

**Design for the Fireworks Display on the Seine, 1699
With Extra “Plaquettes” and Engravings**

Ménestrier, Claude-François (1631-1705). **La statue équestre de Louis-le-Grand placée dans le temple de la gloire; dessin du feu d'artifice élevé sur la rivière de Seine, par les ordres de MM. les prévôt des marchands et échevins de la ville de Paris, le jeudi 13 août 1699; avec l'explication des figures, médailles et bas-reliefs.** Paris: Impr. de Ve Vaugon, 1699.

This is the printed program for the “highlight of the ceremony” of dedication of 13 August 1699 for the giant equestrian statue of Louis XIV installed on Place Louis-le-Grand (destroyed 1792). The idea for the fireworks celebration was invented by “Menestrier following current ideas certainly based on Bernini” (p34, & Figure 77. Glorious Horsemen).

4to. Contemporary thin boards, annotation on upper cover with a contemporary ink inscription. Bookplate on verso of front flyleaf, also ink note identifying Ménestrier as author. Pagination: leaf of title, verso blank; pp 33-12 text. Collation: A-D2. Permission: 5 Aoust 1699. Foremargin closely trimmed, no loss of text. Ink pagination upper right corner indicating removal at early date from a “recueil.”

Included are four extra items: 2 engravings and 2 plaquettes not issued with the program La statue équestre de Louis-le-Grand but published as part of the fireworks celebration on the Seine, of August 13, 1699.



AD. I [Engraving].

Representation du feu d'artifice et des Rejouissance faites sur La Rive de seine pour l'erection de la figure equestre du Roy le 13 Aoust 1699, or les Mariniers commercerent par tirer la lance dans leurs bateaux. Ensuite loye et le soir le feu d'artifice que La Ville avoit fait dresser sur ladite riuere fut tiré. Paris: Chez Guerard Graveur rue St. Jacques la Reyne du Clerge, 1699. Engraving on paper (10 1/4 x 11"), folds. With margins. Text of Ménestrier (pp. 4-6) describes the characters and symbols in the engraving. Tipped in before title page.

Representation du feu d'artifice shows the festivities of August 13, 1699 on the Seine in which a statue of Louis XIV on horseback is mounted on an island in the river. Beneath the statue is a sculpture of Hercule, victorious over the Hydra. Water nymphs and sea gods are below on the rocks. Below that on the waterline to the right is a representation of Jason claiming the Golden Fleece. In boats surrounding the statues are “mariners” who stage a mock battle with lances. Large crowds watch the event from the shoreline.



AD II. [Engraving].

Le Temple de la Gloire.
Dessin du feu d'artifice, élevé sur la rivière de Seine, par les ordres de Messieurs les prévost des marchands et échevins de la ville de Paris, le jedy 13 aoust 1699. Paris: Chez Guérard, graveur rue St. Jacques proche St. Yves à la Reyne du clergé. C. P. Engraving on paper (9 1/2 x 13 3/4"), folds. As with the first engraving, the Ménestrier text (pp. 6-9) describes the figures. Tipped in following text (p. 12).

Inscription: A Paris chez Guerard Graveur rue St. Jacques proche St. Yves a la Reyne du Clergé. C.P.R.

AD III.

Sonnet au roy, et les quatrains sur le sujet de la cérémonie de la statue de sa majesté à cheval, érigée en la place de Louis Le Grand. [Paris: Veuve Claude Mazuel, (Août 1699)]. 4pp. With vignette on title page. Poetry to Louis XIV. Éditeur: Veuve d'Étienne Chardon (16.-1732). Tipped in, following engraving II.

AD IV.

Ceremonies observées pour l'erection de la statuë equestre du Roy, elevée en la place de Louis le Grand, par les soins & diligence de messieurs les prevôt des marchands & echevins de la ville de Paris. (Paris: Chez la Veuve E. Chardon, ruë Galande, proche S. Blaise [1699]). Editeur: Veuve d'Étienne Chardon (16..-1732). 4pp. plaquette with vignette on title page. Laid in. Description of the ceremony observed at the Place de Louis-le-Grand officiated by the Prevôt des Marchands and Échevins de la Ville de Paris. Includes sonnet signed “D.L.C.” 4pp. laid in at rear flyleaf.

This fireworks celebration along the Seine was part of the inauguration of a huge statue (over 20 feet tall) of Louis XIV on horseback designed by Pierre Lepautre and prepared in bronze by François Girardon. The colossal statue, which was cast in a single pour by Balthasar Keller in 1692, was installed on the Place Louis-le-Grand (now Place Vendôme) on August 13, 1699. Louis is depicted as a Roman emperor wearing a voluminous, contemporary curly wig. Sober, calm, and monumental, the image of the king is imposing in its classical majesty. The statute was pulled down during the French Revolution in 1792. According to a proclamation of the National Assembly, all the bronze equestrian statues were pulled down as a symbol of tyrannical rule. (Glorious Horesemen, p.37) A concise history of the plans for and creation of the statue has been compiled by Valérie Montalbetti on the website for the Louvre: <https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/louis-xiv-horseback>.

Claude-François Ménestrier (1631-1705) was a French author, an expert on heraldry, and a scenic designer of court festivals. He was a member of the Society of Jesus, and attendant of the royal court. He was an expert on planning and later describing State festivities. “Ménestrier was undoubtedly the most important and prolific seventeenth-century theoretical writer on symbolic imagery and spectacle. He was also a skilled practitioner in devising and mounting symbolically meaningful festivities, whether religious or secular, in his native Lyons and in Paris, as well as Annecy, Chambéry, and Grenoble. He wrote and published several accounts of such festivities, and his writings include practical treatises on—for example—the safe use of fireworks. Over 150 works spanning half a century (1655-1705) reflect Ménestrier’s important contribution to the artistic and cultural history of France” (Adams, Rawles, and Saunders, Introduction).

[Program] **La statue équestre de Louis-le-Grand.** Adams, Rawles, and Saunders, no. 203; Watanabe-O’Kelly, no. 1982. OCLC: BL, BNF, No locations North America.; AD I [Engraving] No reference; AD II [Engraving] A copy is located in the BNF Hennin Collection, 6441; also a copy is located in the Musée Carnavalet and in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (see Glorious Horesemen p, 127). AD III [Sonnet] No OCLC locations. AD IV [Ceremonies] OCLC: NFG.

Adams, Rawles, and Saunders. *A Bibliography of Claude-François Menestrier: Printed Editions, 1655-1765* (2012). The engravings are not mentioned in the Bibliography. They were probably issued for sale during the ceremony (see Glorious Horsemen, p. 34); *Glorious Horsemen. Equestrian art in Europe, 1500-1800*. Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA 1983

\$2,500.00

