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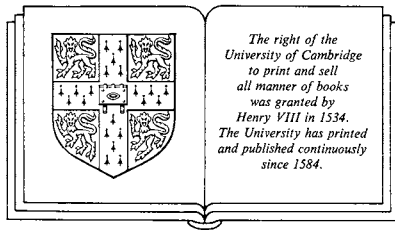
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Francis I

R. J. KNECHT

*Reader in French History
University of Birmingham*



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Preface

THIS BOOK is an attempt to fill a gap. There is at present no up-to-date scholarly history of the reign of Francis I in any language.* Why has a monarch so familiar to the thousands who visit the châteaux of the Loire each year been so neglected by scholars? Two possible explanations may be offered: the contempt for *l'histoire événementielle* shared by many French historians of the present generation and the absence of any corpus of printed sources for the reign comparable with the *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*. Francis has been the subject of much serious scholarship over the years: his relations with foreign powers, military campaigns, artistic and scholarly patronage, fiscal reforms, religious policy and interest in overseas enterprise have all been seriously examined; but the results of this research are to be found mainly in specialist articles and monographs; no attempt has been made recently to cover all these aspects in a single volume.

My treatment of Francis is not biographical, but historical. Biography has its own rules, which cannot always be reconciled with those governing sound historical practice: its success depends on a completeness which the available documentary evidence may not permit. This is particularly true of a king in an age of personal monarchy. There is no possible comparison between the life of a constitutional ruler whose administrative competence is clearly circumscribed and that of a theoretically absolute monarch who set no limits to his own authority. Francis was ultimately responsible for everything that took place in his name. In the absence of documentation capable of illuminating sufficiently the decision-making process at the highest level of government, the only

* Owing to an unfortunate delay for which neither my present publisher nor myself is responsible, this claim requires a qualification. Jean Jacquart's *François I^{er}*, which has recently appeared in France, is an excellent synthesis. I am glad to see that we agree on most matters of substance. As one would expect from the author, his treatment of the economic and social background is particularly strong. He is less informative on the life of the king, the political history of the last ten years of the reign, artistic patronage and overseas expansion.

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way open to the biographer who is unwilling to resort to conjecture is to turn historian and take an all-embracing view of the monarch's role.

For the sake of clarity, I have treated the reign analytically within a broadly chronological framework. This method has enabled me to focus on a number of aspects which might easily have got lost in a straight narrative. My conventions are as follows: rulers and places are given the commonly accepted English version of their names (e.g. 'Francis', not 'François'; 'Lyons', not 'Lyon'); otherwise, French names and titles are in their original form (e.g. Henri, duc d'Orléans). I have translated most quotations and modernized the spelling of sixteenth-century English. Dates are New Style throughout.

Many friends and colleagues have assisted my work. Their contribution in respect of particular topics is acknowledged, where appropriate, in the footnotes. Here I wish to record my more substantial debts: to John Bright-Holmes for his patience and kindness over many years; to Miriam Hodgson for guiding my first steps; to Germaine Ganier for her interest, generosity and countless acts of kindness; to Jack Scarisbrick and Eric Ives for valuable advice and help on many occasions; to Richard Bonney, who read the completed typescript, for suggesting a number of corrections and improvements; to René and Suzanne Pillorget for helping to make my visits to Paris so enjoyable and keeping me in touch with academic life across the Channel; and to John Grenville and Ragnhild Hatton for their help and encouragement in the difficult business of changing publishers. Among the librarians who have helped me, I wish to single out Leslie Brierley of the University of Birmingham and Colin Bailey of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham; and among archivists, Monique Langlois of the Archives Nationales in Paris. My gratitude, too, goes to Christopher Allmand, Henry Cohn, Cecil Clough, Christopher Dyer, Rodney Hilton, Michael Mallett, Hamish Miles, John Rogister, Hamish Scott and Ellis Waterhouse for help of various kinds. Research for this book has been made possible by generous grants from the British Academy and the University of Birmingham. I warmly thank Doreen Leigh for typing my manuscript, not once but twice, with unflinching accuracy and good humour. Finally, my greatest debt is to my wife, who has put up with 'Francis' for nearly twenty years; her criticisms have spared me many errors and her encouragement has helped me to finish.

R.J.K.

Leamington Spa
March 1981

Abbreviations

<i>A. du M.</i>	<i>Annales du Midi</i>
A.N.	Archives Nationales, Paris
A.R.	<i>Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte</i>
<i>Arch. Stor. It.</i>	<i>Archivio storico italiano</i>
Barrillon	<i>Le journal de Jean Barrillon, secrétaire du chancelier du Prat</i> , ed. P. de Vaissière, 2 vols. (1897–1899)
B.H.R.	<i>Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance</i>
B.I.H.R.	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
B.L.	British Library, London
B.N.	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
B.S.H.P.F.	<i>Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme français</i>
C.A.F.	<i>Catalogue des actes de François 1^{er}</i> , 10 vols. (1887–1910)
Champollion-Figeac	<i>Captivité du Roi François 1^{er}</i> , ed. A. Champollion-Figeac (1847)
C.S.P. <i>Span.</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Spanish</i> , ed. G. A. Bergenroth, P. de Gayangos and M. A. S. Hume, 12 vols. (London, 1862–95)
C.S.P. <i>Ven.</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Venetian</i> , ed. R. Brown, C. Bentinck and H. Brown, 9 vols. (London, 1864–98)
D.B.F.	<i>Dictionnaire de biographie française</i>
Decrue, i	<i>Anne de Montmorency, grand maître et connétable de France à la cour, aux armées et au conseil du roi François 1^{er}</i> (1885)
Decrue, ii	<i>Anne de Montmorency, connétable et pair de France sous les rois Henri II, François II et Charles IX</i> (1889)
Desjardins	<i>Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane</i> , ed. A. Desjardins, 6 vols. (1859–1886)
Doucet	Doucet, R., <i>Etude sur le gouvernement de François 1^{er} dans ses rapports avec le Parlement de Paris</i> , 2 vols. (1921–6)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Doucet, <i>Institutions</i> | Doucet, R., <i>Les institutions de la France au XVI^e siècle</i> , 2 vols. (1948) |
| du Bellay | <i>Mémoires de Martin et Guillaume du Bellay</i> , ed. V.-L. Bourrilly and F. Vindry, 4 vols. (1908–19) |
| <i>Econ. H.R.</i> | <i>Economic History Review</i> |
| <i>E.S.R.</i> | <i>European Studies Review</i> |
| <i>F.H.S.</i> | <i>French Historical Studies</i> |
| Florange | <i>Mémoires du Maréchal de Florange dit le jeune aventureux</i> , ed. R. Goubaux and P. A. Lemoisne, 2 vols. (1913–24) |
| G.B.A. | <i>Gazette des beaux arts</i> |
| Granvelle, <i>Papiers d'état</i> | <i>Papiers d'état du cardinal de Granvelle</i> , ed. C. Weiss, 9 vols. (1841–52) |
| Guiffrey | <i>Cronique du roy François Premier de ce nom</i> , ed. G. Guiffrey (1860) |
| Herminjard | <i>Correspondance des réformateurs dans les pays de langue française</i> , ed. A. Herminjard, 9 vols. (Geneva, 1886–7) |
| Imbart de La Tour | Imbart de La Tour, P., <i>Les origines de la Réforme</i> , 4 vols. (1905–35) |
| Isambert | <i>Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises</i> , 29 vols. (1827–33) |
| <i>J.B.P.</i> | <i>Le journal d'un bourgeois de Paris sous le règne de François I^{er}</i> (1515–1536), ed. V.-L. Bourrilly (1910) |
| <i>J.W.C.I.</i> | <i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i> |
| Kaulek | <i>Correspondance politique de MM. de Castillon et de Marillac, ambassadeurs de France en Angleterre 1537–42</i> , ed. J. Kaulek (1885) |
| Le Glay | Le Glay, <i>Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche</i> , 2 vols. (1845) |
| <i>L.P.</i> | <i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</i> , ed. J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, 21 vols. (London, 1862–1910) |
| Michaud et Poujoulat | J.-F. Michaud and J.-J.-F. Poujoulat, <i>Nouvelle collection de mémoires</i> , 1st ser., vol. v (1836) |
| <i>Ordonnances</i> | <i>Ordonnances des rois de France: règne de François I^{er}</i> , 9 vols. (1902–75) |
| <i>R.D.B.V.P.</i> | <i>Registres des délibérations du Bureau de la Ville de Paris</i> , 3 vols. (1883–6) |
| <i>Rev. d'hist. écon. et soc.</i> | <i>Revue d'histoire économique et sociale</i> |
| <i>Rev. d'hist. mod. et contemp.</i> | <i>Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine</i> |
| <i>R.H.</i> | <i>Revue historique</i> |
| <i>R.H.E.F.</i> | <i>Revue de l'histoire de l'église de France</i> |
| Ribier | Ribier, G., <i>Lettres et mémoires d'Etat des roys</i> , |

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List of abbreviations

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- princes, ambassadeurs et autres ministres sous les règnes de François 1^{er}, Henri II et François II*, 2 vols. (1666)
- R.Q.H. *Revue des questions historiques*
- St.P. *State Papers of Henry VIII*, 11 vols. (London, 1830–52)
- Versoris *Livre de raison de M^e Nicolas Versoris, avocat au Parlement de Paris, 1519–1530*, ed. G. Fagniez (1885)

All references to C.A.F. and L.P. are to document numbers, not pages, unless otherwise stated.

