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0521641241 - The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV: Royal Service and Private Interest, 1661-1701

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The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV

The 'personal rule' of Louis XIV witnessed a massive increase in the size of the French army and an apparent improvement in the quality of its officers, its men and the War Ministry. However, this is the first book to treat the French army under Louis XIV as a living political, social and economic organism: an institution which reflected the dynastic interests and personal concerns of the king and his privileged subjects.

The book seeks to explain the development of the army between the end of Cardinal Mazarin's ministry and the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession. During this period the army was reshaped, not simply through the assurance of an adequate money supply, the promulgation of reforming edicts and the imposition of tighter ministerial control. Of even greater significance was the awareness of Louis XIV and his ministers of the need to pay careful attention to the condition of the king's officers, and to take account of those officers' military, political, social and cultural aspirations.

GUY ROWLANDS is Pybus Lecturer in European History, Newnham College, Cambridge.

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The idea of an 'early modern' period of European history from the fifteenth to the late eighteenth century is now widely accepted among historians. The purpose of Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History is to publish monographs and studies which illuminate the character of the period as a whole, and in particular focus attention on a dominant theme within it, the interplay of continuity and change as they are presented by the continuity of medieval ideas, political and social organisation, and by the impact of new ideas, new methods, and new demands on the traditional structure.

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Engraving by Pierre Drevet, 1703, of Louis-Auguste de Bourbon, duc du Maine and prince des Dombes (1670–1736), based on the painting by François de Troy. Author's collection.

Maine, the eldest surviving illegitimate son of Louis XIV and the marquise de Montespan, was the king's favourite bastard. Louis installed him as Colonel-General of the Swiss and Grison forces in 1674, prince des Dombes in 1681, governor of Languedoc in 1682, General of the Galleys (1688–94), colonel of the *régiment des Carabiniers* in 1693, and Grand Master of the Artillery in 1694. With the exception of the Galleys, he held these titles almost without interruption until his death.

The portrait sums up the way in which Maine believed the world should see him: as a soldier and as a sovereign prince of the Dombes, an enclave of disputed status situated north-east of Lyon. The closed crown and the sceptre make that explicit. The title of the engraving (*Ludovicus Augustus Dei gratia Dombarum Princeps*) also reinforced his claim to sovereignty. But within France there was deep reluctance to see him as anything other than a duke, in spite of the king's steps to create a special legal position in society for Maine and his brother, the comte de Toulouse, who in 1714 were even written into the line of succession to the throne. In the aftermath of his father's death in 1715, Maine's pretensions were a danger to the stability of the regency for the child-king Louis XV. In particular, Maine's claims to superior status and a share in power within the kingdom, when coupled with the extensive role he played in the army, threatened to undermine the authority of the regent, Philippe II, duc d'Orléans. Because of the closed crown and sceptre, Orléans had the plate of the engraving destroyed. Few examples of it survive, though there could be no better representation of Louis XIV's dynastic approach to the state, nor of the link between politics, social status and the administration of the army.

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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 2002

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Ehrhardt 10/12 pt *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

ISBN 0 521 64124 1 hardback

Cambridge University Press

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To my parents, with love

‘We cannot expect, however able we may be, to correct the natural inclinations of all men to seek their own interest, but it would still be sufficiently glorious for us to arrange so that they can only find it in honest practices, in meritorious actions, and in observing the rules of their profession.’

(Louis XIV, *Mémoires*, p. 152)

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Acknowledgements

The research which has culminated in this book began in Oxford when I became a D.Phil. student at the same age as the marquis de Barbezieux had succeeded his father in the post of Secretary of State for War in 1691. Nine years later the book was finished when I was the same age, to the month, as Barbezieux when he died in office five months short of his thirty-third birthday. It has been long in gestation. Indeed, during self-indulgent moments I wondered whether Barbezieux had found it easier to manage Louis XIV's armies and deal with the French aristocracy than I was finding it to juggle the demands of a social existence, job hunting, research, writing, teaching and even court ceremonial as a Pro-Proctor amid the *ancien régime* trappings of Oxford University. Unlike Barbezieux, however, I did not take refuge in the bottle or hunting to relieve the pressure, though the finished product might have been better had I done so.

The book which has emerged has been written with the generous help of several institutions and numerous individuals. At Oxford I must thank several host colleges for the financial and moral support they offered during my postgraduate years and my first two posts. Magdalen and Oriel kept the wolf from the postgraduate door with two scholarships and other material support; and the Rector and Fellows of Exeter elected me to a lectureship in early modern history and then a junior research fellowship. Throughout my time as a senior member at Oxford, the Faculty of Modern History made generous contributions to my research expenses. Thanks are also owed to the British Academy for electing me to a postdoctoral fellowship and providing additional funding for a final big push in the archives. Without the Academy this book would never have seen the light of day. Many people in Oxford have shaped my thoughts in discussions formal and informal, assisted me in myriad ways and made the task of research and teaching that much more enjoyable: John Maddicott, Michael Hart, Robin Briggs, Laurence Brockliss, Sir John Elliott, Simon Hodson, Eric Nelson, Robert Evans, Toby Osborne, Tim Watson, Jonathan Powis, Nick Davidson, Nick Dew, Cliff Davies, Felicity Heal, Clive Holmes, Leslie Mitchell, Faramerz Dabhoiwala, Paul Slack and Paul Langford. To my great sadness Angus Macintyre is no longer with us to see this book appear – I hope he would have approved. In the Bodleian Library, Helen, Vera, David and their host of colleagues in the Upper Reading Room passed scores of volumes over the counter to me in a

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period spanning eight years, and dealt with my occasional outbursts of frustration. Heroes, the lot of you.

I must also thank the Principal and Fellows of Newnham College, Cambridge, my current berth, for electing me to the Pybus Lectureship in European History from October 2000, and the Faculty of History in the University of Cambridge for appointing me as a Newton Trust Lecturer from October 2001. I must single out Gill Sutherland, Rosamond McKitterick and Tessa Stone for all their help in easing me into a new job and an unfamiliar environment, and for their encouragement in the last stages of writing. Other colleagues in the faculty who have been sympathetic, generous and welcoming include Ulinka Rublack, Mary Laven, Melissa Calaresu, Brendan Simms, David Smith, Mark Goldie, John Morrill and Tim Blanning. I can only apologise to the dozens of women with whom I now work, both in early modern European teaching at Cambridge and in Newnham, that this book should be so centred on men behaving badly.

The chapters to come are essentially a product of many months of research in France. The staff of the Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre at the château de Vincennes were truly outstanding in the warm welcome and cooperation they extended to an Anglo-Saxon (and one of Huguenot descent, to boot) intent on exploring the reign of the Sun King. Colonel Gilbert Bodinier, Thierry Sarmant and Samuel Gibiat helped me with thorny problems on many occasions and in many ways. Bernard Hamaïde repeatedly helped overcome administrative difficulties and rescued me from despair early on in my researches at Vincennes. But the 'grand croix de l'Ordre de Saint-Louis' must go to Mme Son Bernard, and the many *magasiniers* and conscripts who have worked with her over the years, tirelessly labouring to bring me register after register of documents in my obsessive quest to understand the seventeenth-century state. Louis XIV's motto was 'Nec Pluribus Impar' – not unequal to many – but it could just as well describe Mme Bernard.

Elsewhere in France I received excellent treatment in the Salle des Manuscrits of the Bibliothèque Nationale; in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal; in the Bibliothèque Mazarine; in the Archives des Affaires Etrangères at the Foreign Ministry; and in the Archives Condé at the magnificent château de Chantilly. The archives, of course, close in the evenings and at weekends, and many people, whom space does not permit me to mention, helped make my repeated stays in Paris largely enjoyable ones. In particular, it was always good to talk about Louis XIV and the Jacobites with Edward Corp, and Rainer Babel helped with navigating the archives. Rafe Blaufarb proved such a genial companion in and out of the archives, and it was he who first suggested focusing on the high political dimensions of the army. I keenly await his book on the officer corps in the late eighteenth century. David O'Brien and I have pondered the problem of the royal military household for the last eight years, and his work on this subject for the eighteenth century should soon appear. Sarah Chapman and Greg Monahan kindly supplied me with a couple of crucial references. The extended

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Hicks family, Andrew Naylor and Robert Sholl kept me sane at weekends. I cannot end my recollections of Paris without mentioning Bettina Holstein whose friendship and generosity have been remarkable, and for which I shall be eternally grateful.

On this side of the Channel, nobody has made a greater contribution to my thinking and career than David Parrott. As a thesis supervisor I could not have asked for anyone better, and he was then, and remains now, a most generous and excellent friend. My deepest gratitude goes to him. Without Robert Oresko, however, I would probably have paid far less attention to the great nobility, and I would certainly not have taken matters dynastic so seriously. For the intellectual stimulation Robert has provided, and for his many kindnesses, I thank him profoundly. William Doyle, of Bristol University, has been a source of encouragement and patronage since he examined my D.Phil. thesis, and he too deserves most hearty thanks. A small 'team' gave up many hours to challenge my infelicities and try to make sense of my writing. Alistair Malcolm read most of the chapters in draft form with an editorial eye that both surprised and enlightened me, while Rosamond McKitterick, Philip Grover, David Trim and James Legard looked at one or more chapters. My discussions with James about high politics have been crucial in shaping many ideas. I am exceptionally grateful to them all and look forward to repaying the compliment. Hamish Scott has been a source of great encouragement, wisdom and sound advice; and William Davies at Cambridge University Press deserves the *cordon bleu* of the Saint-Esprit for agreeing to the project in the first place, repeatedly swallowing my excuses for its non-completion, dealing with the completed manuscript, and helping me to believe that I had something worth saying on Louis XIV. Thanks too to Frances Nugent for her patience and copy-editing skills.

No man is an island, though humanities dons working on a foreign country sometimes feel a strong sense of isolation, especially in what are increasingly difficult first years of their career. It is a tribute to all the people I have hitherto mentioned that I rarely felt this way, and while they have in some way or other shaped my thinking they can in no way be blamed for my interpretation of Louis XIV's army which follows. Naturally, profound contributions have been made by historians of the French army both alive and dead whom I have never met. I emerge from this project with a greater respect for the difficulties they too must have encountered in writing on Louis XIV's armies. It is in the nature of the British historical profession to engage in robust debate, so I hope those still with us will not be offended if I have challenged them on a number of matters, both here and elsewhere.

Staving off a sense of isolation depends ultimately upon 'une cercle intime'. Close friends, whose scholarly interests reside a long way from my own and who must be thanked for keeping my feet on the ground, include Philip Carter (who put up with impolite learning in our shared house for three years), Susan Skedd, Robin Eagles, John Cooper and Suzanne Fagence-Cooper, Matthew Grimley, Roey Sweet, Mark Godfrey and Lewis Baston (a world expert on sleaze). Standing above them all are my nearest and dearest. Bridget Heal has been a tower of strength in some very

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dark nights of the soul, and her love has sustained me in the final stages of the book. She heroically grappled with my Introduction and Conclusion, and helped draft the maps in the final moments before completion. My sister Helen deserves thanks for her no-nonsense approach to life and her necessary advice about when to exercise self-restraint; and my grandparents Robert and Mildred Stoker have contributed in countless ways to my education. As to my parents, Ann and Tony Rowlands, without them none of this would have been possible. Though my father would probably have preferred a book on the battle of the Atlantic it is to them that I dedicate this volume, with love.

Abbreviations

Archival sources

AA	Archives de l'Artillerie (kept in SHAT)
AAE CP	Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance Politique
AAE MD	Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Mémoires et Documents
ACC	Archives Condé, Chantilly
Add. Mss.	(BL) Additional Manuscripts
AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
Bib Ars	Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal
Bib Maz	Bibliothèque Mazarine, Institut de France
BL	British Library
BMG	Bibliothèque du Ministère de la Guerre (part of SHAT)
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
Clair.	(BNF) Collection Clairambault
FF	(BNF) Fonds Français
NA	(ACC) Nouvelles Acquisitions
NAF	(BNF) Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises
NLS	National Library of Scotland
Saugeon	(BMG) Collection Saugeon of royal <i>ordonnances</i>
SHAT	Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes

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DBF	<i>Dictionnaire de biographie française</i> , 19 vols. to date (Paris, 1933–)

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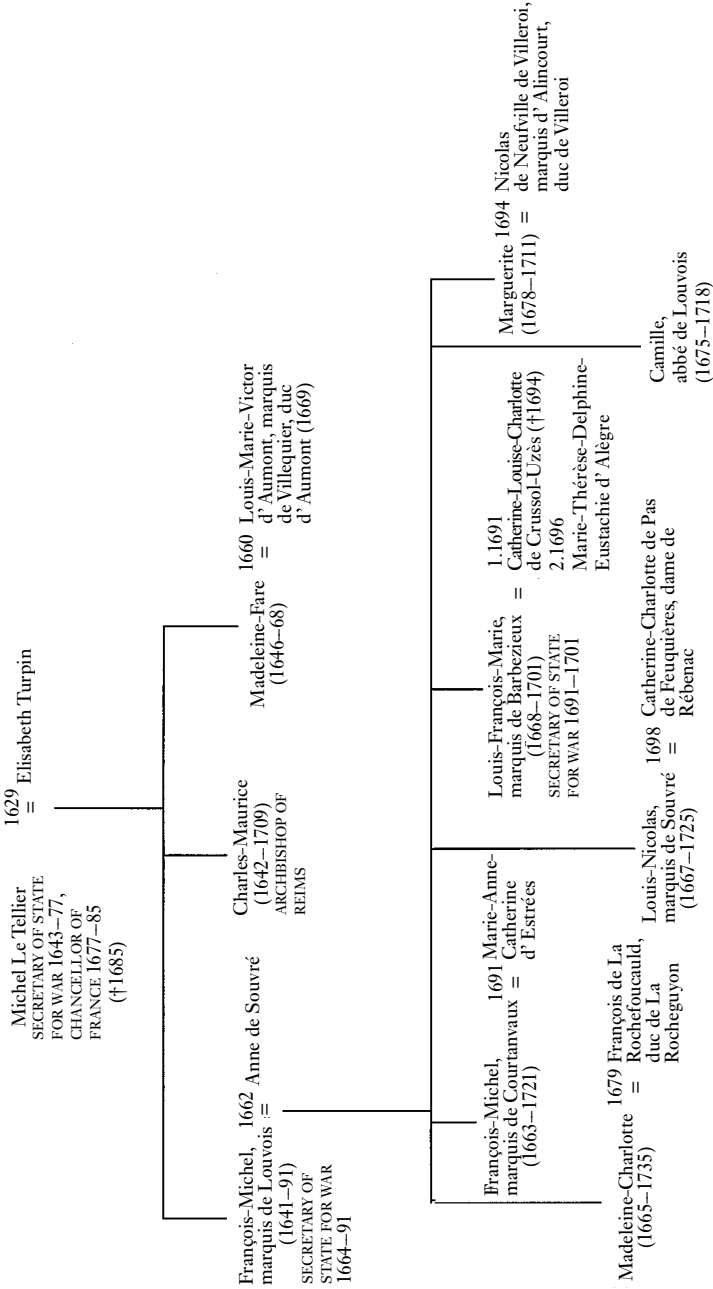
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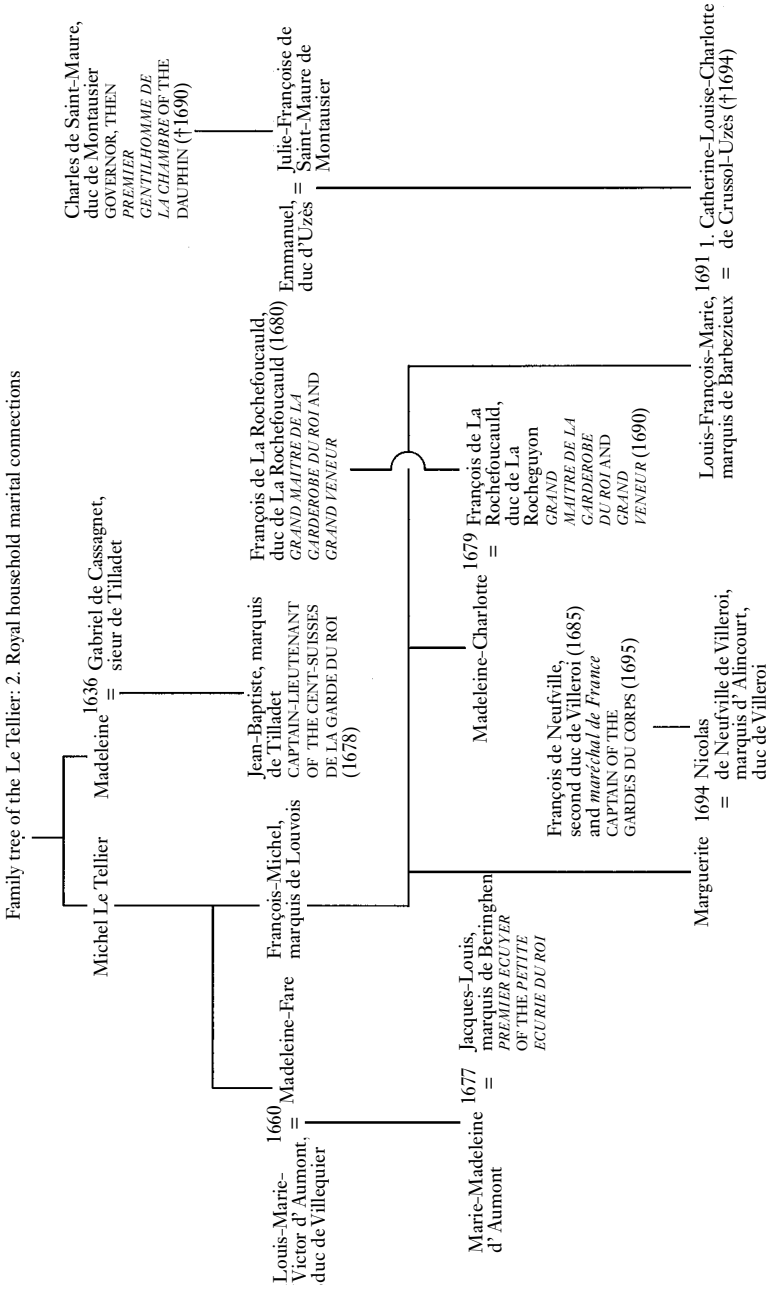
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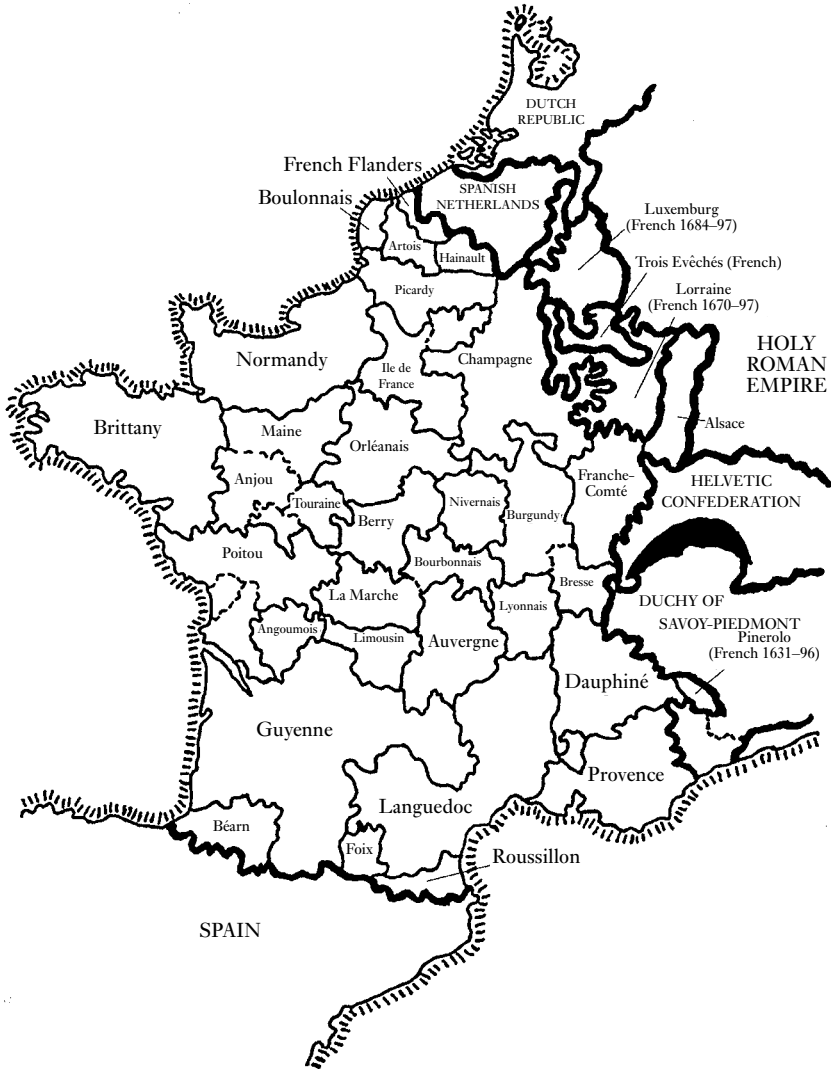
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Family tree of the Le Tellier: 1. Principal branch





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Map 1 The French provinces under Louis XIV.