

Princes of Darkness: The Night at Court, 1650—1750

Author(s): Craig Koslofsky

Source: *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (June 2007), pp. 235-273

Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/519314>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



The University of Chicago Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Modern History*

JSTOR

Princes of Darkness: The Night at Court, 1650–1750*

Craig Koslofsky
University of Illinois

In 1687, John Norris of Bemerton (1657–1711), a lesser “metaphysical” poet, Anglican minister, and Tory pamphleteer, published an extraordinary “Hymn to Darkness.”¹ Written as England’s last Catholic monarch revived hopes and fears of Stuart absolutism, Norris’s poem stands out from other English “poetry of night” through its praise of darkness as an awe-inspiring ruler:

Thy *native* lot thou didst to *light* resign,
But still *half* of the Globe is *thine*.
Here with a *quiet* but yet *aweful* hand
Like the *best* Emperours thou dost command.²

Norris wrote within an established genre, the poetic nocturne, describing darkness, to whom “the Stars above their brightness owe,” as a “most sacred Venerable thing” complementary to and inseparable from light.³ But as a supporter of James II, Norris brought a new political message to the nocturne: he envisioned darkness as an essential aspect of divine and earthly majesty and authority:

Tho *Light* and *Glory* be th’Almighty’s *Throne*,
Darkness is his *Pavilion*.
From that his radiant *Beauty*, but from thee
He has his *Terrour* and his *Majesty*.⁴

* I wish to thank Anita Bravo, R. B. Graves, Kenneth Marcus, Dana Rabin, Steven Pincus, and the Early Modern History Workshop at the University of Chicago, as well as the anonymous readers of the *Journal of Modern History*.

¹ Norris’s first publication was a crude anti-Whig burlesque, *A Murnival of Knaves*, printed in June 1683. See George R. Wasserman, “A Critical Edition of the Collected Poems of John Norris of Bemerton” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1957), 1–27.

² John Norris of Bemerton, “Hymn to Darkness,” in *A Collection of Miscellanies* (Oxford, 1687), 37–38, quote on 37.

³ Chris Fitter, “The Poetic Nocturne: From Ancient Motif to Renaissance Genre,” *Early Modern Literary Studies* 3, no. 2 (1997), <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/03-2/fitt-noct.html>. Fitter outlines the development of the poetic nocturne through Milton, distinguishing between “Cavalier” and “sacred” approaches within the genre, but he does not go on to examine its political inflection by Norris.

⁴ The use of darkness to emphasize majesty contrasts clearly with an earlier emphasis on darkness as concealing authority and hierarchy—seen, e.g., when Shakespeare’s Henry V walks unrecognized among his troops the night before the battle of Agincourt

The Journal of Modern History 79 (June 2007): 235–273
© 2007 by The University of Chicago. 0022-2801/2007/7902-0001\$10.00
All rights reserved.

Lauded as “unquestion’d Monarch” of the time before Creation, darkness was praised for fostering order, beauty, and piety: “Hail then thou Muse’s and Devotion’s Spring, / Tis just we should adore, ’tis just we should thee sing.”⁵ Norris’s political appropriation of the poetic nocturne in praise of darkness and monarchy raises some valuable questions. Which early modern social, cultural, and political developments allowed Norris to bring together divine light, nocturnal darkness, and absolute monarchy?

In this article I argue that Norris’s “Hymn to Darkness” is evidence of two intertwined processes at work in European culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the use of the night in political spectacle and the increase in the scope and legitimacy of everyday nocturnal activity. One can refer to the sum of these processes, symbolic and quotidian, as “nocturnalization,” a decisive step in the development of the modern night.

For the people of early modern Europe, the night’s darkness imposed fundamental limits on daily life, serving at the same time as a many-faceted and evocative natural symbol. The night has not yet been examined in the context of general early modern developments, but scholars have described individual aspects of the broad expansion of daily activities into the evening and night in the early modern period.⁶ At court and in the cities, nocturnalization is most apparent in the years 1650–1750, when mealtimes, the closing schedules of city gates, the beginning of theatrical performances and balls, and closing times of taverns all moved several hours later.⁷ In the same years the nonalcoholic beverages chocolate, coffee, and tea became popular—and coffeehouses, notorious for their late hours, appeared in all European cities by 1700.⁸ Of all

(act 4, scene 1). See Raymond Gardette, “Ténèbres lumineuses: Quelques repères shakespeariens,” in *Penser la nuit: XVe–XVIIe siècles*, ed. Dominique Bertrand, Colloques, Congrès et Conférences sur la Renaissance 35 (Paris, 2003), 343–65, and the literature cited there.

⁵ Norris, “Hymn to Darkness,” 38.

⁶ Several scholars have provided valuable orientation, foremost A. Roger Ekirch, *At Day’s Close: Night in Times Past* (New York, 2005); Norbert Schindler, “Nächtliche Rühstörung: Zur Sozialgeschichte der Nacht in der frühen Neuzeit,” in his *Widerpenstige Leute: Studien zur Volkskultur in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), 215–57; and Paulette Choné, *L’Atelier des nuits: L’histoire et signification du nocturne dans l’art d’Occident* (Nancy, 1992), and “L’académie de la nuit: Louange et science de l’ombre au XVIIe siècle,” in *L’âge d’or du nocturne*, ed. Paulette Choné et al. (Paris, 2001), 17–61.

⁷ See Roman Sandgruber, “Zeit der Mahlzeit: Veränderung in Tagesablauf und Mahlzeiteinteilung in Österreich im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Wandel der Volkskultur in Europa: Festschrift für Günter Wiegmann*, ed. Nils-Arvid Bringéus et al. (Münster, 1988), 459–72; and Peter Reinhart Gleichmann, “Nacht und Zivilisation,” in *Soziologie: Entdeckungen im Alltäglichen; Festschrift für Hans Paul Bahrdt*, ed. Martin Baethge and Wolfgang Essbach (Frankfurt, 1983), 174–94.

⁸ See the article on coffee, tea, and chocolate by Simon Varey: “Three Necessary

these developments, the swift rise of public street lighting stands out: in 1660, no European city had permanently illuminated its streets, but by 1700 consistent and reliable street lighting had been established by royal decrees in Paris, Turin, and Copenhagen; in a dozen French provincial cities; and in Berlin and Vienna.⁹ By the 1730s, Pietists like Phillip Balthasar Sinold (von Schütz, 1657–1742) were condemning *as new* the hedonist “night life” of courtiers and urban elites, thereby documenting the spread of new uses of the night.¹⁰

By combining primary research in sources of early modern daily life with specialized research on early modern theater, festive culture, street lighting, horology, etiquette, and political thought, I will show how the contrast between darkness and light—a fundamental distinction of daily life—was mapped onto the political culture of the seventeenth century through the extraordinary spectacles and daily routines of court society.¹¹ I will then show how the use of the night in extraordinary festivals and other political displays reshaped everyday life at court.

I will conclude by suggesting that the nocturnalization of political symbolism and everyday life at court in the seventeenth century arose to strengthen and supplement established symbols of spiritual and political sovereignty undermined by the confessional fragmentation of Western Christendom.¹² The royal courts of Europe had long functioned as nodes in a single network, linked

Drugs,” *1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 4 (1998): 3–51, and the literature cited there. See also Peter Albrecht, “Coffee-Drinking as a Symbol of Social Change in Continental Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 18 (1989): 91–103.

⁹ See Craig Koslofsky, “Court Culture and Street Lighting in Seventeenth-Century Europe,” *Journal of Urban History* 28, no. 6 (2002): 743–68. In the same period city councils established street lighting in Amsterdam, several other cities in the United Provinces, and Hamburg.

¹⁰ In his discussion of European night life Wolfgang Schivelbusch refers to the simultaneous rise of the “lighting of order” (i.e., street lighting) and the “lighting of festivity” in the seventeenth century. Following Richard Alewyn, Schivelbusch suggests that “the baroque culture of the night spawned modern night life” (*Disenchanted Night: The Industrialization of Light in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Angela Davies [Berkeley, 1988], 137–39).

¹¹ My use of daily life as a category of historical analysis, rather than simply as the subject of study, draws on the landmark article of Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75. On the intellectual history of *Alltagsgeschichte*, see Hans Jürgen Teuteberg, “Alles das—was dem Dasein Farbe gegeben hat: Zur Ortsbestimmung der Alltagsgeschichte,” in *Methoden und Probleme der Alltagsforschung im Zeitalter des Barock*, ed. Othmar Pickl and Helmuth Feigl (Vienna, 1992), 11–42.

¹² See Maria Rzepniska, “Tenebrism in Baroque Painting and Its Ideological Background,” *Artibus et Historiae* 13, no. 7 (1986): 91–112. The politics most shaped by confessional struggles—the Holy Roman Empire, France and the Low Countries, and the British Isles—are the regional focus of this article.

by kinship, diplomacy, and a shared aristocratic culture. By the seventeenth century no one could deny that this network was strained by permanent confessional division. Any prince who sought to act politically outside his territories, or within a multiconfessional territory, needed to communicate persuasively about power and authority with adherents—and, indeed, leading members—of other confessions. Violence was the lingua franca of the confessional age, spoken and understood by almost everyone. But alongside and after the confessional and civil wars of the period 1540–1660, a new idiom of political communication was deployed by sovereigns in principalities and city-states.

This new idiom was of course the Baroque, characterized by its “enthusiasm for spectacular means of irresistible persuasion.”¹³ Rulers deployed it in spiritual and secular contests across the fault lines of Western Christendom. The Baroque expression of ideas, values, and goals sought to transcend the crisis of authority of the confessional age by bringing new emotional and intellectual forces into play, “shadowed” though they were “by suspicions about the pervasiveness of illusion or secrecy.”¹⁴ Darkness and the night were essential to Baroque attempts to articulate and transcend confessional sources of authority: nocturnal darkness intensified the light that represented the divine or the prince.¹⁵ The new uses of the night show rulers’ attempts to strengthen and supplement confessional sources of authority (“most Christian king,” “most Catholic king,” “defender of the faith”) with the “natural” authority of a “sun king.” Rulers had long presented themselves as light givers and identified

¹³ Massimo Ciavolella and Patrick Coleman, “Guide to the Programs on ‘Culture and Authority in the Baroque,’” held at the Center for Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, 2000–2001.

¹⁴ Ibid. See Maria Golubeva’s overview of the scholarship on the Baroque as style and culture in *The Glorification of Emperor Leopold I in Image, Spectacle, and Text*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, Mainz 184 (Mainz, 2000), 15–21, and the literature cited there.

¹⁵ In the long history of the use of darkness to intensify Christian imagery and devotion, Jesuit culture has played a vital role. In the first week of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola, e.g., the author proposes “to deprive myself of all light, . . . shutting the doors and windows while I stay, except when I am to read or eat” (Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of S. Ignatius of Loyola: Founder of the Society of Jesus* [Saint-Omers, 1736], 22). The application of Ignatian spirituality to Baroque theater was promoted by seventeenth-century Jesuits such as Emanuele Tesauro of Turin: see Sebastian Neumeister, “Tante belle inuentioni di Feste, Giostre, Balletti e Mascherate: Emmanule Tesauro und die barocke Festkultur,” in *Theatrum Europaeum: Festschrift für Elida Maria Szarota*, ed. Richard Brinkmann (Munich, 1982), 153–68. On pre-Baroque associations of darkness with danger and evil, see Craig Koslofsky, “From the Wittenberg Nightingale to the Dark Night of the Soul: Theologies of Darkness in Early Modern Christianity” (unpublished manuscript, University of Illinois, 2007, 1–9).

themselves with the sun, but in the Baroque age princes deliberately used the chiaroscuro of light in the night to intensify these images, which began to supplement (though not supplant) traditional Christian symbols of power and authority.

I. NOCTURNAL SPECTACLES AND PLEASURES

Performing in his first court ballet on February 23, 1653, at age fourteen, Louis XIV of France (1643–1715) presented himself for the first time as “le roi soleil.” Louis danced several roles in the ballet, and in his final appearance, which concluded the play, he appeared in a radiant costume as the sun (fig. 1). The first appearance of Louis as a sun king is striking, but its context is equally significant. The performance was the “Ballet de la Nuit” of Isaac de Benserade—and here, as in countless other spectacles of the era, a darkened background enhanced the appearance of a radiant monarch, evoking his power to dispel darkness and bedazzle his subjects.¹⁶ The court ballet, performed in the Petit-Bourbon just outside the Louvre, was open to all, from the royal family to the commoners of Paris. And this “Ballet de la Nuit” was performed at night, using the latest staging techniques and lighting effects, designed and operated by Giacomo Torelli.¹⁷ The Jesuit scholar of royal ceremony Claude-François Méneestrier singled it out as the finest example of the genre for the splendor of the costumes, stage decor, and lighting effects.¹⁸ Like Norris’s “Hymn to Darkness,” this episode in the “fabrication of Louis XIV” calls our attention to the use of the night (both symbolic and real) in the representation of a celestial ruler. Because it was performed at night, this ballet also reveals the nocturnalization of court theater, public spectacle, and elite sociability. The “Ballet de la Nuit” thus invites an examination of darkness and the night in court spectacles and in everyday activities at court.

How did contemporaries view the court performances and royal spectacles

¹⁶ On the “Ballet de la Nuit,” see Marie-Claude Canova-Green, “Le Ballet de cour en France,” in *Spectaculum Europaeum: Theatre and Spectacle in Europe (1580–1750)*, ed. Pierre Béhar and Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung 31 (Wiesbaden, 1999), 485–512; Dominik Keller, “Unter dem Zeichen der Sonne,” in *Die schöne Kunst der Verschwendung*, ed. Georg Kohler and Alice Villon-Lechner (Zurich and Munich, 1988), 57–58; and Kathryn A. Hoffmann, *Society of Pleasures: Interdisciplinary Readings in Pleasure and Power during the Reign of Louis XIV* (New York, 1997), 13–40.

¹⁷ See Marianne Closson, “Scénographiques nocturnes du baroque: L’exemple du ballet français (1580–1650),” in Bertrand, *Penser la nuit*, 425–47; Ian Dunlop, *Louis XIV* (London, 1999), 31; and Marie-Claude Canova-Green, ed., *Benserade: Ballets pour Louis XIV* (Paris, 1997), 7–35, 91–160.

¹⁸ Canova-Green, *Benserade*, 94.



FIG. 1.—Louis XIV costumed as the sun in the “Ballet de la Nuit” (1653). Pen, wash, and gouache touched with gold. Workshop of Henry de Gissey, seventeenth century. Photo: Bulloz. Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, France. Photo credit: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York. Also available in color in the electronic edition of the *JMH* at <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/JMH/home.html>.

of the Baroque era?¹⁹ These events were meant to be “Allegories de l’Estat des temps” (as Ménestrier explained) and drew their importance, as Karl Möseneder has argued, from two fundamental political principles of the seventeenth century regarding the display and perception of power and authority. Like God, temporal rulers had to display their greatness in material creation. And common subjects had to be shown their sovereign’s majesty as directly as possible because they could not otherwise comprehend the abstract authority of the prince.²⁰

The comments of Louis XIV on the political role of spectacles at court addressed both the display and the perception of majesty. In the *Mémoires*, advice to the Dauphin written from 1661 on, the king described in practical terms the value of festivals and entertainment to the ruler. According to Louis, the court should be a “society of pleasures, which gives the courtiers an honest [*honnête*] familiarity with us, and touches and charms them more than one could say.” He contrasted this familiarity with the distance of his lesser subjects: “the people, on the other hand, enjoy spectacles, at which we, in any event, endeavor always to please.” Together, spectacles and pleasures were essential tools of government. “All our subjects in general are delighted to see that we like what they like,” commented Louis: “By this we hold their minds and their hearts, sometimes more strongly than we do by rewards or kindnesses.”²¹ Festivities, Louis XIV continued, directed the attention of the people away from deeper political issues, which they were in any case incapable of truly understanding, accustomed as they were to perceiving only the superficial.²² Here Louis XIV echoed Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), the influential Flemish Neostoic philosopher whose *Six Books of Politics or Civil Doctrine* (*Politiorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex*) first appeared in 1589 and went into thirty-one Latin editions (and as many vernacular translations) in the seventeenth century. Lipsius discussed “the nature of the common people, and by what means the same may be discreetly governed” in the fourth book of the *Politiorum sive civilis doctrinae*, arguing that princes need celebrations and

¹⁹ See Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “From ‘Société de plaisir’ to ‘Schones Neben-Werck’—the Changing Purpose of Court Festivals,” *German Life and Letters* 45, no. 3 (1992): 216–19.

²⁰ This is discussed most clearly in Ménestrier, *Traité des tournois* (1669), as cited in Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450–1650* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1984), 173, 4; and Karl Möseneder, *Zeremoniell und monumentale Poesie: Die “Entrée solennelle” Ludwigs XIV. 1660 in Paris* (Berlin, 1983), 34–43.

²¹ “Cette société de plaisirs, qui donne aux personnes de la cour une honnête familiarité avec nous, les touche et les charme plus qu’on peut dire. Les peuples, d’un autre côté, se plaisent au spectacle” (Quoted in Hoffmann, *Society of Pleasures*, 13, 30, 173–74).

²² Möseneder, *Zeremoniell*, 36.

ceremonies to communicate with the common people, who are “voyde of reason, . . . not led to judge of any thing by discretion or wisdom.” His analysis is founded on the assertion that “the common people are unstable, and nothing is more inconstant than the multitude.” There follows a selective concordance of classical authors intended to show “the chiefest passions of the people,” who are envious and suspicious, easily flattered and “slow of spirit.”²³ Critics of increasing royal power such as Jean de La Bruyère (1645–96) also acknowledged the political role of spectacles and pleasures: “It is a sure and ancient maxim in politics that to allow the people to be lulled by festivals, spectacles, luxury, pomp, pleasures, vanity, and effeminacy, to occupy their minds with worthless things, and to let them relish trifling frivolities, is efficiently preparing the way for a despotism.”²⁴ As the time of both extraordinary spectacles and everyday pleasures at court, the night was, as we will see, fundamental to this political culture.

After 1650, political theorists described the distinct but complementary roles of “pleasures” and “spectacles” and began to examine these events more systematically. Michel de Puré’s *Principles of Spectacles Ancient and Modern (Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux*, 1668) lists ten forms of modern spectacle: theater, balls, fireworks, jousts, “Courses de Bague,” carousels, masquerades, military exercises, royal entries, and ballet. His contemporary Ménestrier offered a similar list.²⁵ The German school of *Zeremonialwissenschaft* (ceremonial studies), centered in Saxony and Brandenburg in the first half of the eighteenth century, discussed at length the relationships among spectacle, ceremony, and authority.²⁶ The crowning work of the *Zeremonialwissenschaftler* was Julius Bernhard von Rohr’s *Introduction to the Knowledge of Ceremony of Great Rulers (Einleitung zur Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft der Grossen Herren*, 1729; 2nd ed., 1733), which offers a similar analysis of courtly entertainment.²⁷ According to Rohr, “pleasures [and] diversions” have “certain political goals behind them. They are meant to gain the love of the better sort

²³ From a contemporary English translation: Justus Lipsius, *Six Bookes of Politickes or Civil Doctrine*, trans. William Jones (London, 1594), 68–70.

²⁴ Jean de La Bruyère, *Les Caractères . . .*, ed. Robert Garapon (Paris, 1962), 275–76. See also the comments of Gabriel Naudé (1639) on “seduction and deception by appearances,” as cited in Möseneder, *Zeremoniell*, 36.

²⁵ Michel de Puré (1634–80), *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux* (Paris, 1668, repr., Geneva, 1972), 161–318; and Claude-François Ménestrier (1631–1705), *Traité des tournois, joustes, carrousels et autres spectacles publics* (Lyon, 1669; repr., Roanne, 1979).

²⁶ See the valuable study by Miloš Vec, *Zeremonialwissenschaft im Fürstenstaat: Studien zur juristischen und politischen Theorie absolutistischer Herrschaftsrepräsentation*, *Studien zur Europäischen Rechtsgeschichte* 106 (Frankfurt am Main, 1998).

²⁷ Julius Bernhard von Rohr (1688–1742), *Einleitung zur Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft der Grossen Herren* (reprint of the second ed., Berlin, 1733), ed. with a commentary by Monika Schlechte (Leipzig, 1990), 732–880.

and the rabble, because people's spirits are more easily guided through such festivities which caress the exterior senses."²⁸ Rohr lists twelve types of diversions, including chivalric sports, opera, ballet and theater, and processions.²⁹ Old and new sit side by side in all these lists, but the nocturnalization of court entertainment and festivity is especially striking. Of the dozen listed by Rohr, six (carnival/masquerade, dances/balls/ballet, opera, costume feasts, illuminations, and fireworks) were necessarily or typically nocturnal. The remaining equestrian diversions could also be held at night inside purpose-built riding halls. The Dresden *Reithaus*, illuminated by thousands of candles, was the scene of riding displays during Carnival in 1695 and during the visit of the Danish king Frederick IV (1699–1730) to the Saxon court in 1709. Torchlit evening sleigh rides are described at the Imperial court in Vienna from the early seventeenth century on.³⁰

The nocturnalization of spectacle in the seventeenth century reshaped court architecture. The great spaces built for balls and celebrations at European courts (such as the Whitehall Banqueting House in London, the *Herkules-Saal* or the *Kaiser-Saal* at the Munich residence, the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, or the *Riesensaal* of Dresden's Royal Palace) made possible more exclusive evening gatherings, allowing court society to develop and emphasize the night as never before in European civilization.³¹ Richard Alewyn was the first to link innovative uses of daily time with the new secular spaces of the Baroque (some of the largest constructed since antiquity) in his work on Baroque festival culture.³² He noted that between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries,

²⁸ Rohr, *Grossen Herren*, 733–34, as cited in Möseneder, *Zeremoniell*, 39.

²⁹ Rohr discusses (1) processions; (2) tourneys and chivalric sport; (3) carousels, Ringrennen, and equestrian ballet; (4) carnivals and masquerades; (5) concerts, dances, balls, and ballets; (6) operas and comedies; (7) costume feasts and "peasant weddings"; (8) sleigh rides; (9) illuminations; (10) fireworks; (11) target shooting; and finally (12) hunting (*Grossen Herren*, "Verzeichniß der Capitel," 732–875).

³⁰ For an illustration of a nocturnal tourney in the *Reithaus* in 1695, see Koslofsky, "Court Culture and Street Lighting," 750. See also Jean-Louis Sponcel, *Der Zwinger, die Hoffeste und die Schloßbaupläne zu Dresden* (Dresden, 1924), 73–98; and Beatrix Bastl, "Feuerwerk und Schlittenfahrt: Ordnungen zwischen Ritual und Zeremoniell," *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 51 (1996): 197–229.

³¹ Richard Alewyn and Karl Sälzle, *Das große Welttheater: Die Epoche der höfischen Feste in Dokument und Deutung* (Hamburg, 1959), 30–31. See Samuel John Klingensmith, *The Utility of Splendor: Ceremony, Social Life and Architecture at the Court of Bavaria, 1600–1800* (Chicago, 1993); and Hellmut Lorenz, "Barocke Festkultur und Repräsentation im Schloß zu Dresden," *Dresdner Hefte* 12, no. 38 (1994): 48–56.

³² Innovative organizations of space and time often develop together: consider the communal monastery and the daily schedule of Benedict's *Rule* or the work of Jacques LeGoff on medieval cities and "merchants' time." The numerous studies of new ways of apprehending, structuring, and controlling space in the Baroque age should call our attention to corresponding innovations in the measuring, structuring, and management of time, in all its divisions.

princely celebrations show a slow shift from the street to the court and from day to night. This was “the sharpest break in the history of celebrations in the West,” marking a new era in the history of the night.³³

The slow movement of European festivals and celebrations into the night, which had begun in the fifteenth century, quickened in the seventeenth.³⁴ Lighting up the night had always been an elite privilege, but Baroque celebrations used the night on an unprecedented scale as nocturnal entertainment began to take precedence over daytime festivities. In France a new era in the history of celebrations began on August 17, 1661, as the financier Nicolas Fouquet welcomed the young Louis XIV to Vaux-Le-Vicomte, Fouquet’s magnificent estate southeast of Paris.³⁵ Vaux-Le-Vicomte, the first Baroque chateau in France, is often described as the inspiration for Versailles, and the nocturnal *Gesamtkunstwerk* Fouquet presented there in August 1661 served as a model for the well-known Baroque celebrations of Louis XIV, such as the “Plaisirs de l’île enchantée” of 1664 and the “Divertissemens de Versailles” of 1674 (fig. 2).³⁶

The King and his courtiers arrived at Vaux-Le-Vicomte in the late afternoon; after viewing the chateau, the royal party waited for sunset, when Fouquet’s celebration was to begin.³⁷ The former protégé of Mazarin presented to the king an imposing nocturnal barrage of culture and luxury intended to display the wealth, power, and taste of the second-most-powerful man in the kingdom. Molière wrote and performed in the evening’s comedy-ballet, *The Impertinents* (*Les Fâcheux*), with music composed by Pierre Beauchamp. The set designs, lighting, and fireworks displays were the work of Charles Le Brun and Torelli. The comedy-ballet, which began after the *souper*, was followed by several fireworks displays. Accounts of the celebration carefully noted that all this took place after dark, with the king and courtiers retiring sometime after 2 a.m.

If we look back a century, we can see what was new about nocturnalization. On June 27, 1559, King Henry II of France (1519–59) opened a five-day tournament to celebrate the weddings of his daughter Elisabeth to Philip II of Spain and his sister Marguerite to Emmanuel-Philibert, Duke of Savoy. The

³³ Richard Alewyn, *Das große Welttheater: Die Epoche der höfischen Feste*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1985), 37–39.

³⁴ Alewyn sees “the transition from Renaissance to Baroque” as “the decisive phase” of the nocturnalization of festivals (ibid., 37).

³⁵ Jean Cordey, *Vaux-le-Vicomte*, preface by Pierre de Nolhac (Paris, 1924); and Peter-Eckhard Knabe, “Der Hof als Zentrum der Festkultur: Vaux-le-Vicomte, 17. August 1661,” in *Geselligkeit und Gesellschaft im Barockzeitalter*, ed. Wolfgang Adam, Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung 28, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1997) 2:859–70.

³⁶ See Alewyn and Sälzle, *Welttheater*, 98–102; and E. Magne, *Les Fêtes en Europe au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1930).

³⁷ Knabe, “Der Hof als Zentrum,” 861.

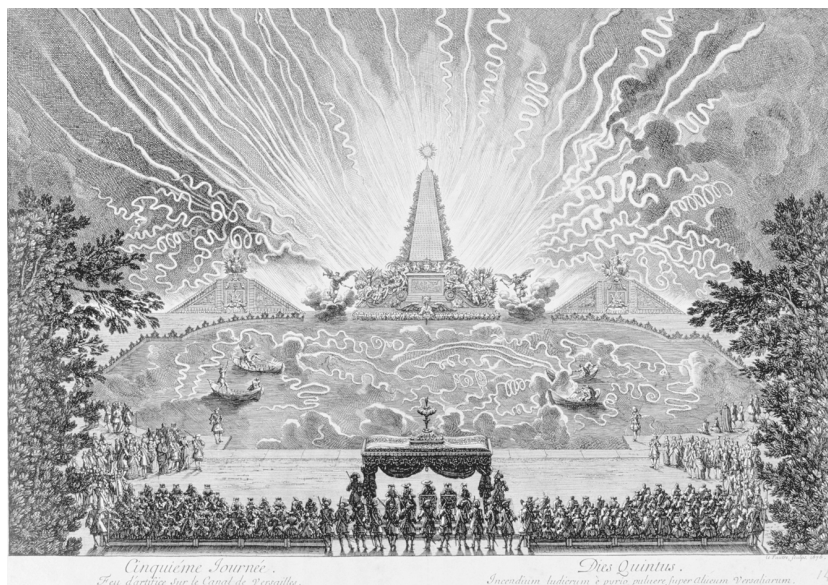


FIG. 2.—Fireworks display from the “Divertissemens de Versailles” of 1674. Engraving. Jean Le Pautre, 1676. Photo: Gerard Blot. Chateaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles, France. Photo credit: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

daytime jousts were the focus of the celebration, especially on the fateful third day. According to the eyewitness account of Antoine Caraccioli, Bishop of Troyes, by five o’clock in the afternoon “the hour [was] late, the weather extremely hot, and the tournament concluded.” Queen Catherine and the noble spectators begged to Henry to retire, but he insisted that “he would break his lance once more,” with fatal results.³⁸ To be sure, the festivals and celebrations of Henry II included lavish banquets at night, but the most elaborate events unfolded during the day.

English court celebrations under Henry VII and Henry VIII, like the Burgundian court practices that inspired them, could involve complex allegorical figures dancing at banquets in the evening, as at the Feast of the Pheasant at Lille in 1454 or at the court pageant celebrating the marriage of Prince Arthur

³⁸ The account of Antoine Caraccioli, Bishop of Troyes, is published in H. Noel Williams, *Henri II: His Court and Times* (London, 1910), 341–43. On the time of day of the accident, see also Lucien Romier, *Les origines politiques des guerres de religion*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1913–14), 2:379–80.

and Catherine of Aragon in 1501.³⁹ In these cases, however, the central message of the celebration was still articulated during the day. The evening entertainments “were appendages to the basic ingredients of any festive evening, feasting and dancing,” and they made no technical use of light and darkness.⁴⁰ In this way they contrast sharply with the most important English court spectacles of the seventeenth century, the masques of James I and Charles I. The Burgundian and Tudor festivals would have been incomprehensible without their daytime elements; the Stuart court masques dropped the daytime events and communicated only at night with theatrical lighting and effects.⁴¹

The courts of Protestant Germany show a similar expansion of the nocturnal aspects of festivals in the second half of the seventeenth century. In 1596, in celebration of the baptism of his eldest daughter, Landgrave Maurice of Hesse-Kassel held a chivalric tournament based on the myths of Jason and Perseus. There were several days of jousting, racing, and knightly sport; only the climax of the entire celebration, marked by a spectacular fireworks display, was held at night.⁴² After 1650, German princes began to shift these celebrations into the evening and night as a sign of luxury and prestige. The month-long “Festival of the Planets” celebrated at the gathering of the dukes of Saxony in Dresden in February 1678 exemplifies this development.

The “Festival of the Planets,” organized by Elector John George II (1656–80) for his three brothers (dukes of the cadet lines of Saxony-Weißenfels, Saxony-Merseburg, and Saxony-Zeitz), also offered numerous jousts and other equestrian sport. But the emphasis had shifted to the evening activities. On at least thirteen evenings the festival included entertainment (opera, ballet, and theater) in Dresden’s court theater, the *Komödienhaus*, built in 1664. These performances, in particular the court “Ballet of the Planets,” were the centerpieces of the festival.⁴³ The Dresden “Festival of the Planets,” which concluded

³⁹ See Gordon Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour: Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance*, Publications of the Sir Thomas Browne Institute, Leiden: General Series 6 (The Hague, 1977), 74–136; Strong, *Art and Power*, 16–19; Jean Verdon, *Night in the Middle Ages*, trans. George Holoch (Notre Dame, IN, 2002), 127–34.

⁴⁰ Strong, *Art and Power*, 18.

⁴¹ As Strong notes, daytime spectacles such as royal entries and tournaments were replaced by court entertainments under the first two Stuarts (*ibid.*, 153–70, 154).

⁴² Alewyn and Sälze, *Welttheater*, 91–97. In sixteenth-century Germany, town and village dances, including those of the elites of German cities such as Augsburg and Nuremberg, were held on Sunday afternoon. See Wolfgang Brunner, “Städtisches Tanzen und das Tanzhaus im 16. Jahrhundert,” in *Alltag im 16. Jahrhundert: Studien zu Lebensformen in mitteleuropäischen Städten*, ed. Alfred Kohler and Heinrich Lutz (Vienna, 1987), 45–64, 52.

⁴³ See Sponsel, *Der Zwinger*, 32–42; Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden: From Renaissance to Baroque* (New York, 2002), 30–34, 130–65; and Horst Richter, *Johann Oswald Harms: Ein deutscher Theaterdekorateur des Barock* (Emsdetten, Westphalia, 1963), 28–52. See also the *Dresdner Hefte* 11, no. 33 (1993),

with a massive fireworks display, was meant to demonstrate to the three younger brothers of John George II the culture and power concentrated at the Dresden court. For much of the festival, John George II and his court artists chose the night as the most effective background for this display; without these nocturnal performances the festival's theme would have made no sense.

The nocturnal celebrations of the Dresden court reached their high point under Frederick Augustus I, from 1697 also King Augustus II of Poland (1694/97–1733).⁴⁴ Through his election to the Polish throne in 1697 and his spectacular cultural politics, centered on his opulent courts at Dresden and Warsaw, Augustus sought to join the preeminent monarchs of his era.⁴⁵ Also depicting him as a sun king, his celebrations turned night into day; figure 3 shows a nocturnal celebration at the Holländisches Palais during the wedding of the Electoral Prince in 1719. Even equestrian events could be held at night, as noted above.

Alongside these nocturnal festivities, a much older use of the night was the display of fireworks, taken to new heights at the courts of the Baroque era.⁴⁶ With unintended irony, fireworks lit up the heavens for an instant before falling to earth, marrying the spectacular display of nocturnal power to a sense of the instability and illusion behind this display.⁴⁷ This period also expanded the visual and political counterpoint to the fireworks display, the urban “illumi-

special volume on “Johann Georg II und sein Hof.” The Festival of the Planets is described in Gabriel Tzschimmer, *Die Durchlauchtigste Zusammenkunft, oder: Historische Erzählung, was der durchlauchtigste fürst und herr, Herr Johann George der Ader, herzog zu Sachsen* (Nuremberg, 1680), which specifies the time of each day's events.

⁴⁴ See Sponsel, *Der Zwinger*; Georg Kohler, “Die Rituale der fürstlichen Potestas: Dresden und die deutsche Feuerwerkstradition,” in Kohler and Villon-Lechner, *Die schöne Kunst der Verschwendung*, 101–34; and Katrin Keller, “La Magnificence des deux Augustes: Zur Spezifik hofischer Kultur im Dresden des Augusteischen Zeitalters (1694–1763),” *Cahiers d'études germaniques* 28 (1995): 55–66.

⁴⁵ See Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden*, 193–237; and Karlheinz Blaschke, “Die kursächsische Politik und Leipzig im 18. Jahrhundert,” in *Leipzig: Aufklärung und Bürgerlichkeit*, ed. Wolfgang Martens (Heidelberg, 1990), 23–38.

⁴⁶ On fireworks, see Kevin Salatino, *Incendiary Art: The Representation of Fireworks in Early Modern Europe* (Santa Monica, CA, 1997); Kohler and Villon-Lechner, *Die schöne Kunst der Verschwendung*; and Eberhard Fähler, *Feuerwerke des Barock: Studien zur öffentlichen Fest und seiner literarischen Deutung vom 16.–18. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1974).

⁴⁷ As an “absolutist” ruler whose displays of power always exceeded his real political impact, Augustus the Strong noted this irony at an intimate fête with thirteen of his courtiers and his mistress in July 1711. At the meal each person was asked to write a phrase or motto in the guest book. Without comment, Augustus wrote “la feuse tierre (et) ies ne Reste que la feusme,” i.e., “the rocket climbs high, and nothing remains but smoke”—a realistic appraisal of the politics of spectacle from a monarch to his courtiers? See Paul Haake, *August der Starke im Urteil der Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1929), 121–23.

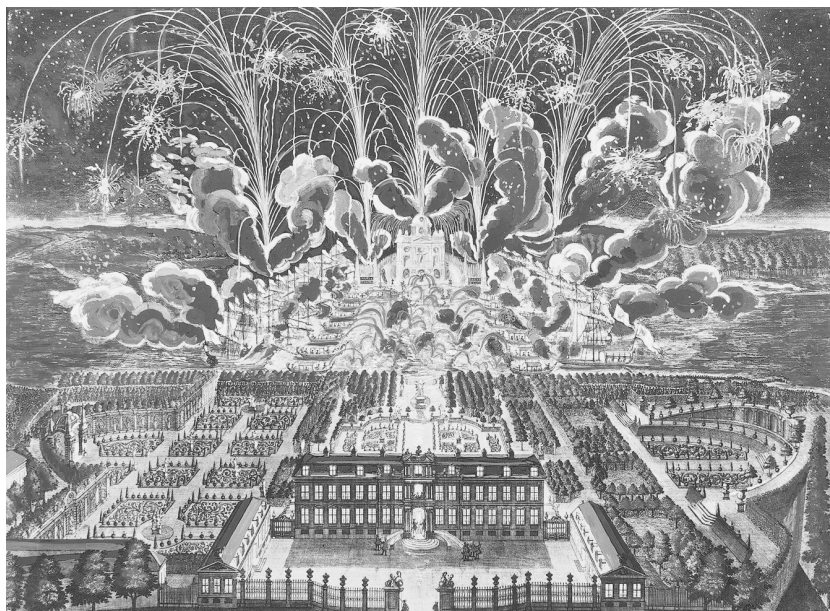


FIG. 3.—Fireworks and illumination of the Holländisches Palais, Dresden (1719). Colored engraving. Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann, 1719. Photo: Knud Petersen. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin. Photo credit: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, New York. Also available in color in the electronic edition of the *JMH* at <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/JMH/home.html>.

nation.” Instead of the single skyward focus of the fireworks display, the illumination placed multiple lights in the windows of a single building or across an entire city, a massive yet precise display of loyalty and obedience to the ruler who ordered the illumination or was celebrated by it (fig. 4). A Viennese pamphlet of 1706 lauded “true-hearted vassals / who have illuminated your houses and palaces / with new fires of joy”—an offering of light and loyalty to the emperor.⁴⁸ A Saxon author writing in 1736 emphasized the novelty of the practice: “It is difficult to say when the art of illumination arose in Germany. In my opinion it is unlikely one would have seen them before the end of the previous seventeenth century.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Johann Neiner, *Brachium Dexteræ Excelsi, Oder die . . . Sieghaften Entsetzung Barcellone . . . und nächtlicher Illumination der gantzen Stadt Wienn* (Vienna, 1706), 4v: “Ihr treu-gesinnte Vasallen aber / die Ihr heut eure Häuser und Palläste / mit neuen Freuden-Feuern beleuchtet.”

⁴⁹ See the contemporary survey from Christian Schoettgen, *Historische Nachricht von denen Illuminationen, wie solche zu alten und neuen Zeiten . . . in Gebrauch ge-*

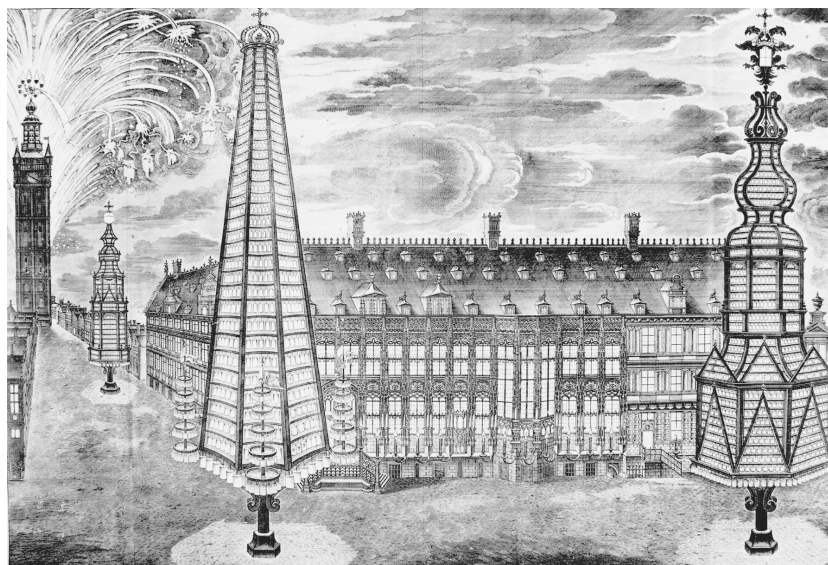


FIG. 4.—Illumination of the Hôtel de Ville, Ghent (1717). Engraving. Anonymous, 1719. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv, Wien: 462.224-A/B.

Two aspects of the political role of spectacles must be mentioned here. First, it is important to note that early modern polities not dominated by courts, such as the Venetian Republic, the United Provinces, and the German Free Imperial Cities, also used fireworks, illuminations, and theater to display power and authority to domestic and foreign audiences (see fig. 5 and the discussion of the Nuremberg city theater below).⁵⁰ Second, the politics of spectacle and pleasure described here did not guarantee success. The masques of Charles I of England presented to the king an ideal world of authority and virtue, but they had little meaning to important parts of the political nation. Charles I's last masque, Sir William Davenant's *Salmacida Spolia* of 1640, was viewed with trepidation by its audience; one courtier considered himself "being so

wesen (Dresden, 1736), 29. For example, Schoettgen notes that the illumination of Magdeburg in 1701 was the first in that city.

⁵⁰ See, e.g., Herbert Schwarzwälder, "Oberstleutnant Johann Georg von Bendeleben und sein großes Feuerwerk in Bremen zur Erinnerung an den Frieden von Habenhausen am 20. Oktober 1668," *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 58 (1980): 9–22; and Thomas Lediard, *Eine Collection curieuseur Vorstellungen in Illuminationen und Feier-Wercken . . . bey Gelegenheit einiger publicquen Festins und Rejouissances, in Hamburg* (Hamburg, 1730).

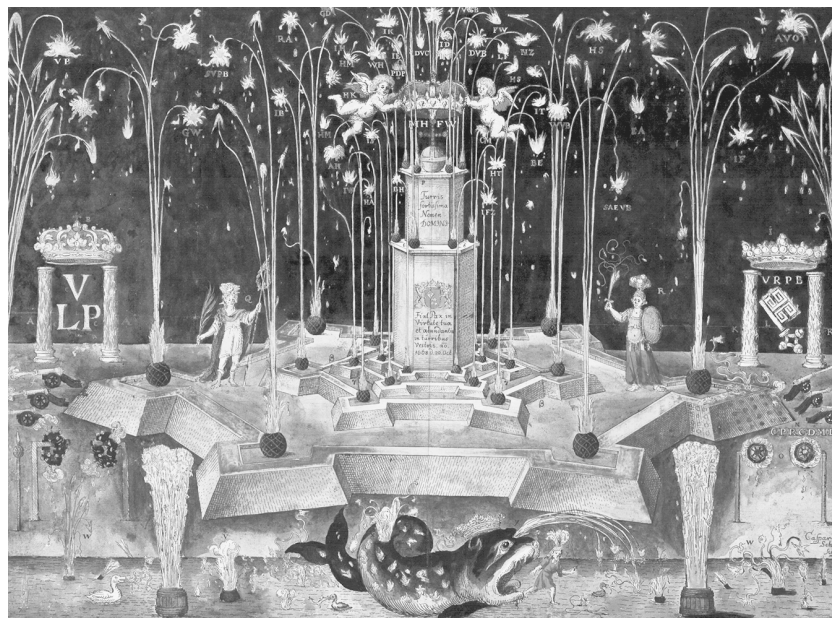


FIG. 5.—Fireworks display in Bremen, 1668, with the letters “VRPB” (Vivat Respublica Bremensis) at right. Colored engraving. Caspar Schultz, 1668. Staatsarchiv Marburg, Best. 4 f Bremen, Nr. 58. Also available in color in the electronic edition of the *JMH* at <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/JMH/home.html>.

wise as not to see it.”⁵¹ In similar terms, the spectacular court life of King-Elector Augustus II of Poland and Saxony did not attract the Saxon nobles who opposed his conversion to Catholicism and his absolutist policies. Throughout his long reign, these nobles had to be forced to attend some of his major celebrations. Of the 112 Saxon nobles personally invited to the Dresden wedding of the Electoral prince and the Habsburg princess Maria Josephine in 1719, only fifty-two were initially willing to attend. The other sixty offered a wide range of excuses from poverty to ill health; some later succumbed to pressure from Augustus and did appear.⁵² Court festivities demanded participation (often costly) on the terms set by the prince as host and affirmed the

⁵¹ Its designer Inigo Jones thought it “generally approved of, especially by all strangers” (Strong, *Art and Power*, 169–70). See also Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, CT, 1992).

⁵² Monika Schlechte, “Barocke Festkultur in Dresden: Quellenforschung zu einem kulturgeschichtlichen Phänomen,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Technischen Universität Dresden (Separatreihe 1 “Gesellschaftswissenschaften”)* 39, no. 6 (1990): 7–11.

sovereign's image as displayed—but subjects could and did refuse the pleasures and spectacles offered at court. The fact that nocturnal pleasures and spectacles were deployed by every prince of this age—successfully or not—is further evidence of the belief in their power.⁵³

II. DARKNESS AND THE PERSPECTIVE STAGE

Among the nocturnal spectacles and pleasures of the court, those of the theater deserve special attention. Nocturnal performances and entertainment consolidated new uses of darkness in both the politics of spectacle and in everyday court life. In the seventeenth century, ministers of state, artists, and architects brought the lighting and scenery techniques of the Italian court stage into performances north of the Alps, and darkness was essential to this new stage technology. The establishment of the Baroque perspective stage can thus serve as a rough index of nocturnalization. The use of darkness in court performances unfolded in three phases: first, the use of lighting effects without a fixed perspective stage, as in the early French *ballet de cour* and the English court masque; second, the use of temporary perspective stages with movable scenery and illusionist lighting; and third, the establishment of permanent Baroque perspective theaters.

These theatrical techniques arrived in England in the rarified atmosphere of the Stuart court masque, the counterpart to the French court ballet. Ben Jonson's first court masque, *The Masque of Blackness*, presented on Twelfth-Night, 1605, was described by Sir Dudley Carleton: "At Night we had the Queen's Maske in the Banqueting-House, or rather her Pagent." Music and dancing were primary to the masque, and the addition of speeches from characters on stage probably led Carleton to use also the term "pageant." These court masques, with theatrical designs by Inigo Jones, "brought the full resources of Italian theatrical machinery into use for the first time on an English stage."⁵⁴ The Stuart masques were performed in the multipurpose interior of

⁵³ Even the parsimonious soldier-king Frederick William I of Prussia, 1713–40, is only a partial exception. Recent studies have noted that Frederick William I, though legendary for his thrift and reduction of court life, also displayed the expected luxury and ceremony when receiving foreign ambassadors or princes. For a state visit of Augustus II in 1728, the Prussian king prepared a nocturnal shooting competition at the Charlottenburg palace illuminated by 8,000 lanterns. See Sponsel, *Der Zwinger*, 135; and Barbara Stollberg-Rillinger, "Höfische Öffentlichkeit: Zur zeremoniellen Selbstdarstellungen des brandenburgischen Hofes vor dem europäischen Publikum," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte N.F.* 7, no. 2 (1997): 145–76.

⁵⁴ Stephen Orgel, ed., *Introduction to Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques* (New Haven, CT, 1969), 3. See Russell West, "Perplexive Perspectives: The Court and Contestation in the Jacobean Masque," *Seventeenth Century* 18, no. 1 (2003): 25–43.

the Whitehall Banqueting House from 1622 until 1637, when a semipermanent “Masquing Room” was built. The fall of the monarchy prevented Charles I from building a permanent court theater.⁵⁵

In France, the *ballet de cour* developed under Catherine de Médicis and the last Valois kings. The first great example, the *Ballet comique de la reine* of October 1581 was performed from 10 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. in the Petit Bourbon with an extraordinary range of lighting effects. Its scenery was scattered throughout the hall, however, with spectators on three sides.⁵⁶ The Grand Théâtre of Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642) in the Palais Cardinal (inaugurated in January 1641) was the first French Baroque perspective stage using “a formal proscenium and an elevated stage where scenery flats could be changed to suggest different lighting effects.”⁵⁷ A remarkable grisaille shows the performance of the ballet “La Prospérité des Armes de la France” in the Grand Théâtre on February 7, 1641 (fig. 6). We see Louis XIII watching a darkened Baroque perspective stage from the ideal central point of view, illuminated by the light from the stage, with Cardinal Richelieu to his right and Queen Anne of Austria and the young future Louis XIV on his left.⁵⁸

Richelieu and Mazarin both sought out the most advanced theater designers and technicians from Italy. The correspondence of Cardinal Mazarin with his agent Elpidio Benedetti in Rome during the ministry of Richelieu shows especially clearly the political interest in the darkened Baroque perspective stage. Through his patronage of Roman Baroque artists, his relationship with Pietro da Cortona, and his contact with Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Mazarin put into motion the artistic policies he would later pursue as minister. Bernini was important to Mazarin not only for his talents in sculpture and architecture but also for his skill in theater technology. The Cavaliere’s Roman comedies of the 1630s were legendary for the “special effects” he brought to the stage. Despite their modest budgets, these performances all featured extraordinary illusions, such as the setting of the sun, the flooding of the Tiber, or a house that burst into flames (safely!) onstage. After negotiation with Mazarin and Benedetti in 1640, Bernini agreed to show Niccolò Menghi, a sculptor of his

⁵⁵ For permanent, purpose-built Baroque stages the English would have to wait until the Restoration: the Theatre Royal opened in Drury Lane in 1663, and the more elaborate Dorset Gardens Theater in Blackfriars opened in 1671. See Edward J. Dent, *Foundations of English Opera: A Study of Musical Drama in England during the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1965), 137–40.

⁵⁶ Strong, *Art and Power*, 119–22; and Gösta M. Bergmann, *Lighting in the Theatre* (Stockholm, 1977), 117–19.

⁵⁷ Hilliard T. Goldfarb, “Richelieu and Contemporary Art: ‘Raison d’etat’ and Personal Taste,” in *Richelieu: Art and Power*, ed. Hilliard T. Goldfarb (Montreal, Cologne, and Ghent, 2002), 240.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 240–42, illustration 107.

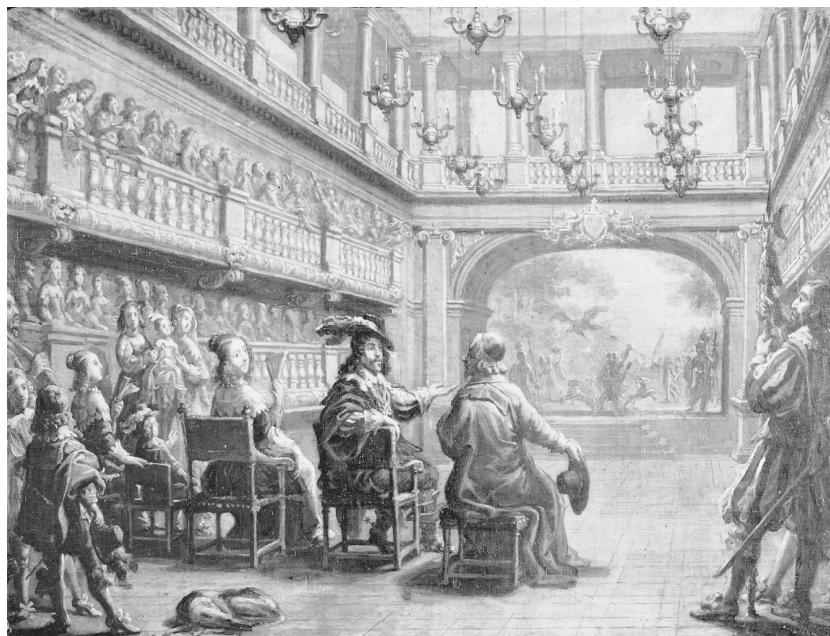


FIG. 6.—The ballet “La Prospérité des Armes de la France” at the Grand Théâtre du Palais Cardinal as viewed by Louis XIII and the royal family (1641). Oil on panel (grisaille). Juste D’Egmont, about 1641. Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris. Photo credit: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York. Also available in color in the electronic edition of the *JMH* at <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/JMH/home.html>.

studio who was making the trip to France, how to stage some of his renowned theatrical illusions. The one that most interested Mazarin and Benedetti was “the way in which one illuminates and in which one makes the sun and the night.”⁵⁹ The techniques developed and disseminated by men like Bernini and Torelli, who installed new stage machinery in the theaters of the Petit Bourbon (1645) and the Palais Royal (1647), made possible Richelieu’s court ballet described above and the “Ballet de la Nuit,” which began the age of the Sun King a dozen years later.

⁵⁹ Madeleine Laurain-Portemer, “Mazarin, militant de l’art baroque au temps de Richelieu (1634–1642),” *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire de l’Art Français* (1975), 65–100, here 72–74, 95, citing a letter of Benedetti to Mazarin dated March 7, 1640. See also Paul Fréart de Chantelou (1609–94), *Diary of the Cavaliere Bernini’s Visit to France*, ed. with an introduction by Anthony Blunt, annotated by George C. Bauer, trans. Margery Corbett (Princeton, NJ, 1985), “Appendix B, Bernini and the Theatre,” 339–41.

In the Holy Roman Empire some of the earliest nocturnal court theatricals (analogous to the court ballet or masque) were performed in Darmstadt (1600), Stuttgart (1609, 1616–18), and Salzburg (1618). The darkened perspective stage is first documented at the Dresden court in 1650 and at the Munich court of the Elector of Bavaria in 1651; the first performance of an Italian opera in the Empire came in Dresden in 1662, when Giovanni Bontempi's *Il paride* was presented at the wedding celebrations for the daughter of the Saxon Elector.⁶⁰ The performance began on the evening of November 3 at 9 p.m. and lasted until 2 a.m.⁶¹ In Munich and Dresden, permanent Baroque perspective theaters were opened in 1657 and 1664, respectively. At the Imperial court in Vienna, Leopold I (1658–1705) staged an extraordinary number of operas or “*dramme per musica*” during his long reign, using the main ballroom of the *Hofburg* and the *Hoftheater auf der Cortina*, built in 1666–67. These nocturnal spectacles were the favored mode of self-representation of the emperor and his court.⁶²

The Imperial Free City of Nuremberg inaugurated its *Nachtkomödienhaus* (lit. “night theater”) in 1668 with the performance of a piece now lost, the *Macaria* of Johann Geuder, by the sons of its ruling patrician families.⁶³ The *Nachtkomödienhaus* contained a classic Baroque perspective stage with the requisite lighting, a proscenium, an elevated stage, and movable wings to create the illusion of depth; as its name indicates, it was built to be used at night. The evening performance of *Macaria* on February 11, 1668, proclaimed the noble pretensions of the Nuremberg patricians. The city fathers sat in special boxes at the central, royal point of view while their sons declaimed the political doctrines of Lipsius, affirming the hierarchy of virtuous rulers above the turbulent rabble (see below, Sect. IV). The play concluded with the apotheosis of the patricians:

Not one sun stands here: many suns stand still
In this crowded room: You Sun-Prince! Fulfill

⁶⁰ Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly has underscored Werner Braun’s point that it is difficult to generalize about the state of opera in the Empire before 1660. See Werner Braun, “Opera in the Empire,” 437–64; and Sara Smart, “Ballet in the Empire,” 547–70, both in Behár and Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Spectaculum Europaeum*; Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden*, 166–92; and H. A. Frenzel, “The Introduction of the Perspective Stage in the German Court and Castle Theatres,” *Theatre Research* 3 (1961): 88–100.

⁶¹ Jörg Jochen Berns, Frank Druffner, Ulrich Schütte, and Brigitte Walbe, eds., *Erdengötter: Fürst und Hofstaat in der Frühen Neuzeit im Spiegel von Marburger Bibliotheks- und Archivbeständen; Ein Katalog* (Marburg, 1997), 489.

⁶² Goloubeva, *The Glorification of Emperor Leopold I*, 23–25, 45–81.

⁶³ Markus Paul, *Reichsstadt und Schauspiel: Theatrale Kunst im Nürnberg des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 2002), 292–325.

What our wishes desire! Let your rays of mercy
Pour out unmerited mercy upon our city.⁶⁴

Compared with Apollo and identified as “demigods” in the play’s epilogue, we see that the ruling fathers of Nuremberg found the nocturnal display of solar majesty and authority as compelling as did Louis XIV or Augustus II. Like these sun kings, the city fathers of Nuremberg used the darkened backdrop of the Baroque perspective stage to project their magnificence.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the purpose-built Baroque perspective stage displayed the highest technological and political achievements of European court theater. This stage relied on artificial illumination for its staging and special effects, and these effects were enhanced when performances were held in darkness. A contemporary described the stage equipment of the Dresden *Komödienhaus* in 1671: “The excellent effects of artificial perspective, the movement and transformation [of the scenery], and the machines built into the theater can be seen better at night, when performances are held with artificial light, than during the day.”⁶⁵ When the young Scotsman John Lauder, later Lord Fountainhall (1646–1722), visited “the king’s comedy house” (the theater of the Palais Royal) in Paris in April 1665, he judged “the thing that most commended it was its rare, curious, and most conceity machines.” He was amazed by “the skies, boats, dragons, vildernesses, the sune itselfe so artificially represented that under night wt candle light nothing could appear liker them.”⁶⁶ The leading guide to theater in France, Ménestrier’s *Des Ballets anciens et modernes* (1682), also emphasized the importance of darkness: “Ordinarily these performances are held at night, with artificial lighting: this is better for the machines than daylight, which reveals the theater’s artifice. Artificial lighting can also be arranged where needed for maximum effect. Some lights illuminate from a hidden location, making an object appear lit by daylight. Some are arranged so that they leave in shadow the places where stage equipment is located.”⁶⁷ In Restoration London the simple staging and

⁶⁴ Ibid., 323: “Nicht eine Sonn hier steht: Viel Sonnen stehen stille / In diesen engen Raum: Du Sonnen-Prinz! Erfülle / Was unser Wünschen wünscht! Laß deine Gnadenstrahlen / Die unverdiente Gnad an unsrer Statt bezahlen.”

⁶⁵ Tobias Beutel, *Churfürstlicher Sächsicher stets grünender hoher Cedern-Wald* (Dresden, 1671), R4r. See also Moritz Fürstenau, *Zur Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters am Hofe zu Dresden* (Dresden, 1861–62, repr., Leipzig, 1979), 217–33; and Irmgard Becker-Glauch, *Die Bedeutung der Musik für die Dresdener Hoffeste bis in die Zeit Augusts des Starken* (Kassel and Basel, 1951), 30–79.

⁶⁶ John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall, *Journals of Sir John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall . . . 1665–1676*, ed. with introduction by Donald Crawford, Publications of the Scottish History Society 36 (Edinburgh, 1900), 3–5.

⁶⁷ Claude-François Ménestrier, *Des ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du*

open-air, daytime performances familiar to us from Elizabethan theater had been supplanted by the darkened perspective stage.⁶⁸ For a production of Shakespeare's *Tempest* at the new Dorset Gardens Theater in 1673, the stage directions of the poet laureate and dramatist Thomas Shadwell show the full use of these special effects:

Act I, Scene I.

The front of the stage is opened, . . . the curtain rises, and discovers a new frontispiece. . . . Behind this is the scene, which represents a thick cloudy sky, a very rocky coast, and a tempestuous sea in perpetual agitation. This *Tempest* . . . has many dreadful objects in it, as several spirits in horrid shapes flying down amidst the sailors, then rising and crossing in the air. And when the ship is sinking, the whole house is darkened, and a shadow of fire falls upon 'em. This is accompanied by lightning, and several claps of thunder to end the storm.⁶⁹

This panoply of illusions was impossible without the ability to darken the whole theater.

The origins of these chiaroscuro effects take us back to the theater of the late Italian Renaissance. The Medici dukes pioneered the form, supporting their new dynasty with extraordinary displays of light and power at night.⁷⁰ At the performance of Antonio Landino's *Il Commodo* in the Palazzo Medici in 1539, the sun, simulated by a two-foot diameter water-filled crystal globe lit from behind, rose to open the play, moved across the sky, and set at the conclusion: this was one of the very first uses of a lighting effect on stage. A permanent court perspective theater, the *Teatro Mediceo*, was erected in the Uffizi Palace in 1589. With its proscenium arch, movable wings, single royal viewing point, and complex lighting reliant on nocturnal performances, the *Teatro Mediceo* was the forerunner of all the Baroque perspective theaters described above. Roy Strong described its specific political role: "this highly artificial means of creating visual experience and controlling its reception by the audience [based primarily on the use of darkness and light], evolved at a court presided over by a new dynasty ever-anxious to promote itself to new levels of grandeur to conceal its bourgeois origins."⁷¹

The Italians also published the first description of modern theater techniques, Sebastiano Serlio's "Second Book of Architecture" (1545). Serlio discussed stage lighting in some detail and described simulating sunset and night

théâtre (Paris, 1682), cited in Jan Clarke, "Illuminating the Guénégaud Stage: Some Seventeenth-Century Lighting Effects," *French Studies* 53, no. 1 (1999): 3–15, 7.

⁶⁸ See the rich and detailed study by R. B. Graves, *Lighting the Shakespearean Stage, 1567–1642* (Carbondale, IL, 1999).

⁶⁹ Quoted in Dent, *Foundations of English Opera*, 139–40.

⁷⁰ See Strong, *Art and Power*, 5–6, 126–52; Bergmann, *Lighting*, 44–88. Of course, the other Northern Italian courts shared in the development of these theater techniques.

⁷¹ Strong, *Art and Power*, 140.

on stage, as in the 1539 performance of *Il Commodo*. The first direct reference to the benefits of darkness for the theater is in the “Dialogues on Stage Affairs” (ca. 1565) of Leone Di Somi (ca. 1525–ca. 1590), the extraordinary Jewish court physician and playwright in Mantua: “It is a natural fact . . . that a man who stands in the shade sees much more distinctly an object illuminated from afar. . . . Wherefore I place only a few lamps in the auditorium, while at the same time I render the stage as bright as I possibly can.”⁷² Di Somi’s advice would be expanded in theory and practice as these Italian techniques of stage illumination were brought north in the course of the seventeenth century by men like Inigo Jones and the architect Joseph Furttentbach of Ulm (1591–1667), who studied theater techniques in Italy before applying them in their native lands. In his writings on theater design, Furttentbach emphasized the utility of darkness discovered by the Italians: “No windows are placed at the sides of the front pit. The walls there are left unbroken so that the spectator will not be blinded but will sit in darkness and have greater wonder at the [simulated] daylight falling in at the streets between the houses, as well as at the light of morning coming from between the clouds. . . . It were better if no windows were put at the sides of the audience, so that the spectators, *left in darkness like the night*, would turn their attention to the daylight on the stage”⁷³ So began a new epoch of European theater, which relied on staging at night or in darkness. Strong’s reading of the visual politics of the *Teatro Mediceo* applies to all the chiaroscuro theaters set up at courts from Versailles to Vienna, Stockholm to Madrid: “Enclosed within the *teatro* of the Uffizi Palace, an audience of some three thousand was to be subject time and again to some amazing spectacle glorifying the Medici in whose eyes all lines of vision met.”⁷⁴

The association of the theater with darkness and illusion in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries becomes especially significant when we note that this age saw the theater as the supreme metaphor for human existence. Like the apocryphal last words of Cardinal Mazarin (“Tirez le rideau, mon rôle est joué”), countless funeral sermons and funeral orations of the age begin with the Baroque commonplace: “Our life is well-compared with a play.”⁷⁵ As

⁷² Leone di Somi, “Dialogues on Stage Affairs,” in Allardyce Nicoll, *The Development of the Theatre* (New York, 1966), 275.

⁷³ Joseph Furttentbach the Elder, *Mannhafter Kunstspiegel*, in *The Renaissance Stage: Documents of Serlio, Sabbattini and Furttentbach*, ed. Barnard Hewitt, trans. Allardyce Nicoll, John H. McDowell, and George R. Kernodle (Coral Gables, FL, 1958), 206 (emphasis mine).

⁷⁴ Strong, *Art and Power*, 140. On Madrid see Margaret Rich Greer, *The Play of Power: Mythological Court Dramas of Calderón de la Barca* (Princeton, NJ, 1991), and the literature cited there.

⁷⁵ See the model funeral sermon (based on the funeral sermon for Agnes von Dohrstadt) in Balthasar Kindermann’s *Der Deutsche Redner*, 1st ed. (Wittenberg, 1660), 275:

one scholar of German literature has noted: “At no time has the word ‘Theater’ or its Latin form ‘theatrum’ had anywhere near as wide a range of meaning as in the Baroque.”⁷⁶ The darkness and illusion fundamental to the theater of the age shadowed this wide range of associations.

III. THE NOCTURNALIZATION OF DAILY LIFE AT COURT

After the spectacular Baroque celebrations described above came to their conclusion with a magnificent fireworks display or radiant theatrical performance, did life at court return to the dawn-to-dusk rhythm typical of early modern life? At courts before the mid-seventeenth century, this was usually the case. But slowly the new emphasis on the night in court celebrations began to reorder everyday routines at court. New uses of the night at court converged with urban developments as princes and courtiers regularly extended the legitimate social part of the day long past sunset, and often past midnight.

This growing emphasis on the night is reflected by a new theme in the moral criticism of court life. Long characterized as an immoral space (as the German proverb “bei Hof, bei Höll” indicates),⁷⁷ the court was now condemned for its immoral use of time. “The night is turned into day and the day into night” at court, reversing the divine order.⁷⁸ As the French nobleman Casimir Freschot remarked in his guide to life at the Imperial court in Vienna in 1705: “The brevity of the day for persons of quality, who never rise before noon, and who consequently do not have even four or five hours of daylight, makes social intercourse at night necessary.”⁷⁹ Another commentator, the Pietist Phillip Balthasar Sinold, complained that “the courtiers alter the order of nature by mak-

“Unser Leben wird füglich mit einem Schauspiel verglichen.” On Mazarin, see Johann Michael von Loen (1694–1776), *Gesammelte kleine Schriften (1749–1752)*, reprint of the 1750–52 ed. (Frankfurt am Main, 1972), vol. 1, 45.

⁷⁶ “Zu keiner Zeit hatte das Wort Theater bzw. seine lateinische Form theatrum einen annähernd weiten Bedeutungsumfang wie im Barock” (Thomas Kirchner, “Der Theaterbegriff des Barocks,” *Maske und Kothurn* 31 [1985]: 131–41, quote on 131). Jonathan Dewald also emphasizes theater as the image of political life in his study of *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570–1715* (Berkeley, 1993), 37–38.

⁷⁷ “At court—in hell”: see Helmuth Kiesel, “*Bei Hof, bei Höll*”: *Untersuchungen zur literarischen Hofkritik von Sebastian Brant bis Friedrich Schiller* (Tübingen, 1979).

⁷⁸ Rohr, *Grossen Herren*, 18–19: “die Nacht in Tag, und der Tag in Nacht verwandelt.”

⁷⁹ Casimir Freschot (1640?–1720), *Memoires de la cour de Vienne, ou Remarques faites par un voyageur curieux sur l’état present de cette cour* (Cologne [actually Amsterdam], 1705), 91. German translation as *Relation von dem Kayserlichen Hofe zu Wien* (Amsterdam, 1705), 51–52. On Freschot, see Erich Zöllner, “Das barocke Wien in der Sicht französischer Zeitgenossen,” in *Probleme und Aufgaben der österreichischen Geschichtsforschung: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, ed. Heide Dienst and Gernot Heiss (Munich, 1984), 383–94.

ing the day into night and the night into day.” These night people “stay awake in order to indulge in their entertainments, though other people sleep: afterwards to restore the vigor lost by their sensual pleasures they sleep while other people are awake and attend to their business.”⁸⁰

The nocturnalization of court life is documented by a wide variety of sources. Much of our evidence comes from the polycentric Holy Roman Empire, with its profusion of courts great and small. In their (less than constant) search for discipline, concord, and good order, most princes left detailed court ordinances and court diaries, a fairly consistent set of sources on everyday life at court. The court ordinances of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries prescribe a daily schedule no different from that of the other orders of society: early to bed and early to rise. At the Brandenburg court in Berlin in the late fifteenth century, the Privy Council met at 6 a.m. in the summer and 7 a.m. in the winter.⁸¹ The times set for worship, for meals, and for the closing of the palace gate are the most common indications of the course of the day at court.⁸² Under the last Valois kings, the French court also kept a traditional daily schedule, reinforced by the dangers of nocturnal violence in the periods of civil war. A 1585 court ordinance of Henry III (1574–89) set the king’s *souper*, the last meal of the day, at six in the evening; at 8 p.m. the king would retire to his chamber. The gates of the Louvre were to close not long after 8 p.m. and open at five in the morning.⁸³ Members of the court, including the king, might well be out much later at night, but such activity remained clandestine.

At the Saxon court, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ordinances show a traditional division of the day. At the court of Elector Augustus I (1553–86), meals were to be served “in the morning around ten o’clock and in the evening at five.” The 1637 court ordinance of John George I (1611–56) set the day’s meals at nine in the morning and four in the afternoon; the gates were to be closed at nine in the summer and eight in the winter.⁸⁴ Surveys of

⁸⁰ The author of several devotional tracts and a Pietist utopia, Sinold also published a manual of advice, *Die Wissenschaft zu leben . . . und . . . ein tüchtiges Mitglied der menschlichen Gesellschaft zu seyn* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1739), 212: “Die Hofleute verändern die Ordnung der Natur, indem sie aus dem Tage Nacht machen und aus der Nacht Tag machen.” On Sinold von Schütz, see Hans Wagener, “Faramonds Glukseligste (sic) Insel: Eine pietistische Sozialutopie,” *Symposium* 26 (1972): 78–89, and the literature cited there.

⁸¹ J. von Pflugk-Hartung, ed., *Im Morgenrot der Reformation* (Berlin, 1925), 182–83.

⁸² On the shift from two meals to three per day, see Sandgruber, “Zeit der Mahlzeit,” 459–72.

⁸³ Jacqueline Boucher, “La nuit dans l’imagination et le mode de vie de la cour des derniers Valois,” in Bertrand, *Penser la Nuit*, 413–24, 418; see the overview in Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe’s Dynastic Rivals, 1550–1780* (Cambridge, 2003), 150–60.

⁸⁴ Arthur Kern, ed., *Deutsche Hofordnungen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1905, 1907), 2:49, 71, 79.

everyday life at sixteenth-century courts confirm these impressions. By about nine at night the court was to be quiet, with the gates locked. Any later nocturnal gatherings would have been dimly lit at best: court inventories recorded and limited the number of tallow lights and (much more expensive) wax candles used each week.⁸⁵

For Saxony after 1656, court diaries are an especially rich source on everyday life. The diaries, which recorded daily events at court, became particularly important when the Saxon Electorate was divided among the four sons of Elector John George I upon his death in 1656.⁸⁶ The four brothers agreed to pursue a common foreign policy and to maintain good relations: to this end they registered the daily events at their respective courts and regularly sent copies of these court diaries to one another. Offering a day-to-day view of Saxon court life, the diaries describe, often in minute detail, the visitors, ceremonies, and celebrations at each court, including the time and place of each event. In Dresden, the birthday celebrations for Elector John George II in 1664 and 1665 began with prayers at six or seven o'clock in the morning. After a service lasting several hours, the court sat down to a midday meal, followed by an afternoon worship service. No celebration in the evening is mentioned for either year.⁸⁷ At the smaller Halle court of Duke Augustus in 1676, the court diary shows a traditional daily schedule: no activities after the evening meal are described.⁸⁸ Most often, the duke took his evening meal in his own chambers or those of the duchess: the official or social part of the day had come to an end. When a troupe of traveling actors came to the Halle court and performed "Love's Great Garden of Confusion" and "The Two Husbands Duped" on August 14, 1676, they did so in the afternoon. That evening, meals were again taken separately in the chambers.⁸⁹ Both norms and practices reflected a dawn-to-dusk rhythm.

⁸⁵ Kurt Treusch von Buttlar, "Das tägliche Leben an den deutschen Fürstenthöfen des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 4 (1899): 15–19.

⁸⁶ The eldest son, John George II, inherited the bulk of the territory, the electoral dignity, and the Dresden court; the three younger sons (Augustus, Christian, and Maurice) founded the cadet lines of Saxony-Weißenfels, Saxony-Merseburg, and Saxony-Zeitz, with their courts at Halle, Merseburg, and Zeitz, respectively. Typically the three younger brothers sent their court diaries to John George II in Dresden, who in turn sent reports of the comings and goings at his court to Halle, Merseburg, and Zeitz. See Gabriele Henkel, "Die Hofstagebücher Herzog Augusts von Sachsen-Weißenfels," *Wolfenbüttler Barock-Nachrichten* 18, no. 2 (1991): 75–114; and Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden*, 30–34.

⁸⁷ Eberhard Schmidt, *Der Gottesdienst am Kurfürstlichen Hofe zu Dresden* (Göttingen, 1961), 32–34.

⁸⁸ Henkel, "Hofstagebücher," 106–14.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 111–12: "Der Liebe großer Irrgarten und darauff das Poßenspiel: Die 2 betrogene Ehemänner gennant, agiert."

The afternoon performance of the strolling players who came to Halle in August 1676 was far removed from the latest lighting techniques of Baroque theater seen, for example, in the Dresden *Komödienhaus* or the Nuremberg *Nachtkomödienhaus*. The small provincial court of Saxony-Weißenfels at Halle lagged behind the latest trends in nocturnal sociability.⁹⁰ In Saxony, these trends emerged from the court in Dresden, where the Saxon princes and their court nobles began to exploit the expressive possibilities of the night. When John George III became Elector of Saxony in 1680, he reduced court life and expenditure on festivals in favor of the military, and performances in the *Komödienhaus* dropped off for several years.⁹¹ But in the 1680s Dresden saw a new form of elite sociability: nobles and court officials who had attended evening performances at the *Komödienhaus* began to hold their own evening balls and masquerades.⁹² These elites also held the city's first honorable nocturnal funerals.⁹³ Slowly, the social uses of the night were expanding beyond court celebrations and entertainment. The Saxon court diaries of John George IV (1691–94) and Augustus II (1694–1733) confirm this shift to evening entertainments in the everyday life of the Dresden court.⁹⁴ In addition to the court diaries, the essays of Johann Michael von Loen (discussed below) describe the wide range of nocturnal entertainment the author enjoyed there during visits to Dresden from 1718 to 1723.

Nocturnalization shaped almost every aspect of life at court, from architecture to cosmetics.⁹⁵ Matthaeus Daniel Pöppelmann (1662–1736), the architect

⁹⁰ In 1680, the court moved from Halle to Weißenfels on the accession of Duke John Adolph, and in 1685 a small *Komödiensaal* was opened in the Weißenfels palace. See Klaus-Peter Koch, "Das Jahr 1704 und die Weißenfelser Hofoper," in *Weißenfels als Ort literarischer und künstlerischer Kultur im Barockzeitalter*, ed. Roswitha Jacobsen (Amsterdam and Atlanta, 1994), 75–95.

⁹¹ See Fähler, *Feuerwerke des Barock*, 125.

⁹² Sponzel, *Der Zwinger*, 43.

⁹³ In Dresden and in other Lutheran cities such as Berlin, court nobles and urban elites began to stage torchlit nocturnal funeral processions in the 1680s. They were quickly imitated by citizens and townspeople, despite the vehement resistance of the clergy, and by 1700 nocturnal funerals were the norm in Lutheran cities. See Craig Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead: Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany* (New York, 2000), 133–59.

⁹⁴ So, e.g., the evening ball attended by John George IV on Tuesday, January 10, 1693: "Hat Abends Herr Ober-Jägermeister von Erdtmannsdorff in seinem Hause den Ball gegeben, wobey Ihr Churfürstl. Durchl. zu Sachsen unser gnädigster Herr auch erschienen" (Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, OHMA, O IV, Nr. 69, Hofdiarium, 1693).

⁹⁵ Two aspects of court life relatively unaffected by nocturnalization were the hunt and the schedule of Christian worship services.

of the Dresdner *Zwinger*, described the innovative uses of daily time and courtly space in the elegant galleries and gardens he had designed in Dresden, noting in 1729 that “in the comfortable season of the year the most esteemed ladies and cavaliers of the court and many residents of the city go strolling in this garden . . . until late in the evening.”⁹⁶ At the Imperial residence in Vienna the streets were full of traffic after dark, as Freschot observed: “in this great city . . . one is underway just as often by night as by day—some to pursue the pleasures on offer, some to wait upon secret dealings, of which there can be no shortage in a place where ministers from all the powers of the world are found.”⁹⁷ When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) visited Vienna in 1716 she reported that “’tis not long since two coaches, meeting in a narrow street at night, and the ladies in them not being able to adjust the ceremonial of which should go back, sat there with equal gallantry till two in the morning.”⁹⁸ Freschot also refers to audiences with the emperor scheduled for about seven to nine in the evening in winter.

At Versailles, the center of European court life, a range of sources document everyday “night life” during the reign of Louis XIV. The typical day began with the royal *lever* at nine and ended at midnight. In 1692, the Duc de Saint-Simon (1675–1755) described evenings of music, cards, and billiards, called *appartements*, held thrice weekly in winter. These gatherings lasted from seven until ten in the evening in rooms that were “beautifully illuminated.”⁹⁹ Saint-Simon noted that even after Louis stopped attending the *appartements* and “spent the evening with Madame de Maintenon, working with different ministers one after the other,” the king “still . . . wished his courtiers to attend assiduously.”¹⁰⁰ Although she was an outsider at Versailles, Charlotte Elisabeth d’Orléans (Liselotte von der Pfalz, 1652–1722) reveals in her letters that she also lived in the fashionable new rhythm of court life, rising around 9 a.m.

⁹⁶ Matthaeus Daniel Pöppelmann, *Vorstellung und beschreibung des . . . Zwinger Gartens Gebäuden oder Der königl: Orangerie zu Dresden* (Dresden, 1729), cited in Peter Lahnstein, *Das Leben im Barock: Zeugnisse und Berichte, 1640–1740* (Stuttgart, 1974), 110.

⁹⁷ Freschot, *Relation von dem Kayserlichen Hofe zu Wien*, 51.

⁹⁸ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Mrs. <T-----I>, September 26, 1716, in *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford, 1965), 1:273.

⁹⁹ Klingensmith, *Utility of Splendor*, 171.

¹⁰⁰ Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon (1675–1755), *Memoirs of Louis XIV and the Regency, by the Duke of Saint-Simon*, trans. Bayle St. John, 3 vols. (Washington DC, 1901), 1:34, and *Mémoires de M. le duc de Saint-Simon*, reprint of the 1879–1930 ed. of Hachette, 43 vols. (Paris, 1975–): 1:70–71.

and retiring at midnight.¹⁰¹ Research on the courts of Henry IV and Louis XIII has not shown this kind of regular night life.¹⁰²

At the Bavarian court in Munich, which vied with those in Dresden and Vienna to rank as the most magnificent in the Empire, Elector Max Emmanuel (1679–1726) began holding such *appartements* in the mid-1680s: “five or six rooms, one after the other, all beautifully adorned and illuminated, with various tables for gaming” were set up, along with another room for dancing. As the introduction of the *appartements* suggests, daily life at the Bavarian court slowly but steadily shifted to later hours and more nocturnal activities: a 1589 court ordinance set the *coucher* of the Bavarian duke at nine in the summer and eight in winter, but by the eighteenth century, eight to ten in the evening was the normal supper hour; the *coucher* usually took place around midnight. In the second decade of the eighteenth century the diary of Count von Preysing’s life at the Bavarian court mentions polite conversation that typically ended around 10 p.m. and a 1719 masquerade that went until five in the morning.¹⁰³

Extending the day into the night was becoming a part of an aristocratic style, and one’s appearance by candlelight became correspondingly more important. During her stay at the Electoral court in Hanover in December 1716, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu noted that “French Comedians play here every night” and remarked that “all the Women here have litterally rosy cheeks, snowy Foreheads and bosoms, jet eyebrows, and scarlet lips, to which they generally add Coal black hair. These perfections never leave them till the hour of their Death and have a very fine effect by Candlelight, but I could wish they were handsome with a little more variety.”¹⁰⁴ Telling time at night, which for centuries had apparently been of little concern at court, also became more important. In his 1665 diary describing the visit of Bernini to France, Paul Fréart de Chantelou mentions a novelty presented to the Cavaliere: “His Eminence [the abbé Buti] showed the Cavaliere a clock for use at night, which had a dial

¹⁰¹ Maria Fürstenwald, “Liselotte von der Pfalz und der französische Hof,” in *Europäische Hofkultur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. August Buck, Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung 8–10, 3 vols. (Hamburg, 1981), 3:468.

¹⁰² See Boucher, “La cour des derniers Valois,” 413–24; and Émile Magne, *La Vie quotidienne au temps de Louis XIII* (Paris, 1942), 50–90.

¹⁰³ Klingensmith, *Utility of Splendor*, 171. On *appartements* at the court of Charles XII (1697–1718) of Sweden, see Fabian Persson, *Servants of Fortune: The Swedish Court between 1598 and 1721* (Lund, 1999), 53.

¹⁰⁴ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Lady Rich, December 1, 1716, in *Complete Letters*, 1:288. On cosmetics, see Melissa Hyde, “The Make-Up of the Marquise: Boucher’s Portrait of Pompadour at Her Toilette,” *Art Bulletin* 82, no. 3 (2000): 453–75, and the literature cited there. See also Piero Camporesi on “the revenge of the night,” in *Exotic Brew: The Art of Living in the Age of Enlightenment*, trans. Christopher Woodall (Cambridge, 1994), 12–19.

illuminated by a lamp, so that one could tell the time at any hour."¹⁰⁵ These clocks, like urban street lighting, were an invention of the seventeenth century. They were first and foremost luxury objects, but they also indicate a new interest in marking time slightly more accurately at night.¹⁰⁶

By the early eighteenth century, evening diversions and nocturnal entertainments such as gaming and dancing were considered typical of everyday life at court. In his *Introduction to the Knowledge of Ceremony of Great Rulers* (1729), Julius Bernhard von Rohr distinguishes between orderly and disorderly courts, based on the regular division of the day: "At some courts, . . . a certain hour is set at which the princely rulers and their servants take their rest, and in the morning arise from their beds." Fixed schedules made for orderly court life, but the pursuit of pleasure meant disorder. "The night is turned into day and the day into night" at these disorderly courts, where "a large part of the time meant for nightly rest" is spent "in eating, drinking, gambling, dancing, and other divertissements" by courtiers who "then sleep almost until noon."¹⁰⁷

In his *Introduction to the Knowledge of Ceremony of Great Rulers*, Rohr's criticism of night life at court is circumspect, typical of his tone when discussing "great rulers." Rohr's comments on dancing in the companion volume to the *Great Rulers*, his *Introduction to the Knowledge of Ceremony of Private Persons* (*Einleitung zur Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft der Privat-Personen*, 1728), show how disturbing the new uses of the night could be: "The balls of the well-born or the common dancing-parties are held at just that time of terror and darkness when the spirit of darkness rules: [he] arranges these [dances], and he is obeyed there. . . . The darkness, the snares, the masks behind which one hides often permit shameful liberties."¹⁰⁸ According to Rohr, the grave moral dangers of dancing arose because "one goes too far with regard to the hour, one does not stop at the proper time, [and so] the night, which was made by God for rest, is transformed by this sensuality into day."¹⁰⁹ In his guide to

¹⁰⁵ Chantelou, *Diary of the Cavaliere Bernini's Visit*, 179.

¹⁰⁶ Night clocks were first designed in Rome, reportedly at the request of Pope Alexander VII (Chigi, 1655–67). On an early eighteenth-century Florentine night clock (case and mosaics by Giovanni Battista Foggini; woodwork by Leonard van der Vinne) in the Getty Museum collection, see Peter Fusco, "Curator's Report: Proposed Purchase, Night Clock," May 6, 1997, J. Paul Getty Museum, Permanent Collection, Object File, Acc. No. 97.DB.37, 1–5. For a survey of European night clocks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see also Alessandra Mazzonis, "Un orologio del XVII secolo al Museo Correale di Sorrento: Il notturno di Pietro T. Campani," *Kermes* 14, no. 44 (2001): 17–26, 69.

¹⁰⁷ Rohr, *Grossen Herren*, 18–19.

¹⁰⁸ Julius Bernhard von Rohr, *Einleitung zur Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft der Privat Personen*, ed. with a commentary by Gotthart Frühsorge (Berlin, 1728; repr., Leipzig, 1989), 467–68.

¹⁰⁹ "Man treibt Übermaß dabei in Ansehung der Zeit, man höret nicht zu rechter Zeit

comportment for “private persons” Rohr presents a general critique of the disorder of nocturnal sociability. Late hours at coffeehouses and nocturnal funerals also come under his criticism as widespread but improper uses of the night.

Rohr’s association of night life with the wellborn is reflected in the London diary (1717–21) of William Byrd of Virginia (1674–1744). After noting his attention to his evening prayers consistently for several weeks, Byrd attended a masquerade on February 6, 1718: “I dressed myself in the habit of the Marquis and went to Mrs. B-r-t, and from thence to Lady Guise’s, and from thence to Lady Foley’s, and at about ten went to the masquerade, where I was well diverted. . . . I stayed till 6 o’clock [a.m.], having kept up my spirits with chocolate. I neglected my prayers, for which God forgive me.”¹¹⁰ Phillip Balthasar Sinold warned his readers of this new temptation to late hours. The division between day and night, he reminded his readers, was created by God as “a special sign of his unfathomable wisdom.” Sinold then related how this divine order is ignored by two exemplary members of the “so-called beautiful world,” Clorinde and Cleomenes. Both stay out “nearly until morning” dancing, gossiping, and gambling, completely forgetting their evening and morning prayers, to the detriment of their bodies and souls. Their evening socializing (commencing “after seven o’clock”) is an “assembly of vanity.”¹¹¹ “One must realize,” Sinold added, “that such nocturnal gatherings are allowed and approved in Christendom, while in contrast gatherings meant for the practice of piety [i.e., Pietist conventicles], even when they take place in broad daylight, are in most places entirely forbidden.”¹¹² Moralists like Rohr and Sinold decried the “everyday” nature of aristocratic night life, which went far beyond the occasional use of the night at festivals or celebrations. In a tension typical of the Baroque, the exclusivity and prestige of nocturnal sociability immediately evoked warnings about the illusions and deceit the night fostered.

The melancholy warnings of Rohr and Sinold about the moral dangers of “night life” contrast with the more sanguine comments of Johann Michael von Loen in his essay *The Court at Dresden in the Year 1718 (Der Hof zu Dresden, im Jahr 1718, 1749)*. Loen, drawing on his experiences at the opulent court of Augustus II in 1718 and 1723, describes a series of nocturnal festivities and celebrations, culminating in the Carnival season of 1723. During Carnival “every evening the so-called *Redutten* or public dances were [held]” in a “hall

auf, die Nacht, die doch von Gott zur Ruhe erschaffen, wird bei dieser Uppigkeit gar öftters in Tag verwandelt” (ibid., 468).

¹¹⁰ William Byrd, *The London Diary (1717–1721) and Other Writings*, ed. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (New York, 1958), 76.

¹¹¹ Sinold, *Die Wissenschaft zu leben*, 337.

¹¹² Ibid., 337–38.

illuminated with countless lights.” Despite the unrestrained nightly festivities, Loen points out that in Dresden “business went on uninterrupted”: “Though a part of the night was spent with all manner of festivities, on the next morning one saw that every man was back at his post: the merchant in his stall, the soldier on guard, the clerks in the chancellery, the councilors in their meetings and the jurists in their chambers.”¹¹³ The duties of daily life had come to accommodate nocturnal revelry: “only certain beauties and wandering cavaliers who had no servants” stayed in bed until noon.¹¹⁴ Writing in the 1730s, the courtier-author Karl Ludwig Freiherr von Pöllnitz (1692–1775) considered the late hours described here to be the norm. Pöllnitz was a “vagabond courtier” who visited every major court in Europe, supporting himself by gambling and publishing gossipy accounts of court romances and intrigues. At the modest court of Modena in the early 1720s he was received with all due respect by the ruling duke (Rinaldo D’Este, 1695–1737), but the “quiet” court life there drew his ridicule. He described it as nearly monastic and “inspiring melancholy”: “one rises there early in the morning, goes to mass, and dines promptly at a good hour; afternoons, one takes a stroll. In the evening one plays a few games; dinner is at eight o’clock, and around ten o’clock one goes to sleep.” Pöllnitz decried “this miserable way to live in monotony . . . which is simply not appropriate for a ruler’s court.”¹¹⁵ These early hours were the antithesis of the display of aristocratic style and royal majesty essential to the life of the court.

IV. PRINCES OF DARKNESS

This evidence of the nocturnalization of spectacular celebrations, theatrical performances, and everyday pleasures at court could be easily multiplied, but the question would remain: why did darkness and the night become so important to the spectacles, pleasures, and daily life of northern European court society in the seventeenth century? No single answer could address the broad international phenomenon examined here, but I suggest that new demands on the representation of power, majesty, and hierarchy explain much of the development.

In early modern Europe, the hardening of Christian confessions immediately

¹¹³ Loen, *Kleine Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 62–66. On Loen, see Christiane Buchel, “Johann Michael von Loen im Wandel der Zeiten: Eine kleine Forschungsgeschichte,” *Das Achtzehnte Jahrhundert: Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für die Erforschung des Achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* 16, no. 1 (1992): 13–37.

¹¹⁴ “Nur gewisse Schönen und irrende Ritter, die keine Bedienung hatten, wanden ihre Glieder bis gegen Mittag noch in den weichen Federn herum” (Loen, *Kleine Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 66).

¹¹⁵ Karl Ludwig Freiherr von Pöllnitz, *Nouveaux memoires du Baron de Pollnitz, contenant l’histoire de sa vie . . .*, new ed., vol. 2 (Frankfurt, 1738), 151–52.

created the need to transcend them. Paradoxically, to speak to Christians of all confessions Baroque rulers had to display power and authority to one another in Christian and natural terms. The anonymous *Ceremoniale Brandenburgicum* (1699), an influential treatise on political ceremony, explained this in terms of light and radiance: “The authority and power of the potentates and princes of the world shines forth especially in their own lands. . . . But it shines even more brightly when others who are themselves powerful regard it.”¹¹⁶ Seventeenth-century princes, courtiers, and artists supplemented the display of traditional Christian authority with supraconfessional representations of political power, just as the secular *étatiste* thought of Hobbes served as the dark side of the divine right doctrines of Bossuet. By mapping the contrast of darkness and light onto their political displays, princes and courtiers made the night essential to court culture.¹¹⁷

The hardening of confessional divisions meant that even the rulers of confessionally monolithic kingdoms like Spain needed to display their grace, power, authority, and culture in supraconfessional terms. We can see this through the experienced eyes of the Duc de Saint-Simon during his embassy to the Spanish court in 1721. Invited by his Madrid host, Don Gaspard Giron, “to go and see the illuminations of the Place Mayor,” Saint-Simon and his retinue “were conducted by detours to avoid the light of the illuminations in approaching them.” The French courtiers’ first view of the illuminated plaza was carefully arranged for maximum theatrical effect: “we arrived at a fine house which looks upon the middle of the Place, and which is that where the King and Queen go to see the fêtes that take place. We perceived no light in descending or in ascending the staircase. Everything had been closed, but on entering into the chamber which looks upon the Place, we were dazzled, and immediately [as] we entered the balcony speech failed me, from surprise, for more than seven or eight minutes.” The contrast between darkness and light made a powerful impression on Saint-Simon, who praised the “splendor” and “majesty” of this display. The square was lit from each of its balconies, from which “two torches of white wax were placed, one at each end of the balcony, supported upon the balustrade, slightly leaning outwards, and attached to nothing.” Saint-Simon registered the desired effect: “The light that this gives is incredible; it has a splendor and a majesty about it that astonish you and impress you. The smallest type can be read in the middle of the Place, and all about, though the ground-floor is not illuminated.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ As cited in Vec, *Zeremonialwissenschaft*, 139: “Die Hoheit und Macht der Potentaten und Fürsten der Welt / leuchtet zwar sonderlich in dero Landen hervor. . . . Aber es glänzet dieselbiger noch heller wann andere Mächtige selbst dieselbe consideren.”

¹¹⁷ See Choné, *L'Atelier des nuits*, 10–12.

¹¹⁸ Duc de Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:307–8, and *Mémoires*, 39:2–4.

As the representative of Louis XV to Philip V, the duke's response was carefully registered in turn by the Spanish courtiers: "Don Gaspard Giron and the Spaniards who were with me in the house from which I saw the illumination, charmed with the astonishment I had displayed at this spectacle, published it abroad with all the more pleasure because they were not accustomed to the admiration of the French, and many noblemen spoke of it to me with great pleasure." At a royal audience the following day, Saint-Simon made certain to express to King Philip his "astonishment at an illumination so surprising and so admirable."¹¹⁹

Saint-Simon's report from Madrid suggests that the nocturnalization I have documented in northern Europe reflects a change in style across the European court system. As confessional divisions proved unbridgeable, nocturnal displays of power and authority grew at courts across Europe. This diffusion is not surprising, as these courts were entirely international. At the time of Saint-Simon's embassy in 1721, the King of Spain was a French Bourbon, the King of England a former Lutheran from Hanover, and the King of Poland a Saxon convert to Catholicism; a few years later the Livonian Catherine I would inherit the Russian throne. For these rulers, nocturnalization was a new technique to express power and share pleasure at court and beyond. Confessional divisions led rulers, ministers, and courtiers to seek new ways to present glory. It did not matter whether princes were Catholic Spanish Habsburgs or Calvinist Hohenzollerns: they often chose darkness and the night to display their splendor and majesty.

Nowhere is this better expressed than in the verse of John Norris of Bemerton. His "Hymn to Darkness" opened with the traditional association of darkness with maternity:

Hail thou most *sacred Venerable* thing,
 What Muse is worthy thee to sing?
 Thee, from whose pregnant *universal* womb
 All things, even *Light* thy *Rival* first did Come.¹²⁰

But for Norris, darkness and light are complementary: "The *Vision* of the Deity is made / More sweet and *Beatific* by thy *Shade*."¹²¹ The aesthetic and political

¹¹⁹ Duc de Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*, 3:307–8. For the court, the illumination was followed by nocturnal entertainment: "Scarcely had I time to return home and sup after this fine illumination than I was obliged to go to the palace for the ball that the King had prepared there, and which lasted until past two in the morning." Evidence suggests that the Spanish court also nocturnalized its spectacles, theater, and daily routines during the seventeenth century. See, e.g., Hannah E. Bergman, "A Court Entertainment of 1638," *Hispanic Review* 42, no. 1 (1974): 67–81, in which a young woman at court complains that her mother expects her to go to sleep by midnight (70).

¹²⁰ Morris, "Hymn to Darkness," 37.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

recoding of the night come together as Norris likens darkness to the ideal Baroque sovereign, awesome and unchallenged by his subjects. As in the “Ballet de la Nuit,” God himself uses darkness as the backdrop for his majesty and authority. Summing up the uses of the night in Baroque political symbolism, Norris makes the connection with political ceremony explicit:

Thus when he first proclaim'd his sacred Law
And would his *Rebel* subjects awe,
Like Princes on some great *solemnity*
H'appear'd in's *Robes of State*, and Clad himself with *thee*.¹²²

Norris understood well the importance of night for the supraconfessional display of power and authority in the seventeenth century. As we have seen, the use of darkness and the night as the “Robes of State” by sovereigns was a distinctive feature of Baroque statecraft.

Norris's praise of divine, majestic darkness must be brought down to earth, however. Princes used the night to conceal, dissemble, or deceive—the dark side of the night's role in political culture. The utility of darkness for Baroque political expression corresponds well with discussions of the political value of illusion and deception in the seventeenth century.¹²³ Like the darkened illusions of the perspective stage and the great European fireworks displays, the analysis of illusion and perception in political power also developed first in Renaissance Italy. It was Machiavelli who advised that “in general, men judge more by sight than by touch. Everyone sees what is happening, but not everyone feels the consequences. Everyone sees what you seem to be; few have direct experience of who you really are.” The Florentine then commented on the display of majesty at court: “Those few” with direct experience of a prince's true intentions “will not dare to speak out in the face of public opinion when that opinion is reinforced by the authority of the state.”¹²⁴ To control what subjects see and what image the prince presented, the illusions powered by the contrast between darkness and light were vital. When Georg Rodolf Weckherlin (1584–1653), secretary to the Duke of Württemberg, reported on a week-long celebration at the Württemberg court at Stuttgart in 1616, he expressed the desired effects of the Baroque court festival: “My soule was amazed with marvell: mine eyes did dazle: and all my senses were overwhelmed by the majestie, beautie, richesse and magnificence of those brave Princesses, Princes, Ladies,

¹²² *Ibid.*, 38.

¹²³ See Dewald, *Aristocratic Experience*, 33–40. This corresponds with the understanding of the Baroque presented by José Antonio Maravall, *Culture of the Baroque: Analysis of a Historical Structure*, trans. Terry Cochran, Theory and History of Literature 25 (Minneapolis, 1986).

¹²⁴ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chap. 18, in *Selected Political Writings*, ed. and trans. David Wootton (Indianapolis, 1994), 55.

Lords and Knights.”¹²⁵ His French contemporary Nicholas Faret’s *L’honneste-homme; Ou, L’art de plaire a la court* (1630) described the court as “this theatre” in which the courtiers surround a sun king who “distributes unto them certain beams of his magnificence.” At court, “princes and great men are about a king like goodly stars, which receive all their light from him.” But the brilliance of the monarch overwhelms the courtiers: “it is all confounded in this great light. . . . The greatest part of the meaner sort consume themselves near this fire, before they can be warm.”¹²⁶ Faret’s astute description of a sun king whose light leaves “all confounded” reappears in an account of the overpowering fireworks display presented to Louis XIV by Nicolas Foucquet at Vaux-le-Vicomte in August 1661. Jean de La Fontaine (1621–95) described the scene: “Suddenly we saw the sky darkened by a dreadful cloud of rockets and serpents.” He immediately asked: “Should one say ‘darkened’ or ‘illuminated’?”¹²⁷ Light and darkness themselves were confounded as this dazzling nocturnal display left its audience blinded by the light.

The nocturnal pleasures, performances, and pyrotechnics of the court show a recurring sense that the spectacular contrast between darkness and light (real or symbolic) was an indispensable way to amaze, dazzle, and overwhelm—or dissemble. As Rohr noted, festivities can “better conceal the calamitous times that might press upon a land or city.”¹²⁸ Concerns about the relationship between state power and official deception have lost none of their relevance in our own time.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Georg Rodolf Weckherlin, *Triumphall shews set forth lately at Stuttgart: Written first in German, and now in English by G. Rodolfe Weckherlin, secretarie to the Duke of Wirtemberg* (Stuttgart, 1616), 5. See Ludwig Krapf and Christian Wagenknecht, ed., *Stuttgarter Hoffeste: Texte und Materialien zur höfischen Repräsentation im frühen 17. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1979).

¹²⁶ From the contemporary English translation: Nicholas Faret (1596–1646), *The Honest Man or the Art to Please at Court*, trans. Edward Grimstone (London, 1632), as quoted in Margaret Lucille Kekewich, ed., *Princes and Peoples: France and British Isles, 1620–1714* (Manchester and New York, 1994), 29–30.

¹²⁷ Salatino, *Incendiary Art*, 19. La Fontaine’s response is discussed by Aurélia Gailard, “Le Soleil à son coucher: La nuit réversible de la mythologie solaire sous Louis XIV,” in Bertrand, *Penser la nuit*, 449–63.

¹²⁸ Rohr, *Grossen Herren*, 733, as cited in Möseneder, *Zeremoniell*, 39.

¹²⁹ From Machiavelli on, realist discussions of the display of power and majesty were kept separate from actual presentations of a prince’s (simulated) greatness. Baroque political theory “revealed” and discussed the very mechanisms and techniques of power that it advised rulers to conceal. Michael Stolleis has discussed this paradox in his *Arcana imperii und Ratio status: Bemerkungen zur politischen Theorie des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1980). Political theorists resolved the issue through their strategic contempt for the perceptions and awareness of the common people. The formation in the eighteenth century of a public sphere gradually challenged this contempt and the concomitant darkness and secrecy of absolutist political culture. See Jörg

As noted above, Justus Lipsius and Louis XIV agreed that princes need celebrations and ceremonies to communicate with the common people, who perceive only the superficial and sensual. Lipsius argued that common subjects are fundamentally unable to perceive or support the common good, “not making any difference between that which is true and false.”¹³⁰ The Flemish philosopher wrote in the spirit of his age. Advice on the perspective stage from Nicola Sabbatini’s *Manual for Constructing Theatrical Scenes and Machines* (*Practica di Fabricar Scene e Machine ne’Teatri*, 1638) reflected Lipsius’s hierarchy of perception and understanding in practical terms: “the common or less cultivated persons are set on the tiers and at the sides”; the workings of the stage machines might be visible from there, but “such people do not observe them minutely.” In contrast, “the persons of culture and taste should be seated on the floor of the hall, as near the middle as possible, in the second or third rows. They will have the greatest pleasure there, since . . . all parts of the scenery are displayed in their perfection.”¹³¹ The better sort could take pleasure in the illusions of the stage—or the state—while “common or less cultivated persons” would be impressed even by an imperfect display.

Möseneder credits Lipsius with the spread of this educated contempt for the common people.¹³² Lipsius’s views were repeated by political philosophers such as Christian Wolff (1679–1754), who legitimated the social hierarchy of their age by mapping it on to a hierarchy of perception and understanding. The lower estate recognized only the superficial and sensual: “The common man, who relies merely on the external senses and makes little use of reason, cannot by himself properly grasp the majesty of a king. But through *the things that come before his eyes* and that touch his other senses, he receives a clear impression of his [sovereign’s] majesty, power, and authority.”¹³³ It was in

Jochen Berns, “Der nackte Monarch und die nackte Wahrheit-Auskünfte der deutschen Zeitungs- und Zeremoniellschriften des späten 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhunderts zum Verhältnis von Hof und Öffentlichkeit,” *Daphnis* 11, nos. 1–2 (1982): 315–50; Andreas Gestrich, *Absolutismus und Öffentlichkeit: Politische Kommunikation in Deutschland zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft 103 (Göttingen, 1994), 34–77; and James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge and New York, 2001).

¹³⁰ Lipsius, *Six Bookes of Politickes*, 68–70.

¹³¹ Nicola Sabbatini’s *Practica di Fabricar Scene e Machine ne’Teatri* [Manual for Constructing Theatrical Scenes and Machines] (1638) as translated in Hewitt, *Renaissance Stage*, 96–97.

¹³² For further examples in French political thought, see Möseneder, *Zeremoniell*, 38–39. Johann Heinrich Zedler’s *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1732–50) defined the masses (“Pöbel”) as “die gemeine Menge niederträchtiger und aller höhern Achtbarkeit geraubter Leute” (the common crowd of base people deprived of all higher perception), vol. 28, col. 948.

¹³³ Rohr, *Grossen Herren*, 2; my emphasis.

these terms that Julius Bernhard von Rohr argued that the inability of subjects to comprehend majesty truly was the primary reason for court spectacles and ceremonies.¹³⁴ This contempt for the common people fits well with prevailing arguments among scholars of court society that the diverse elements of the prince's spectacles and pleasures were intended to speak simultaneously on several levels to several audiences.¹³⁵ The political philosophy behind it all stated that the display of majesty did not merely reflect political power—it created it.¹³⁶

When we use daily life as a category of analysis, the sun kings of the age of Louis XIV and Augustus II start to look more like “princes of darkness.” They would not have accepted this identification, but their constant use of darkness and the night to enhance their own (limited) brilliance invites it. The night at court connected autocratic rulers, aristocratic courtiers, and common subjects in a series of hierarchical fields of vision. Subjects gazed up at spectacles of light and power projected onto the night sky while princes and courtiers, seemingly face-to-face, shared an intimate “time of pleasures.”¹³⁷ Darkness was vital to each of these displays: it enabled rulers to offer pleasure, demonstrate magnificence, and deceive their subjects, combining the fundamental political strategies of this age.¹³⁸ The seventeenth-century insight that

¹³⁴ See Christian Freiherr von Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von dem Gesellschaftlichen Leben der Menschen, und insonderheit dem gemeinen Wesen zu Beförderung der Glückseligkeit des menschlichen Geschlechtes* (Halle, 1721). Rohr opened his *Introduction to the Knowledge of Ceremony of Great Rulers* with a long citation from Wolff's *Vernünfftige Gedancken*.

¹³⁵ See the overview provided by Jörg Jochen Berns, “Die Festkultur der deutschen Höfe zwischen 1580 und 1730,” *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, new series, 34, no. 3 (1984): 295–311.

¹³⁶ See Stollberg-Rillinger, “Höfische Öffentlichkeit,” 147–50; and the concise remarks of Ulrich Schütte, “Das Fürstenschloß als ‘Pracht-Gebäude’,” in *Die Künste und das Schloss in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Lutz Unbehaun, with the assistance of Andreas Beyer and Ulrich Schütte, *Rudolstädter Forschungen zur Residenzkultur 1* (Munich, 1998), 15–29.

¹³⁷ The dark side of the Baroque monarchy is discussed in similar terms by Hélène Merlin, “Nuit de l'Etat et Roi-Soleil,” in *La Nuit*, ed. François Angelier et Nicole Jacques-Chaquin (Grenoble, 1995), 203–18; and by Gaillard, “Le Soleil à son coucher,” 449–63.

¹³⁸ The scarcity of any direct discussion of the role of the night in the contemporary theorists of Baroque court spectacle (such as Ménestrier or Rohr) is not surprising. Discussion of the night in the literature of spectacles was analogous (on the level of daily life) to the discussions of deception, illusion, and “image” in Baroque political theory discussed above. Thus a tract could recommend the use of illusions of majesty and power, confident that the common people would see only the illusions—never the political advice behind them. Proclamations of a monarch's greatness and advice on the importance of burnishing this image existed side by side, but never in the same text. Analogously, on the technical level references to the utility of darkness to create illusion, spectacle, and wonder are frequent; on the theoretical level we see a keen

“shadows and lights are relative and reciprocal” and that “the order of nature . . . has made these two conditions inseparable”¹³⁹ helps explain why in an age of “sun kings” the night became more important than ever before.

sense of the power of spectacle, but little explicit discussion of the need for darkness itself.

¹³⁹ From a 1668 lecture on Poussin’s *Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well* (1648) given by the painter Philippe de Champaigne at the French royal academy of painting and sculpture, as quoted in John Rupert Martin, *Baroque* (New York, 1977), 295–96.