academies was the exquisitely well-rounded *gentilhomme*. Their curriculum was broad – so broad, in fact, that it was intrinsically antithetical to disciplined, in-depth scholarship. In the words of one modern commentator, who generally applauds the "modernism" of the academy curriculum: "Altogether, the studies of the young gentleman, when pursued with thoroughness – as they were apt not to be – were at least as comprehensive as those of the young scholar."[18] The problem lies in that "as they were apt not to be": in reality, academy instruction rather quickly became associated with perfect manners and academic superficiality, if not outright anti-intellectualism. In other words, although the academies were created in large part to break through the military nobility's resistance to an academic element in their education, the new schools' implementation of the academic portion of the curriculum could be so dilettante that they ended up

breaking through nothing, but simply ratifying their students' existing value system.[19]

This is probably not the precise outcome the classically-imbued Montaigne had in mind when he reacted against education aimed only "*à nous meubler la teste de science.*"[20] He shared the aversion of many of his contemporaries to narrow-thinking pedants; in discussing them, he offers this explanation for their lack of creative or independent thought: "*… comme les plantes s'estouffent de trop d'humeur, et les lampes de trop d'huile: aussi l'action de l'esprit, par trop de'estude et de matiere …*[21] Rather, he voices preference for a holistic training model: "*Je veux que la bienseance exterieure, et l'entre-gent, et la disposition de la personne, se façonne quant et quant l'ame. Ce n'est pas une ame, ce n'est pas un corps qu'on dresse: c'est un homme; il n'en faut pas faire à deux.*"[22] But Montaigne's philosophical ideal surely fell short of realization through the academies. Their actual product was likelier to be the empty-head satirized by one contemporary as knowing only how "to blow the horn nicely, to hunt

[19] Because the academies were intrinsically designed for aristocrats and would-be aristocrats, they did not survive the French Revolution (Wise, *The History of Education* [above, n. 16], 242). They never really caught on in England, where the Civil War had "checked the rise of the aristocracy" (Boyd, *History of Western Education* [above, n. 16], 262); cf. Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (above, n. 11), 117. In Germany they "gave way to *Realschule*, which fulfilled many of the purposes … [of] the academies, but concentrated on studies" (Wise, *The History of Education* [above, n. 16], 242).

[20] Michel Montaigne, *Essais*, ed. Albert Thibaudet (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1950), I.25 ("*Du Pedantisme*"), 167.

[21] *Ibid.*, I.25, 164.

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skillfully, and elegantly to carry and train a hawk"[23] – or, for that matter, the "*grand seigneur*" pictured by Dumas, who "*montait à cheval et faisait des armes dans la perfection*" while neglecting "*[les] études scolastiques, si rares à cette époque chez les gentilshommes*" (xxvii.355).[24]

A mirror image of academy curricular values was provided by the *collèges* run by the Society of Jesus, founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1539.[25] As early as 1560, the "education of youth in letters, learning and Christian life" through schools open without tuition to the public was viewed by the order, in O'Malley's words, as a "super-category" of ministry, with every Jesuit expected to "bear his part of the burden of the schools."[26] Soon after that date, there was "in every town of note … a Jesuit college staffed by expert teachers and administered with military precision"; in 1627, these *collèges* in the

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[22] *Ibid.*, I.26 ("*De l'Institution des Enfans*"), 199.

[23] Quoted by Hexter, "The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance" (above, n. 12), 46, from Richard Pace, *De Fructu* (Basel, 1517), cited in F.J. Furnivall, ed., *Early English Meals and Manners* (London: Early English Text Society, original series, no. 32, 1868), xii-xiii.

[24] Metafictional remarks of this sort, especially those stressing the cultural or moral gulfs between the author's own era and his characters', fall frequently from the mouth of his omniscient narrator. See, e.g., Dumas, *LTM*, i.10, x.131, x.135, xi.142-143, xxix.393, xxxiii.436, xxxv.455.

[25] Other religious orders too sponsored influential schools, most notably the Oratorians. My exclusive emphasis here on the Jesuits is due to their explicit connection in *LTM* to Aramis.

[26] John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 200; the quotations are translated by him from a letter written by Ignatius's secretary, Polanco.

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province of Paris alone enrolled 3,595 boys.[27] Their dramatic spread made them "the biggest network of private schools Europe has known," reaching a number of between five and six hundred throughout the European continent.[28] As each Jesuit seminarian completed his own stint of academic training (which with very few exceptions required teaching responsibilities), usually at the age of 30 or more, he swore to "show a special concern for the education of boys" and joined the ranks of the teaching order.[29]

In stark contrast with the academies, the Jesuit *collèges* strove to mold their pupils on the model of the learned Renaissance humanistic scholar, through rigorous and disciplined training of the intellect. Their grip on 17th century French education rapidly became so tight as to occasion this

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[27] Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (above, n. 11), 191. By the time the order was temporarily suppressed in 1773, it had 150 working *collèges* in France and boasted 3000 teaching members and two million French alumni (*ibid.*, 228). George Huppert, *Public Schools in Renaissance France* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1984), xii-xiii, 104-115, 124-125, 142, views this exponential growth in France as essentially a campaign of hostile takeovers of secular schools dating from the Renaissance – a campaign encouraged by Henri IV because it suited his programme of nationalization; cf. Olwen Hufton, "Every Tub on its Own Bottom: Funding a Jesuit College in Early Modern Europe," in John W. O'Malley, S.J., *et al.*, eds., *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 8; Judi Loach, "Revolutionary Pedagogues? How Jesuits Used Education to Change Society," in O'Malley *et al.*, *Jesuits II*, 66; and especially Aldo D. Scaglione, *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 1986), 55-56.

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[28] Hufton, "Every Tub," 7.

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[29] William J. McGucken, S.J., *The Jesuits and Education* (New York: Bruce, 1932), 240 (on required practice teaching); the quotation is from S.E. Frost, Jr., *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Western Education* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Books, 1966), 213.

hyperbolic summation: "In Spain, Austria, and Southern Germany they dominated secondary education; in the France of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century education was exclusively under their sway."[30]

Curricularly, the Jesuit *collèges* resembled the University of Paris in their conservative adherence to a humanistic literary education. Latin remained the sole allowed language of instruction and everyday conversation until the order's formal suppression in 1773. Primary curricular emphasis was placed on classical grammar and literature, as well as on argument. The program was divided into junior and senior divisions; students entered the former at about ten years of age and followed a roughly six-year course in grammar, literature (poetry, drama, history) and rhetoric (classical oratory); the latter provided a three or four-year course in philosophy, culminating in theology.[31] With a nod to the courtly educational ideals of the day, the *collège* curriculum offered instruction in "manly exercises" (e.g., riding, fencing, swimming), thus distinguishing itself from that of the University of Paris and

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[30] Robert Ulich, *History of Educational Thought* (New York: American Book Co., 1945), 153-154.

[31] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (above, n. 25), 215-216; Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (above, n. 11), 189. Greek instruction, though secondary to Latin, was a serious and integral part of the curriculum; "the best of [the *collèges*], like Messina, were *trilingue* in that besides Latin and Greek they also taught Hebrew" (O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 215). All schools and all instructors strictly followed a common curriculum codified in the *Ratio Studiorum*, or "plan of studies," issued by the order in 1599 after several decades of experimentation and

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reflecting a reversed image of the academy curriculum, which concentrated on physical training, with a nod to academics.

A third major component of the education system of wealthy French families was private tutelage (*préceptorat*).[32] Dependence on private tuition was an intrinsic element of education in the great household and was often combined with attendance at a university or *collège* (with an entourage of tutor[s] and servants boarding with the student to cover parts of the broad curriculum desired by French noble families that might be skimped by the educational institution he was attending).[33] At the turn of the 17th century, exclusive usage of tutors was made more frequent by the defection of the upper classes from the unruly University of Paris.[34] The ideal of education in

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refinement; this plan, only slightly revised, still stands as the cornerstone of Jesuit education today.

[32] Private tutors were somewhat less common in Italy, where an urban aristocracy early came to rely on schools for the education of their children; they were especially frequent among the country aristocrats of England and Germany.

[33] Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat* (above, n. 3), chs. 1 and 2. For instance, a student receiving a traditional classical education at a university might be privately tutored in the more practical subjects (French, Italian, modern history and manly arts); conversely, a student boarding at an academy might receive supplementary lessons in Latin grammar and other academic subjects; Henri de Mesmes is reported to have become fully proficient in Greek, despite its secondary position in the Jesuit *collège* where he boarded, through supplementary lessons with the *précepteur* who accompanied him there (Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* [above, n. 11], 9).

[34] Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (above, n. 11), 117, 194-195; Boyd, *History of Western Education* (above, n. 16), 262; Harry G. Good and James D. Teller, *A History of Western Education*[3] (London: MacMillan, 1969), 166-167.

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households with private tutors remained broad and naturally varied in accordance with the character of the family involved. Physical training, manners and instruction at arms were core enterprises, and the impulse to train society's future leaders in a broad range of practical topics (the vernaculars, modern history, politics, geography, and the arts) was shared with the academies. Although perhaps with some qualification concerning the level of concentration on Latin grammar that was normative in the two countries, the following formulation about the aristocracy in Spain might equally as well be applied to a large segment of the older French *noblesse*: "… the upper nobility did not deign to register their sons at the universities, but preferred to go on educating them at home by means of private tutors in Latin, in modern languages and in the martial and chivalric arts, so that they might pursue the ideal of the gentleman …."[35]

Given the particular character of the French nobility, the question of how much Latin was the right amount was a knotty one. The answers ran the gamut from "none" to "a full classical education." In 1550, perhaps the *none*'s preponderated, as Schalk asserts;[36] even then, though, some portion of the nobility hearkened to the more scholastic ideal propounded by the Italian humanists, as is clear from the example of Montaigne himself (a relatively "new" noble whose father had him brought up in Latin, and who learned

[35] Di Simone, "Admission," in de Ridder-Symoens, *History of University* II (above n. 12), 315.

[36] Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree* (above, n. 16), 174.

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French only at the age of six) and from that of the French poet Jean de la Taille, whose 1574 complaint that "he was taught the classics along with how to handle horses, and have them obey" testifies to early enshrinement in some noble quarters of the traditional classical education.[37] By the time of Louis XIII, when Dumas's novel was set, François de La Mothe le Vayer, who would become tutor of the Dauphin, considered himself to be walking a middle course between two current educational poles in advising Richelieu that the future Louis XIV should acquire "*quelque lumiere de lettres*" through commencement of his education from Latin grammar, but that

> *de luy faire apprendre les regles de Donat et de Priscien, comme il se pratique d'ordinaire dans les Colleges, et avec la mesme longueur de temps, ce seroit a mon avis le luy faire employer trop bassement, et au prejudice de tout plein de choses qui luy peuvent occuper l'esprit plus utilement*.[38]

By the second half of the 17th century, under the *Roi Soleil*, the nobility's prejudice against scholars had effectively disappeared;[39] the education of the Dauphin in the court of Louis XIV, for example (meticulously detailed by his eminent *précepteur*, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet) delved immensely more deeply into the Latin authors than was expected at the academies, as well as requiring significant Latin composition (*thèmes*) in both poetry and prose

[37] Jean de La Taille, "*Le courtesan retiré*," in *Oeuvres*, ed. René de Maulde (Paris, 1878), IV.24, quoted in Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree* (above, n. 16), 8.

[38] *Oeuvres de François de La Mothe le Vayer, Conseiller d'Estat Ordinaire*, vol. I (Paris: Auguste Courbé, 1662 [originally published 1640]), 67.

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(scholastic exercises the academies had completely jettisoned from their curriculum).[40]

Turning back, then, to Dumas's novel: How much of this 17th century historical and sociological reality did this brilliant but somewhat slapdash "star of the Romantic Revolution" know or appreciate?[41] One of the first saws anyone who dabbles in criticism of Dumas will read is that this author of historical plays and novels himself played fast and loose with historical facts. As Samaran exclaims: "*… que d'erreurs matérielles, que d'invraisemblances, que d'anachronismes!*."[42] Excusing this tendency to inaccuracy, presumably in favor of the excitement of his swashbuckling plots, the author himself is said to have averred that it was all right to rape history, as long as one produced a child thereby.[43] By contrast, the second maxim the budding critic will hear is that Dumas is a past master at bringing the *spirit* of his novel's times alive. Again, in Samaran's words: "*… qui a peint avec plus de vie et d'apparente vérité les moeurs héroiques de la noblesse dans la première moitié du XVII*e *siècle …?*"[44] Both observations are indisputably true, and both pertain to the matter of the author's sketching of his heroes' academic pedigrees.

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[39] Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree* (above, n. 16), 175.

[40] Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (above, n. 11), 125-127.

[41] Dumas, *TTM*, (anonymous) frontispiece.

[42] Samaran, in Dumas, *LTM*, xxxiii.

[43] *Ibid.*, xxxiv.

[44] *Ibid.*, xxxiv.

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In Porthos, the author offers a typology of the intended recipient of the kind of courtly education offered by the academies. Indelibly stamped with the manners and deportment of his class, he had real accomplishments in skills like riding and fencing, with sufficient Latin thrown in to achieve the requisite "air of comprehension" among his aristocratic peers. As Zola commented a quarter-century after publication of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, "*Un homme qui ne sourit pas d'un air d'intelligence à une citation d' Homère ou de Virgile est un homme jugé. Celui-là n'est pas des nôtres ….*"[45] But Porthos's overt antipathy to any discussion of *les sciences* specifically affiliates him with the segment of the French *noblesse d'épée* deprecated by Castiglione's Count for its aversion to learning; he is precisely the type of noble – "courageous but vain, empty-headed and foolhardy" – that Pontaymery felt should make way for a new variety that combined "bravery with understanding, judgment, and a general education."[46]

By contrast, Athos's family is just as clearly typed as one of the old elite who clung to the we-can-have-it-all attitude characteristic of the upper classes of Renaissance Italy. Athos has obviously benefited from both a thorough literary education and meticulous instruction in courtly arts and manners. He fairly embodies the courtier's ideal of *sprezzatura* (in French,

[45] Émile Zola, *Chroniques et Polémiques* I, in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. xiii, ed. Henri Mitterand (Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1966), 239.

[46] Alexandre de Pontaymery, *L'académie ou institution de la noblesse françoise* (Paris, 1599), as paraphrased in Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree* (above, n. 16), 182.

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nonchalance), which in Castiglione's words "*nesconda l'arte e dimostri ciò, che si fa e dice, venir fatto senza fatica e quasi senza pensarvi*."[47] Just under thirty at the time of the novel's action in 1625, Athos represents a class and type of aristocrat who – if the novel were placed in any other generation – might most likely have been pictured as having taken a University degree, supplemented by private instruction in practical arts, but whose training in the context of a dysfunctional University of Paris would most likely have been imparted wholly through private tutelage.

Although Athos's companions may be taken aback when, later in the novel, this musketeer with the aura of leadership and innate grace is revealed as *le comte de la Fère*, to the reader the revelation of his high birth is merely the logical outcome of his ineffable air of ingrained superiority. Pertinently, his impeccable and unassuming Latinity is as much a clue to his social standing as are his graceful carriage and charisma.

Aramis, whose age Dumas sets at twenty-two or twenty-three, is the musketeer whose schooling is most explicitly described in the novel. He entered the seminary at nine and "stopped out" just three days short of his twentieth birthday (xxvi.344). Since the *abbé* he later consults about returning to pursue ordination is specifically identified as a Jesuit, we may with justice infer that it was this order that is supposed to have sponsored his earlier *collège.* In his almost eleven years there he would have completed the junior

[47] Cordié, *Opere di Baldassare Castiglione* (above, n. 13), I.xxvi.47.

course in grammar, literature and rhetoric (normally 5-6 years), the senior course in philosophy and theology (normally 3-4 years) and most of his two-year novitiate (the period of "mutual trial" during which the candidate is not yet committed to joining the order).[48] Such a timetable put him on the brink of his initial vows, but he decided to defer: "*Je déclarai à mes supérieurs que je ne me sentais pas suffisamment préparé pour l'ordination, et sur ma demande, on remit la cérémonie à un an*" (xxvi.345).

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His reason for deferral goes right to the nub of this character's conflicting character traits. One day (he tells d'Artagnan), while "reading his verses" to the *maîtresse* of "*une maison que je fréquentais avec plaisir – on est jeune, que voulez-vous! on est faible*" (xxvi.344), he was interrupted by a jealous military officer who insulted and provoked him … but the not-yet-musketeer was afraid and retreated in humiliation. The insult, nonetheless, festered in his "*sang vif*" (xxvi.345), and he promptly dropped out of the seminary and undertook daily fencing lessons for a full year with "*le meilleur maître d'armes de Paris*" (xxvi.345). On the anniversary of the original confrontation, he sought out the officer again, challenged him and killed him on the first pass.

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[48] McGucken, *The Jesuits and Education* (above, n. 28), 243. Aramis's entry into the novitiate, which signals his intent to join the order, distinguishes him from most students in the lay *collèges*, who attended without such an intention. For a detailed breakdown of the fifteen-year post-*collège* plan of study for those who did join the order, see David Mitchell, *The Jesuits: A History* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1981), 233; Scaglione, *Liberal Arts*, 59-60.

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There was a scandal, and he found it expedient to join the musketeers (xxvi.346).

After his eleven years in the seminary, where oral Latin was rigorously maintained as the language of instruction and day-to-day conversation, while Latin texts were the major curricular focus, Aramis's Latin is not only fluent but also flaunted. Unlike the aristocratic Athos, he is the self-conscious intellectual who peppers his conversation with learned allusions. In doing so, he threatens inadvertently to put himself on the wrong side of the courtier's ideal – the side where ostentatious display of learning produces the opposite of the desired effect:

> *perché delle cose rare e ben fatte ognun sa la difficultà, onde in esse la facilità genera grandissima maraviglia; e per lo contrario il sforzare e, come si dice, tirar per i capegli dà somma disgrazia e fa estimar poco ogni cosa per grande ch'ella si sia.*[49]

As a good Romantic, preoccupied with chivalric adventure and individual heroism, as well as the passions of the heart, Dumas cannot resist assimilating himself to this courtier, to Montaigne and (at least for the moment) to the know-nothing segment of 16th and 17th century French nobility, through ridicule of Aramis's lucubrations. Both the latter's proposed

[49] Cordié, *Opere di Baldassare Castiglione* (above, n. 13), I.xxvi.47.

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thesis topics seem to have been products of the author's caustic imagination.[50] The comic triviality of the first (*Should the lower orders bless with one hand or two?)*, coupled with Aramis's grandiose claims for its originality and scholarly import ("*qui n'a point encore été traité, dans lequel je reconnais qu'il y a matière à de magnifiques développements*": xxvi.336), suggests the obscurantism commonly attributed to medieval scholastic philosophers and later to the Jesuits. The second affords the author the opportunity for tongue-in-cheek expatiation on minute points of Christian doctrinary disputes, while at the same time setting the scene for his own developing opposition of Latin erudition to true heroism; indeed, even the most academically-inclined of modern readers cannot help rejoicing when Aramis is delivered by d'Artagnan from the grasp of the Jesuit father and his curate. Elated by the news that his mistress still loves him, Aramis spurns the sparse meal of "*horribles légumes et … affreux entremets*" (xxvi.349) that his manservant has just brought him and orders up a repast of sumptuous meats and wines. When D'Artagnan teasingly repeats the Latin tag-line, *non inutile desiderium in oblatione*, the now twice-failed *abbé* replies joyously: "*Allez-vous-en au diable*

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[50] See Samaran, in Dumas, *LTM*, 337 n. 2: "*D'où Dumas a-t-il tiré ces réflexions assez saugrenues sur l'art et la manière de bénir? Il est difficile de le dire. Retenons que les citations latines sont vraisemblablement en grand partie de son cru et sont fort peu orthodoxes quant aux dispositions liturgiques que l'auteur commente sur le mode plaisant*." Cf. Coward, in Dumas, *TTM*, 641 (n. to 252). In default of wide-ranging sources listing Jesuit thesis or disputation topics, of course, it would be imprudent to deny categorically that there might have been some real precedent for either or both of these two topics.

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avec votre latin! Mon cher d'Artagnan, buvons, morbleu, buvons frais, buvons beaucoup, et racontez-moi un peu ce qu'on fait là-bas" (xxvi.350) – thus signaling his choice of passion, romance and adventure over the dry dust of scholastic disputation.

Aramis's educational typology reveals much about his social standing. The contrast between his hyper-Latinity and Athos's quiet and unassuming command of Latin may in and of itself suggest that his roots have shallow grounding in *la noblesse*. Through allusions to letters of ennoblement, ambitious bourgeois, and *la noblesse de robe*, Dumas shows himself aware that he has set his novel in a time of unprecedented upward social mobility, characterized by a "bourgeoisie en marche vers la noblesse."[51] Indeed, the Jesuit educational mission – academically meritocratic and providing schooling to all for free – was integrally wrapped in this social mobility.[52]

[51] Yvonne Bézard, *La vie rurale dans le sud de la région parisienne, 1450-1560* (Paris: 1929), 79, quoted in Bitton, *Nobility in Crisis*, 94. Bitton, ch. 6, discusses the era's "high rate of infiltration across class boundaries" (100) by usurpers, *anoblis* and office-holders and cites many statistics attesting to exponential growth in the number of *anoblissements* between 1550 and 1650 (94-95, 98-99). For references to social mobility in Dumas's novel, see, e.g., xvi.199, xviii.238; chapter xvi is titled "*Gens de Robe et Gens d'Épée.*"

[52] Loach, "Revolutionary Pedagogues," 66: "Not only, however, was tuition free to all, but the system was meritocratic, with advancement wholly dependent upon the individual's academic progress, while a spirit of emulation permeated teaching methods. The educational system organized by the Jesuits thus offered genuine opportunities for upward social mobility, which were taken up by sons of the merchant, professional, and artisan classes." It is often noted, of course, that the decision of the Jesuits for practical, financial reasons to take themselves out of the business of teaching reading and writing to *abécédaire* classes undermined their egalitarian goals: though the *collèges* remained free, their failure to teach literacy served effectively to bar the lower social classes from admission (see, e.g., Huppert,

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Several further points of plot and expression join with Aramis's patent erudition to hint that his family may be recent additions to the roles of nobility. While Athos, Porthos and even d'Artagnan are explicitly labeled noble early in the novel, the first explicit mention of Aramis's social class comes only on page 345, when not the omniscient and sociologically-attuned narrator, nor even any of the other characters, but Aramis himself styles himself "*bon gentilhomme*"; the contrast with the insistence with which Athos's innate nobility is stressed, over and over again, is stark. It may or may not be meaningful that Aramis's handkerchief, though elegant and of the finest material, sports no coat of arms ("*sans broderie, sans armes et orné d'un seul chiffre, celui de son propriétaire*": iv.62); it may or may not be fanciful to imagine that, in alluding to the regard his soldier father was held in by the king, Aramis may be speaking in shorthand of the family's *anoblissement* (xxvi.346); but the reference to Aramis's contracted year of training in swordsmanship is definitely pointed.

Early in the novel, as d'Artagnan muses on his prospects for surviving his upcoming triple duel, he dismisses the last-scheduled opponent's swordsmanship cavalierly: "*quant au sournois Aramis, il n'en avait pas très*

Public Schools, 126; Scaglione, *Liberal Arts*, 114-115). Demographic statistics cited by Scaglione for the Jesuit *collège* at Bordeaux, *ibid.*, 115, are instructive at both ends of the social scale: 45.5% of those enrolled were sons of "bourgeois functionaries," 21% sons of merchants, 8.4% sons of noblemen, and 5.9% sons of artisans or peasants (with the remainder presumably indeterminate); cf. 118.

grand'peur, et en supposant qu'il arrivait jusqu'à lui, il se chargeait de l'expédier bel et bien …" (v.66-67) – and that is *after* Aramis's grueling year of daily private fencing lessons! The scholarly musketeer's deficiency to the age of twenty in this essential art of the French nobility is surely significant. It points less conspicuously to the incapacity of the Jesuit fathers to match the level of martial training afforded by private tutors and academy specialists than to his own family's failure to have subjected him from infancy on to a consistent regimen of physical training for grace, fluidity and assurance of deportment and for technical expertise in a variety of "manly arts." This failure points *ipso facto* to the family's absence from the rolls of the *vieille noblesse*.[53]

The most enigmatic of the novel's academic pedigrees is that of the Latin-deprived d'Artagnan himself. At eighteen years of age, he is old enough to have completed a course of study at a *collège* or regional university. He could not have done so successfully, however, without achieving a higher

[53] Patrick Brady, *"L'Épée, la lettre, et la robe: Symbolisme dramatique et thématique des 'Trois Mousquetaires,'" Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 23:3-4 (1981), almost in passing notes the coupling of this "*signe social*" with a certain femininity in Aramis's character (220), as well as with his affiliation to "*la robe et la plume*" (222); he does not elaborate on the social or educational implications of the connection. In an article concerned primarily with the social contrast between d'Artagnan and Athos, Catherine Claude ("*Un bourgeois conquérant en habit de mousquetaire du roi*," *Europe* 490/491 [February/March, 1970], 53-58) takes the opposite line to that argued here, characterizing Aramis as "un aristocrate…, pas un bourgeois en tout cas" (55), but with no supporting argumentation. In fact, Aramis merits only a single sentence in her transition between d'Artagnan and Athos. (She devotes three to Porthos, whom she views as a bourgeois on the evidence of his materialism [55], without regard to the more definitive marker of nobility provided – at least for that period of French history – by his anti-intellectualism.)

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degree of proficiency than he has in their language of instruction. He is also of an age to have finished the less classically rigorous course at an academy, but, given the obvious impoverishment of his family, it is almost certain that this educational option would not have been available to the young teenager.[54] Certainly, his fellow-countryman M. de Tréville assumes that it has *not*: to assuage the young man's disappointment at being ineligible for immediate entry into the musketeers, he offers a letter of introduction and free tuition to just such an establishment in Paris, where he can mingle with nobility and study riding, fencing and dance (iii.50-51); the author seems aware that Richelieu endowed twenty scholarships for young nobles to attend academies (though not actually till eleven years after the action of this novel).[55]

To the age of twelve, d'Artagnan might have attended a primary school *(petite école)* licensed by the scholaster of his diocese. These schools

[54] The cost of the academies in Paris was prohibitive for any but the wealthy. Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat* (above, n. 3), 135-136, concludes that "the 500 livres that it cost to send a son to the academy as a day schooler for a year at Paris exceeded the total annual income of more than half the nobility, while the cost of boarding a son for a year was clearly out of reach for well over 80 percent of these nobles." Provincial academies, which charged about half as much as their Parisian counterparts, were likewise too pricey for most provincials, especially if boarding was required. The expense of the academies worked against their goal of uniting and strengthening the old nobility, in opposition to the commercial bourgeoisie and the *noblesse de la robe*, and led to frequent (but largely unsuccessful) calls for public subsidies to the academy (*ibid*., 125-132, 138; Hexter, "The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance" [above, n. 12], 68).

[55] Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat* (above, n. 3), 132 and 132 n. 20.

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offered free universal elementary education in all parts of France. By ordinance, since 1560, parents could even be fined for not sending their children to school – though this provision seems to have been little enforced and would certainly not have precluded home tutelage among the wealthier strata of society. At a *petite école*, our young hero would have learned reading, writing, arithmetic, the church service, catechism and the elements of Christian doctrine – and would have made his first incursions into Latin grammar.[56] From there, we may surmise, he probably graduated into the hands of one or more private tutors – inexpensive ones, given his family's financial picture.

Perhaps d'Artagnan's burning desire to become a second-generation musketeer, coupled with his father's equally ardent interest in *rearing* one, resulted in a scanting of the academic side of the young man's training, in favor of the physical. D'Artagnan *père* explicitly mentions a regimen of fencing lessons (i.12), and the prowess that his son demonstrates upon arrival in Paris certainly bespeaks both sound technical instruction and long and devoted practice, as well as physical talent. But we hear no more of the shadowy tutor *(précepteur)* the author refers to as having despaired over d'Artagnan's inability to master the simplest rules of Latin grammar (xxiii.291) or of the academic regimen that eventually delivered him to his

[56] Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (above, n. 11), 42; cf. Huppert, *Les Bourgeois Gentilshommes* (above, n. 13), 76 and 59-83 *passim*.

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new acquaintances as a *forte tête* with acute wit and real-world problem-solving skills, but less Latin than expected of a *gentilhomme.* It is thus notable that, while the cultural "facts" embedded in Dumas's educational characterology of Porthos, Athos and Aramis have proven dead-on accurate, his fourth musketeer's academic pedigree is significantly less transparent. Its obscurity arises, I suggest, from the intrusion into d'Artagnan's characterization of both anachronism and autobiography.

The two centuries between Dumas and his *mise en scène* had witnessed the Enlightenment, with its insistence on freedom of thought, the power of reason and the perfectability of humankind and human institutions. They had seen the French Revolution's impassioned espousal of liberty and equality, along with Condorcet's plan for universal secondary education, providing equal opportunity for all social classes. Above all, they had seen an enormous ballooning of the economic and social influence of the bourgeoisie, with an accompanying glorification of a work ethic. One effect of these intervening historical and philosophical shifts is that, while d'Artagnan is explicitly portrayed as being of provincial aristocracy, he is *experienced* as undergoing a Horatio-Alger-like climb to the top.[57]

[57] A parallel may also be made to d'Artagnan's fellow Gascon, Rastignac, the enterprising hero of Balzac's roughly contemporaneous *Père Goriot* (1835) whose name has become a French byword for "a bright and ambitious young man determined to succeed – perhaps at any cost" (Peter Brooks, ed., in Honoré de Balzac, *Père Goriot* [New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1998], 13.) D'Artagnan shares the first half of the *arriviste* characterization with

Amid d'Artagnan *père*'s farewell exhortations to his son, he alludes to the family's "*vieille noblesse*" (i.12) as the young man's passport to attendance at the court of Louis XIII and adjures him to "*…[soutenir] dignement votre nom de gentilhomme, qui a été porté dignement par vos ancêtres depuis plus de cinq cents ans*" (i.12). At the same time as he mouths these assertions of aristocratic privilege, though, he also voices sentiments that issue from an essentially contradictory set of philosophical givens: "*C'est par son courage, entendez-vous bien, par son courage seul qu'un gentilhomme fait son chemin aujourd'hui*" (i.12). In this notion, he echoes the proverb, "*Noblesse vient de vertu*."[58] Both sayings caution against a facile assumption of innate aristocratic superiority and make us realize that the "*aujourd'hui*" that shapes the fourth musketeer's cultural reality is less d'Artagnan's in 1625, than the author's own in 1844.

As d'Artagnan *fils* proceeds upon his journey, it rapidly becomes obvious that the only character in the book who responds to him as endued

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Rastignac but is exempted by Dumas from the more prejudicial, mercenarily-based half, in part out of idealization natural to a chivalric setting 200 years previous to the authors' own era.

[58] *Nouveau Petit Larousse Illustré* (1927), s.v. *noblesse*, where the proverb is glossed, "*un homme n'est réellement supérieur aux autres que par son mérite*." Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree* (above, n. 16), chs. 2 and 6 *et passim*, argues that, whereas earlier thinkers viewed virtue (especially military virtue) as the defining characteristic and *raîson d'être* of the nobility, and instances where the two were not, in fact, joined troubled them by seeming to call for a revised definition, an era began in 1594 (to last for two centuries, ending in the Revolution) where the two concepts were separated, facilitating a redefinition of nobility purely along hereditary class lines.

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with even a modicum of *vieille noblesse* is his father.[59] Both his Gascon insophistication and his patent impoverishment work against any such reaction. In their early contretemps, Athos snootily assails the newcomer's provinciality, "*…vous n'êtes pas poli. On voit que vous venez de loin*" (iv.57). Aramis homes in on the same vulnerability: "*Je suppose, Monsieur, que vous n'êtes pas un sot, et que vous savez bien*, quoique arrivant de Gascogne, *qu'on ne marche pas sans cause sur les mouchoirs de poche*" (iv.63, emphasis mine). As for his poverty, right from the character's debut in scene one, dressed in a faded doublet "*dont la couleur bleue s'était transformée en une nuance insaisissable de lie de vin et d'azur céleste*" (i.10), the author hammers home his primary point, that the young hero's internal resources by far outstrip his external ones.

Seen in light of Samaran's suggestion that d'Artagnan's historical prototype came from a bourgeois family that had wangled a falsified title (see note 9), the fictional father's claim to five hundred years of nobility may ring hollow. Indeed, it is tempting to speculate whether Dumas is insinuating that d'Artagnan's father's pretentions to *vieille noblesse* are just that: pretentions. If

[59] Catherine Claude, "*Le bourgeois mousquetaire*," agrees and goes even further by stating flatly: "*En effet, en dépit d'un acte de naissance vite oublié, c'est un bourgeois...*" (54). She also notes that, when d'Artagnan leaves the king's service at the end of the third novel in the musketeer series, *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*, he "slips" by saying, "Je redeviens bourgeois" (55). The evidence she cites for his bourgeois character is behavioral rather than educational, involving realism, goal-orientation and (less convincingly) assertion of his bourgeois "*fidélité*" to Mme. Bonacieux (55), as well as two scenes from the sequels to *LTM*, in which she argues that he affiliates himself either politically or economically to the bourgeoisie (56-58).

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so, the slightly jarring ideological collocation of his exhortation on the one hand to live up to the family's hereditary nobility and his promise on the other that a man's success depends on his character, rather than on accidents of his birth, is revealed as pointed: a token tipping of the hat to inherited privilege yields quickly to the expression of the heartfelt bourgeois hope that virtuous effort will result in advancement. The resulting implication that the youngest of the four heroes, though he does not "belong" socially, yet will work his way to the role of number-one hero, must have been congenial to the mass of Dumas's 19th century readers.

Nonetheless, whether the reader experiences d'Artagnan as impoverished aristocracy, as "new nobility" on the make, or as an ambiguous amalgam of the two, his subsequent characterization and exploits make it abundantly clear that he is presented as *praxis* to his father's theory that character is the key to success in life. Despite his initial economic and social disadvantages, including his deprivation of the classical education that marks the *gentilhomme* as *gentilhomme*, his nobility of spirit will gain him the respect and admiration he has set out to win. While Athos represents the landed aristocracy and its chivalric ideals, d'Artagnan emblemizes a meritocracy.[60]

[60] In an article aimed primarily at casting Dumas's plot as d'Artagnan's subjection to a set of Oedipal conflicts, Michel Picard, "*Pouvoirs du feuilleton ou d'Artagnan anonyme*," *Littérature* 50 (May, 1983), 55-76, pleads the opposite case: "*L'idéologie bourgeoise progressiste des XVII*e *et XVIII*e *siècles se trouve réduite à des vestiges caricaturaux (ce qui reflète la situation de l'époque de Dumas, pas de celle des mousquetaires): qu'on songe à ce qu'est devenu ici le 'mérite personnel' ou*

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Salient facts from Dumas's own biography resonate in d'Artagnan's anachronistic appearance as meritocrat. The author's father, Thomas-Alexandre Dumas-Davy de la Pailleterie, the son of a marquis and a black slave from Santo Domingo, suffered socially for his mixed race and an imputation of illegitimacy. When the marquis's eventual remarriage resulted in alienation between father and son, Thomas-Alexandre renounced all ties with *la vieille noblesse* and entered the French army under his mother's name. There, he excelled in all areas (physical, mental, moral) and was made a general by the age of 31. He married Marie-Louise Labouret, the daughter of

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the proprietor of l'Hôtel de l'Épée (also a commander of the national guard), and they had a daughter and later a son, our author-to-be. Unfortunately for the whole family, Thomas-Alexandre lost favor with Napoleon for his staunch republican convictions. After his early death in 1806 (when Alexandre was four years old), the family lived in impoverishment.

The career of his own father, then, who gained little from his tenuous ties to inherited aristocracy yet rose by his own talents to heights of military fame and reputation, provided Dumas with a paradigm for d'Artagnan the meritocrat. To explain d'Artagnan the carelessly schooled musketeer, on the other hand – right down to his less than stellar mastery of the Latin language – we must look to the author's own desultory academic training.

Napoleon's continuing disfavor barred the disgraced general's son from the military schools and civil *collèges* that normally would have opened their doors for him.[61] Rather, the precocious child entered on a catch-as-catch-can educational path. He learned to read by himself; his sister taught him to write – a skill that, enhanced by scrupulous instruction in penmanship at the *petite école* of his home parish, was to land him his first gainful employment as a clerk.[62] At age ten, he moved to the private school of the vicar of his parish.

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[61] Alexandre Dumas, *Mes Mémoires*[2], vol. I (Paris: Calmann Lévy, n.d.), xxv.276.

[62] On his picking up reading without instruction, see Dumas, *Mémoires*, I.xxi.126. On writing: Dumas's schoolmaster, M. Oblet, so valued instruction in fine penmanship that, without intentional humor, he attributed Napoleon's eventual downfall to bad handwriting. The emperor's officers did not betray him, the schoolmaster averred; they got his commands

Two years later, when the school was decertified, the worthy *abbé* came to his home for six francs a month, two hours a day, to instruct him in Latin. Separately, he received lessons in "*mes quatre règles [de calcul]*" from the master of the *petite école* and in "*des contres, des feintes et des parades*" from an alcoholic fencing master left mute by a student's sword-thrust through his uvula.[63] Like d'Artagnan, Dumas preferred to pour his energies into athletics and mastering weaponry of all types: "*je lançais des pierres comme David, je tirais de l'arc comme un soldat des îles Baléares, je montais à cheval comme un Numide.*"[64] In sum, concludes a biographer, "*il a pendant des années développé sa vigueur et sa souplesse de corps plutôt que ses facultés intellectuelles*."[65]

Two particular anecdotes from the author's memoirs attest to the sloppiness of his Latin preparation. He dates his first "*humiliation morale*" to a meeting with an admired relative who "*savait le latin et le grec sur le bout de son petit doigt*": "*Il me salua dans la langue de Cicéron; je voulus lui répondre et fis trois barbarismes en cinq mots. Il était fixé.*"[66] Despite this embarrassment, the scholar *manqué* continued to shrink from the rigors of a classical education. After each of his Latin lessons, his *précepteur* locked away his own texts of Virgil and Tacitus in a chest and left them in the keeping of Dumas's mother. His

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mixed up because they couldn't read his handwritten orders (Alexandre Dumas, *Mes Mémoires*, vol. II [Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1897], xxxi.26).

[63] Dumas, *Mémoires* II.xxxi.25; cf. I.xxiv.272 on the fencing-master's unfortunate history.

[64] Dumas, *Mémoires*, I.xxv.276.

[65] Henri Clouard, *Alexandre Dumas* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1955), 23.

devious young charge ingeniously devised a means to extract these "teachers' editions" secretly, prepare his homework with the benefit of the translations on the facing page, then return them to the locked box without his mother or the *abbé* becoming any the wiser.[67] Dumas's gullible teacher was left, we are told, puzzling over the fact that his student was so accomplished at Latin-to-French translations (*versions*) but failed miserably at French-to-Latin (*thèmes*). So much for careful Latinity; despite admiration for the dramatic art of Virgil, Dumas was to remain ever a self-avowed "*mauvais latiniste*."[68]

If Dumas had had the opportunity to pursue a formal education, he would have found a traditional classical curriculum re-entrenched there (though the language of instruction had largely passed over to French even in the reinstituted Jesuit schools).[69] The democratic impulses of the Revolution and the post-Napoleonic era's increasing spirit of "unbridled competition" and "capitalist entrepreneurship" had combined to render otiose a form of education aimed at preparing the sons of aristocrats to take their appointed

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[66] Dumas, *Mémoires* I.xxvii.300.

[67] Dumas, *Mémoires* II.xxxii.37.

[68] Dumas, *Mémoires*, II.xii.104. A couple of examples of his *mauvais latin* have intruded into the text of *LTM*, as Samaran has noted in Dumas, *LTM*, xxxiii.

[69] Françoise Waquet, *Le Latin ou l'empire d'un signe: XVI^e^- XX^e^ siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998), 21-21, traces the beginning of "*une evolution générale qui s'inscrit sous le signe d'un recul du latin parlé*" to the second half of the 18th century. The 1832 revision of the *Ratio* emphasized vernacular instruction (Good and Teller, *A History of Western Education* [above, n.31], 157).

[71] Brooks, in Balzac, *Père Goriot* (above, n. 56), vii.

role as society's leaders.[71] Rather, the 19th-century French curriculum pressed the benefits of rigorous philological training on all those fortunate enough to win access to secondary education – partly from an ingrained belief that learning the classical languages, like learning theoretical mathematics, best trained the mind for discriminating and critical mental activity; partly from an enthusiastic embracing by the *bourgeoisie* of the promise of upward social mobility to be gained through a classical education.[72] The fact that these studies were widely viewed as impractical and of little relevance to real life made no appreciable dent (and would not for many more years) in the secondary curriculum. The clamor to fill these seats and so to join the "club" of the educated elite is aptly described by Zola in a continuation of the passage quoted above:

> *Celui-là [l'homme jugé] n'est pas des nôtres, il n'a pas usé pendant dix ans ses fonds de culotte sur les bancs d'un college; il ne sait ni le grec ni le latin, et cela suffit pour le classer parmi les pauvres diables, car il n'est pas chez nous une famille qui ne s'ôte le pain de la bouche afin d'envoyer ses enfants décliner* rosa, *la rose.*[73]

Like the families Zola describes, Dumas's mother scrimped to afford the six francs necessary to set her son to learn Latin from the kindly but intellectually modestly-powered Abbé Grégoire. Thus Dumas faced a similar challenge to d'Artagnan's: could he, through acute intelligence, wit and drive,

[72] See note 13 and James Bowen, *A History of Western Education* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), III.282-285.

[73] Zola, *Chroniques et Polémiques* I, in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. xiii (above, n. 44), 239.

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surmount his patched-together education, emblemized by lax Latinity, to assume a position among Zola's *les nôtres*? It is at least partially from his own outsider status that his affinity with the hopeful values represented by the fourth musketeer arose.

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Each of Dumas's trio of actual musketeers represents a major educational system of early 17th century France. Athos is good at everything. His easy combination of a rigorous classical education with courtly training in the military arts, manners and deportment represents the ultimate, holistic aristocratic ideal dating back to Renaissance Italy. Porthos reflects the attitudes that characterized another part of the French aristocracy and led to the "realistic" trend in French education. Rejecting the bookishness of the traditional scholastic education, proponents of realism undertook to teach future men of affairs those skills and subjects that would be most relevant to their destined positions at court. Porthos himself stands at the academy's most extreme pole, in his total distaste for all academic study; we may assume that a plenitude of his aristocratic fellows clustered around that pole with him. Finally, in Aramis we see a reflection of the regimented and disciplined academic training program offered by the Society of Jesus. Beginning seventy-five years before the action of the novel takes place, Jesuit *collèges* had swept through France, establishing dominance in their provision of a strict classical education to aspiring ecclesiasts and the sons of the the

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noble and not-so-noble, the wealthy and the not-so-wealthy. Dumas's own voracious reading, supported by the researches of his history-teaching collaborator, Maquet, apparently provided the author with sufficient knowledge of early 17th century educational options to create these remarkably true-to-life typologies.

In d'Artagnan, by contrast, we are proffered less a type of 17th century education than an updating of the social values of that period to coincide with those of the author's own time. The successes of this musketeer-in-training hold out the promise that talent and virtuous effort will be rewarded through upward mobility. The fact that the author has chosen to transmit this hopeful message partially through the vehicle of Latinlessness speaks volumes, both about the place of Latin in the curriculum over the centuries and about the role of Latin as socioeducational marker. By resisting the limits set on him by his present station in life, the Latinless hero proves himself a hero indeed.

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Stowe has noted – deceptively simply, but aptly – the sea change brought about by Dumas's decision to move the historical setting of his novel to a time when his hero's real-life counterpart was a child of ten: "Thus lifted from his proper historical context and placed in another one, d'Artagnan becomes a fictional creation. The events in which this fictional d'Artagnan participates were real ones, as he was a real person, but because his role in them is an imagined one both characters and events now partake of a new reality, that of the novel" (Richard S. Stowe, *Alexandre Dumas Père* [Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976], 69).

Coudert makes the same point, in an apostrophe to the hero himself: "*Car vous êtes une authentique création romanesque, et, à ce titre, il convient de vous laisser chevaucher librement entre l'imaginaire et le réel*" (Marie-Louise Coudert, "*Lettre à M. D'Artagnan,*" *Europe* 490/491 [February/March, 1970], 75). The lack of literary pertinence of the minutiae of the proto-d'Artagnan's life has not, however, dampened scholars' prosopographical interest. A long line of books has looked into the "*vrai*" d'Artagnan, beginning just two years after the novel's publication with Eugène d'Auriac, *D'Artagnan, Capitaine-Lieutenant des Mousquetaires* (Paris: Baudry, 1846), including Charles Samaran, *D'Artagnan, Capitaine des Mousquetaires du Roi: Histoire Véridique d'un Héros de Roman* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1912) and Armand Praviel, *Histoire Vraie des Trois Mousquetaires* (Paris: Flammarion, 1933), and culminating (for the moment) in two 21st century studies, Kari Maund, Phil Nanson, *The Four Musketeers: The True Story of D'Artagnan, Porthos, Aramis & Athos* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2005), and Roger Macdonald, *The Man in the Iron Mask: The True Story of the Most Famous Prisoner in History and the Four Musketeers* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005), which breaks the mold by concluding that d'Artagnan and the Man in the Iron Mask were one and the same

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Indeed, the contrast of Athos's quiet and unassuming command of Latin and Aramis's hyper-Latinity in and of itself may suggest that the latter's roots have shallow grounding in *la noblesse*. Through references to letters of ennoblement, ambitious bourgeois, and *la noblesse de robe* (e.g., at xvi.199, xviii.238; chapter xvi is titled "*Gens de Robe et Gens d'Épée*"), Dumas shows himself aware that he has set his novel in a time of unprecedented upward social mobility, characterized by a

"bourgeoisie en marche vers la noblesse" (Yvonne Bézard, *La vie rurale dans le sud de la région parisienne, 1450-1560* [Paris: 1929], 79, quoted in Bitton, *Nobility in Crisis*, 94). Bitton, ch. 6, discusses the era's "high rate of infiltration across class boundaries" (100) by usurpers, *anoblis*, and office-holders and cites many statistics attesting to exponential growth in the number of *anoblissements* between 1550 and 1650 (94-95, 98-99). Several further points of plot and expression join with Aramis's patent erudition to hint that his family may be recent additions to the roles of nobility. While Athos, Porthos and even d'Artagnan are explicitly labeled noble early in the novel, the first explicit mention of Aramis's social class comes only on page 345, where he is labeled "*bon gentilhomme*" neither by the omniscient and sociologically-attuned narrator, nor even by any of the other characters, but only by himself; the contrast with the insistence with which Athos's innate nobility is stressed, over and over again, is stark. It may or may not be significant that Aramis's handkerchief, though elegant and of the finest material, sports no coat of arms ("*sans broderie, sans armes et orné d'un seul chiffre, celui de son propriétaire*": iv.62); it may or may not be fanciful to imagine that, in alluding to the regard his soldier father was held in by the king, Aramis may be speaking in shorthand of the family's *anoblissement* (xxvi.346); but the question of Aramis's contracted year of training in swordsmanship is definitely significant. Early in the novel, as d'Artagnan muses on his prospects for surviving his upcoming triple duel, he dismisses the last-scheduled opponent's swordsmanship cavalierly: "*quant au sournois Aramis, il n'en avait pas très grand'peur, et en supposant qu'il arrivait jusqu'à lui, il se chargeait de l'expédier bel et bien …*" (v.66-67) – and that is *after* Aramis's grueling year of daily private fencing lessons! The scholarly musketeer's deficiency, up to the age of twenty, in this essential art of the French nobility may suggest the incapacity of the Jesuit fathers to match the level of military training afforded by private tutors and academy specialists. More conspicuously, however, it points to his own family's failure to have subjected him from infancy on, through private tutelage, to a consistent regimen of physical training for grace, fluidity and assurance of deportment and for technical expertise in a variety of "manly arts." This failure in and of itself is evidence for the family's absence from the rolls of the *noblesse d'épée*.

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In an article aimed primarily at casting Dumas's plot as d'Artagnan's subjection to a set of Oedipal conflicts, Michel Picard, "*Pouvoirs du Feuilleton ou d'Artagnan Anonyme*," *Littérature* 50 (May, 1983), 55-76, pleads the opposite case: "*L'idéologie bourgeoise progressiste des XVII*^{e} *et XVIII*^{e} *siècles se trouve réduite à des vestiges caricaturaux (ce qui reflète la situation de l'époque de Dumas, pas de celle des mousquetaires): qu'on songe à ce qu'est devenu ici le 'mérite personnel' ou l'esprit d'entreprise!*" (74). Picard's view is based in his perceptions that "*le travail est absent, comme censuré*" in *LTM* and that M. Bonacieux, the prominent bourgeois of the novel, is characterized pejoratively (74; cf. 63).

He is certainly correct that *work* in a bourgeois sense is not part of the program that d'Artagnan sets himself in his quest for fame and fortune, but this absence both accords with and is necessitated by the setting of that quest among the nobility surrounding the court of Louis XIII[e], as well as by the genre of the historical novel. (Any who, like Jean Thibodeau, "*Les Trois Mousquetaires, Suivi de Vingt Ans Après et du Vicomte de Bragelonne ou Dix Ans Plus Tard, ou Une Disparition de la Fiction dans le Texte Historique,* " *Europe* 490/491 (February/March, 1970), 72, view the historical novel as by nature a tool of the counter-revolution would presumably agree with Picard.) Nonetheless, in *LTM*, the author insistently portrays the young hero as one who will achieve the goal he sets for himself by marshalling his rich internal resources (granted, with a little boost here and there from luck or a lady). It is not at all, as Picard suggests, that earnest bourgeois belief in personal merit has disappeared from Dumas's novel; rather, the author has so internalized this value that it is found embodied not in an explicitly bourgeois character, but in one nominally noble. To qualify as a musketeer at all, d'Artagnan must be of the nobility, but in character he is the essence of bourgeois expectation. To borrow a phrase from Molino, "Alexandre Dumas et le Roman Mythique," 59, it is at least in part d'Artagnan's meritocratic ascendancy that "*donne à l'aventure du héros une dimension collective*" – that is, a collectively *bourgeois* dimension