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This book thus fills a gap in the scholarship on the evolution of sixteenth-century ludic literary culture that would segue into the salon society of the seventeenth century. In addition to works on the theory of play, several studies have laid the groundwork for this project. Keating's *Studies on the Literary Salon in France, 1550–1615* (1941) is still considered an important text on the subject. More recently, Berriot-Salvadore, first in “Les femmes dans les cercles intellectuels de la Renaissance” (1989) and then in *Les Femmes dans la société Française de la Renaissance* (1990), provides an invaluable, comprehensive overview of women's participation in literary and intellectual society during this period, as does Timmermans in *L'Accès des femmes à la culture sous l'Ancien Régime* (1993). Studies that focus on specific sixteenth-century proto-*salonnières* include Christie Ellen St-John's dissertation, “The *Salon Vert* of the Maréchal de Retz” (1999); Anne R. Larsen's body of work on the Mesdames des Roches, including most recently *From Mother and Daughter* (2006), as well as her study of seventeenth-century intellectual circles in *Anna Maria van Schurman: “The Star of Utrecht,”* (2016); Kendall Tarte's study of the gatherings of the Dames Des Roches, *Writing Places* (2007); and Anna Klosowska's *Selected Poems and Translations* (2007) of the poetry of Madeleine de l'Aubespine. Diana Robin's *Publishing Women: Salons, The Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (2006) provides an excellent starting point for considering Italian precedents in salon society. Sarah G. Ross's *The Birth of Feminism* (2009) outlines the early education of humanist women in Italy. George McClure's *Parlour Games and the Public Life of Women in Renaissance Italy* (2013) and Konrad Eisenbichler's *The Sword and the Pen* (2012) illustrate the developments of Sieneese women's participation in salon and academic society. Allison Levy's volume *Playthings in Early Modernity* (2017) further contextualizes the

125 Helpful studies on the specific historical *raisons d'être* and characteristics of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century salons include Goodman's “Public Sphere and Private Life,” 1–19, and “Enlightenment Salons,” 329–50. See also the whole of DeJean's *Ancients against Moderns*. In *Woman Triumphant*, 141, Maclean suggests that salons or “assemblies” like the French salons “must ... have been common in Italy in the early sixteenth century” because of the Italy-Lyon connections, but he does not explore the Italian circles in depth.

materiality of sixteenth-century salon activities in Italy. In *The Prodigious Muse* (2011), Virginia Cox underscores the close cultural ties between France and Italy, including the fame of Italian women writers in France. Jacqueline Boucher's *Présence italienne à Lyon à la Renaissance* (1994) illustrates the birth of those ties in great detail. Finally, scholars of these subjects owe much to the work of Colette Winn, François Rouget, and others on editions of manuscript albums associated with the groups discussed here.

*Women, Entertainment, and Precursors of the French Salon, 1532–1615* also builds on my previous work in *Literary Circles and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (2006), in which I examine the inscription of the literary quarrel known as the *Querelle des femmes* in the works of men and women who took part in literary circles in Italy, France, and England. Especially in research for the chapters on literary circle activity in France, it became clear that a vibrant world of sixteenth-century sodalities existed both within and on the fringes of court culture, one that stood at an interesting intersection in Franco-Italian literary history but has received little consideration in contemporary English scholarship beyond stating its existence and women's participation in it. Increasingly intrigued by the representations (and sometimes misrepresentations) of the *longue durée* of salon culture, in "Salons, Salonnières, and Women Writers" (2007), I began the inquiry that has brought me to this larger study of the history of salon society in France. In "Marie de Beaulieu and Isabella Andreini: Cross-Cultural Patronage at the French Court" (2014), I examined the case of an Italian poet's and French *filie d'honneur's* engagement with the literary taste and patronage of specific court circles. In the process of studying Andreini's (1562–1604) *rime*, I realized that her dedications to Catherine de Vivonne, the future *marquise* de Rambouillet; her mother Giulia Savelli, *marquise* de Pisany; and other important figures in the world of seventeenth-century salons (such as Mademoiselle de Guise, the future *princesse* de Conti, and the poet Giambattista Marino) were evidence that further research should be done regarding influence and connections between sixteenth- and seventeenth-century milieux.<sup>126</sup> In a similar vein, in *Women, Entertainment, and Precursors of the French Salon, 1532–1615*, I also draw upon studies that have focused on women's roles as patrons and arbiters (and creators) of taste because the subjects are in many cases inseparable. An important work that identifies historical trends regarding the figure of the princess or noblewoman as *mécène* and arbiter of taste—and as leader of a group of

126 See Campbell, "Marie de Beaulieu and Isabella Andreini," 871. See also Cox, *Prodigious Muse*, xvii; and Andreini, *Rime, Parte seconda*, 30, 41–42, 50–51.

like-minded artists and intellectuals—is Claudie Martin-Ulrich’s *La persona de la princesse au XVIIe siècle: personnage littéraire et personnage politique* (2004), and one of the key examples of that figure in Martin-Ulrich’s study is Marguerite de Valois, whose works have been edited and contextualized by Eliane Viennot. Especially helpful are Viennot’s biography, *Marguerite de Valois* (1993), her editions of the *Correspondence, 1569–1614* (1998), and the *Mémoires et discours* (2004). Finally, the work of scholars in Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier and Eugénie Pascal’s volume *Patronnes et mécènes en France à la Renaissance* (2007) sheds light on the myriad ways that such women became the makers of taste during this period.<sup>127</sup>

As rich as these lines of inquiry are, we nonetheless still wrestle with a problematic historicized delineation of seventeenth-century salon society. Many scholars categorically state that due to political exigencies, the advent of classicism, and the change in taste from humanist interests to those of sentimentalism or sensibility, a clean cultural break occurred. Articulating that break in traditional terms of periodization, Keating, as noted above, ridicules the “giddy and trivial old age” of the seventeenth-century circle of Marguerite de Valois.<sup>128</sup> Recently, in *Salons, History, and the Creation of 17th-Century France*, Faith E. Beasley more carefully considers the beginning of seventeenth-century salons as she notes that the “origin of what has become almost the mythical milieu of the salons, is usually associated with the famed *chambre bleue* of the marquise de Rambouillet,” but she adds that Timmermans’s research

has shown ... that the marquise’s gatherings were not an isolated social phenomenon. Two other salonnières, the vicomtesse d’Auchy and Mme des Loges, opened their doors and exercised power in the empire of letters before the famous marquise. Perhaps because the salons of d’Auchy and des Loges were openly academic, especially with respect to literary matters, Rambouillet’s *chambre bleue* is usually highlighted as the first to unite writers and worldly figures in the art of genteel conversation.<sup>129</sup>

In Beasley’s description of pivotal salons—those of the Catholic d’Auchy and the Huguenot des Loges—that look back to the humanist ones of the sixteenth century but appear only shortly before that of Rambouillet, we

127 See Campbell, *Literary Circles and Gender*; “Salons, Salonnières, and Women Writers,” 202–5; “Marie de Beaulieu and Isabella Andreini,” 851–74.

128 Keating, *Studies on the Literary Salon*, 19.

129 Beasley, *Salons, History*, 22.



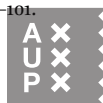
catch a glimpse of the historical reality that scholars who adhere to strict notions of periodization efface. Beasley neatly expresses why Rambouillet's salon is usually considered the "first to unite writers and worldly figures in the art of genteel conversation" by suggesting that the salons of d'Auchy and des Loges are more like the sixteenth-century ones and thus somehow do not count in the seventeenth century because they were "openly academic." She highlights the often-asserted assumption that the earlier salons, or proto-salons, engaged mainly in rigidly academic-style debate on topics of humanist interests, presumably such as philosophy and religion, which were among the topics popular in the d'Auchy and des Loges salons. From the brief considerations of the entertainments of Pierrevive's circle above, as well as that of her daughter-in-law the *duchesse* de Retz, one can see that not all sixteenth-century groups were entirely academic in the humanist sense; rather, they were also heavily engaged with play in vernacular poetry and games.

That both sixteenth- and seventeenth-century groups were categorizable by clean divisions between their engagement with less or more heavily intellectual or scholarly concerns remains something of a fallacy. Anne Larsen observes that "as early as 1615," the Rambouillet salon's weekly meetings "were known to introduce practices that the Académie Française would later formalize,"<sup>130</sup> thus bringing an intriguing convolution into the argument that the intellectualism of the *chambre bleue* was removed from academic practices, albeit contemporary ones. Moreover, regarding the des Loges salon, which predates that of Rambouillet, Larsen points out that, although labeled "academic" like the earlier groups of the sixteenth century, it featured a mixture of humanist discourse, conversation games, and literary engagement. In it Marie Bruneau, Dame des Loges, brought together figures active in politics, religion, and literary production. It was attended by such "[f]uture academicians as Conrart and *salonnières* as Madame de Sablé" and likely also included Madeleine de Chemeraud, a cousin of the Mesdames des Roches, whose gatherings Chemeraud had attended in Poitiers.<sup>131</sup> Clearly, more continuity existed between sixteenth- and seventeenth-century groups than has been previously considered.

As we will see in the following chapters, most sixteenth-century assemblies were, in fact, blends of the academic and the ludic, with discourse typically moving from serious moral, intellectual, and political questions to game-playing of various kinds, including playful debate and badinage about

<sup>130</sup> Larsen, *Anna Maria van Schurman*, 130–31.

<sup>131</sup> Larsen, "Marie Bruneau," 100–101.





the nature of love and lovers' behaviors.<sup>132</sup> Conversation and entertainments clearly exhibited practices that would later appear in seventeenth-century salon *sociabilité*, such as use of coterie pseudonyms, literary competitions, group authorship, escapism from political turmoil, and engagement with key styles of poetry, drama, romances, and novels. Ultimately, there were few distinct breaks with the elements of proto-salon society in the sixteenth century, other than those that traditional approaches have defined.

In Chapter 1, "At Play in Italy and France: Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Social Continuities," the groundwork is laid for illustrating the continuities between characteristics of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *société mondaine*, especially regarding Italian precedents. Here Bernard Suits's notion that the games people play are harbingers of things to come and Roger Caillois's observation that the principles of games are often ultimately accepted and then reflected in the larger culture prove intriguingly true in the development of these ludic sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literary and social contexts. Working in reverse chronological order, we first consider the poet Giambattista Marino (1569–1625) as a go-between in the Italian and French salon society of the seventeenth century. Marino was invited to Paris by Marie de' Medici, and he stayed from 1615–1623, becoming a much-celebrated figure in salon society. Moving back into the sixteenth century, we then examine how connections between Italian and French women and their intellectual circles were fostered through the transnational movement of high-ranking women between centers of power through marriage, as was the case with Marie de' Medici. In particular, we consider the experiences of Catherine de' Medici, Renée de France, her daughter Anna d'Este, and d'Este's granddaughter Louise Marguerite de Lorraine, the future *princesse* de Conti. We also consider Giulia Savelli and her daughter Catherine de Vivonne, the future *marquise* de Rambouillet, who on her father's side of the family was related to the *duchesse* de Retz, the daughter-in-law of Marie-Catherine de Pierrevive. All these women, with Italian or French roots and/or Italian or French marital connections, held critically important positions as conduits of power, patronage, and taste. Finally, a brief survey of the *longue durée* of salon society in Italy as it segues into France provides a backdrop for the discussions in the ensuing chapters.

In Chapter 2, "Marie-Catherine de Pierrevive and the Dames des Roches: Proto-Salon Entertainment in Lyon and Poitiers," I first establish why

132 The notion of "ludic" as it applies to play and games in general must be carefully considered, because games and competitive play, as we will see, were intrinsic parts of the so-called "humanist" circles.



sixteenth-century Lyon is a key place for cultural encounters between Italy and Paris and what that meant for entertainment in its *société mondaine*. In that context, women's participation in ludic literary society demonstrates that they were engaged in interactive intellectual play with their male contemporaries, in particular taking part in poetry writing as a "game of skill," as Caillois would put it, with enough ability to be deemed "pleasing" among their contemporaries.<sup>133</sup> Next, we look at how the famed gatherings in the homes of printers and the Académie de Fourvière, as well as the proto-salon hospitality of Marie-Catherine de Pierrevive, Dame du Perron (Gondi), serve as examples of ways that twentieth-century scholarship (particularly that of Saulnier, whose prolific work on the literary history of Lyons has heavily influenced scholarly attitudes toward the literary milieu of that city) divided Lyonnais sodalities into distinct categories of brilliant humanist circles and intellectually suspect groups of fans of vernacular Italian literature and games, a seldom completely supportable dichotomy. Then, we turn to Poitiers and the *bureau d'esprit* of the Dames des Roches to show how the interactions of Estienne Pasquier and others with that group clearly illustrate the fault lines in the artificial bifurcation of ludic literary society into strictly serious, humanist interests and ludic, game-loving activities enacted in both classical and vernacular languages. Moreover, the context for Pasquier's interactions with that group, his legal work in the courts of the *Grands Jours*, which were engaged in condemning "to death many nobles and others who had committed violent acts during the religious troubles," illustrates how Pasquier and his fellow magistrates sought Huizinga's "place apart" in the society of the Dames des Roches.<sup>134</sup>

In the third chapter, "Antoinette de Loynes and Madeleine de l'Aubespine: Entertainment among the Parisian *Noblesse de robe*," we see how the characteristics of sixteenth-century Parisian proto-salon society are illustrated as they foreshadow those of the seventeenth century by taking into consideration what is known of the entertainment practices of prominent circles hosted by members of the *noblesse de robe*, the class of nobles who held state offices, usually concerned with legal affairs. The ludic activities of these groups, like those in Lyon and Poitiers, support Huizinga's observation that poetry, beyond serving an aesthetic function, can also be "ritual, entertainment, artistry, riddle-making ... [and] competition."<sup>135</sup> In the Parisian circles of Antoinette de Loynes and her husband Jean de Morel, *sieur* de Grigny, and Madeleine

133 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 7.

134 Bernstein, *Between Crown and Community*, 162; Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 12.

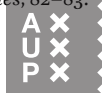
135 Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 120.



de l'Aubespine and her husband, Nicolas de Neufville, *seigneur* de Villeroy, we examine humanist and Italianate literary interests, poetry competitions, dialogic poetry, play with anagrams and riddles, dramatic performances, and patronage. Evidence of Pasquier's interactions with these groups surfaces in his publications as well as in the Villeroy album. Ultimately, the artifacts of these groups, both in print and in manuscript, attest to how each developed its own signature style of entertainments and modes of play.

Moving up the social ranks, in the fourth chapter, "Claude-Catherine de Clermont: Amusement and Escapism among the *Noblesse d'épée* and Royal Milieu," I address circles of higher-ranking nobles and royals, particularly the famed ludic hospitality of Claude Catherine de Clermont, *maréchale*, then *duchesse* de Retz, and her husband, Albert de Gondi, whose circle included Marguerite de Valois, numerous women of the court, and a constellation of the most popular poets and thinkers of the period. I argue that the *duchesse* de Retz, who was famous for her hospitality and entertainments, and who was the daughter-in-law of Marie Catherine de Pierrevive and the cousin of Jean de Vivonne, the father of the *marquise* de Rambouillet, stands in an important place in the history of the development of salon-style sociability and should be considered a key *proto-salonnaire*. Consideration of poetry by Marie de Romieu (1569?–1585?), poetry in the Retz album, and letters and other writings by Pasquier allows us to position Retz's style of entertaining within the larger Franco-Italian context, in particular with practices in Poitiers as well as Lyon, where Pierrevive held her assemblies. Caillois's notion that there is "a truly reciprocal relationship between society and the games it likes to play" and that the "popular acceptance" of the "tendencies, tastes, and ways of thought" that emerge in ludic society spills over into society at large, considered in context with the economic power and elite social position of Madame de Retz (illustrated by the sway she held over important figures in her milieu, evident in the myriad dedications she received), helps us to understand how the "tendencies, tastes, and ways of thought" popularized by her circle, and the others similar to it, endure into the next century when they will be further refined and codified to suit the ensuing generations of salon society.<sup>136</sup> In references to Retz's hospitality and engagement in literary society, we find such precursors to seventeenth-century French salon practices as leadership and patronage by women; adherence to specific genres and styles of literature; use of coterie pseudonyms as part of group identities; and the phenomenon of creating spaces away from court in which to propagate *sociabilité* and escape the realities of the war-torn environs.

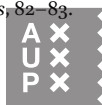
136 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 82–83.



In Chapter 5, “Marguerite de Valois and Proto-*Précieuse* Taste,” entertainment practices and tastes propagated in Marguerite’s gatherings illustrate why her groups have been generally associated with influencing seventeenth-century salon society, even though she herself has been dismissed as a relic of the sixteenth century and therefore irrelevant. To do so, we examine her direction of debates held at her dinners, descriptions of which both Brantôme and Pasquier have recorded, as well as examples of her influence upon literary taste, as exhibited by the literary activities of the d’Urfé brothers, Honoré, Antoine, and Anne. In particular, we look at how Honoré’s novel *L’Astrée*, inspired by the interests of Marguerite’s circle, finds lasting fame in seventeenth-century salon society. Similarly, we begin to discuss how her *fille d’honneur* Marie de Beaulieu’s proto-novel *L’Histoire de La Chiaramonte*, dedicated to Marguerite, illustrates the tastes in literature and entertainment of women in Marguerite’s circle. In the examples of taste in subject matter and ludic activities of Marguerite’s friends, we see an illustration of Caillois’s theory that games in fact educate and train participants in the “very virtues or eccentricities” valued in the games.<sup>137</sup> Some of those “virtues and eccentricities,” such as Marguerite’s fascination with Neoplatonic moralism, her delight in pastoral entertainment, and her love of Italianate literature and theater, would endure in ludic literary society. We also see how Beaulieu’s friendship with the Italian actress and poet Isabella Andreini, who dedicates poems to Beaulieu and other noble women, including Catherine de Vivonne, the future *marquise* de Rambouillet, sheds light on the taste-making power of the high-ranking women at play in Marguerite’s world.

In the sixth chapter, “*L’Histoire de La Chiaramonte: A Divertissement for the Circle of Marguerite de Valois*,” I provide a detailed overview of *L’Histoire de La Chiaramonte*, which has not yet been edited or translated in a modern edition. This proto-novel is a repository of the entertainments, subjects, and literary genres embraced by Marguerite de Valois, her close friends such as Madame de Retz and Madame de Nevers, and other members of her court circles. Building on the introduction to this work in Chapter 5, I discuss Beaulieu’s characters, who include key members of Marguerite de Valois’s circle, some of whom are mentioned by name and others in veiled references, a practice that will gain wide popularity in *roman à clef* novels of the seventeenth century. I also examine several artifacts of this work, including the prefatory matter for the work as a whole, the poetry of compliment that accompanies the text, as well as the games, conversations, actions of the characters, and literary references within it, to argue that

137 Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 82–83.



they illustrate the myriad ways that this proto-novel is meant to please the influential proto-*salonnières* of the sixteenth century. Ultimately, we see that many elements of *L'Histoire* foreshadow seventeenth-century salon taste, demonstrating Huizinga's and Caillois's notions of the interdependence of games and culture and the continuing development of that culture.

In the conclusion, "Sixteenth-Century *Société Mondaine* and the Persistence of Entertainment Practices," we review what is revealed by undertaking this study of "particulars dealt with in short duration," as Hume recommends, in order to have a better understanding of the *longue durée* of ludic literary society as it segues from the sixteenth into the seventeenth century.<sup>138</sup> We consider the optics employed in this study, including the historical information we have about these groups, the documents associated with them, the contemporary activities and reminiscences of Estienne Pasquier as he interacted with most of them, and the literary activities of women writers of lower or outsider status, such as Marie de Romieu, Isabella Andreini, and Marie de Beaulieu, who crafted works to entertain the important noble and royal women taste-makers of the sixteenth century. We also see that enduring elements of the sixteenth-century *société mondaine* that arise in the seventeenth century illustrate the ways that theorists of play such as Huizinga, Fink, Caillois, and Suits have argued that play and culture are productively intertwined; that is to say, the rituals and principles of play produce effects beyond the perimeters of play spaces. Ultimately, I contend that what we know of the social gatherings and entertainments of sixteenth-century French noble and royal women reveals women's cultural leadership and influence on ludic literary society long before the famous *salonnières* of the seventeenth century were circumscribed as a unique phenomenon.

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138 Hume, "Construction and Legitimation," 657.



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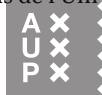
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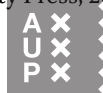


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