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MUSKETEERS



A Musée
de l'Armée
Invalides

Exhibition
-
from 2 April to 14 July 2014
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Hôtel des Invalides,
129 rue de Grenelle,
6 boulevard des Invalides
(disabled access)
Paris 7

www.musee-armee.fr
-
Open everyday
from 10 a.m. to 18 p.m.
Closed on 1st May



INTRODUCTION

Thanks to *The Three Musketeers* and to the Alexandre Dumas' heroes become extraordinarily well-known everywhere through the illustrated book, advertising, the toys industry and, above all, the cinema, we think we know everything about the musketeers, whose blue tabards, fighting spirit or exploits have acquired a worldwide reputation. Nevertheless, these fighters left very few material traces that the novelist's work and the legend he built up around them have paradoxically concealed from us.

This exhibition is dedicated to the «real» musketeers, to those young men who took part both in the pomp of the court and the extremely violent wars of the 17th century, but our study of Dumas' work with a historian's eye will not stop at the figures of d'Artagnan and his companions-at-arms: even if he intentionally changed the chronology, romanticised the episodes chosen as a plot and setting for these narratives, the novelist, more than any other, understood and reproduced the spirit of the 17th century, allowing us to enter Richelieu's study, the strongholds of the siege of La Rochelle, Fouquet's residences or the cell of the Man in the Iron Mask.

It is he who will guide your visit through history and fiction, the first, as you will discover, will not produce any less surprises than the second.

1

THE MIRACLE CHILD, CREATOR OF A WORK OF ART

On Thursday, 14th March 1844, the readers of the *Siècle* found a new serial, signed Alexandre Dumas, on the first page of their newspaper. The author of *The Three Musketeers*, who above all saw himself as a playwright, only hesitantly took up writing the serial novel; a type whose publication style entailed strict cut-off points and lots of action every day. When preparing his popularised history work *Louis XIV and his Century* (*Louis XIV et son siècle*), Dumas became familiar with the news columns of the time, such as those of La Rochefoucauld or Loménie de Brienne, who contributes the plot about the ferrets, but also the *Mr d'Artagnan's Memoirs* (*Memoires of Mr d'Artagnan*) by Gatien Courtilz de Sandras, of doubtful authenticity, who gave him the character of d'Artagnan, those of his three musketeer companions and the figure of Milady. The exclusive literary collaboration between Alexandre Dumas and Auguste Maquet took off from *The Three Musketeers*. On the basis of the «bunch of plans» composed together, Auguste Maquet put together an initial version of the plot, with a draft of the dialogues, which Dumas rewrote before delivering it to the newspaper.

Illu. Intro: *Capture of Ghent, from 5 to 12 March 1678*, by Joseph Parrocel – © Paris – Musée de l'Armée, Pascal Segrette

Portrait of Alexandre Dumas by Nadar – © BnF



2

THE REAL MUSKETEERS

In 1622, Louis XIII, at that time at war against the Protestants, detached the 50 soldiers armed with carbines from the companies of his guard's light-horse cavalry to form an independent unit. These soldiers were armed with a musket, a heavy weapon that could only be used on foot, but they were still cavalry who moved around on horseback. Called the king's musketeers, they were given the famous blue tabard decorated with the cross and *fleur de Lys*, the symbol showing that they belonged to the monarch's Household. Furthermore, the king remained their captain; the company was commanded by a captain-lieutenant chosen for his loyalty. He recruited very young men from among his family or those of friends (often they were only 15 or 16 years' old) who had the privilege of starting their military career in this prestigious corps.

The character of the musketeer mounted foot-soldiers made very varied missions a possibility: escorting the royal retinue, policing operations and maintaining order but, above all, they were in the first line of the royal troops when it meant relieving a town under siege.

Handling Harquebuses, Muskets and Pikes [...],

by Jacob de Gheyn

© Paris – Musée de l'Armée, Christian Moutarde

3

LOUIS XIII

Alexandre Dumas was cruel with Louis XIII, portraying him as a colourless monarch, a rather ridiculous puppet in the hands of Cardinal de Richelieu. The novelist concealed the difficulties that the young monarch, who was only 23 years of age in 1625 when *The Three Musketeers* began, was compelled to overcome in order to impose his authority on a rebellious aristocracy and even on his mother, Marie de Médicis, whose troops he defeated at Ponts-de-Cé five years previously. From his childhood, Louis XIII's enthusiasm for all things military, the extraordinary collection of firearms and the harquebuse masterpieces in his armoury, inherited by the musée de l'Armée, are an illustration of his genuinely «warrior king» character, who spent more time in bivouacs and camps than in his palaces.

Wheellock pistol with triple barrel, in wood, metal
an ivory © Paris – Musée de l'Armée



4

INTRIGUES IN THE FRENCH COURT

A Queen of France who unwisely offers her jewels to her luxury-loving English suitor, an all-powerful minister who in this way sees an excellent way of destroying her reputation in the eyes of her husband, the king, a clever spy who succeeded in stealing two of these jewels to humiliate the Queen, an adventurer who goes off to England and at all speed brings the jewels back to France to avoid dishonouring his monarch. Everyone knows the main plot in *The Three Musketeers*, wrongly believed to be the fruit of Alexandre Dumas's unbridled imagination. In fact, the novelist never changed any details of this episode included in the *Memoirs of François de La Rochefoucauld*. What is less known is that this romantic story hides an international espionage case in which the great painter Rubens was closely involved and whose works, collected here, and are the only evidence today.

Portrait of Anne of Austria, by Pierre Paul Rubens
© Musée du Louvre, Jean-Gilles Berizzi

5

«THE MAN IN RED», RICHELIEU

Richelieu, so concerned about his fame, could not foresee that a little more than 200 years after his death, thanks to Alexandre Dumas and *The Three Musketeers*, he would become a character in a novel with worldwide success. Dumas often told about a black legend concocted in the 17th century by the opponents or the victims of the cardinal's politics and willingly recounted by romantic writers, who made him into a «diabolical» and «implacable» minister-prelate, not hesitating to use any means to achieve his designs. However, contrary to the cardinal-vampire that the cinema was often happy to show, the novelist also portrayed Richelieu as a minister instilled with the well-being of the state, capable of generosity and forgiveness toward those adversaries whose worth he was capable of appreciating. Dumas, in *The Vicomte of Bragelonne*, even had Anne of Austria pay the best tribute that any of his enemies could give him, when she talked about the cardinal who never said «I will do» but «I have done».

Entry of the King and Richelieu into La Rochelle
after the town had surrendered, by Maurice Leloir
© Paris - Musée de l'Armée



6

FROM THE ÎLE DE RÉ TO LA ROCHELLE

Peculiar soldiers who seem to avoid military discipline, Dumas' musketeers showed up to fight when La Rochelle was under siege. Despite its political importance, this was only one of the very many military events during the very troubled reign of Louis XIII. From 1621 onwards, the Protestants in Poitou, Brittany and Anjou rose up against the royal authority. The Duke of Buckingham supported their insurrection, and who landed on the Île de Ré with his troops on 12th July 1627, but failed to take the fort of Saint-Martin-de-Ré, defended by the Comte de Toiras. In August 1627, the royal army, commanded by Richelieu and Louis XIII in person, laid siege to La Rochelle, which had rallied to the English; a siege which lasted for 14 months. Despite the many attempts made, the English fleet did not manage to provide the town with supplies or to lift the blockade. On 1st November 1628 Louis XIII entered the town.



7

THE CORPS OF MUSKETEERS, THE GENTLEMEN'S ACADEMY

As no real officers' school existed at the time, the companies of musketeers took in young noblemen to give them combat training and an introduction to military discipline as well as all the violence in combat. Learning to obey and to command, trained in riding, fencing, and also dancing, sometimes letters and mathematics, the young musketeers, after a few years, were in a position to apply to join the royal army; nevertheless provided that they survived the particularly dangerous missions entrusted to their unit in wartime. Moreover, so that this pool of young officers could be spared and that the army would not be short of senior officers in the future, the mounted grenadiers from the King's Household took over from the musketeers in 1676 and, like them, were in the front line during sieges.



8

CAPE AND SWORD

The costumes in the Louis XIII style and the figures of swashbuckling gentlemen were still to be seen in French paintings particularly in the form of the «Spanish-style» whims, very much in fashion in the 18th century as well as genre scenes – views of taverns, smoke-filled rooms and bodyguards – inspired by the Dutch masters. The romantic artists' enthusiasm for the English civil war, followed by the success of the Alexandre Dumas cycle, brought about a renewed interest in these picturesque images seen increasingly from the 1830s. Taking inspiration from plays based on Dumas' novels, Ernest Meissonier produced a large number of effigies of 17th century soldiers, playing, drinking, making music, and even fighting with each other. Other than such emulations, more innovative artists, such as Edouard Manet and, at a later stage, Pablo Picasso, took direct inspiration from the old masters – particularly Velázquez – for their characters of swordsmen and musketeers.

Illustration of *Henri Bouchet's Epic of the French military dress*, by Job, Paris, 1898
© Paris – Musée de l'Armée



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FROM THE NOVEL TO THE THEATRE

Even more than the novel, it was the performing arts, nowadays the cinema, from which Alexandre Dumas' hero derived his worldwide fortune. The novelist himself started the development on 27th October 1845, with the triumphal performance of the play, *The Musketeers*, in the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique, based on *Twenty Years After*, a work shortly before published in serial form. It was in 1849 that *The Three Musketeers* itself was staged under the title *La Jeunesse des Mousquetaires (The Young Musketeers)* by the Théâtre Historique, that Dumas had bought two years previously. In 1909, the Italian director Mario Caserini, made the first film version of *The Three Musketeers*. This film pioneered a long series of film versions, which unfortunately had great difficulty in reproducing the spirit of the novelist's work.

Musketeer's tabard
© Compagnie du costume



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ALEXANDRE DUMAS, MILITARY WRITER

Son of a Bonaparte general, inveterate duellist and tireless hunter, no doubt Alexandre Dumas developed his interest in history and military heroes by fighting in the battles during the 1830 Revolution, on the side of the rebelling Parisians. It is true that the national reconciliation policy of the French king Louis-Philippe, the beneficiary of the July days, enabled to celebrate heroic deeds by the monarchy's soldiers, as well as by the Revolutionaries or by Napoleon's «Grande Armée». As he had written a six-act play about the Emperor in 1831, Dumas was asked in 1841 to contribute, together with Adrien Pascal, to a history of the French army regiments. But it was with *The Three Musketeers* that he created the archetype of military hero who, at the same time, finds the discipline difficult to accept, scorns danger and is loyal to his master.

Helmet without visor, round shield. Items «stolen» by Alexandre Dumas when the Musée d'Artillerie was pillaged in July 1830.

© Paris – Musée de l'Armée, Anne Sylvaine



11

DUMARTAGNAN'S PARIS

No doubt there was quite a number of Gascons among the musketeers, but their service demanded that they live in Paris, billeted on the inhabitants of the Faubourg Saint-Germain on whom this tax in-kind was imposed. Thus, the horsemen lodged just a short distance from the Louvre where they could be called on to provide an escort for the king. However, in 1659, Louis XIV decided to build a mansion for the musketeers in the Rue du Bac, where the first company was installed, while the second company, from 1701, was accommodated in an enormous building behind the Bastille, in the Rue de Charenton. So the musketeers became the first soldiers in the royal army to have their own barracks.

Just like his heroes, Alexandre Dumas was a provincial who turned Parisian and his description of the 17th century Paris, with his anachronisms or his allusions, are evidence of his own view of the capital. We are now inviting you to explore Paris again, under the guidance of Alexandre Dumas and d'Artagnan.

Axonometry of the city of Paris by Caspar Merian around 1615, ©DR



12

MAZARIN AND THE FRONDE

Mazarin, who Dumas treated very badly in *Twenty Years After*, was nevertheless a political miracle: a young papal officer noticed who came to Richelieu's notice, and who obtained the cardinal's hat for him in 1641. He became the principal minister of the regent, Anne of Austria, and together they governed France for 17 years, during a particularly troubled time. Continuing his mentor's policy against the Hapsburgs, he had to fight against uprisings, or *frondes*, incited by the Parliament and by the aristocracy who, on two occasions, compelled him to go into exile without succeeding in removing him entirely from power. In 1646, Mazarin temporarily disbanded the company of musketeers but kept d'Artagnan who, having become «his Eminence's gentleman-in-waiting», loyally, and in often sensitive circumstances, commenced a career in the service of the leading figures in the State.

Portrait of Cardinal Mazarin,
by Philippe de Champaigne
© Château de Versailles



13

THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

In *Twenty Years After*, while the Fronde was raging in Paris, Dumas sent d'Artagnan and Porthos across the Channel on mission. Strictly speaking, Dumas did not invent our characters' journey to an England disrupted by a civil war much more dramatic than the one in France. In fact, Courtilz de Sandras gave to understand that Mazarin sent d'Artagnan to England. Some biographers of the real musketeer even say, without being able to prove it, that he took part in the expedition mounted by the Duc d'Harcourt in 1643 and was at the battle of Newbury. Dumas reduced the months of wandering and captivity of Charles 1st after his defeat by the army of Parliament at Naseby and depicted the four musketeers' reunion in England, as well as their unsuccessful attempt to snatch the British monarch from the scaffold (30 January 1649).

Pikeman's half armour around 1610-1620
© Paris – Musée de l'Armée, Anne-Sylvaine



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THE «REAL» D'ARTAGNAN

The historic d'Artagnan, the one portrayed by Courtilz de Sandras and the one by Dumas who took inspiration from it have many common elements: all three Gascon cadets, going to Paris to «go into active service», becoming brave and loyal musketeers.

Charles Ogier de Batz was born in 1612 at Castelmoré near Lupiac in Gascony. Around 1633, he joined the company of musketeers, taking his mother's name, d'Artagnan, and the title of count. In 1646, the musketeers were disbanded and d'Artagnan went into Mazarin's service among his «gentlemen-in-waiting». His loyalty to the minister and to the king during the Fronde earned him some difficult missions, which were proof of his tact and his humanity, as well as some rewards, such as the post of *captain of the King's little deer-hunting dogs*. When the musketeers were formed again in 1667, he became a lieutenant, then captain-lieutenant of the first company. Field Marshall in 1672, he was killed at the siege of Maastricht the following year.

Page from *the Mémoire d'Artagnan* by Courtilz de Sandras
© Private collection

Illu. 15: Mocking mask
© Paris – Musée de l'Armée,
Anne-Sylvaine Marre-Noël

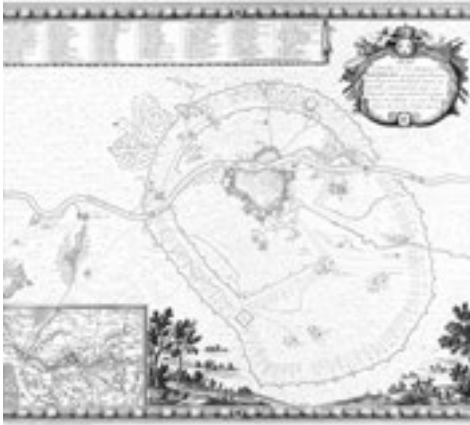
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THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

D'Artagnan and his companions could not fail to come across the most enigmatic prisoner in French history, condemned to life imprisonment, his face hidden by a metal mask. Even if Dumas was convinced by Voltaire's theory according to which the man in the iron mask was a brother of Louis XIV, the real identity of this mysterious person is still unknown today. We have selected six interpretations from among the 40 – sometimes hare-brained – scenarios proposed.

Who is the man in the iron mask? We know very little of the real history of the man in the iron mask who always seems to have been guarded by Bénigne d'Auvergne de Saint-March, a former musketeer appointed governor of the fortress of Pignerol, in Piedmont. The prisoner, together with Fouquet and Lauzun, followed his jailer to Pignerol, to the Exilles then to the Île Sainte-Marguerite, off the coast of Cannes. It was at the time of this latest transfer, in 1687, that a handwritten newspaper produced by the Jansenists showed that prisoner travelled in a closed litter, «with a steel mask» on the face.

Appointed governor of the Bastille in September 1698, Saint-March crossed France with this «former prisoner that he had in Pignerol, who he always kept masked and whose name is never spoken...» then installed him in the Bastille, in the third room of the Bertaudière tower. He died there on 19th November 1703 and is buried under the name Marchioli in the cemetery of the Saint-Paul church.



16

THE SIEGE OF MAASTRICHT AND WAGING WAR IN THE 17TH CENTURY

Following a commercial dispute, Louis XIV went to war against Holland (1672-1678), which enabled him to maintain his glory at the expense of the Protestant republic. However, it resulted in Europe uniting against him and marked the start of a series of alliances against France. In this context, the siege of Maastricht (1673) took on particular importance since it revealed to his enemies the strength of an army which, in 13 days, subjugated one of the most powerful fortified towns in Europe. Perhaps Dumas hesitated to kill off his hero since he did not give any great importance to this episode in his novel. Nevertheless, in *The Vicomte of Bragelonne*, he conveys the rise in the court nobility to the detriment of the fighting nobility, d'Artagnan dying during this siege, even though Aramis, who became a master plotter, survived his former companions.

17

ATHOS, ARAMITZ, PORTHAU AND THE OTHERS

D'Artagnan and his companions, and also Epernon, Gassion, Lauzun, Gramont, Tréville... belonged to the Gascon minor nobility without any hope of inheriting, who went to Paris to «go into active service». Through their bravery, these children of the Béarn or the Bigorre showed that the Gascon term «cadet» (*youngest*) gradually replaced the word «puîné» (*youngest*) to mean the younger sons with no birthright. Some of them, such as the marshals Jean de Gassion or Antoine de Gramont, reached the highest posts in the army but, contrary to d'Artagnan, did not have the chance of arousing the interest of a biographer such as Alexandre Dumas. Literature also favoured the fame of Savinien Cyrano, the most illustrious of these «cadets de Gascogne» (*younger Gascons*), the hero of Edmond Rostand's play. Cyrano was in fact a Parisian, as the Bergerac estate whose name he added to his own, was in the Vallée de Chevreuse.



18

THE KING'S MUSKETEERS (FROM LOUIS XV TO 1814)

During the siege of Mons (1691), a detachment of musketeers fought recklessly and suffered very heavy losses. Two years later, Louis XIV ceased to go to war and, from then on, the companies only took part in special cases. This period marked the end of the musketeers' golden age, when they served in the last campaigns of Louis XIV but were rarely seen on the battlefield during his successor's reign. In the 18th century, their mission mainly consisted in a guard and prestige service to the monarch. They saw fire one last time during the Austrian War of Succession.

In 1775, the two companies were disbanded for economic reasons. Formed again briefly under the Restoration, they finally disappeared in 1815.

19

DUMAS MET THE LAST MUSKETEER

Around mid-January 1824, Alexandre Dumas visited the artist Theodore Géricault, then dying, who he found in bed drawing his own left hand, the only model he had. The novelist did not imagine then that his greatest success, two years later, would be thanks to the musketeers. Perhaps he was also unaware that they man lying before him was one of the last of them. In fact, in July 1814, the artist joined the 1st company of musketeers, briefly formed again by Louis XVIII and who accompanied the flight of the king's household as far as Béthune at the start of the 100 Days.

Neither of the two protagonists in this encounter would the imagine that the musketeer Géricault would, in turn, become the hero of a novel, *The Holy Week?* penned by Louis Aragon in 1958.

AROUND THE EXHIBITION

CINEMA

From 1 to 6 June

Sessions for the young on 25 May

CONCERTS

From 4 April to 24 June

www.musee-armee.fr/programmation/concerts

LECTURES

From 25 March to 2 April

www.musee-armee.fr/programmation/conferences-et-colloques

EVENTS

The Dumas 24 hours

Marathon reading of Alexandre Dumas novel,
The Three Musketeers, in the most beautiful places in
the Hôtel des Invalides
5 - 6 April

En garde!

Presentation of 16th century fencing
demonstration in the Salle Turenne
12 - 13 April

www.musee-armee.fr/programmation/evenements

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-

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specific to the exhibition (stationery, figurines,
jewellery, etc.).

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And to continue the adventure, come and discover the
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the tombs of Turenne and Vauban in the Dôme church.

