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The comte de Vergennes is best known as one of the great foreign ministers of modern French history. For much of the 1780s he was also first minister in all but name. This is the first book to deal in depth with this lesser-known aspect, and the critical part he played in French domestic policies on the eve of the Revolution.

The book studies Vergennes' role in the context of the debate on the nature and future of the French monarchy in the two decades before the Revolution. In this debate Vergennes stood firmly on the side of the royal authority. His previously neglected financial reforms, fully examined here, were the last attempt to restructure the monarchy in accordance with its traditional principles. The failure of this undertaking accelerated the final collapse of the royal government.

Preserving the monarchy is based on important new archival material, as well as on established sources which here are often reinterpreted. The result is a significant new study, not merely of Vergennes but of the end of the *ancien régime*.

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University of Bradford



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[More information](#)

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 1995
 First paperback edition 2004

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

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Price, Munro.

Preserving the monarchy: the comte de Vergennes, 1774-1787 / Munro Price.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 46566 4

1. Vergennes, Charles Gravier, comte de, 1719-1787.
2. France - Foreign relations - 1774-1793.
3. France - Politics and government - 1774-1793.
4. Finance, Public - France - To 1789.
5. Foreign ministers - France - Biography.
6. Diplomats - France - Biography. I. Title.

DC131.9.V3P75 1995

944'.035-dc20 94-9531 CIP

ISBN 0 521 46566 4 hardback

ISBN 0 521 52706 6 paperback

Cambridge University Press

0521527066 - Preserving the Monarchy: The Comte De Vergennes, 1774-1787 - Munro
Price

Frontmatter/Prelims

[More information](#)

To my parents, Judy and Stanley Price

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Acknowledgements

This book is the result of several years of research in Cambridge, London and Paris. As a result, I owe considerable debts of gratitude on both sides of the Channel.

In France, my thanks go above all to Pierre and Jacquemine de Tugny Vergennes, for allowing me to consult their remarkable family archives, and for their unfailing kindness and generosity. I am also very grateful to the marquis de Breteuil and the marquis de Gontaut-Biron, who were equally generous with access to their family papers.

In Paris, I was fortunate to have as a supervisor Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, who was always a source of ideas, encouragement, and hospitality.

In England, Tim Blanning was a model supervisor, who never allowed me to forget the European context of Vergennes' policies. I also owe a great debt to John Hardman, whose advice and enthusiasm have helped enormously in the writing of this book. I am very grateful to Ele Cosgrove at Bradford who deciphered my writing and word-processed the manuscript with minimum complaint and maximum efficiency. A grant from the Bradford University research committee also helped fund the final stage of my work in France.

There are many other historian friends and colleagues whom I must thank collectively rather than individually, or the list would be very long. Finally, I am grateful to my non-academic friends, who have learned over the years to live with the discreet shade of Vergennes.

Abbreviations

AAE	Archives du ministère des affaires étrangères
AFV	Archives de la famille de Vergennes
AN	Archives Nationales
AP	Archives privées
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale
CP	Correspondance politique
LAB	Louis Auguste (le Tonnelier de) Breteuil papers
MDF	Mémoires et documents France
MS FR	Manuscrits français
NAF	Nouvelles acquisitions françaises