**Part two. Fakes and facts.**

In this work we decided to go through the basic stereotypes about Cardinal Richelieu which appears when someone reads Alexander Duma’s book “The Three Musketeers” or watches one of the many films shot by the famous composition. In the book making bids for the grace of a historical novel Duma deals with the historic facts quite freely, building them conveniently into the narration. The directors and scriptwriters putting the book into screen, in their turn, added some details according to their own view. However, despite all the mentioned above, films and books managed to save a lot of the true facts. So let us analyze which features of a typical image of Armand Jean du Plessis, duke de Richelieu, are based on the inner history and which are just a part of the folklore.

**Myth number one. Cardinal fought against the King. False**

**The whole story is:** Cardinal against King, musketeersagainst guardsmen is a classical confrontation, well-known by Duma’s book. However, in fact, the situation was completely different. The King not only took him as a friend, but called him so openly and considered him to be the most valuable man in the government. To tell the truth, at first, their relationship, indeed, was very bad: Luis XIII reasonably set him down as the closest follower of his mother and the main political opponent Marie de Medicis for a long time. But after Richelieu had managed to pacify the militant Queen mother successfully and prevented the beginning insurrection, the king developed a grace for him and brought him closer.

While being exiled for supporting Marie de Medicis, young bishop of Luçon despaired and decided that his career was finished and his days were numbered. That’s why he took King’s offer to effect negotiates with Queen mother as his last hope for saving. The diplomatic mission succeed: Queen got back to the Royal Household and made up with her son. Being thankful, she redounded Richelieu to become a cardinal. However, after a while Cardinal exiled Marie de Medicis again, having done the right thing to trust the young king. It’s also known that Richelieu’s attempt to retire could convince King to do anything the Cardinal demanded.

**Myth number two. Cardinal is a malignant intrigant not acquainted with honor. False**

**The whole story is:** Despite Cardinal indeed preferred to act by artifice in public interest, he knew the idea of honor quite well. He descended from a noble stem of great antiquity. His father was one of the best Henry IV’s supporters, and his both godfathers were marshals. At master Pluvinel’s Military Academy, who brought up “real men”, he was perfectly educated. Pupils studied etiquette, fencing, dancing, they also formed the right view of life and duty. So Richelieu was the show gentleman, he even took part in a few duels in his youth and was reckoned honorable man. His loyal people always got adequate reward and privilege.

Richelieu’s biographers tell an interesting story. When he was preparing for getting Magister degree in theology, he was renting chambers in a monsieur Rable’s house. In that respectful bourgeois’s garden there was a beautiful peach-tree. After peaches had got mature, Richelieu with his manservant began secretly stealing them, bored and trying to make the weekdays funnier. Rable ran off his legs looking for the thief, but he certainly could not suspect the polite, courteous stayer – student-theologist. More than twenty years passed and the story seemed to die down. But Richelieu suddenly remembered about his young lark and ordered to find monsieur Rable. Already old, he was brought to all-powerful Cardinal with his daughters. Rable scared and began assuring he was a law-obedient citizen. Richelieu set him at rest and asked if he remembered all his peaches being stolen once. Rable got hot and answered he was still sorry about losing them. The thief would get into trouble if only he caught him. Then Richelieu admitted it was he who was stealing peaches. He ordered to pay Rable’s family an enormous sum of about a few annual wages and expressed his hope that he’d paid for the stolen reaches enough.

**Myth number three. Cardinal was in love with the Queen. False**

**The whole story is:** while Royal boys-descendants got separate parts of the country in lordship and helped the heir of the throne, Royal daughters had an only function – being a mutually beneficial goods for exchange. In this way France and Spain “exchanged” their princesses, and 12-year-old Anne of Austria came to Paris to become Luis’s wife. Having been brought up in stringency of catholic Spanish court, she was frightened by the life of luxury in Paris, courtier cabals and hassles. In Spain princesses were almost treated like a toad under the harrow, and Anne was taken aback by princely dresses and food, society immorality and conjugal duty. Richelieu was appointed as her confessor. He was the only one whom Queen could open her mind and whom she had a right to complain to. Therefore, their relationship was truly very confidential and close. But Richelieu was 15 years older and thought her to be a little unlucky silly girl, who she at her age undoubtedly was. And Richelieu was Anne’s ghostly father, and she was his advisee. Later, grown up Anne got used to the entourage and French habits, grew bolder and even arranged a plot against Richelieu.

**Myth number four. Cardinal was in love with lady d’Egilon. Partly true**

**The whole story is:** Lady d’Egilon was Richelieu’s elder brother Henri’s daughter. Since childhood she was Armand Richelieu’s ward as her farther died early. Richelieu himself arranged her profitable marriage to lord d’Egilon. But the wedlock turned to be unlucky and lasted short. After her husband’ death lady d’Egilon decided to go into convent. By that time she communicated with Richelieu much. She was a very lever woman and they could talk on every topic together. As a result, Richelieu managed to tell his niece against retiring. She used to live in his home by the right of a relative, kept a good house, attended the parties he held. She took care of him till his very death. We can’t be sure whether they had closer relationship or not, because Richelieu had an unblemished reputation, however there always are rumors. For example, some of them claim that Richelieu and duchess d’Egilon had two children, though no one have ever seen them or heard their names. On his deathbed Richelieu, who looked very unpleasantly because of his illness, asked everyone to take lady d’Egilon away in order she not to see his dead body. In his official will he handed her down a great part of his possessions.

**Myth number five. Cardinal armored. True.**

**The whole story is:** Richelieu studied military art for many years. His dreams were quite like famous d’Artagnan’s: he dreamt of becoming a captain of king’s musketeers, first, and a marshal of France then, fulfilling a lot of deeds of a hero. Having got the power by another way, Cardinal still thought that church ecclesiastic actions are less important than affairs of state. Richelieu saved his love and aspiration to military events, so he did not disdain putting armors on his soutane in important battles and leading the army. It may seem that he as a divine should have been judged for such an action, but in fact, he gained the eternal respect of all his people. There’s a famous engraving called “La Rochelle siege”, where Cardinal stands at the front, observing the battle.

**Myth number six. Cardinal forbade duels. True**

**The whole story is:** Everyone who have read Duma’s novel or watched films may remember that musketeers-duelists were constantly chased after by Cardinal’s guardsmen. Those episodes and absolutely true. Cardinal had a lot of reasons for hating duels. He saw duels destroying many talented young men, capable of making a benefit for the statement. Duel was an abuse of the authority, because gentleman’s life belongs not to him, but to the king, Cardinal thought. Besides, Richelieu also had a personal reason for prosecuting sword meeting. His beloved brother Henri died at the duel at early age. That’s why Cardinal indeed conduced ordaining laws about banning duels and controlled their fulfillment.

**Myth number seven. Cardinal fought against heretics. False**

**The whole story is:** Cardinal, in spite of being the head of the French catholic church, didn’t intend to catholicize everyone. He didn’t pay attention to what confession France lieges took themselves to till they were loyal to the king. Furthermore, he was against all kinds of war in the country – no matter, feud or religious persecution it was. La Rochelle siege – the most well-known war between catholics and huguenots of that time – was not about belief. Protestants began rebelling openly: they refused to pay dues to a catholic ruler, demanded a special attitude to them, undermined authority.

Interesting fact: having been the bishop of Luçon, Richelieu in his preaching made an anthem not to the Lord, but to the King, making his fold love absolute monarchy. His first preaching at the appointment of a bishop told the parish about the majesty of the civil authority and the necessity for all the Frenchmen to obey it inviolately. Cardinal was disapproved of in Roma because of such views and was even called “cardinal of huguenots” or “governmental cardinal”.

**Myth number eight. Cardinal had spies. True**

**The whole story is:** Cardinal did have a huge spy network all over the country. There women as well as men were used. The personality of mysterious Milady turned out to have the real background. Milady is not a single influential spy-woman. Richelieu was sure that for having the true information he had to get the news both from the aristocracy and plebs, so many his informers were poor citizens – men, women and children. Existence of the intelligencers guaranteed, first, that Richelieu will know in advance about future attempts upon his or the King’s life. Also Frenchmen, knowing that their every careless word will be transferred to the highest instance, were afraid of organizing meetings, complaining and criticizing the government even in private conversations. Officially Richelieu had no relation to his spies: all the cooperation was executed by his friend and trusted man – father Joseph, Dominican monk.

**Myth number nine. Cardinal was not acquainted with life’s difficulties. False**

**The whole story is:** Richelieu can hardly be counted for one of the typical aristocrats who successfully captured the ascendancy and the treasury. The first serious problem for Armand for getting the Luçon episcopacy. Having come to the land, Richelieu found there a church with rotten floors and hardly full roof, an impoverished peasant village and an ancient castle where drafts were passing. The housekeeper was shrugging: the previous bishop had died about 30 years ago and since that everything valuable had been stolen. Little money that earned Richelieu should have been divided into two parts: for personal and the common use. The three quarters of the personal money Armand sent to his mother, forfeiting other means of living. Half the rest sum he invested in the church fixing. He had to live on the tiny balance of money till the next autumn and stay at the cold empty stony castle in the winter. In his letters to friends Richelieu wrote that Luçon was to be the worst episcopacy not only in France, but also in the whole world. The money was not enough even for buying food, not mentioning about firewood and payment for servants; pieces of furniture were found dilapidated at the garret. In a few years Richelieu managed to win the glory of the richest and the most prosperous episcopacy for Luçon.

Second, Richelieu was a deeply ill man. Frequent diseases in his childhood broke his health down. The first winter in his episcopacy he also spent in fever. In the youth, he had to cross the Alps, and as a result of long-day colds, he hardly survived and was getting round for a few weeks. In adulthood he was constantly tortured by nightmares and headache, sometimes he had hallucinations. During a difficult working day he could begin running round the table heehawing and saying he was a horse. The most up-to-date methods of medicine in the beginning oh the seventieth century suggested curing any illness by either bloodletting, or stomach lavage, or limb amputation. The richest men could afford emerald-crumb treatment. Fortunately, Richelieu managed to avoid swallowing emerald crumb. All the same, he died quite early because of an unknown illness, which still can be diagnosed by neither doctors, nor historians.

Third, there were over 40 attempts upon Richelieu’s life while he was a cardinal. Some of them were prepared by Anne of Austria, Marie Medicis, Haston of Orlean, othe ones – by religious and political fanatics. As a way of defense against poisons it was supposed to use a toad stone – a substation, got from toads’ heads. It was expected to change its color when got to a poisoned food. We can’t be sure if it was really useful, but Richelieu died by his own death. Dying, he spoke the famous sentence: “I did not have other enemies, apart from the nation ones”.

**Myth number ten. Cardinal and a black dog. False**

**The whole story is:** Richelieu had loved cats for all his life. It may have been connected with the fact that cats are good for nervous system and lighten headaches. In the Palais-Cardinal there were a little more than 30 cats. The society judged him for that passion, because cats were thought to be this life’s shelter for the devil. The greatest indignation was caused by a black cat Lucifer – a “devil spawn”. Therefore, Richelieu didn’t like dogs and didn’t let them near the Palace. In his will Richelieu left his cats a round amount for living (feeding), but fanatical churchmen kicked the cats away and hardly didn’t burn them, while the money rested in the officials’ pockets.