



0. REAL EXPLOITS of D'ARTAGNAN - Story Preface

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The town of Auch remembers the real D'Artagnan—the King's Musketeer—with this statue. Image by Professor Eugene Ivanov from the School of Physics, University of Western Australia; online via Wikimedia Commons.

As a *Le mousquetaire du Roi*, the historical D'Artagnan was charged by the King to arrest Nicolas Fouquet on September 5, 1661. (Fouquet was the Superintendent of Finance for France whose reportedly corrupt and lavish lifestyle was not appreciated by Louis XIV.) Although this was not the kind of duty he wanted, D'Artagnan ably managed his prisoner for a period of four years.

Was he romantically linked to Anne of Austria, the Queen Mother of France (who died of breast cancer in 1666)? There is no historical evidence for that, but D'Artagnan was a minister of Louis XIV.

Did he have an affair with Madame Bonacieux? That story—like so many others, such as *The Count of Monte Cristo*—was the product of Alexandre Dumas' imagination.

As the governor of Lille (not a pleasant experience for him), D'Artagnan wanted to exchange the life of an administrator for the life of a soldier. Eventually he got his wish and became Captain Lieutenant of the first company of musketeers. Only the King (who was Captain General) had a higher rank in the unit.

During France's war with the Netherlands, the real D'Artagnan died of a musket ball to the throat in the siege of Maastricht (a Dutch town at the southern tip of the country). Today his statue is a prominent feature in the town of Auch.

The King whom D'Artagnan served with such valor—Louis XIV—ruled 72 years. (He died in 1715; this link depicts him at about age 67.) He was, thanks to Cardinal Richelieu's plan for French kings, an absolute monarch. He was fond of saying, "*L'Etat, c'est moi*" ("I am the State").

When he revoked the Edict of Nantes—which his grandfather Henri IV had signed to give the Huguenots rights under the law—the "Sun King" (as Louis XIV was known) stripped the Huguenots of their religious freedom. Historians estimate that 200,000 (or more) skilled French Protestants left the country as a direct result. Some came to America where many settled in Charleston, South Carolina. Others fled to neighboring European countries.

Cultural life flourished during the Sun King's reign. Louis XIV turned his father's "hunting lodge" (the "old chateau") at Versailles into a stunning palace. (He used Fouquet's architects who created, among other things, an exquisite "bedchamber" for the king and the famous "Hall of Mirrors.")

Not far from the forest of Fontainebleau (and the palace Napoleon Bonaparte later called home), Versailles (with its magnificent gardens and groves) is now a national museum and remains a favorite tourist destination.

But the seeds of discontent, which are inevitably sown by an absolute monarchy, germinated quickly in France. Within 75 years of Louis XIV's death, the French Revolution erupted and Louis' descendant (Louis XVI) was beheaded.

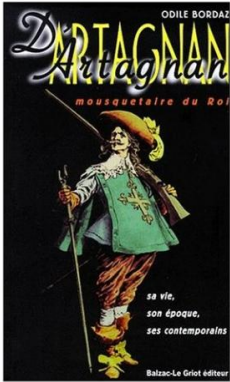
That, however, is another story for another day.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/REAL-EXPLOITS-of-D-ARTAGNAN-Musketeer-The>

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D'Artagnan: Le Mousquetaire du Roi

Book-cover image online, courtesy Amazon.

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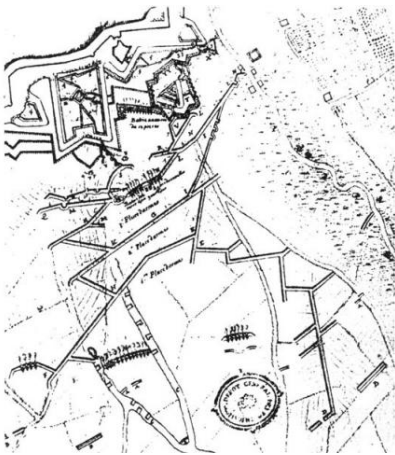


Nicolas Fouquet

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Siege of Maastricht - Map

Map of the siege of Maastricht, online courtesy Fortified Places.

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Maastricht - Village Scene

Image of Maastricht online, courtesy [University of Maastricht](http://www.universityofmaastricht.nl).

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D'Artagnan - Statue in Auch

Image by Professor Eugene Ivanov from the School of Physics, University of Western Australia.

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View of Auch

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King Louis XIV - Age 67

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Forest of Fontainebleau

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Palace of Fontainebleau

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Fontainebleau Palace

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