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# PEREGRINATIONS

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## **Putting an End to the Concept of Aristocratic Quarters in Paris**

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The concept of an “aristocratic quarter” is used as often by researchers as it is seldom defined; such is its force of evidence. Historians or art historians avidly employ it when they are interested in the surroundings of some beautiful *hôtel* (city residence) in Paris about which they are writing. They readily conclude that a certain quarter is aristocratic when they find a royal palace and a few residences of courtiers in its immediate vicinity. Given that the extant vestiges primarily date from the modern period, they tend to mistakenly interpret the phenomenon of 17<sup>th</sup>-and 18<sup>th</sup>-century residences in the Marais as evidence for a medieval reality. This has resulted in the belief that, in Paris, aristocrats aspired to live near the king. This, in turn, would explain the concentration of aristocratic residences around the most important royal palaces: the Louvre, then the Hôtel

de Saint-Paul after 1364, which initiated the *quartier du Marais*, destined to be developed at a later stage.<sup>1</sup>

Even André Chastel's study of the *quartier du Louvre* from the fourteenth to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, groundbreaking in its research methods, does not escape this tendency. Chastel's work is innovative in that it does not base itself on architectural features in order to define "the aristocratic residence." Rather, it relies on the configuration of plots, the smallest documented common denominator from this period, to culminate in this strong assertion: a vast *surface* of the plot, combined with a *layout* cutting through a block or situated on a corner, and a *localization* close to the Louvre suffices to identify an upper-class residence, with such localization being a "necessary and sufficient" criterion.<sup>2</sup> Hence, just a physical proximity to the Louvre leads to a decisive conclusion, even though the exact distance that would define "near the Louvre" is not established.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Pierre Babelon, *Le marais, mythe et réalité* (Paris: Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques et des Sites, 1987); Jean-Pierre Babelon, "Naissance des beaux quartiers à Paris," *D'une ville à l'autre: structures matérielles et organisation de l'espace dans les villes européennes (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, ed. (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1989), 55-68.

<sup>2</sup> Françoise Boudon, André Chastel, Hélène Couzy, and Françoise Hamon, *Système de l'architecture urbaine. Le quartier des Halles à Paris* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1977), 185.

More disturbing is that Chastel's particular interest in this area close to the Louvre arises from the emotion elicited by the demolition in 1971 of *les Halles*, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century central food market designed by Victor Baltard. In his introduction, Chastel takes for granted the existence of the *quartier des Halles*, which he also calls the *quartier du Louvre*, and admits to having done so simply for "the sake of convenience" (*par simple souci de commodité*).<sup>3</sup> This is to some extent understandable, because the conceptualization of the city as an assemblage of relatively homogenous parts with proper identities is as ancient as Paris itself. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the academic, Thomas of Ireland, considered that "the town of Paris is, as with Athens, divided into three parts: the first, the *grande Ville*, is that of merchants, artisans, and the general populace; the second, the island known as *Île de la Cité*, of the nobility, the royal court, and the cathedral; while the third, *Université*, is that of students and colleges."<sup>4</sup> Here, Paris' tripartite, functional,

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<sup>3</sup> "on s'en est tenu à un simple quartier... par simple souci de commodité," Boudon, Chastel, Couzy, and Hamon, *Système de l'architecture urbaine*, 9.

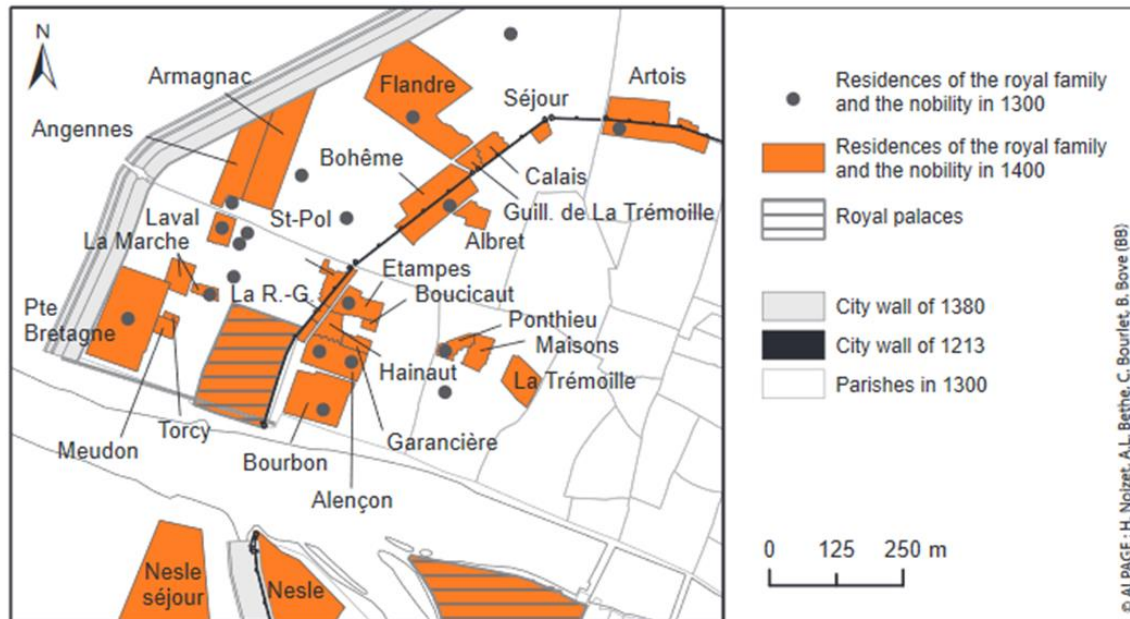
<sup>4</sup> The original text can be found in: Serge Lusignan, "L'université de Paris comme composante de l'identité du royaume de France: étude sur le thème de la *translatio studii*," *Identité régionale et conscience nationale en France et en Allemagne du Moyen Âge à l'époque moderne*, Rainer Babel and Jean-Marie Moeglin, eds. (Sigmaringen: J.Thorbecke, 1997), 59-72, at p. 71-72.

spatial scheme is easily discernable. The artificiality of this conceptualization has long poisoned French historiography, as we shall see.

It is generally accepted that the spatial organization of cities is informed by the organization of societies. The concept of an “aristocratic quarter” that interlinks the royal palace and courtiers’ residences, however, presupposes that urban space is neutral and does not affect the ways in which the courtly community is spatially deployed. Hence, the “aristocratic quarter” is a slippery concept and should be discussed in terms other than those used by historians or art historians. In this discussion, I approach the topic from the perspective of urban history, with the aid of GIS analysis. I consider Paris in its totality, and, in the absence of medieval documentation about the height of buildings, use a social definition of an aristocratic city residence to see it as the possession of a courtier and not as a remarkable building.

Following this method, I have elaborated on a corpus of property biographies that at least a courtier owned in 1300 or 1400 and have applied to them a prosopographical analysis based upon a standard survey form (owner,

social rank, date, localization, dimension, etc.).<sup>5</sup> This standardization has enabled me to execute a statistical and primarily spatial assessment of the phenomenon of aristocratic quarters as part of a GIS analysis, the heuristic value of which will become apparent.



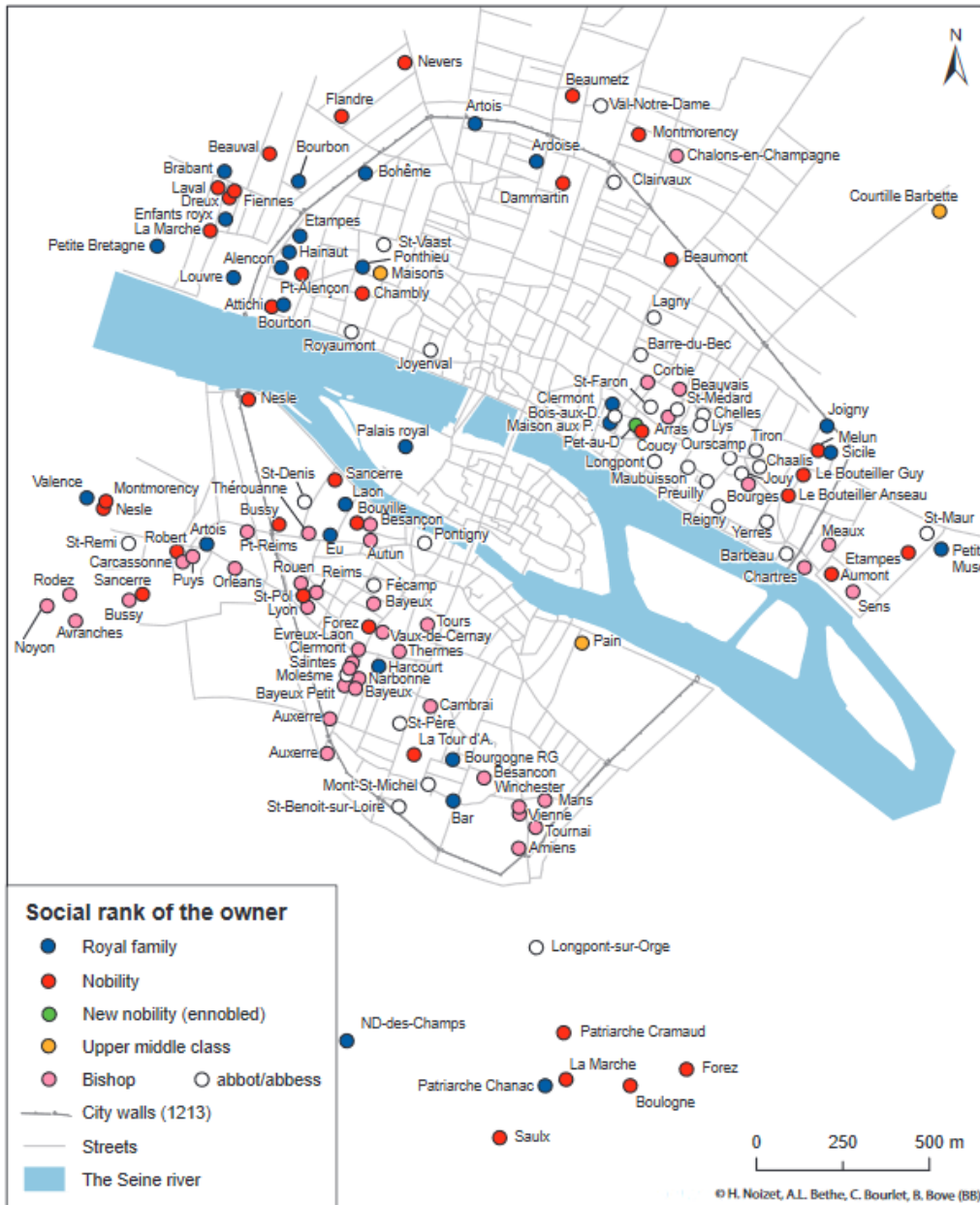
**Figure 1** The “aristocratic quarter” in the vicinity of the Louvre (1300 and 1400).  
Map: author.

<sup>5</sup> This study was conducted as a part of an unpublished thesis written for my habilitation (*Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches*) entitled *Habiter la ville. Paris et la noblesse de cour au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, defended in 2018 at the University Paris 1. The prosopographical catalogue of the city residences can be found in its appendixes on CD-ROM. A copy of this work can be consulted at the *section de diplomatique* of the IRHT in Paris. See also Adolphe Berty et al., *Topographie historique du vieux Paris* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1866-1897); or, more recently Valentine Weiss, ed., *La demeure médiévale à Paris. Répertoire sélectif des principaux hôtels* (Paris: Somogy, 2012).

## 1. The Royal District of the Louvre called into Question

Focusing on the *quartier des Halles* studied by André Chastel's team, a concentration of city residences in close proximity to the Louvre throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century can be observed, even if there is not always topographical continuity between the residences of highly placed lords spending time at the royal court in the beginning and end of the century (**Fig. 1**).

And yet, if we zoom out and look down from the scale of the city in 1300, the concentration of courtiers' residences around that of the king at the Louvre is no longer clearly discernable (**Fig. 2**). There are more residences of princes (in blue) and of noblemen (in red) on the southern bank of the river Seine, the Rive Gauche, than around the Louvre. Moreover, a concentration of a dozen residences stands out in the eastern part of the city, on either side of the city walls, in the area of the Hôtel de Saint-Paul. As for the clergy (in pink), it is clear that they preferred the Rive Gauche. This is particularly true for bishops, 69% of whom resided there, even though their privately owned residences were not primarily used by the clerics of their diocese who were studying at the



**Figure 2**  
Aristocratic residences in Paris, circa 1300. Map: author.

as may have been the case for certain properties owned by abbots.<sup>6</sup>

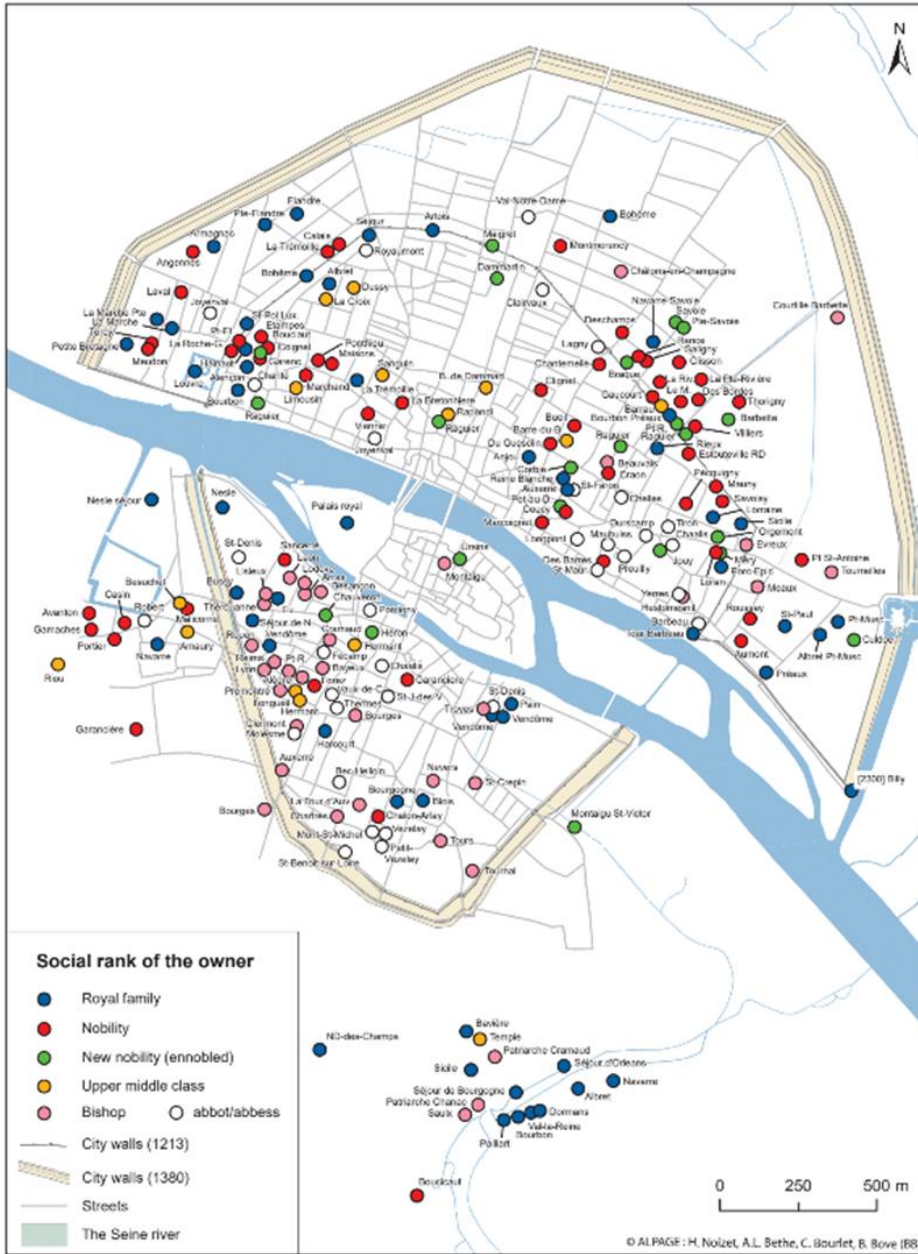
<sup>6</sup> Given there were only few abbots among the courtiers, their properties are not of significance with respect to this subject and have not been integrated into the analysis.



This spatial distribution relativizes the view taken by Thomas of Ireland. It shows us that the nobility lived predominantly on the Rive Droite, which was inhabited by the bourgeoisie, and on the Rive Gauche along with students, but *not* on the Île de la Cité. Evidently, clerics formed a visible minority on the Rive Gauche, but taxation lists reveal that even there they were numerically inferior to the urban middle classes.<sup>7</sup> This also calibrates Chastel's analysis, for the Île de la Cité palace did not precipitate the development of an aristocratic quarter in the surrounding area: hence, the proximity of a royal palace is not a general rule that enables one to identify an aristocratic residence. In addition, the concentration of noblemen's residences in the eastern part of Paris, near Saint-Paul's church, invites us to distinguish the "aristocratic quarter," where people sought to be among those of like mind, from the "royal quarter", where people sought proximity to the sovereign. This demonstrates the limits of an intuitive approach to the quarter like Chastel's.

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<sup>7</sup> In 1300, 1,460 *feux* (fireplaces) had to pay tithes. This figure may represent 25,000 to 30,000 inhabitants, including the number of *feux* that are exempted from taxes in a period where there were at most 2,000 to 3,000 students and a few hundred clerics, both secular and regular. See Caroline Bourlet and Alain Layec, "Densité de population et socio-topographie: la géolocalisation du rôle de taille de 1300," in *Paris de parcelles en pixels*, Hélène Noizet, Boris Bove, Laurent Costa, eds. (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2013), 228-37; and Jacques Verger, *Culture, enseignement et société en Occident aux XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1999), 183.



**Figure 3** Aristocratic residences in Paris, circa 1400. Map: author.

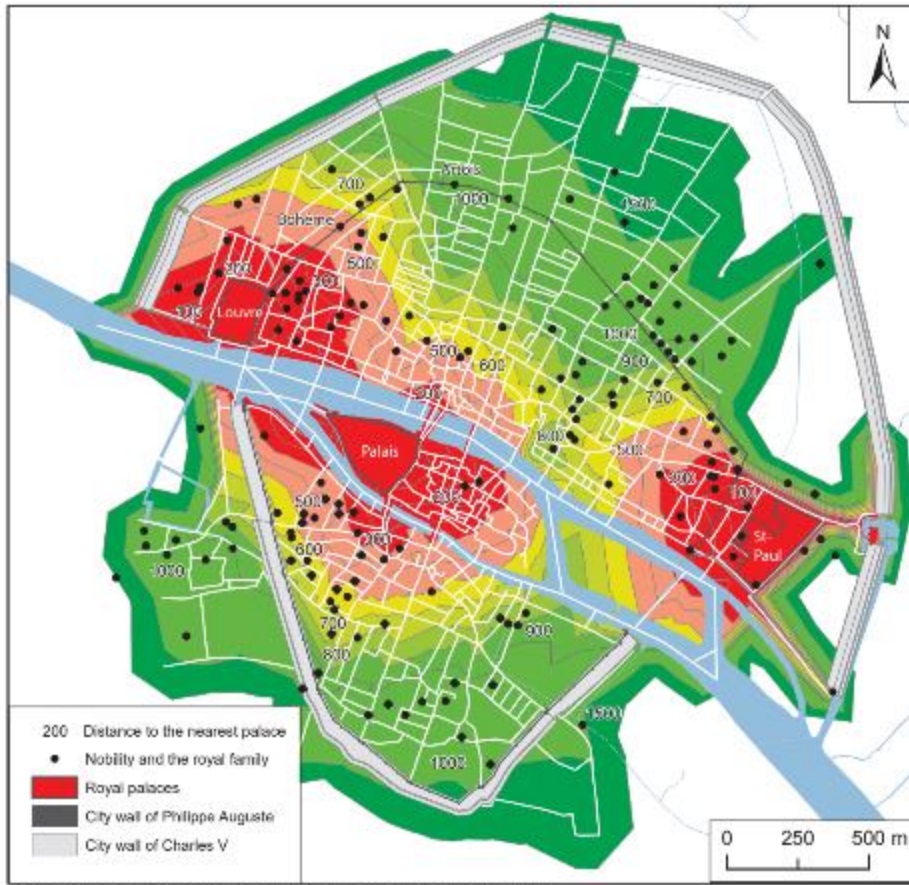
A geographical breakdown of city residences in 1400 (**Fig. 3**) confirms the preceding analysis, except that King Charles V moved into the Hôtel de Saint-Paul quarter in 1363, transforming the area from an aristocratic into a royal

quarter, while initiating the arrival of new courtiers to the vicinity. That members of the court settled in the northeast of Paris—the area of the Temple, formerly the fortress and fief of the Knights Templar—invites us to question the boundaries of the quarter of Saint-Paul: what distance constitutes being *near* a royal palace? That is where GIS's mathematical objectivation, combined with contemporary witness accounts, enables us to uncover the phenomenon of clustering.

The modeling of human circulation throughout the Parisian streets has been realized with the help of *ad hoc* software developed by Éric Mermet at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. It enables us to identify all points situated 100 meters, 200 meters, 300 meters, etc., walking distance from any given point. GIS allows us to measure the distances on a network of segments between one point and another, connected by nodes. By converting the street map into such a network, we can calculate the actual distances between any given aristocratic residence and the closest royal palace by following the streets. Based on these calculations, it is possible to create a map with isolines representing equal distances from any given point.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The following section has been elaborated with the help of GIS tools developed by Éric Mermet in his thesis and with his collaboration. For details concerning the calculations, see Éric Mermet, *Conception de méthodes et d'outils d'analyse spatiale pour l'organisation, l'exploration et la représentation*



**Figure 4** Distance to royal palaces via the streets and via the Seine in 1400. Map: author.

Those isochrones that were determined based on the three royal palaces demonstrate that the space within the city of Paris used for circulation does not form regular rings: it is constrained by the gates at the city walls, by the river Seine, and by the open areas without streets where only the plot owner is

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*d'informations géographiques sur un réseau de transport*, PhD thesis, Université Paris Est Marne-la-Vallée, 2011. An isoline is synonymous with an isopleth, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) defines as “a line (either imaginary or on a map or diagram) connecting points for which some chosen quantity has the same value, the points (if on a diagram) being defined by two variables of which one is usually distance and the other either distance or time.”

allowed to move around (**Fig. 4**).<sup>9</sup> It remains to be determined what those living at that time considered to be nearby. We do have a clue, however, for in 1388 Charles VI presented the Hôtel de Bohême to his brother Louis d'Orléans "*afin que promptement et aisément il puisse venir devers [lui] et retourner en son hostel toutes fois qu'il lui veura a plaisir*" (so that he could come to him quickly and easily and return to his residence whenever he desires, according to his wishes).<sup>10</sup> It is thus conceivable that Louis d'Orléans' residence, situated some 500 meters from the Louvre, formed part of the "royal quarter" surrounding the castle.

If we agree that a distance of 500 meters constitutes the limit of proximity, a fact confirmed by the clustering of courtiers' residences at less than 300 meters from the Louvre, then the Hôtel de Bourgogne-Artois near the northern wall of the city, which is frequently associated with the Louvre in research publications, could not be deemed to be close by. The Hôtel de Bourgogne-Artois is located one kilometer from the Louvre, a similar distance to that of the new group of residences we have been able to observe in the Temple fief. Regarding the Rive

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<sup>9</sup> "Isochrone" refers to "a line (imaginary or on a map) connecting points at which a particular event occurs or occurred at the same time" (*OED*).

<sup>10</sup> Louis Douët d'Arcq, *Choix de pièces inédites relatives au règne de Charles VI* (Paris: Veuve Jules Renouard, 1873), vol. 1.98.

Gauche, even if we make the generous hypothesis that the network of ferry services on the Seine had transformed the river into a main artery that one could take at the end of any street running towards the river, the majority of residences on the Rive Gauche were excluded from the la Cité palace quarter. This is the case, even if the modeling highlights the necessity of considering the northern part of the Rive Gauche as a zone proximate to the royal palace.

This modelling, which takes into account the ferry network, has the added advantage of highlighting the short travel time of water transport between the Louvre and Palais de Cité, whose zones of proximity overlap to such a degree that it makes sense to assume that they form a royal quarter with two centers. Water transport was straightforward for the kings: they had a pier at the western extremity of Île de la Cité—seen in the miniature for June in the *Très riches heures du duc de Berry*—and so took to the waterways in order to cover the distance between the two palaces.<sup>11</sup> Modeling, therefore, provides us with a clearer understanding of why Philip IV the Fair bought the Hôtel de Nesle from Amaury de Nesle in 1308. The purchase was undoubtedly linked to the works at the la

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<sup>11</sup> See the *Public Domain Review* for images of all the months.

Cité palace: the king might have planned to interconnect the three residences,<sup>12</sup> or, more plausibly, he thought of the Hôtel de Nesle as an annex to the Louvre or the la Cité palace. Still, one also understands why Philip VI of Valois bought the Hôtel de Nesle in 1329 from the executors of the will of Jeanne of Burgundy, spouse of Philip V, who wished to sell it, in order to fund the collège de Bourgogne that she founded. Subsequently, the Hôtel was given to several lords close to the sovereign, although it seems to have remained in the royal domain.<sup>13</sup>

Ultimately, there is but one royal quarter: around the Louvre and the Île de la Cité. Saint-Paul's quarter was the basis of an aristocratic quarter that barely developed on account of Charles V settling in the vicinity, for the group of residences in the North is too distant to be considered as being part of it.

## **2. The Nature of the Aristocratic and Princely Quarters**

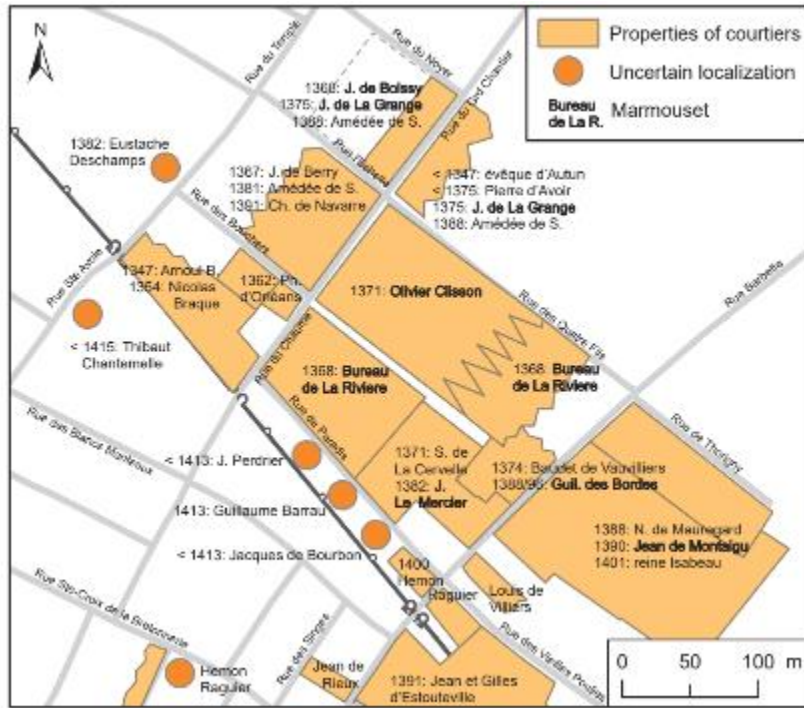
The residences close to the Temple formed a new aristocratic quarter, which I call the “quarter of the Marmouset clan,” because all of its members

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<sup>12</sup> Charles V seems to have had plans to construct a bridge between the Louvre and the palace of la Cité. See F. Hoffbauer, *Paris à travers les âges: aspects successifs des monuments et quartiers historiques de Paris, depuis le XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Firmin-Didot 1886), 166.

<sup>13</sup> Adolphe Berty and H. Legrand, *Topographie historique du vieux Paris. Vol. 1: Région du Louvre et des Tuileries* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1866), 37-79.

belonged to a political network of counselors to Charles V, that resumed its activities at the beginning of Charles VI's reign.<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 5)



**Figure 5** The occupation of the Temple quarter by the Marmouset clan (1368-1415). Map: author.

Contemporaries regarded a strong sense of locational solidarity as the spatial translation of the “*pacte d’alliance et d’amitié*” (pact of alliance and friendship) against other factions at the court.<sup>15</sup> Almost all of their properties were terraced houses and fully occupied almost two entire blocks. Therefore, the

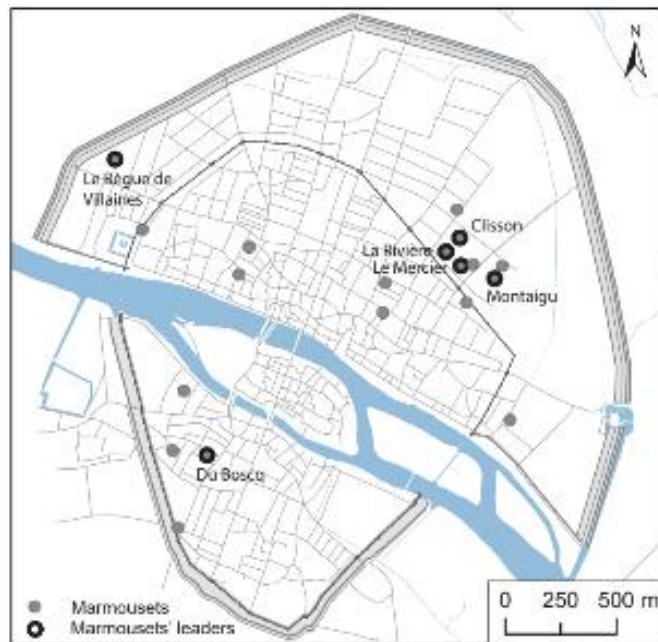
<sup>14</sup> John Bell Henneman, “Who were the Marmousets?” *Medieval Prosopography* 5 (1984): 19-63.

<sup>15</sup> Louis Bellaguet, ed., transl., *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys contenant le règne de Charles VI de 1380 à 1422* (Paris: Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 1839-1852, reprint 1994), vol. 1.569.



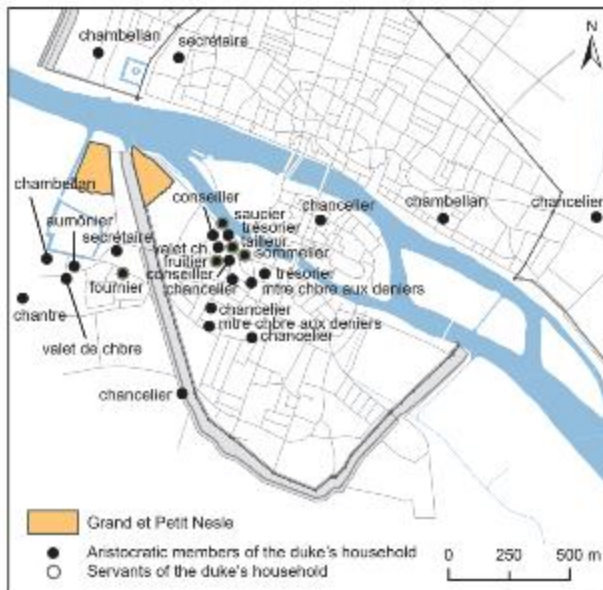
hypothesis of a “Marmouset clan quarter” can be maintained after zooming out in scale, since almost half of the individuals belonging to this group clustered here, as well as four out of the network’s six leaders. (**Fig. 6**)

**Figure 6** The Marmouset clan in Paris. Map: author.



I have also identified a clustering of noblemen around Duke Jean de Berry on the Rive Gauche, between the city itself and the suburb of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, according to the concept of the centrifugal court, in analogy to that clustering around the king. Hence, it is not an aristocratic quarter akin to the one in the Temple area, which brings together people of equal social standing, but rather a “princely quarter” gathered around one man. With its epicenter at the Hôtel de Nesle, which Charles V presented to his brother, Jean de Berry, this

princely quarter *de facto* overlapped a large part of the royal quarter of the Louvre-Cité. Just as the highest-ranking members of the princely courts were largely included in the royal court, the duke's lord chamberlain was often a counselor to the king. (Fig. 7)



**Figure 7** Residences belonging to members of the Duke of Berry's household (1400). NB: Black dots represent aristocratic members of the household. Numbered dots refer to servants. Map: author.

However, centrifugal princely quarters or aristocratic quarters comprised of equals were not the norm: I have not found anything of a similar nature for the Dukes of Burgundy or the Dukes of Orléans during the same period, even if they left a different mark on the city.

The noblemen belonging to the Duke of Burgundy's court did not choose proximity to their leader; they were spread throughout the entire city (**Fig. 8**). However, contemporaries noted that, during the civil war, Parisians in the parish of St. Eustachius were loyal supporters of the Dukes of Burgundy.<sup>16</sup> This can be explained by the efforts with which Phillip the Bold and later John the Fearless developed commercial bonds with artisans, merchants, and hotel keepers around their Hôtel d'Artois-Bourgogne.<sup>17</sup> The Dukes's account books actually reveal that his people habitually rented public accommodations, rather than buying a house in Paris. Renting could take several forms. The people belonging to the ducal house could be lodged in the enclosure of the Hôtel d'Artois, but they could also stay in one of Paris' inns. It also happened that the Duke's knights took their meals in the inns, which also rented out beds, tables, trestles, bedsheets, tin cups, and tapestries to the Duke's residence.<sup>18</sup>

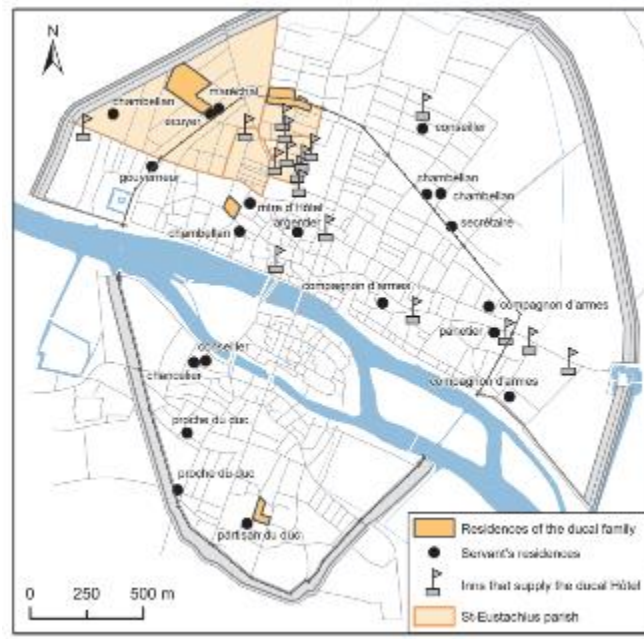
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<sup>16</sup> Florence Berland, *La cour de Bourgogne à Paris (1363-1422)*, PhD thesis, Université Charles de Gaulle, Lille 3, 2011, 249.

<sup>17</sup> "Livre des trahisons de France," Joseph Kervyn de Lettenhove, ed., *Chroniques relatives à l'histoire de la Belgique sous la domination des ducs de Bourgogne* (Bruxelles: F. Hayez, 1873), vol. 2.117; Bellaguet, ed., trans., *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, vol. 5.87; Louis Douët d'Arcq, ed., *La chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet* (Paris: Veuve J. Renouard, 1857), vol. 2.431.

<sup>18</sup> de Lettenhove, "Livre des trahisons de France," 269-72.

**Figure 8** The Dukes of Burgundy's quarter in Paris.  
Map: author.



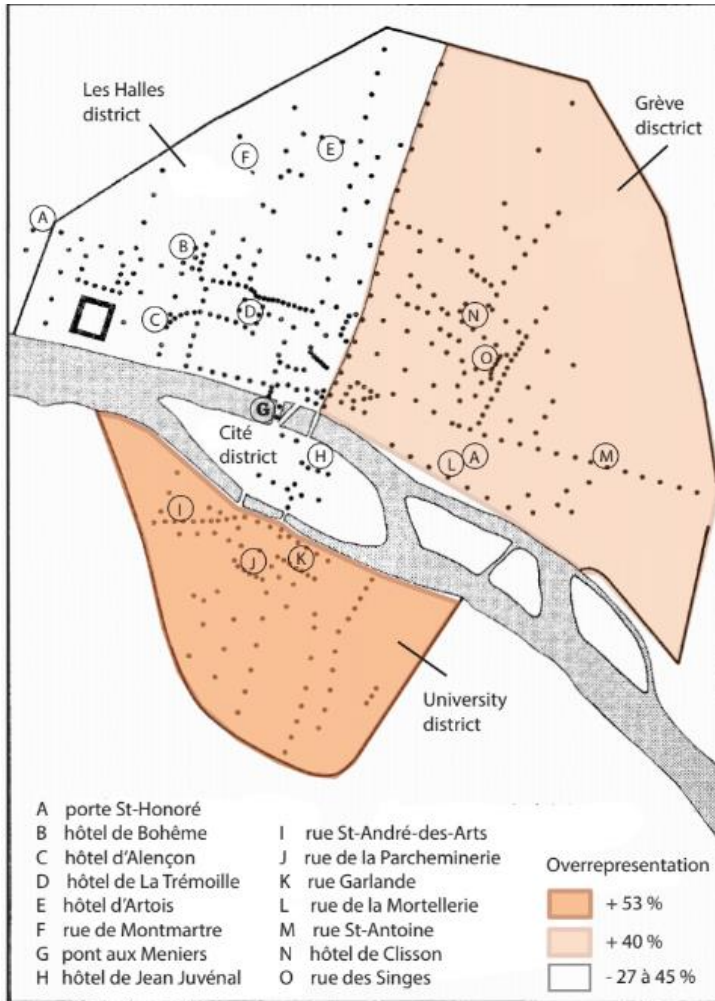
We can assess the differences between the rootedness of the Parisian houses of Berry and Burgundy by studying how each of them went about defending their respective residences in 1405, when Louis of Orléans and John the Fearless were on the verge of an openly declared war. Efforts to safeguard the Duke of Berry were concentrated on the Hôtel de Nesle, where he *“fit établir devant la porte une herse au travers de laquelle on pouvait se défendre à coups d’épée”* (had a portcullis placed in front of the gate through which people could defend themselves with swords). This would suggest the existence of a high closing wall. Safeguarding the Duke of Burgundy, on the other hand, was fitted to the

scale of the quarter surrounding him by “*faisant placer des portes de bois dans toutes les rues qui se trouvaient aux alentours de sa maison*” (placing wooden doors in all the streets in the vicinity of his house). The doors were guarded at night by crossbowmen.<sup>19</sup> This particular strategy shows that John the Fearless chose a profoundly urban-style of defense, as had been done since the 14<sup>th</sup> century when the streets were barricaded with chains. Such a procedure would be inconceivable without the assistance of those living close to his residence. Hence, the challenge of urban violence reveals the superficial integration of the Duke of Berry into his social environment, in contrast to the Duke of Burgundy’s deep rootedness in his quarter, which was confirmed by Monstrelet in 1410: “[*le duc de Bourgogne*] *fit faire par les rues de grandes fortifications de palis et de barrières afin que de sa partie adverse ne peust estre grevé*” (the Duke of Burgundy had ordered huge fortifications with stakes and barriers erected in the streets so that his party would not have to regret any losses).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Bellaguet, *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, vol. 3.307.

<sup>20</sup> Douët d’Arcq, *La chronique d’Enguerran de Monstrelet*, vol. 1.113.



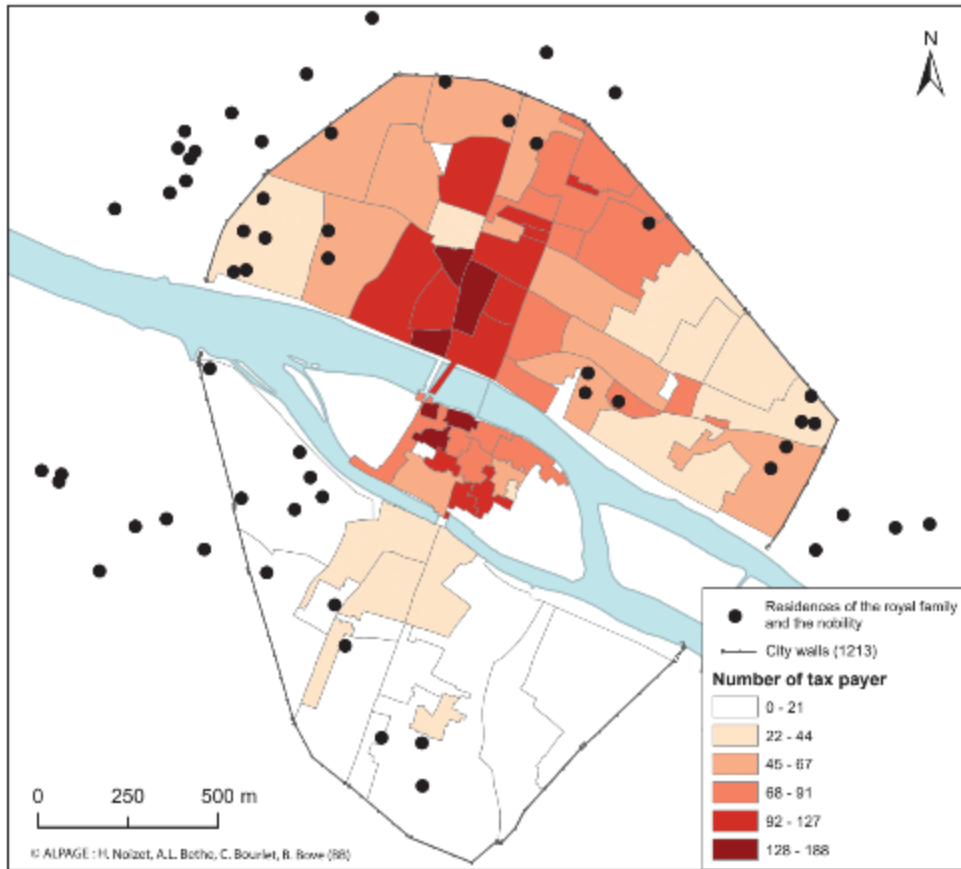
**Figure 9** Locations of properties confiscated from the Armagnac supporters in Paris. Map: author.

A concentration of courtiers affiliated with Louis of Orléans cannot be

established around his Hôtel de Bohême in the west, or the Hôtel du Porc-Épic in the east. And yet, the differentiated spatial distribution of the confiscations of goods belonging to Parisians who had supported the Armagnacs between 1418 and 1427 would suggest that many of them dwelt around the Hôtel de Bohême, where the upper classes and the financiers supporting the duke resided in a privileged environment (**Fig. 9**).

But if we compare the number of confiscations to the density of population across the same period, two over-represented areas stand out: the northeastern quarter, with more than 40% of the confiscations, and -- in particular -- the Marmouset quarter, whose inhabitants also supported the Armagnacs' politics. The relative level of confiscations was even higher on the Rive Gauche, but this was less significant, for it can be explained by the overrepresentation of courtiers in relation to the artisanal population, and by the presence of the Duke of Berry, who also belonged to the Armagnac party. Although less well documented, the case of the Duke of Orléans seems similar to that of the Duke of Burgundy: his presence did not give rise to a princely quarter, but he benefited from a great deal of support from the parishioners of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, neighbors of the Hôtel de Bohême.

Consequently, a princely quarter can be understood in two ways: as that of a popular prince amongst his middle-class neighbors, or as that of a prince who attracts noblemen from his court. Only three cases of the latter can be found. A comparable process cannot be established for princes of a lesser caliber. Furthermore, it is likely that politicization may have exacerbated this



**Figure 10**  
Residences owned by lay people and population density (1300).  
Map: author.

phenomenon for the dukes, who were quarrelling about the French crown at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

These two types of quarters are as spectacular as they are rare. This should invite us to consider something other than the proximity of a patron or support from a population as the guiding principle behind the dissemination of aristocratic residences throughout Paris. The existence of twin royal quarters around the Louvre-Palais de la Cité, on either bank of the Seine (excluding the Île de la Cité itself) suggests that population density offers a more decisive



explanation than the distribution of courtiers' residences. This can be verified by superposing the spatialization of residences in 1300 with that of taxpayers listed in the tax rolls of that same year (**Fig. 10**).

The correlation between low population density and a clustering of city residences stands out and explains, not only why courtiers deserted Île de la Cité, but also why lay lords willingly settled on the Rive Gauche. (Inside city walls was a sparsely occupied residential area and peripheral zone of the city.) Choosing peripheral areas can be explained by noting that courtiers were late to settle in Paris during the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the city was at its demographical peak. The aristocratic élites needed space: on average their urban properties measured 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> for noblemen and bishops, 6,600 m<sup>2</sup> for princes of royal blood, 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> for the royal Hôtel de Saint-Paul, namely, a land occupation similar to that of the enclosures of the mendicant convents.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike the convents, Parisians were not overly inclined to surrender their plot to a lord from the court who had no pre-emptive rights over them, or who lacked the capacity to intimidate them. Noblemen thus had to buy their plots one

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<sup>21</sup> According to the map drawn up by Edme Verniquet, *Plan de la ville de Paris avec sa nouvelle enceinte* (s.l. 1791): 5,600 m<sup>2</sup> for the Carmelites, 10,000 to 11,000 m<sup>2</sup> for the Augustinians and the Dominicans, 22,000 m<sup>2</sup> for the Franciscans.

by one and merge the middle-class properties that were small, due to the higher density of population, and measured less than 300 m<sup>2</sup>. In this context, courtiers had no choice other than to move to the less densely occupied peripheral zones, where middle-class properties were larger. The King of Navarre's city residence in the suburb of St-Germain-des-Prés comprised at least thirteen different properties,<sup>22</sup> while it took the dukes of Bourbon a century before they obtained all thirty plots of their block near the Louvre.<sup>23</sup>

Population density is the principal factor behind the distribution of aristocratic residences, but there are also other factors worth exploring, although they are of minor importance. The clustering of court bishops on the Rive Gauche would suggest that they were seeking the clerical atmosphere of the riverbank on which scholars lived rather than proximity to their ruler, thus following the principle of ideological clustering, even though none of these residences disposed of a *studium* and some of their owners were the king's confessors. There is, however, one last organizing principle behind the spatial

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<sup>22</sup> Adolphe Berty, L.-M. Tisserand, and Th. Vacquer, *Topographie historique du vieux Paris. Vol. 2: Région du bourg Saint-Germain* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1876), 157-58.

<sup>23</sup> Simone Roux, "Résidences princières parisiennes: l'exemple de l'hôtel de Bourbon, fin XIV<sup>e</sup>-milieu XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Fürstliche Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Europa*, Hans Patze, and Werner Paravicini, eds. (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke Verlag, 1991), 75-101.

distribution of city residences, namely their integration into a network following specific itineraries.

### 3. City Residences as a Network

If we study **Figure 5**, we observe that a certain number of aristocratic residences are lined up on the Rue de Béthisy or on the Rue du roi de Sicile. The reason for this becomes clear if we crosslink the map of aristocratic properties with the map of the shortest routes from one point to another.<sup>24</sup> This is an opportunity to explore via GIS, for it enables us to automatically calculate the shortest routes between one point and another within a network composed of segments (streets) and nodes (city residences).

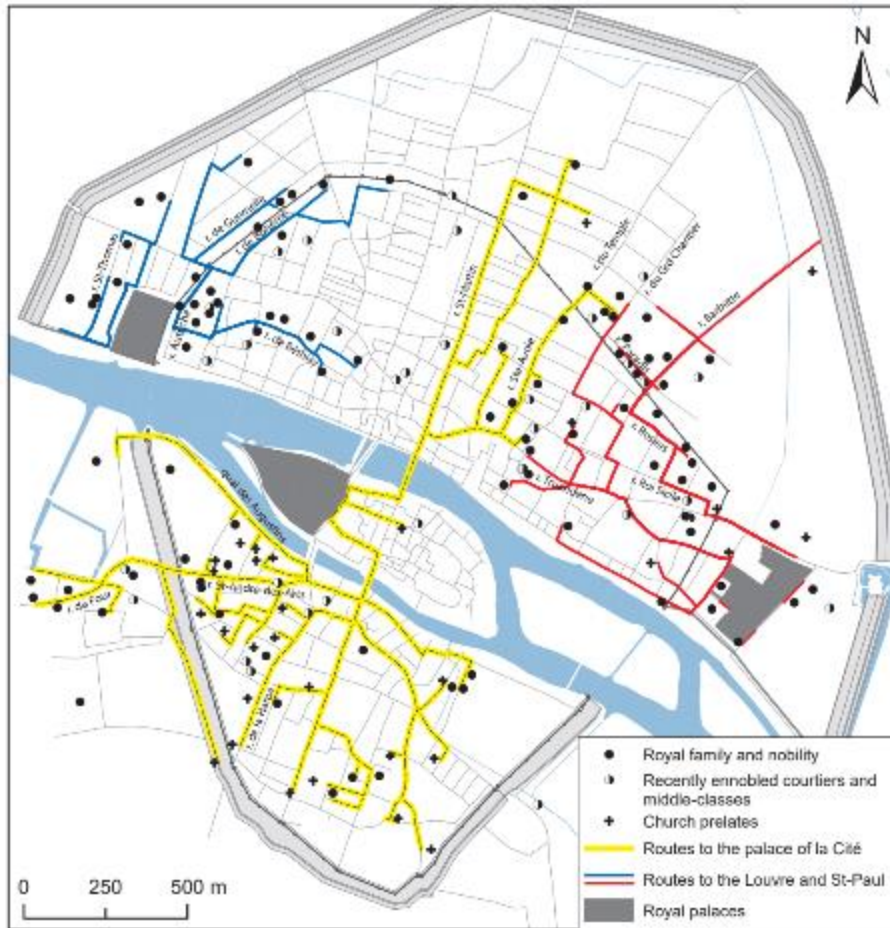
The idea was to seek out the shortest route/s from an aristocratic residence to the nearest royal palace, in order to make visible the streets or sections of streets shared by those following those trajectories.<sup>25</sup> The calculations were based on the princely residences, those of the nobility, and those of Church prelates.

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<sup>24</sup> Here again, the solution would not have been possible without Éric Mermet's invaluable assistance.

<sup>25</sup> Since movement on the city's waterways was probably less important than traveling overland, we did not integrate that into the model.

Those owned by middle-class people, or by recently ennobled middle-classes were excluded; however, they are noted on the map (**Fig. 11**) for reference purposes.



**Figure 11** The shortest routes from city residences to royal palaces. Map: author.

Obviously, this representation should not be taken as an exact depiction of reality, for the modelling on which it is based only considers a very small number of factors that determine the courtiers' movements: street widths, traffic

intensity, and circumstances in which movements were made, *inter alia*, with a small or large group of attendants and either by day or night. The most important unknown factors were the king's exact whereabouts and whether courtiers sought out the shortest way to him. While this study just represents the trajectories to the nearest palace, we should not overlook the possibility that courtiers might also travel to the most distant palaces.

That said, this experiment is of interest in that it reveals where the lines dividing the flow of movement to each palace are located on the road network. The Louvre, for example, had no direct competitor: all movement leaving aristocratic residences in the west of the city was directed toward it, even from the most distant residences such as the Hôtel d'Artois-Bourgogne. The situation is less clear in the east of the city. The dividing line between the basin of the Hôtel de Saint-Paul and that of the palace of la Cité passes between the Rue du Temple and the Rue du Grand Chantier, thus partitioning this quarter into two spheres of influence with regard to the palaces. This confirms that the most important part of the Temple quarter was part of the Hôtel de Saint-Paul's orbit and highlights its physical distance to the new residence of Charles V, as well as to the old palace of la Cité. Inversely, it should be noted that the Temple quarter

was as much in the orbit of the palace of la Cité as it was in that of the Hôtel de Saint-Paul. The sociological make-up of the first owners of Temple quarter residences, who were predominantly active in the administration, confirms this second hypothesis.

And yet, it is evident that all movements by courtiers dwelling on the Rive Gauche led them primarily to the old palace of la Cité, which had been renovated by Philip the Fair. In his study of the quarter of Saint-André-des-Arts, Jean-Claude Garreta emphasizes that, between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, this quarter was transformed into an area favored by the *gens de robe*, lawyers and magistrates working at the Parlement de Paris (a court of law) and in the central administration, but also by sergeants and other procurators attached to the Châtelet (another court of law and prison).<sup>26</sup> This may come as a surprise, in light of the tenacious notion of a tripartite Paris going back to Thomas of Ireland, but the Rive Gauche assuredly offered living conditions that were much more pleasant than the area around Châtelet, in terms of tithes and prices for plots, while still being very accessible, topographically speaking.

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<sup>26</sup> Jean-Claude Garreta, *Le quartier Saint-André-des-Arts, des origines à 1600. Étude topographique*, PhD thesis, École Nationale des Chartes, Paris, 1956, 2, 348.

This might also explain the Rive Gauche's attraction for bishops, living far away from the most fashionable palaces. These prelates were the king's counselors rather than those with whom he would share his family life, hunting, his court pageants, and his jousts. Accordingly, it seems reasonable that they would prefer the Rive Gauche: closer to the political center that had drawn them to the capital, but also a calm area with a clerical atmosphere to their liking.

The other lesson to be learned from the representation of the shortest travel distance is that most of the residences were located on the most advantageous itineraries, thereby confirming the hypothesis that these trajectories were actually used. This is evident for the streets closest to the Louvre, such as Rue Saint-Thomas or Rue d'Autriche, and to a lesser degree Rue de Guernelle, which also lead to the Hôtel d'Artois-Bourgogne, but primarily for Rue de Béthisy, further away but on the road to the palace of la Cité and the Hôtel de Saint-Paul. On the Rive Gauche it was Quai des Augustins and the Rue Saint-André-des-Arts, with its extension Rue du Four outside the city walls, as well as Rue de la Harpe. In the east, the principal itinerary sinuously followed the ramparts of Philippe Auguste: Rue du Paradis, Rue Barbette, Rue des Rosiers, and Rue du Roi de Sicile as far as Porte Baudoyer. If we consider the distribution

of city residences from a spatial perspective, those situated on Rue de la Truanderie were in a position similar to those on Rue de Béthisy: on the major route that leads to the city's most important crossroads, and, as a consequence, to the three palaces.

## **Conclusions**

As we have seen, conceptualizing the “aristocratic quarter” requires more than an intuitive approach. Admittedly, going beyond this level without a measuring tool that enables us to objectivize the rationale underpinning the clustering process was difficult. GIS's heuristic leverage now makes that possible by forcing us to structure the data and to go beyond case studies in favor of a broader approach to the process. GIS enables calculations of surfaces, density, and distances of complex geometrical forms that are not otherwise possible. Above all, it allows us to propose modelings of movement in the form of isochrones or calculations of the shortest routes, which are highly difficult to represent by means of traditional cartography. In short, GIS opens new pathways toward historical reality.



For instance, we learn of the multiplicity and complementarity of spatial logics at work in the topographical clustering of the courtiers' properties. First, it is necessary to distinguish between an "aristocratic" quarter, one that brings together equals aspiring to be among others like them, and a "royal" or "princely" quarter that attracts a ruler's subjects. Second, these spatial concepts are not mutually exclusive, in as much as the princely courts assembled in the capital participate in the royal court. Furthermore, the arrival of a sovereign can transform, by means of a dialectical process, an aristocratic quarter into a royal quarter. Third, the spatial logics are not limited to spatial proximity; spatial logics are also of a relational nature and should be viewed from the perspective of movement. Establishing that the majority of the courtiers' properties are located on the same short route to the nearest palace enables us to connect the most distant city residences to the courtly network.

This study of aristocratic quarters also enables us to better understand the relations between the city and the court, and to assess to what degree, in the case of Paris, the latter was removed from the former: members of courtly nobility were the last to arrive in Paris and had no other option than to settle where vacant spaces were still available, on the city's periphery, with the result that the

court infiltrated Paris by means of movement rather than architecture. It has certainly been noted that the most powerful princes could exert influence over their neighbors in Paris, but this was neither systematical, nor primarily a norm because there is little doubt that, apart from the context of civil war, the ties between courtiers and Parisians were less binding. The high number of aristocratic quarters where courtiers sought to be among their equals, like their fencing the streets off, tells us that the life of the courtiers rarely intersected with that of others in Paris. It was as if they were living in separate spheres. 🐼