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978-0-521-57023-7 - Church and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France

Henry Phillips

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This original and far-reaching study recounts the powerful involvement of the Catholic Church in the cultural life of France in the seventeenth century.

Professor Phillips brings together the social, religious and intellectual history of the *Grand Siècle* and focuses on the involvement of the Church in a variety of cultural domains, including literature, art, censorship and ideas, exploring the limits as well as the extent of the Church's influence, especially in its attempt to impose orthodoxy in all areas and on all sections of society. Given that orthodoxy determines the believer's inclusion or exclusion from the Church, thus implying the notion of boundaries in a context of constraint, the study is conceived according to a number of spaces. The notion of space is sometimes interpreted literally, as in the case of Port-Royal, the school and the church building, and sometimes metaphorically, as in orthodoxy itself, science and theology. The book also deals with religious attitudes to *libertinage*, atheism and deism, and with aspects of French Protestantism.

The strength of Professor Phillips's synthesis, the first of its kind to address the subject in English, lies in the breadth of its concerns and in its combination of social, religious and intellectual history.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521570237

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First published 1997
First paperback edition 2002

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

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Phillips, Henry.
Church and culture in seventeenth-century France / Henry Phillips.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0 521 57023 9

1. Christianity and culture – France – History – 17th century.
2. France – Civilization – 17th century. 3. France – Church history – 17th century. 4. Catholic Church – France – History – 17th century.
I. Title.

BR845.P48 1996
261'.1–dc20 96-20316 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-57023-7 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-89299-5 Paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2009

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Preface

This project has been a long time coming to fruition, having passed through at least two different phases. It was almost on the point of being abandoned until the timely intervention of Professor Peter Bayley of the University of Cambridge who flatteringly persuaded me to continue, and to him I owe my first debt of gratitude. The project in fact originated in a paper I was invited to give in 1982 to the Society for Seventeenth-Century French Studies, and I am therefore grateful to them for the opportunity of furthering an interest in French social and cultural history acquired in my teaching as a lecturer in the French Department of the University of Aberdeen. I must however record a particular expression of thanks to my former colleague at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Peter Burke, who has guided me through the pitfalls of a discipline which is not my first home. Michael Moriarty, now of Queen Mary and Westfield, in the University of London, offered important encouragement at a crucial stage of writing. Joe Bergin of the University of Manchester and Lawrence Brockliss of Magdalen College, Oxford have also offered invaluable advice. Dr Anthony Wright of the University of Leeds was also kind enough to look over parts of the text. An early stage of this project benefited greatly from a substantial grant from the British Academy. I am grateful both to the Master and Governing Body of Emmanuel, and to the University of Cambridge, who were generous enough in granting me a year's study leave during which much of the work which finds its present form here was completed. The facilities of the University of Manchester have been vital to the final stages of the project. Lastly, Richard Fisher of Cambridge University Press and Monica Kendall, my copy-editor, have been of invaluable assistance in seeing the book safely through to publication.