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978-1-107-02633-9 - Louis XVI and the French Revolution, 1789–1792

Ambrogio A. Caiani

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Louis XVI and the French Revolution, 1789–1792

The experience, and failure, of Louis XVI's short-lived constitutional monarchy of 1789–1792 deeply influenced the politics and course of the French Revolution. The dramatic breakdown of the political settlement of 1789 steered the French state into the decidedly stormy waters of political terror and warfare on an almost global scale. This book explores how the symbolic and political practices which underpinned traditional Bourbon kingship ultimately succumbed to the radical challenge posed by the Revolution's new 'proto-republican' culture. While most previous studies have focused on Louis XVI's real and imagined foreign counter-revolutionary plots, Ambrogio A. Caiani examines the king's hitherto neglected domestic activities in Paris. Drawing on previously unexplored archival source material, Caiani provides an alternative reading of Louis XVI in this period, arguing that the monarch's symbolic behaviour and the organisation of his daily activities and personal household were essential factors in the people's increasing alienation from the newly established constitutional monarchy.

AMBROGIO A. CAIANI is College and Departmental Lecturer at Lady Margaret Hall and the Faculty of History, University of Oxford.

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For my parents

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‘Mais on ne se bat pas dans l’espoir du succès!

Non! non! c’est bien plus beau lorsque c’est inutile!’

Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Act V, Scene VI

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Acknowledgements

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Note on translations

Unless otherwise stated all translations present in this volume are my own. I have tended in general to opt in favour of a simple translation into modern English rather a literal rendition of the original, and somewhat antiquated, French expressions used by eighteenth-century writers. I hope that the resultant loss in authenticity will be compensated by comprehensibility.

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Abbreviations

AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
Anselme	Père Anselme de Sainte-Marie, <i>Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique de la Maison Royale de France, des Pairs, Grands Offices de la Couronne et de la Maison du Roi</i> , 12 vols, 3 edn (1726–1733)
AP	<i>Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860</i> , 1st series, ed. M. J. Madival and M. E. Laurant, 89 vols (Paris, 1867–1896)
ASGe	Archivio di Stato di Genova
ASMo	Archivio di Stato di Modena
ASPr	Archivio di Stato di Parma
ASTo	Archivio di Stato di Torino
ASVe	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
BA	Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Paris
Bio Uni	<i>Biographie Universelle ancienne et moderne</i> , ed. J. Fr. Michaud, 45 vols (Paris, 1988)
BnF	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
FO	Foreign Office
MLH	Musée de Légion d’Honneur
Ms.fr.	Manuscripts Français
NAF	Nouvelles Acquisitions Français
Saint-Allais	<i>Nobiliaire universel de France, ou, Recueil général des généalogies historiques des maisons nobles de ce royaume</i> , ed. Nicolas Viton de Saint-Allais, 21 vols (Paris, 1872–1877)
SHAT	Service Historique de l’Armée de Terre (Archives de la Guerre, Château de Vincennes)
TNA	The National Archives, London

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Tr.Drts. *Traité des Droits, Fonctions, Franchises, Exemptions, Prérogatives et Privilèges Annexés en France à chaque dignité, à chaque Office, à chaque État, soit Civil, soit Militaire, soit Ecclésiastique*, ed. Joseph-Nicolas Guyot and Philippe-Antoine Merlin, 4 vols (Paris, 1786)