

## Temporality and Accessibility at the French Court: Network Analysis and the 1585 court ordinance of Henri III of France

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In 1530 Francis I, King of France from 1515 to 1547, claimed that ‘in no other Christian monarchy existed a greater conglutination, bond, and conjunction of true love than between the Kings of France and their subjects.’<sup>1</sup> As we learn from King Louis XIV (1638-1715), this bond of true love expressed itself in the subject’s easy and free access to the prince.<sup>2</sup> While the French monarchy prided itself in its public character and (relatively) high accessibility, this pride has sometimes mistakenly been understood as a limited or non-existing presence of privacy at the French court. Notwithstanding the relatively easy accessibility of the French court, it was from the reign of Henri II (1519-1559) at the latest - and further elaborated under Henri III - that an increasing proportion of court life became regulated through court ordinances. This article focuses on the *Règlement general de 1585* of Henri III, which belongs to a group of three independent court regulations issued in 1574, 1578 and 1585.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1990s, network theory found its way to the field of archaeology in, among others, the form of access diagrams<sup>4</sup>. Where network theory studies graphs as representations or relations of objects in the form of nodes or vertices and edges, access analysis uses this theory to represent the configurational relations between spatial elements and their connectivity. The application of access diagrams is beneficial in deepening the understanding of a building’s spatial layout and creating awareness of the different degrees of accessibility. Nevertheless, access diagrams only represent a static representation of accessibility. In reality, the degree of accessibility of a particular space or a set of rooms can change depending on the time of day, the inhabitant, or the company.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, since access diagrams are mainly concerned with the positioning and relationships of enclosed spaces, they lack important information provided by the inclusion of humans as actors and temporality as an important variable. Thus, in order to reach an informed notion of the spatiality of privacy at a particular residence, one needs to account for these variables by adding temporal data to the network.

Using network theory and the time and space specific information provided by 1585 court ordinance of Henri III of France (1551-1589), this paper will reconstructs and measures the spatiality of privacy at the French court. This paper will demonstrate how networks in the fourth dimension can overcome some limitations of access diagrams by integrating additional source material, like court ordinances, and accounting for the important variable of temporality. It will furthermore show how temporality was an essential factor in regulating access to the French royal apartment and that contrary to what has often been assumed the French king did experience forms of privacy, however, not in his own apartment.



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Fig. 1: Chronological evolution of courtiers' access to the king's apartment and the king's whereabouts at that time (blue)



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<sup>1</sup> Chatenet, Monique. "Henri III et 'l'ordre de la cour'. Évolution de l'étiquette à travers les règlements généraux de 1578 et 1585". In *Henri III et son temps: actes du colloque international du Centre de la Renaissance de Tours, octobre 1989*, 133-139, Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1992, 133

<sup>2</sup> Louis XIV stated in his *Mémoires* the following : 'Il y a des nations où la majesté des rois consiste... à ne point de laisser voir; et cela peut avoir ses raisons parmi les esprits accoutumés à la souvitude, qu'on ne gouverne que par la crainte et la terreur. Mais ce n'est pas le génie de nos Français, et ... s'il y a quelque caractère singulier dans cette monarchie, c'est l'accès libre et facile des sujets au prince'. Cited by Benoist, *Versailles*, 29.

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this article, I used the transcriptions provided by the Centre de recherche du château de Versailles as part of the project 'L'étiquette à la cour : textes normatifs et usages' (2014-2016) : <https://chateauversailles-recherche.fr/francais/ressources-documentaires/corpus-electroniques/corpus-raisonnes/l-etiquette-a-la-cour-de-france/reglements-de-la-maison-du-roi.html>. For the original document : Paris, Archives nationales, KK 544 fol. 55r – 141r. For more about Henri III's court ordinances, see : Chatenet, "Henri III et 'L'ordre de la cour'".

<sup>4</sup> Hillier, Bill, and Hanson, Julianne. *The Social Logic of Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. See also : Foster, Sally M. "Analysis of Spatial Patterns in Buildings (access analysis) as an insight into a social structure examples from the Scottish Atlantic Iron Age." *Antiquity* 63 (1989): 40. Examples of the application of access diagrams in archeology are: Fairclough, Graham. "Meaningful constructions – spatial and functional analysis of medieval buildings." *Antiquity* 66 (1992): 348-366; Sherlock, Rory. "Changing Perceptions: Spatial Analysis and the Study of the Irish Tower House." *Château Gaillard* 24 (2010), 239-250.

<sup>5</sup> Ronnes, Hanneke. "An Archaeology of the Noble House. The Spatial Organisation of Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Castles and Country Houses in the Low Countries and the Privacy Debate", *Medieval and Modern Matters* 3 (2012): 143.