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0521827671 - Provincial Power and Absolute Monarchy: The Estates General of Burgundy,
1661-1790

Julian Swann

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PROVINCIAL POWER AND ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

The Estates General of Burgundy, 1661-1790

This is the first book in English to study the history of the Estates General of Burgundy during the classic period of absolute monarchy. Although not a representative institution in any modern sense, the Estates were constantly engaged in a process of bargaining with the French crown, and this book examines that relationship under the *ancien régime*. Julian Swann analyses the organisation, membership and powers of the Estates and explores their administration, their struggles for power with rival institutions and their relationship with the crown and with the Burgundian people. The Estates proved remarkably resilient when confronted by the challenges posed by the Bourbon monarchy, and by the reign of Louis XVI they were seemingly more powerful than ever. However, the desire to protect their privileges and to extend their authority had not been accompanied by an attempt to forge a meaningful relationship with the people they claimed to serve.

JULIAN SWANN is Lecturer in Early Modern European History at Birkbeck College, University of London. He is the author of *Politics and the Parlement of Paris under Louis XV, 1754-1774* (1995).

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À Manon et Margot

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Preface

This book has taken nearly a decade to produce and in the course of what has often seemed an interminable struggle I have accumulated a large number of debts. I would particularly like to thank James Collins, William Doyle, Joël Félix, Roger Mettam, Mark Gilbert and Munro Price who have kindly given up their time to read all, or part, of the manuscript and to offer much help and encouragement. The three anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press were also an invaluable source of constructive and helpful criticism. Together they helped me to avoid many pitfalls and errors, although all the remaining defects of this book are my own. Within the wider circle of Burgundian enthusiasts I have enjoyed and benefited from many discussions with Mark Bryant, Chris Corley, Simon Everett, Jim Farr, Mack Holt, Jeff Houghtby and Charles Papon. In Dijon, professor Hugues Richard generously shared his extensive knowledge of the Estates. I am also grateful to my former research supervisor, Tim Blanning, for his support at every stage of my career. I should also like to thank Richard Fisher and Michael Watson of Cambridge University Press for their patience and professional assistance.

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constant support, as have my own family, Ron, Barbara, Jan, Paul and Rene. However, this book would never have been started had it not been for one very special Burgundian, my wife, Manon, to whom this book is dedicated. Manon and my daughter, Margot, never cease to remind me of the most important things in life.

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Abbreviations

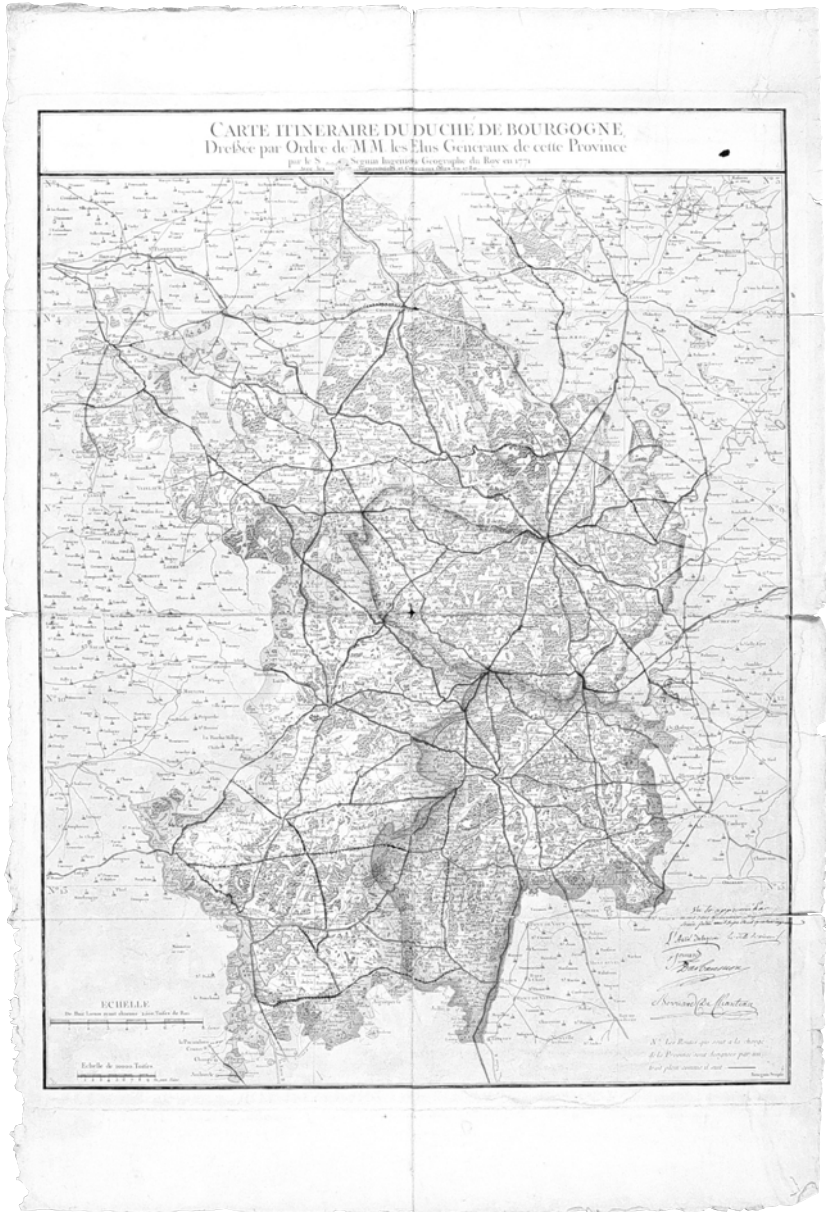
ADCO	Archives Départementales de la Côte d'Or
ADSL	Archives Départementales de la Saône et Loire
AN	Archives Nationales
BMC AC	Bibliothèque du Musée Condé, Archives Condé
BMD	Bibliothèque Municipale de Dijon
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale

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Map 1 The duchy of Burgundy in the eighteenth century