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'We must emphasise the great richness of the book, the abundance of knowledge, the solidity of the analyses and the brio of the portraits . . . an impressive analysis of the whole of the reign of the Sun King' Franck Le Moal, *Le Litteraire*

'a magnificent study of the life of Louis XIV. He shaped his own age and, partly because of some of his mistakes, helped to shape the future of France as well' Chris Patten, *The Tablet* Books of the Year

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Philip Mansel is one of Britain's leading historians of France and the Middle East. His previous books include *Louis XVIII*, *The Eagle in Splendour: Napoleon and his Court*, *The Court of France: 1789–1830*, *Paris Between Empires, 1814–1852* and *Dressed to Rule: Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II*. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, the Royal Society of Literature, the Institute of Historical Research and the Royal Asiatic Society, and he is President of the Conseil Scientifique at the Centre de Recherche du Château de Versailles and a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

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King of the World

The Life of Louis XIV



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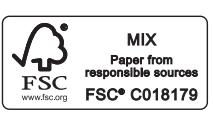
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Jean-Baptiste Tavernier to Louis XIV, 1676

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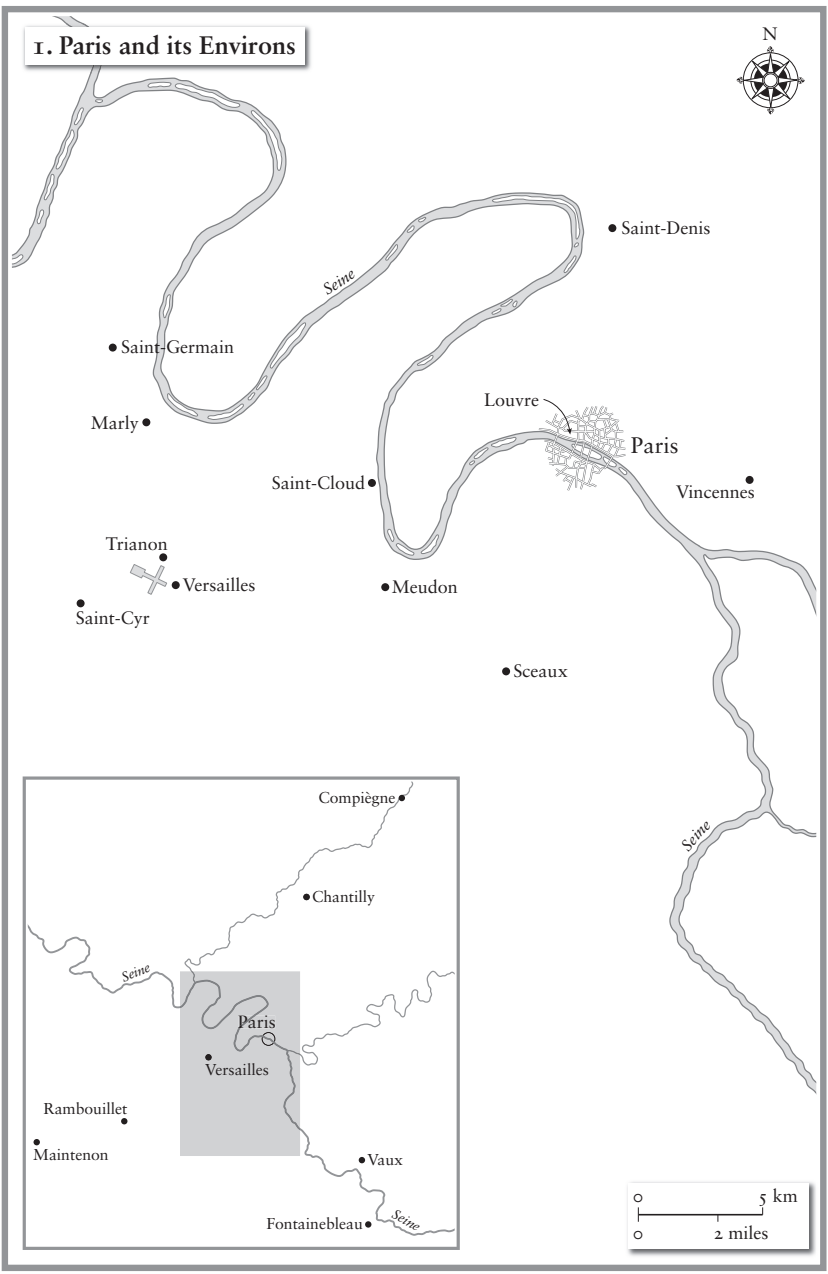
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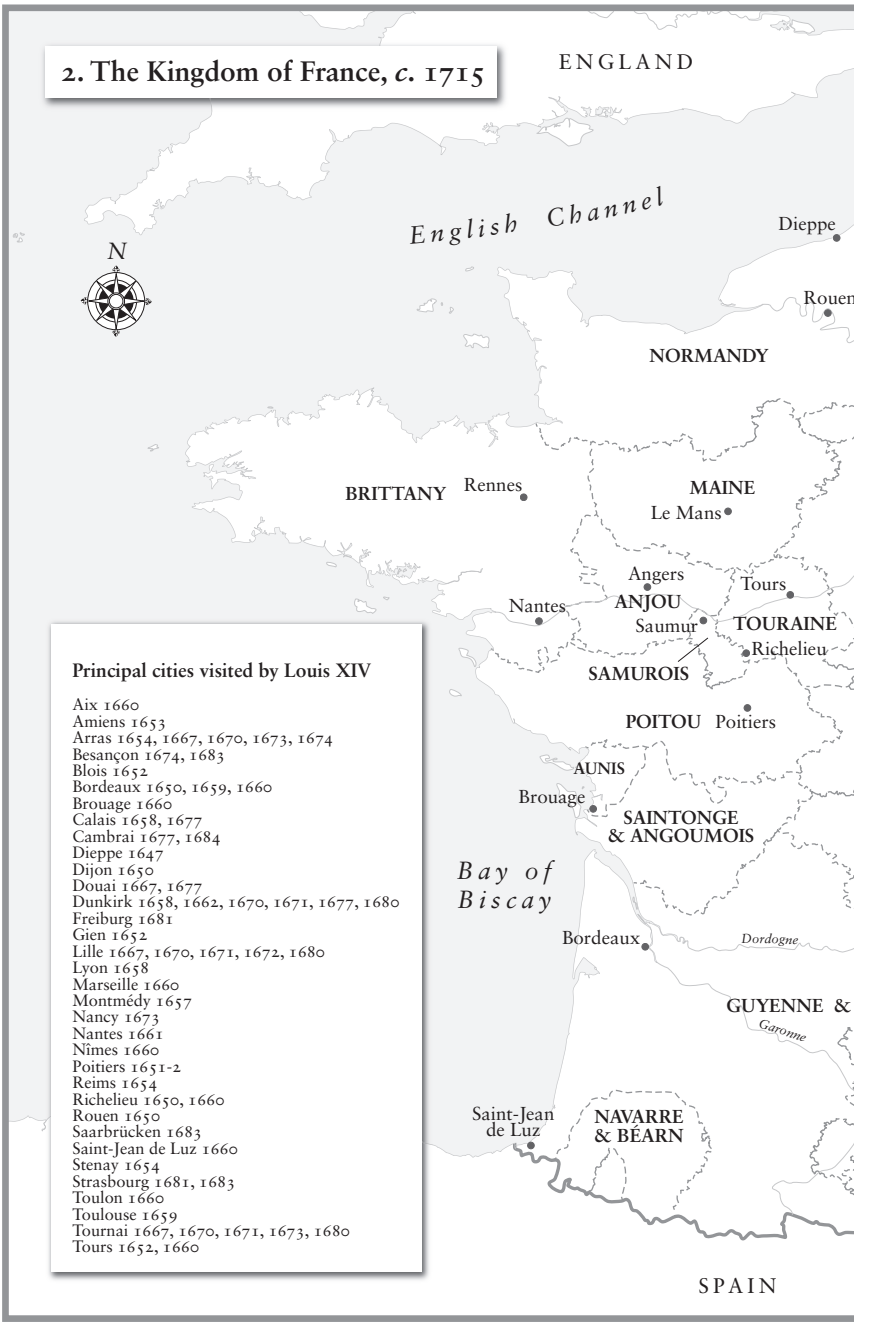
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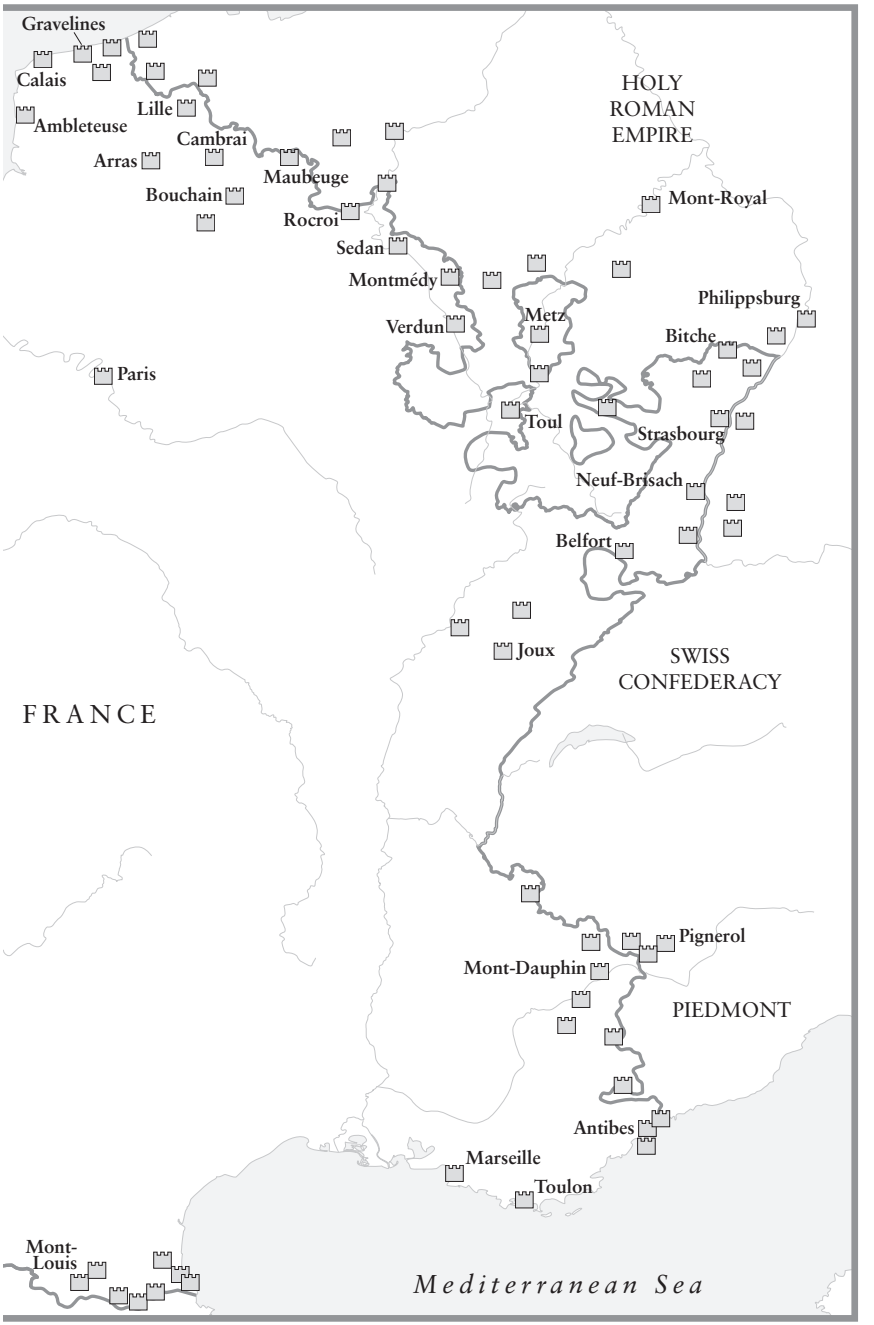
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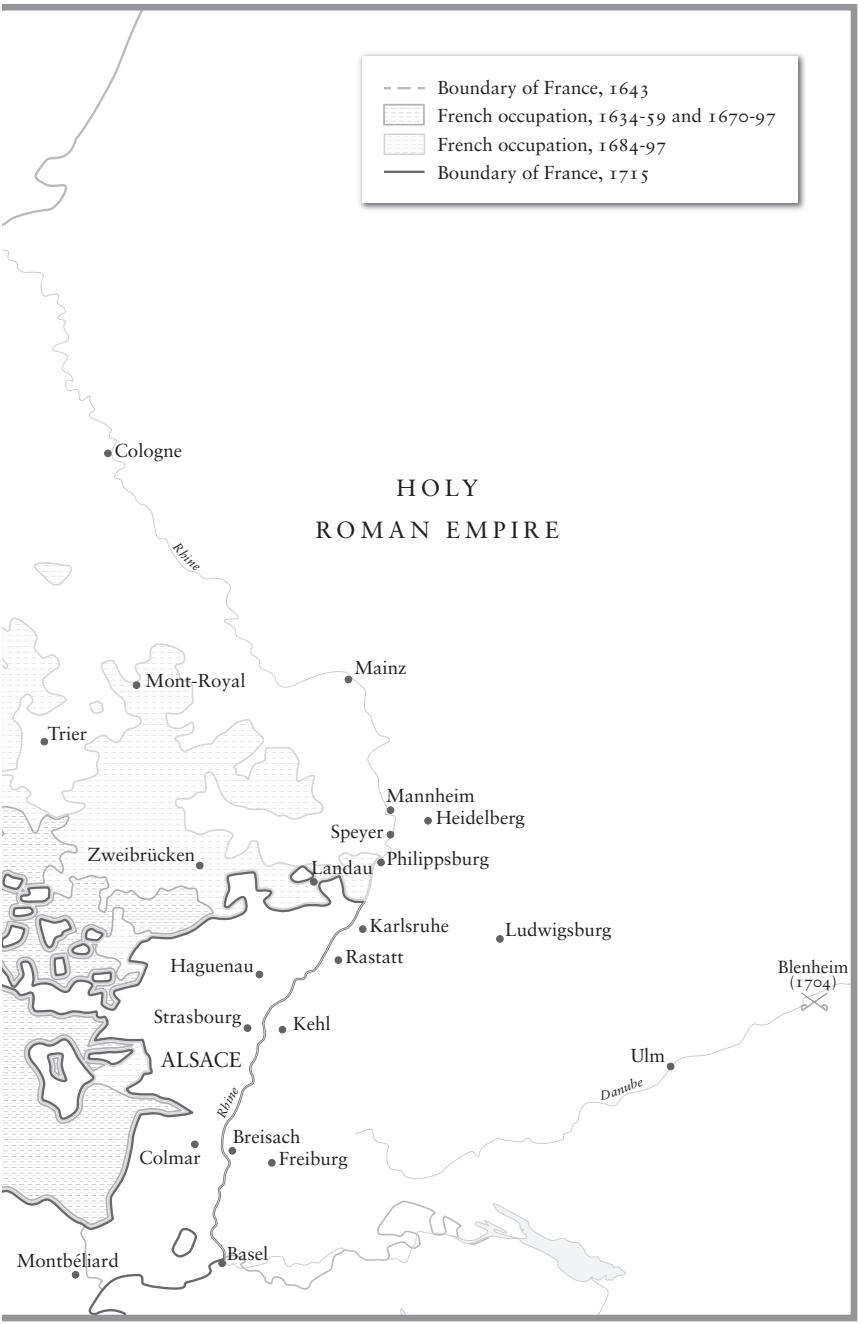
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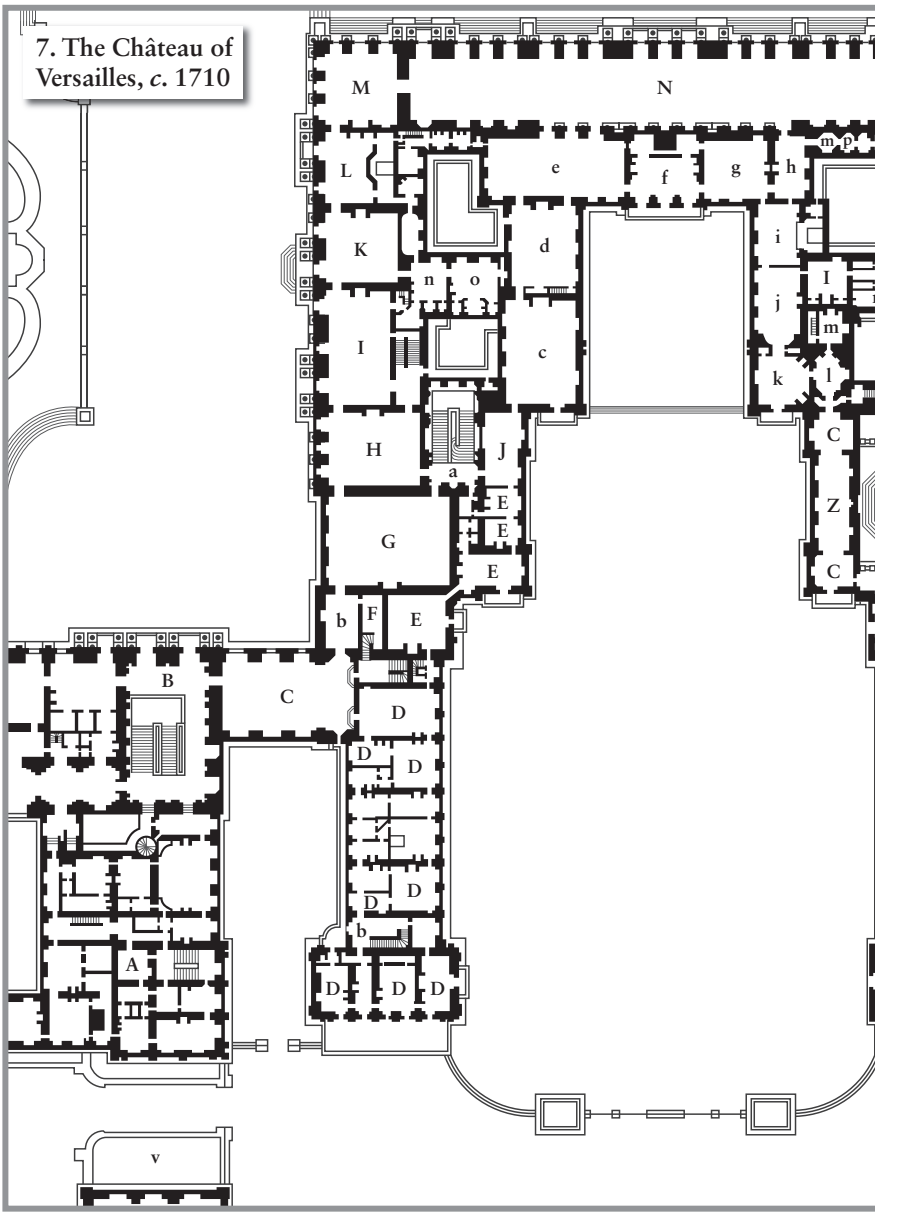
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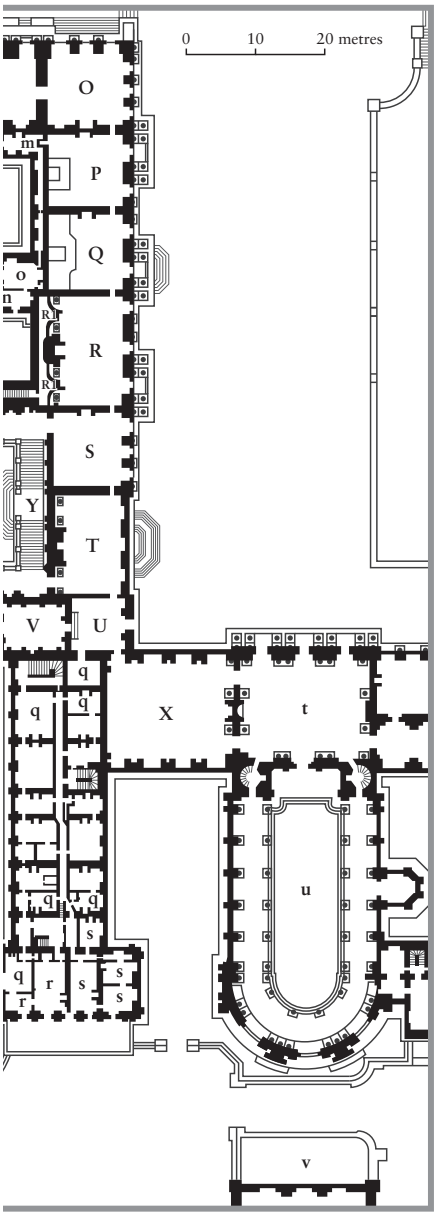


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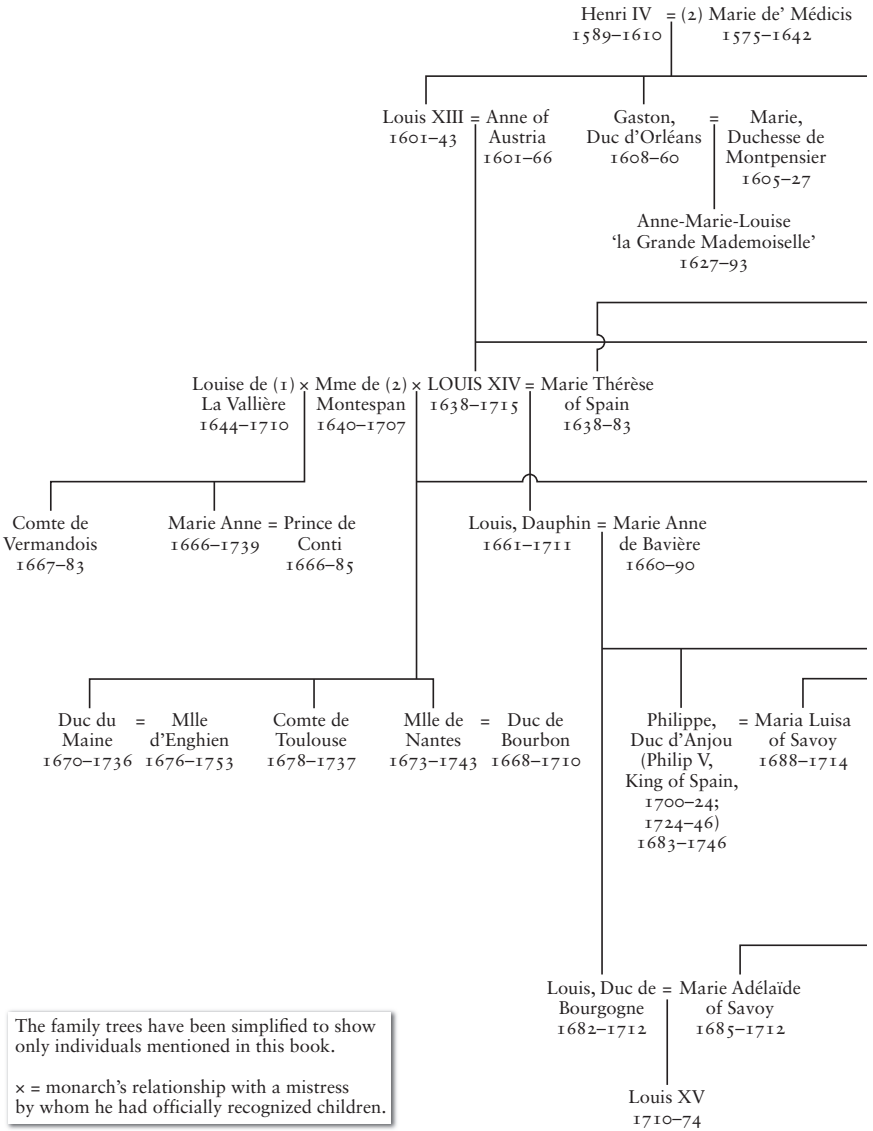
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A. Pavillon d'Orléans
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E. Apartment of Madame de Maintenon
F. Staircase
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q. Apartment of the Governor of the Château
r. Bureau of the Domain of Versailles
s. Apartment of the King's Confessor
t. Vestibule of the Chapel
u. Chapel
v. Wings of the Ministers

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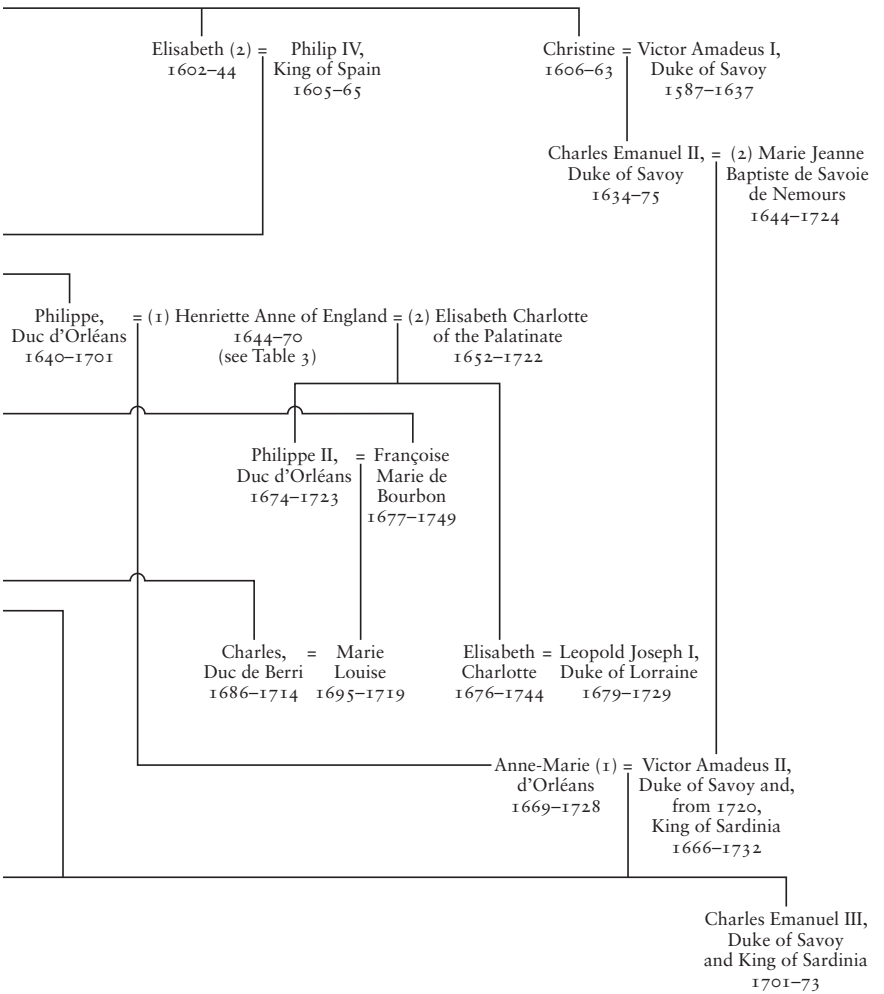
1. The Houses of France and Savoy



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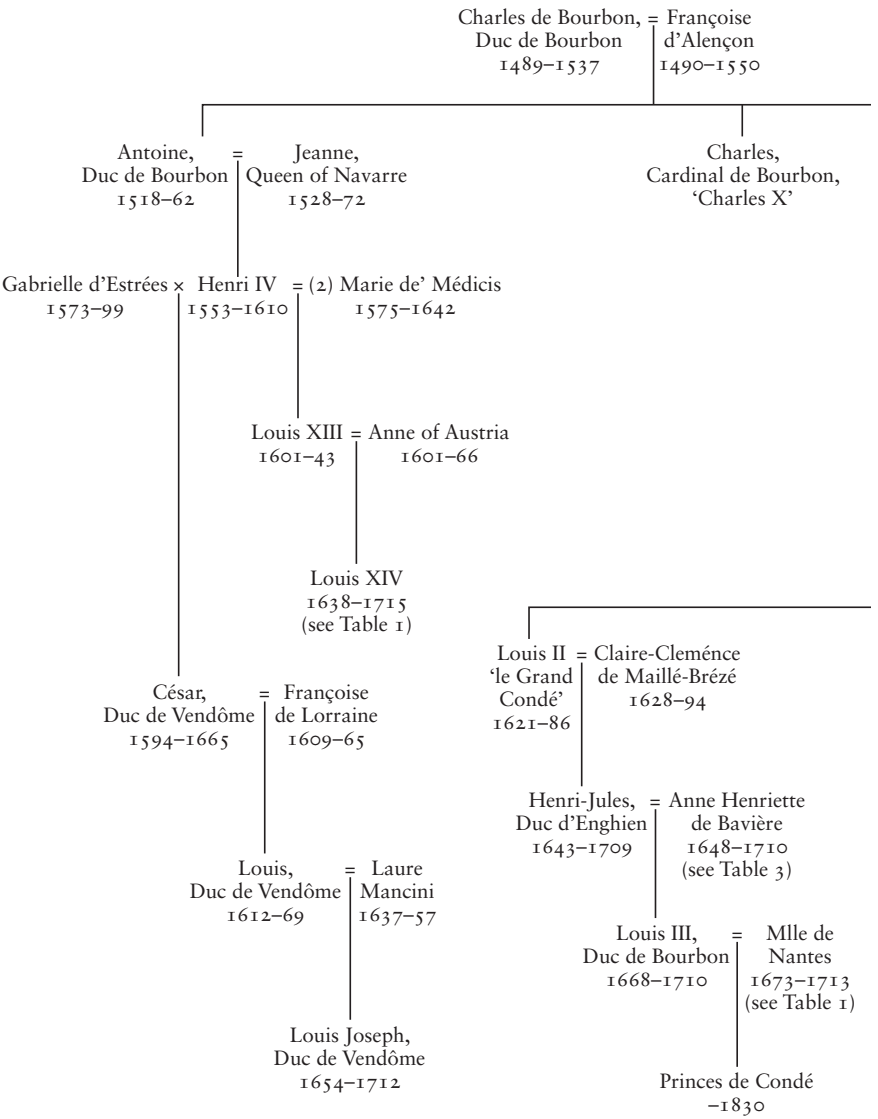
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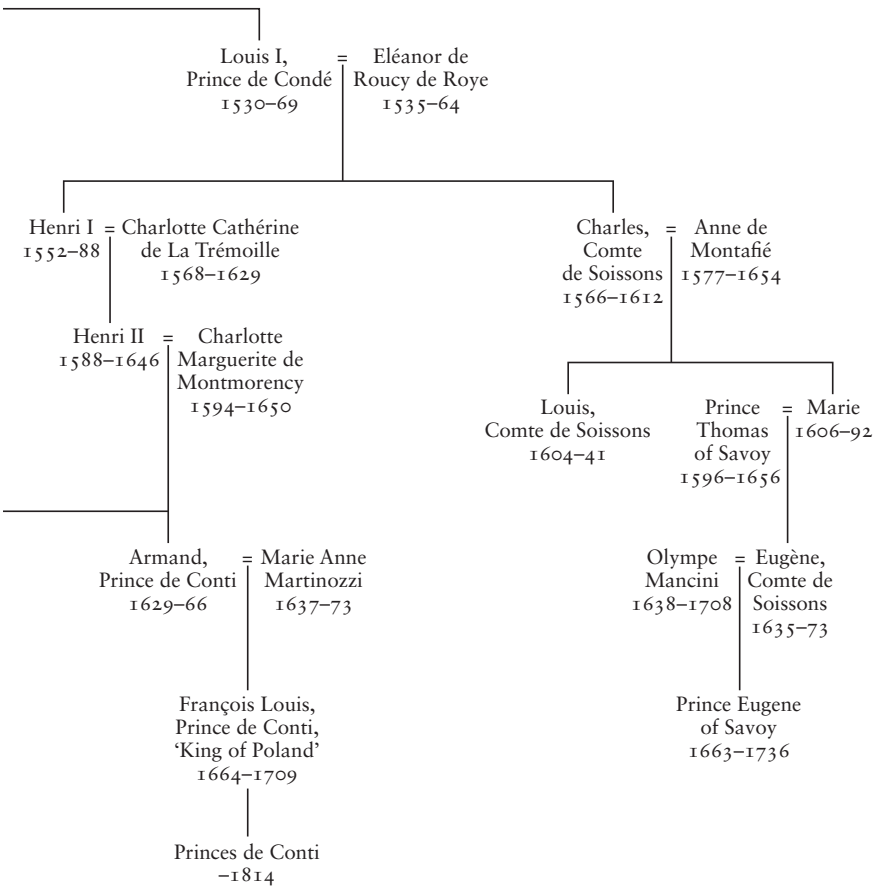


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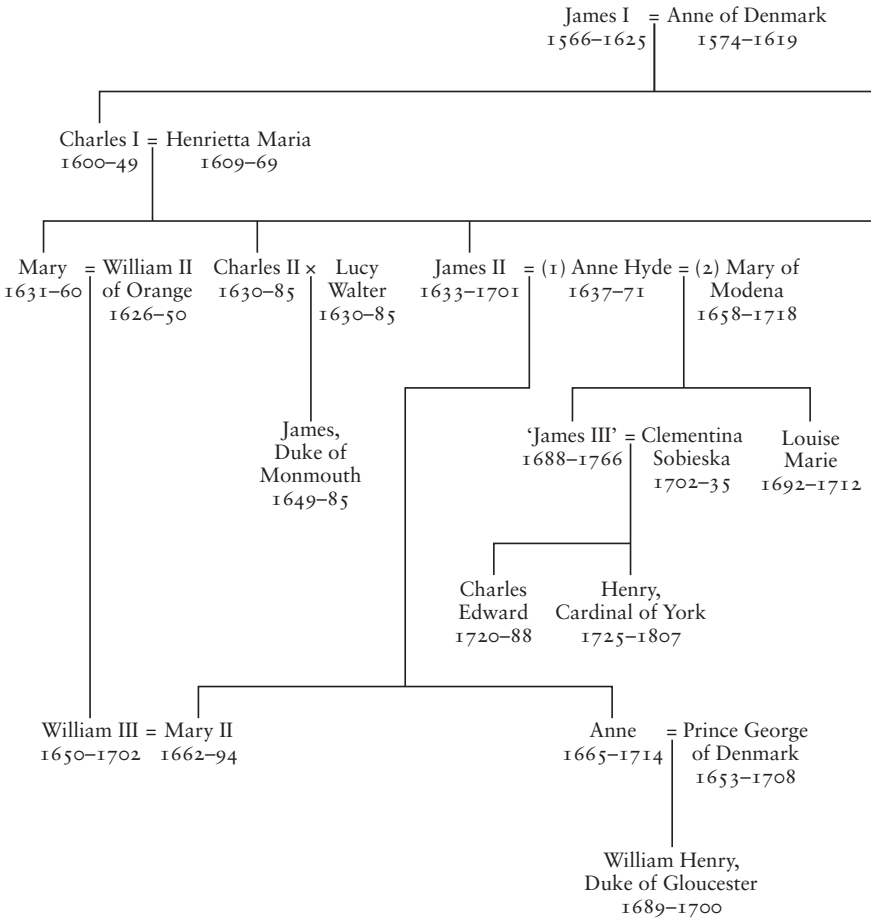


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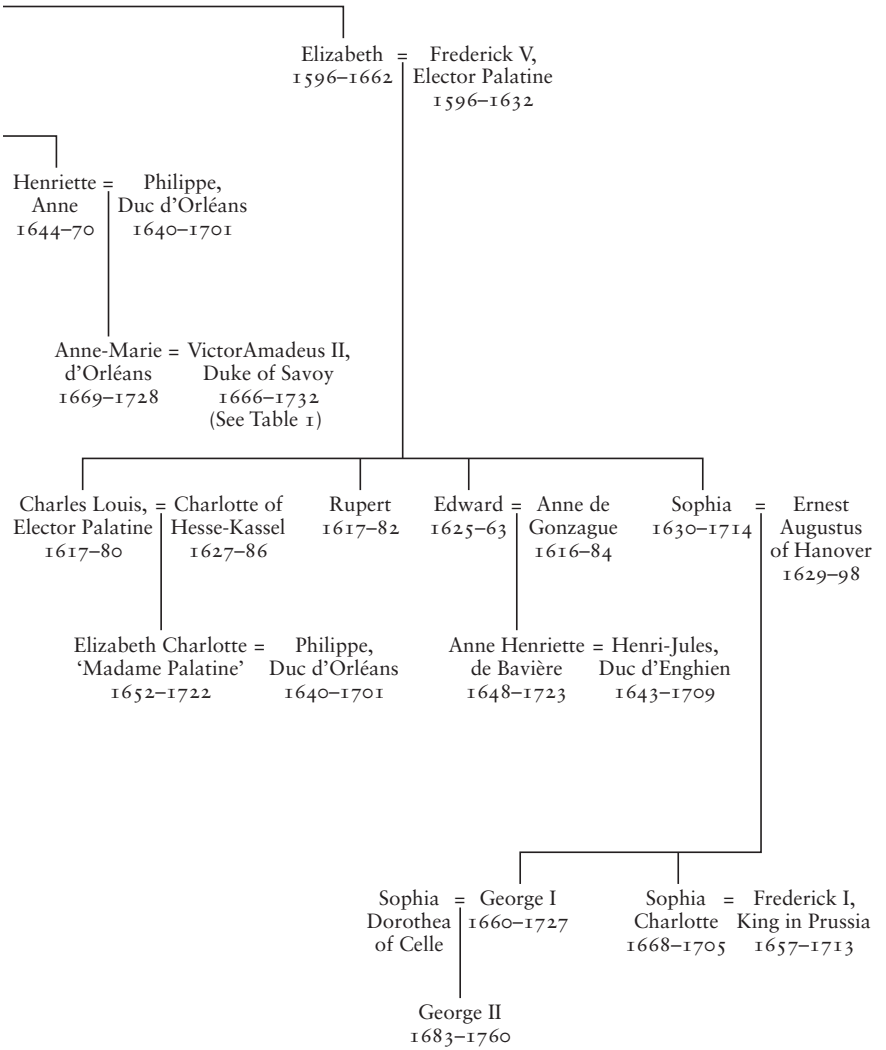


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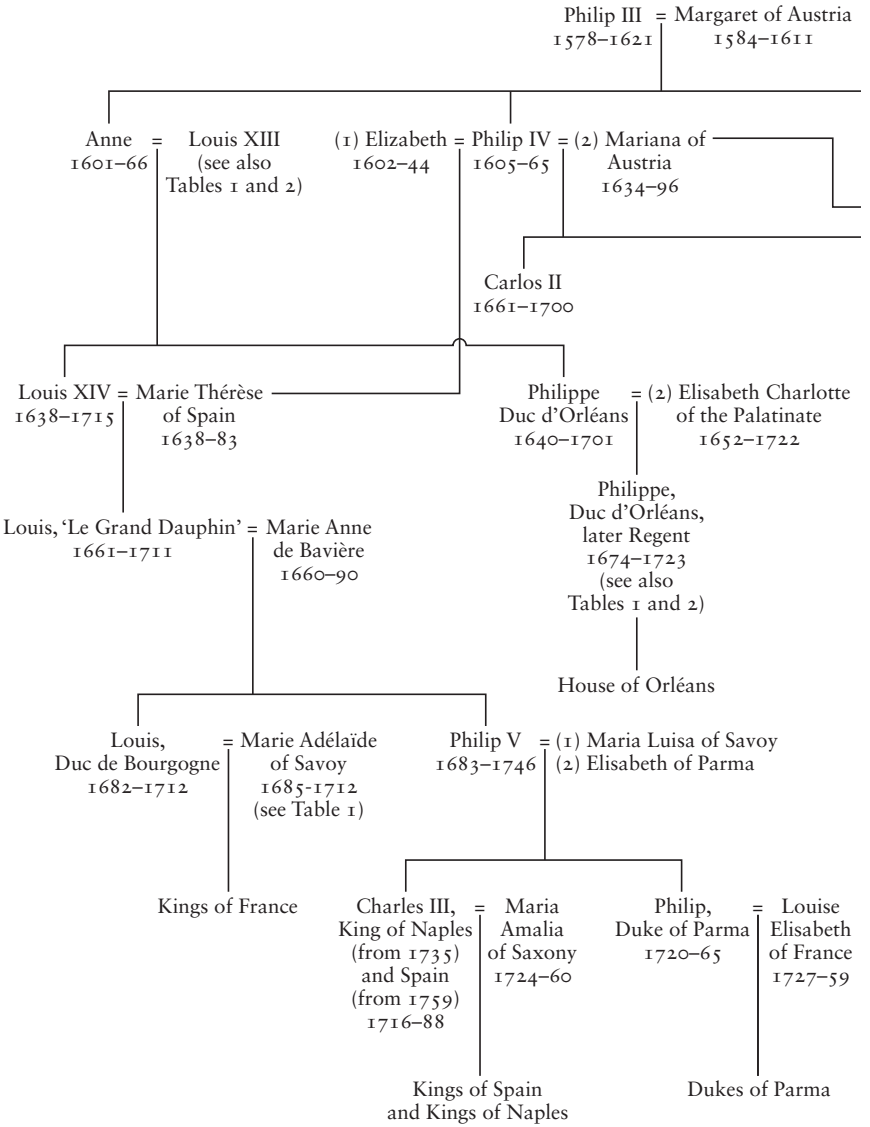


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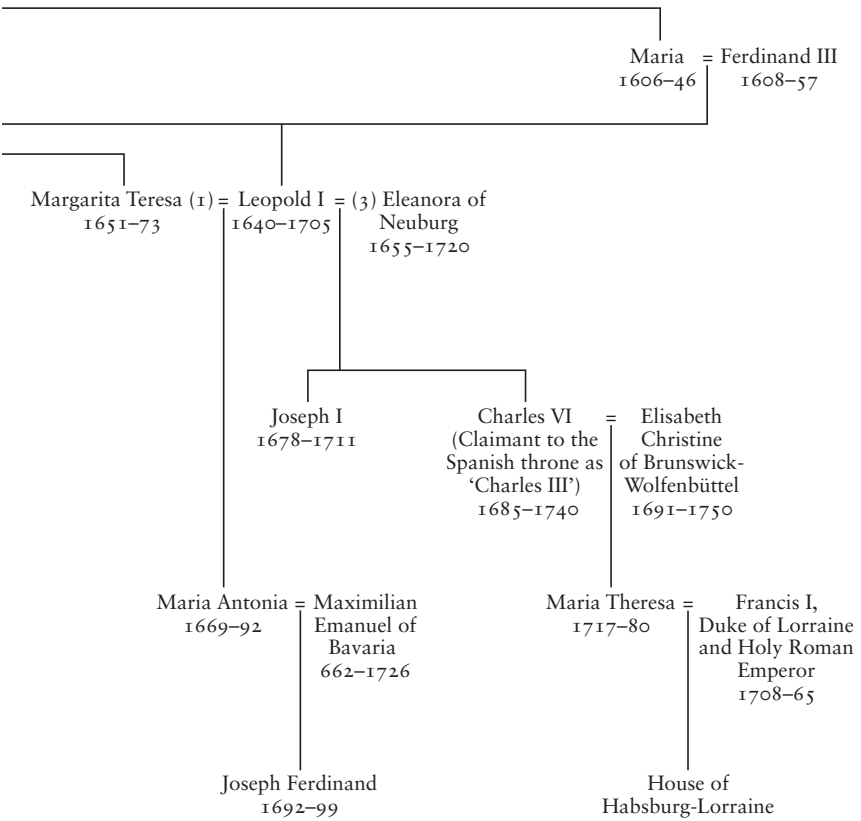


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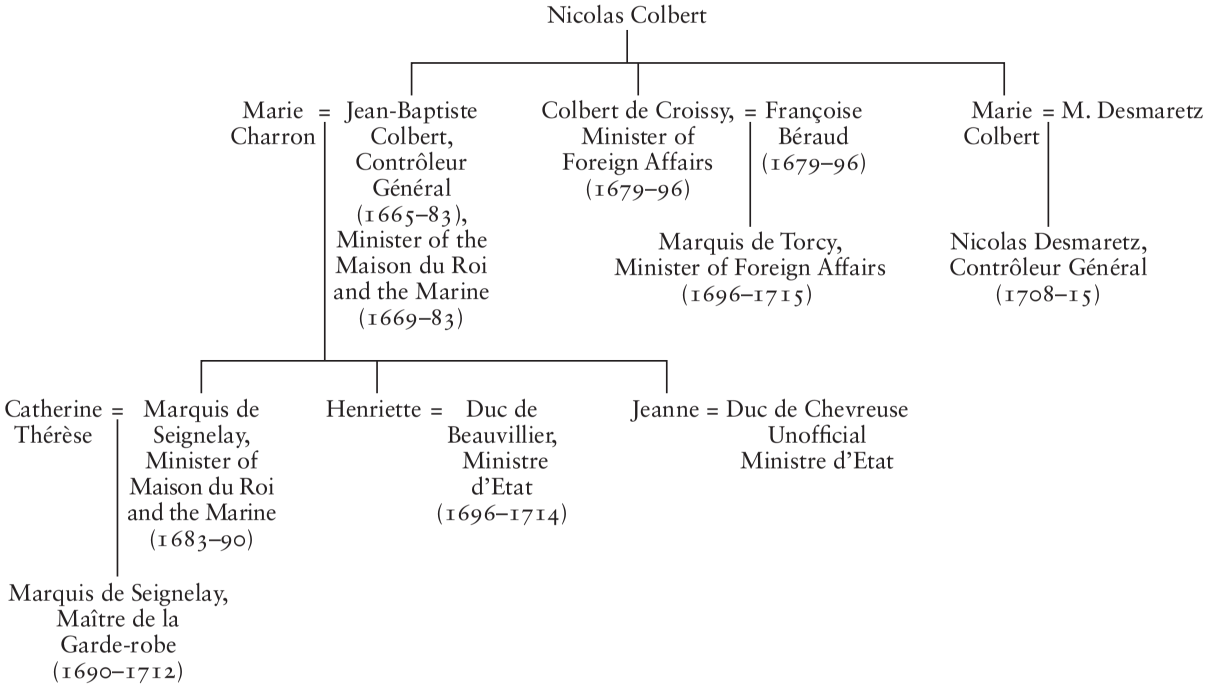


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Introduction: A Thousand Years of France

Louis XIV was both King of France and a global ruler with global ambitions. He founded colonies in America, Africa and India, tried to seize Siam (as Thailand was then known), sent missionaries and mathematicians to the Emperor of China and launched the struggle for France's global markets which continues to this day. The motto he adopted early in his reign, in 1662, expressed his hopes and desires: 'Nec pluribus impar' (literally 'Not unequal to more'), meaning 'not incapable of ruling other dominions', as well as 'not unequal to many enemies'.

Louis was a man in pursuit of glory, a king devoted to dynastic aggrandizement and a leader bent on national expansion. He is also an argument. How could such a civilized man, exceptionally considerate to women (he built the best girls' school of the age, near Versailles at Saint-Cyr), order acts of barbarism against French Protestants and France's neighbours? Was Louis le Grand, as he was called from 1680, master or instrument of his court, his ministers and his financiers? Did he leave France stronger or weaker? He dominated his age and, since he chose the sun as his symbol, later became known as *le roi soleil* – the Sun King. Did he deserve the name?

The present biography has benefited from a surge of new books on his palaces,[1] household,[2] finances,[3] diplomacy,[4] ministers,[5] armies,[6] fortresses,[7] enemies,[8] Catholic faith[9] and health,[10] from the recently published complete correspondence of his second wife, Madame de Maintenon,[11] and from an account of his itinerary throughout his life,[12] as well as from the many books published in 2015 to mark the 300th anniversary of his death.[13]

Thanks to these and numerous other works, as well as my own researches in archives in Paris and London, this biography can take Louis out of Versailles (his main residence for less than half his reign, and never the only one) and show the view from Lille, Besançon and Strasbourg, as well as from London, Madrid, Constantinople and Bangkok. Multiple perspectives are needed for, in addition to working for the expansion of

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France on the Rhine, the Mississippi and the Mekong, Louis pursued goals outside France. They included the restoration of his Stuart cousins to the thrones of England, Scotland and Ireland; the election of a French prince as king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania; and the preservation as great powers of France's allies the Ottoman Empire and Sweden. Louis' greatest single mistake, the Revocation in 1685 of the Edict of Nantes which had permitted Protestant worship in France, was triggered not only by internal French forces, and his own Catholic zeal, but also by his rivalry with the House of Austria for the leadership of Catholic Europe.

Similarly, Louis' most famous single building, Versailles, was created not only for France but for the world: to attract and impress foreign visitors, and to surpass all other palaces, past and present. It was a bid for global fame, as well as his personal combination of royal residence, government and military headquarters, art gallery, music and ballet festival, and show-place for French products.

The end of Louis' reign would be dominated by pursuit of another global ambition, the Spanish succession. After his marriage in 1660 to the Infanta María Teresa, elder daughter of Philip IV of Spain, he hoped that one of their descendants, rather than one of the King's cousins in Vienna, would inherit the entire Spanish monarchy, including its global Empire stretching from Mexico to Sicily. Unlike in France, the Spanish monarchy could pass through the female line, and his brother-in-law Carlos II, King of Spain from 1665, was a childless invalid.

When Carlos died in 1700, Louis accepted his decision to leave the Spanish monarchy to Louis' second grandson, instead of observing international treaties which proposed to divide the monarchy and give France more territory. Philippe, Duc d'Anjou became El Rey Don Felipe V. Louis had put Spain before France, his family before his country. Fighting to keep Philip on the throne of Spain against a European coalition, he brought France close to collapse. Nevertheless, the present King of Spain, Philip VI, is a descendant of Louis XIV.

Louis XIV was able to play a global role because of the power of the kingdom of France. His reign and personality were conditioned by the geography, history, demography and traditions of the country he ruled. When he inherited the throne in 1643, the French monarchy was over a thousand years old. Between 481 and 511 Clovis, King of the Franks, one of the barbarian tribes which had invaded the Roman Empire, ruled what is now northern France and part of northern Germany. Around 497 Clovis converted to Christianity, and was baptized in Reims, north-east of Paris in the Frankish heartland.

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In 751 Childeric III, the last of Clovis's Merovingian dynasty, had been confined to a monastery by his Mayor of the Palace, Pepin, who became the first king of the Carolingian dynasty. From 768 to 814 one of the great rulers in European history, Pepin's son Charlemagne, extended the Frankish kingdom into an empire stretching from the Elbe to the Ebro, and from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. He was crowned emperor by the Pope in Rome in 800.

The Treaty of Verdun in 843 divided Charlemagne's Empire between his three grandsons. King Charles the Bald ruled the west, called Francia after the Franks, although most of the population was of Celtic or Gallo-Roman stock. The middle land, stretching from the North Sea to Italy, was called Lotharingia after its ruler, the eldest grandson the Emperor Lothar, who reigned from Charlemagne's old capital Aachen in the Frankish heartland, near the Rhine. The east was ruled from Regensburg by King Louis the German. Absorbing most of Lotharingia after its disintegration in the tenth century, by 962 the rulers of the eastern kingdom had become emperors. Their territory had begun its evolution into the collection of around 300 semi-independent principalities, bishoprics, cities and counties known, in Louis XIV's reign, as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.

After the death of the last Carolingian king of Francia or France, one of his relations, a prominent noble called Hugues Capet, was elected king by other great nobles in 987. His own domains included only the region around Paris, known as the Île de France, stretching from Compiègne north of Paris to Orléans to the south. Other regions of France formed autonomous fiefdoms under rival dynasties, supported by local interests and loyalties. Their allegiance to the king of France was little more than nominal.

Slowly, however, the kings of France extended their control. One of their principal advantages was the prestige of coronation at Reims. The ceremony was partly based on that of the kings of Israel, as described in the first book of Samuel in the Old Testament. Like them, the king of France was not only crowned but anointed with holy oil. A dove was believed to have descended from heaven to Reims bearing a container or 'holy ampulla' full of oil. The king of France was considered a sacred figure, with the power to heal, by his royal touch, men and women suffering from scrofula.

Other weapons were the growth of their capital Paris into the largest city north of the Alps, able to supply an army and administration; a growing sense of national identity and pride in France, and in being and speaking French (a literary language before Italian, English or German);

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and the exceptional fecundity of Hugues Capet's descendants, the House of France. Rival dynasties died out. The many branches of the House of France multiplied.

After the conquest of England by the Duke of Normandy in 1066, the kings of England became the principal rivals of the kings of France. In the second half of the twelfth century Henry II of England and his sons also ruled the duchies of Guienne in the south-west and Poitou, Anjou and Normandy in the west of France. The Louvre began as a fort built in 1190–1202, at the same time as the city wall, by King Philippe Auguste, to protect Paris from English attacks. By 1204, however, as a result of English dissensions as well as his own strength, Philippe Auguste had conquered all the French possessions of the King of England, except the area around Bordeaux.

The French monarchy further increased in power and prestige in 1226–70, during the reign of King Louis IX, who would later become its revered patron saint, St Louis. After the 'Albigensian Crusade' in 1209–29 against the heretical Cathars, Toulouse and Languedoc were annexed to the royal domain. The population of the kingdom of France reached 17 million in 1300, more than any other country in Europe.

The power and attraction of France were shown by the submission of the Archbishop and city of Lyon to French rule in 1312, although Lyon had been part of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1349 Humbert II, the last ruler of Dauphiné, sold his province, also part of the Holy Roman Empire on the east bank of the Rhône, to the French crown. Henceforth, as he had stipulated, the eldest son of the king was called the Dauphin, the traditional first name of rulers of the province.

The kings of England remained half French in culture and ambitions. The Salic Law restricting the French crown to men descended from previous kings in the male line was invented in 1337–40 in a vain attempt to stop Edward III of England claiming the throne of France, through his mother Isabella, daughter and sister of kings of France.

By the 1360s the ambition of Edward III of England to rule France had been thwarted: he was left with the south-west corner around Bordeaux, and Calais. The Louvre expanded into a fortified palace under the cultivated King Charles V, who reigned from 1364 to 1380, and also built another fortified palace at Vincennes east of Paris. In 1420, after a string of victories, another king of England, Henry V, tried to create a composite Anglo-French monarchy. He was declared heir to the mad King Charles VI of France, but died in 1422, the same year as Charles himself. For a time his son Henry VI ruled northern France, as well as England. In 1429, however, an illiterate peasant called Jeanne d'Arc took Charles VI's son

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Charles VII from his power-base south of the Loire, defeated English forces besieging Orléans and led him to be crowned king in Reims. The French monarchy was proving stronger than its foes.

The recapture of Bordeaux by Charles VII in 1453 signalled the end of the first Hundred Years War between the kings of France and England (the second would begin under Louis XIV). Tudor monarchs, however, still hoped to conquer slices of France. The kings of England continued to use the title king of France, and to quarter the fleurs-de-lys of the kings of France in their coat of arms, until the Treaty of Amiens between George III and the French Republic in 1802.

To the north lay another rival of the French monarchy: the Duchy of Burgundy. Until the reign of Louis XIV, the kings of France followed contradictory dynastic strategies, simultaneously expanding their domain and diminishing it, by assigning provinces known as appanages to younger sons, in order to support them and enhance their status. Monarchy remained a family business. In 1369 Philip the Bold, youngest brother of Charles V, who had been created duke of Burgundy, married Margaret of Burgundy, heiress of the provinces of Flanders, Brabant, Artois and the Franche-Comté in the Holy Roman Empire. Further advantageous marriages by his descendants led to the creation of a wealthy composite monarchy, a revived Lotharingia called 'Burgundy'. It soon ruled most of the coveted 'middle land' between France and the Holy Roman Empire, a tangle of small states without clear political, linguistic or geographical frontiers, stretching from the North Sea through the fertile provinces of the Southern Netherlands and the wooded hills of the Ardennes to Lorraine, Alsace and the confederation of cantons beginning to be known as Switzerland.

Philip's great-grandson Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy (who had hoped to unite his dominions into a single Kingdom of Burgundy), died in January 1477, his corpse devoured by wolves after his defeat outside Nancy, capital of the Duchy of Lorraine, which he had hoped to conquer. The Duchy of Burgundy, encouraged by its local assembly or Estates, returned to French rule. Flanders, however, and the neighbouring provinces, as well as the Franche-Comté, remained united under the Duke's daughter Mary. She married the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, head of the House of Austria. The rivalry between their descendants and the kings of France would dominate Louis XIV's reign and last until the French Revolution and beyond.

Meanwhile the kingdom of France continued to absorb outlying provinces. In 1481, after the death of the last Count of Provence, Provence and Marseille, formerly owing allegiance to the Empire, acknowledged the

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suzerainty of the King of France, while retaining much of their administrative autonomy; until 1789 French laws would be promulgated in Provence in the name not of the King of France but of the 'King of France, Comte de Provence'.

The Duchy of Brittany had been semi-independent since the ninth century, with its own language, laws, parliament (known as Estates since it contained representatives of the three estates – church, nobility and Third Estate) and dynasty. In 1491 the heiress to Brittany, Duchess Anne, although dedicated to Breton independence, was obliged to marry Charles VIII, King of France, who had invaded her duchy. After his death, she married his cousin and successor Louis XII. In 1532 under François I, son-in-law of Anne of Brittany, the personal union between the Duchy and the kingdom was replaced by a perpetual administrative union, although the Duchy, like Provence, was allowed to retain many independent institutions. In 1527 after the rebellion of the Constable de Bourbon, a descendant of the fifth son of St Louis, his duchy of the Bourbonnais was also united to the crown domain. As a further unifying gesture, François I by the Edict of Villers-Cotterêts of 1539 decreed that official documents such as parish registers should be henceforth kept in French, rather than Latin or other languages like *langue d'oc*, the language of the south.

By the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis signed with the King of Spain in 1559, François I's son Henri II abandoned his claims to the Duchy of Milan and the kingdom of Naples, for which kings of France had been fighting since 1494. However, he won control of three cities between Lorraine and Alsace – Metz, Toul and Verdun. He thereby reasserted the French monarchy's desire for expansion eastwards into the middle land, a region which Louis XIV would get to know extremely well, as it would be the scene of most of his wars.

After the dynasty, the court was another unifying institution, as central to France's development as Parliament to England or the army to Prussia. In addition to the King and Queen, other members of the royal family had households of their own, drawn from most classes and regions. The court was not only a constellation of households and departments but also a dynamic force, strengthening and celebrating royal power and driving cultural and religious change. More than any other court, perhaps because of a long succession of forceful queens consort and queens regent since Isabeau de Bavière, wife of the mad King Charles VI in the early fifteenth century, the French court was also a female power-base. *The Book of the City of Ladies*, one of the first defences of women's rights, and one of the first French books by a woman, was written around 1400 by one of Isabeau de Bavière's servants, Christine de Pisan. The first Protestants in

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France were encouraged by François I's sister Marguerite, Queen of Navarre (another woman writer), and his mistress the Duchesse d'Etampes.[14]

At least since the marriage of Charles VIII to Anne, Duchess of Brittany, the Queen's household and apartments had been almost as large and magnificent as the King's. It was Queen Anne, wrote the French chronicler Pierre de Brantôme, author of *Vies des dames galantes*, who introduced 'la grande cour des dames' and asked for noblewomen to enter her household in order to educate them and increase her own importance. A court without women, he wrote, was like a garden without flowers.[15]

Anne of Brittany's son-in-law François I, who reigned from 1515 to 1547, spent much of the year away from Paris, surrounded by women in his favourite hunting palaces of Fontainebleau, in a forest south-east of Paris, and Chambord, in a forest near the Loire. The former was an ancient royal castle which he expanded and had redecorated by Italian artists like Primaticcio and Cellini. The latter was a vast new palace and hunting lodge of 440 rooms which he built in 1519–47, possibly from designs by Leonardo da Vinci.[16]

Long before Louis XIV's creation of Versailles, François I made the French court a synonym for splendour. In 1544 the Mantuan Ambassador wrote: 'If you have not seen the court of France, you have not seen what grandeur is.'[17] This grandeur came not only from the number of courtiers (perhaps 10,000 in all) and the size of the palaces, but also from the luxury of the objects inside: pictures, jewels, furniture, tapestries. The court was always on the move, particularly between the many royal residences in the Île de France and the valley of the Loire, in search of safety, revenue, food and hunting.[18] Sometimes, it needed 12,000 horses to transport it. One shocked Italian bishop wrote to Cosimo de' Medici: 'this court is like no other . . . here one thinks of nothing but hunting, women, banquets and moving house.'[19] Louis XIV's grandfather Henri IV would later boast that he had never slept in the same place two nights running.[20]

Both when the King was a minor and after he reached maturity, his mother publicly exercised or shared his authority. François I's daughter-in-law Catherine de Médicis, widow of his son Henri II, served as regent or a member of the council in 1560–88 during the reigns of her sons Charles IX and Henri III. So did Marie de Médicis, widow of Henri IV, in 1610–17 and 1620–30 during the reign of her son Louis XIII, and Anne of Austria in 1643–61 during the early reign of her son Louis XIV. Anne had the largest household of any queen of France (701 members in 1646), larger at times than her son's.[21] Under Louis XIV women would enjoy greater power than at any time before the Fifth Republic.

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The most important section of the king's household, far larger than in other royal courts, was his guard. The Gardes du Corps, companies of mounted gentlemen, had been founded in 1419, when half of France was occupied by English troops. So little trusted were the French by the future Charles VII that he raised a company of Scots archers 'ordonnez à la garde du corps du roy': Scotland was a trusted ally in the wars against England.[22] Three more companies of French Gardes du Corps had been added by 1514, as well as a company of Swiss guards.[23] King Ferdinand of Aragon said: 'no one in all Christendom had such a guard, nor one which was so well ordered.'[24]

Throughout his reign Louis XIV would devote particular attention to his guard. His court was distinguished by 'the incessant aspect of force', wrote the Venetian Ambassador in 1684: 'never was a sovereign guarded with more diligent vigilance,' both inside and outside Versailles, and along its corridors and staircases.[25] The Captain of the Gardes du Corps on duty was always beside him, responsible for his security, and for granting permission to individuals who wished to speak to him.[26] Gardes du Corps would surround Louis at his coronation in Reims on 7 June 1654, and escort his coffin in the funeral procession from Versailles to Saint-Denis on 9 September 1715.[27]

For the king of France, and Louis XIV in particular, was a military leader as well as a sacred monarch. When he was crowned, he was given 'the Sword of Charlemagne' and golden spurs as well as the crown, orb, sceptre and hand of justice. One proverb said: 'Qui retire l'épée, perd le sceptre': 'Who sheathes the sword, loses the sceptre.'

The 'wars of religion' which devastated France after 1560 confirmed that royal power was based on force as well as religion. Great nobles like the La Trémoille and La Rochefoucauld families, and the King's Bourbon cousins the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé, turned Protestant, as did an arc of cities stretching from La Rochelle on the Atlantic coast down to Nîmes and up to the Protestant stronghold of Geneva. Protestant forces under Condé tried to 'surprise' or kidnap the court at Meaux on 28 September 1567. It was saved only by the speed of its horses and carriages as it fled to Paris at two in the morning, and by the loyalty of Swiss mercenaries.[28] In reaction to growing insecurity, the Gardes Françaises, a regiment of 1,000 foot soldiers, had been formed to help guard François I's grandson Charles IX in 1563. On 24 August 1572, as hatred rose between Catholics and Protestants assembled in Paris to celebrate the future Henri IV's marriage to Marguerite de Valois, sister of Charles IX, the regiment led the St Bartholomew's Eve Massacre of Protestants in the streets of Paris and the courtyards of the Louvre.[29]

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In 1576 the Duc de Guise, Grand Maître de France or head of the King's household, and a cousin of the Duke of Lorraine, had formed the Catholic League. He claimed descent from Charlemagne and, with the financial support of Philip II of Spain, had designs on the throne of Charles IX's brother and successor Henri III. On 12 May 1588 barricades made of barrels and paving stones were erected in the streets leading up to the Louvre itself by Parisians infatuated with the Duc de Guise. Royal troops lost control of the capital. As Henri III fled to Chartres on 13 May, he cursed Paris, which he had once loved more than his wife, and said he would return only through a breach in the walls.[30]

Through the *taille*, or land tax on non-nobles, and the *gabelle*, or salt tax, the French monarchy had greater permanent annual revenues than other monarchs. Since the fourteenth century, the States General, a national parliament assembling deputies of the clergy, the nobility and the third estate, had been occasionally summoned when the crown needed more money. The size of France limited this institution's usefulness, unlike the many local assemblies in provinces like Brittany and Provence. Thanks to the Salic Law, France lacked the disputed successions needing validation by a national institution which in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries increased the importance of Parliament.

Now, in desperation at his loss of power, Henri III summoned the States General to the royal chateau of Blois on the Loire. They too, however, favoured the League and the Duc de Guise. More aggressive than the English Parliament, they demanded control of appointments to the King's court and his council – in other words, a share of executive power. They also imposed Catholicism as a condition of succession to the throne.[31] The King decided to eliminate Guise.

The King used not his Gardes du Corps, since they had been infiltrated by the League, but another force he had created in 1584 'for his most reliable and faithful guard'. Mainly bachelor nobles from the south-west, *les quarante-cinq* or *les gentilshommes ordinaires du roi*, as they were called, were directly under the King's authority (since Guise and his brother the Duc de Mayenne controlled much of the royal household through their offices of *grand maître* and *grand chambellan*), and guarded him day and night.[32] On the morning of 23 December Guise – ignoring warnings with the boast 'whom God guards is well guarded' – was summoned from the council chamber, where he could impose his wishes on the King, through the King's bedroom to the Cabinet Vieux. There the *quarante-cinq* overpowered and killed the Duke.[33]

As he contemplated his enemy's corpse, Henri III is said to have remarked, 'My God, how tall he is! He is even taller dead than alive.'[34]

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Most of France rose in rebellion. The King's execution of Guise's brother the Cardinal de Guise, who had crowned and anointed him at Reims in 1575, was considered especially shocking. The university of Paris, the Sorbonne, deposed 'ce misérable bougre de roi', as 'the former king' was known, and released his subjects from their oath of allegiance. His name was deleted from public prayers.[35] Members of the League wrote that 'the people make kings, not kings the people.'[36] Henri III retained control only of the royal heartland of the Loire, Bordeaux and the Dauphiné. Tours became the de facto capital of France, as Bourges had been in the previous century when the King of England had ruled northern France.[37]

On 1 August 1589 Henri III was stabbed to death in a revenge assassination by a Dominican friar called Jacques Clément, at Saint-Cloud outside Paris, which he was besieging. The King had received him in private, on the commode, because the friar claimed to have secret information for Henri's ears only.[38] In Paris Guise's sister the Duchesse de Montpensier, one of the leaders of the League, declared, 'my only regret is that he did not know before his death that I had ordered it.' She then drove through the streets in her carriage, proclaiming, 'Good news, my friends! Good news! The tyrant is dead!'[39]

Henri III's childlessness had been a source of weakness. Under the Salic Law his heir was his distant Protestant cousin, Louis XIV's grandfather Henri, King of Navarre, a descendant of the fifth son of St Louis, Robert Comte de Clermont, founder of the Bourbon branch of the House of France. Navarre was a small kingdom in the western Pyrenees, founded in the ninth century by Visigoths fleeing the Arab conquerors of Spain. Henri had inherited it from his mother Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre; the southern part, which Navarrese autonomists still regret today, had been taken by Castile in 1512.

Although France and Navarre were legally united in 1620, their separate coats of arms – the three golden fleurs-de-lys on a blue background of France and the golden wheel on a red background of Navarre – were thenceforth constantly reproduced (joined under a common crown and surrounded by the collar of the royal Order of the Holy Spirit founded by Henri III in 1578) on the walls of French royal palaces, on the King's official documents and on his personal seal.

In 1589 part of the court and four-fifths of France refused to serve the new King of France and Navarre, because he was Protestant. Many nobles regarded his accession primarily as an occasion to bargain for more favours, including regular meetings of the States General. Dreams of provincial independence revived. The Duc de Mayenne, while governing as 'lieutenant-general of the kingdom' in Paris, hoped to become duke of an

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independent Burgundy, his cousin the Duc de Mercoeur to be duke of Brittany, and the Duke of Savoy to annex Provence and Dauphiné. Paris was 'purified' by repeated religious processions. Although the supreme French law court, known as the Parlement of Paris, defended the Salic Law as the basis of all others, the Council of Sixteen ruling the city asked for Philip II of Spain or his daughter the Infanta Isabella (whose mother had been a daughter of Henri II) to ascend the throne, and admitted a Spanish garrison. Pamphleteers called leaders on both sides vipers and scorpions feeding on the corpse of France.[40]

Henri IV had to besiege Paris twice, to prove himself an invincible hero in battle and to convert to Catholicism (the sixth time that he changed religion) before he could finally enter his capital, on 22 March 1594. Later that day he watched the last Spanish and Neapolitan soldiers leave Paris by another gate. He too had been helped by foreign forces, German Protestant mercenaries and above all English loans, ships and soldiers: to his Surintendant des Finances Maximilien de Sully, he later described Elizabeth I as 'a second self'.[41] After his entry into Paris, he felt obliged to visit every parish church in the capital, to reassure Parisians he was neither a Protestant nor the devil incarnate.[42]

By 1598, when he made peace with Spain, Henri IV controlled the same extent of territory as Henri II and Henri III. Despite his apparent triumph, he had felt obliged to buy nobles' and factions' submission: the Guise family for example received 4 million livres in 1593.[43] By the 'perpetual and irrevocable' Edict of Nantes of 1598, guaranteeing Protestants the right to worship in public in certain localities, he bought their submission. Echoing an edict of Henri III in 1576, he had also given them the right to garrison certain fortresses as *places de sûreté* (Saumur, Nîmes, Montpellier, Grenoble and other cities). In areas where they could worship in public, he also established mixed Catholic–Protestant courts. By secret clauses, the King even agreed to pay Protestant pastors, teachers and some of their garrisons. Later, contrary to the terms of the Edict banning Protestant services in and around Paris, he permitted Protestant services at Charenton just east of Paris. French Protestants, although forming no more than around 6 per cent of the population, ran the equivalent of a state within the state, with separate assemblies and armed forces.[44]

In 1598–1610 France enjoyed a rare interval of peace. The King could concentrate on building projects in Paris and the Île de France. Louis XIV would be taught to regard him as 'Henri le Grand', a hero as well as one of the greatest kings of France.

However, Henri IV's heart often ruled his head. In 1610 he planned war with Spain, partly in continuation of the traditional French struggle

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with the House of Austria, but also in pursuit of Charlotte de Montmorency, Princesse de Condé (later Louis XIV's godmother), who had been taken to Brussels, capital of the Spanish Netherlands, by her husband to enable her to evade the King's advances.[45] On 14 May 1610, Henri IV was stabbed to death in his carriage in a crowded Paris street, by Jean François Ravaillac, a Catholic fanatic convinced that the King was still at heart a Protestant hostile to the ultra-Catholic House of Austria: Ravaillac had been encouraged by books and sermons arguing, as in the reign of Henri III, that, for a good Catholic, 'tyrannicide' was no crime.[46] Gardes Français, who under their commander 'le brave Crillon' had helped Henri IV recapture his kingdom, kept order in Paris after his murder.[47]

Thus antiquity, heredity, coronation and the widely proclaimed belief that the kings of France were representatives and images of God himself did not protect them from rebellion or assassination. France was a monarchy on a knife-edge. For a time Parisians had favoured a king from the Houses of Austria or Lorraine. Both Henri IV's son Louis XIII and his grandson Louis XIV would be threatened by repeated revolts and haunted by fears of new religious wars and acts of regicide.

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The Gift of God

Even by royal standards, the family into which the future Louis XIV was born on 5 September 1638 was a nest of vipers. Louis XIII had many reasons to fear his closest relations. His mother Marie de Médicis, and his weak and treacherous brother and heir Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, frequently rebelled or plotted against him. Gaston joined at least six separate conspiracies. Rebellion remained a French disease. As Louis XIII's chief minister the Cardinal de Richelieu wrote, Protestants behaved as if they shared the King's sovereignty; great nobles as if they were not his subjects; and governors of provinces as independent rulers.[1] His wife also conspired.

In Bordeaux cathedral on 25 November 1614, at the age of thirteen, Louis XIII had married Anne of Austria, a daughter of Philip III, King of Spain, of the same age as her husband. At the same time his sister Elisabeth of France had married Anne of Austria's brother, the future Philip IV of Spain. The two princesses had been exchanged at a formal ceremony at the exact midpoint between their two countries: on the Island of Pheasants, a tiny uninhabited islet of dried mud in the middle of the Bidassoa, the river which runs along the frontier between France and Spain down to the Bay of Biscay. However varied the kingdoms and provinces they ruled, dynasties in Europe retained an acute sense of nationality.

Marriages in Louis' mother's family the House of Austria helped create many of the states of Europe. In 1506 after the death of Philip the Handsome, son of the head of the House of Austria the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I and Mary of Burgundy, his son the future Emperor Charles V (1519–55) had inherited the Netherlands or 'Burgundy', the ancient rival of France. Through his mother Juana the Mad, daughter of Ferdinand, King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily and Isabella, Queen of Castile, Charles V also inherited those four kingdoms in 1516. After Maximilian I's death in 1519, he was in addition elected Holy Roman emperor: the title, in theory elective, had in practice become hereditary in the House

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of Austria. Under Charles V, Spain also conquered what are now Mexico and Peru.

After his abdication in 1555, his son Philip II inherited Spain and its global Empire and the Netherlands: because Spain was ruled by a branch of the House of Austria, Louis' mother, although an infanta of Spain, was called Anne 'of Austria'. Charles V's younger brother Ferdinand had become king of Hungary and Bohemia, by marrying the heiress to those thrones. He also ruled the family's hereditary lands in and around Austria and was elected Holy Roman emperor after Charles V's abdication. The lands of the House of Austria surrounded France and spread across the globe.[2] Hence the motto adopted by Charles V: 'Plus ultra' – 'Nothing beyond'.

The Franco-Spanish marriages of 1610 had been intended as guarantees of peace, prosperity, glory and alliance between the two most powerful, and most Catholic, kingdoms in Europe; hitherto they had often been enemies.[3] To her Première Femme de Chambre, Madame de Motteville, one of the many French courtiers who wrote political memoirs, Louis XIII's wife Anne of Austria was a heroine. One of the beauties of the age, she was particularly admired for the 'extreme whiteness' of her hands.[4] Her charm and familiarity won her courtiers' devotion.[5]

Nevertheless for Louis XIII and Richelieu she was a traitor. In 1626 she had confessed to the King's council her knowledge of 'the conspiracy of Chalais' (so named after the chosen assassin the Comte de Chalais, Maître de la Garde-robe du Roi) to kill the King and the Cardinal and marry her to her husband's brother Gaston. For twenty-two years, moreover, she had failed in the essential duty of a royal consort, to produce an heir. A fall on 14 March 1622, running down the long gallery of the Louvre with her ladies-in-waiting, had contributed to one miscarriage, and she would suffer three more. The Queen's prayers, pilgrimages and many vows to the Virgin Mary and the saints (Francis, Teresa of Avila, Anne 'la royale' and more) had no effect.[6]

One of Richelieu's greatest triumphs had been the fall of the Protestant stronghold of La Rochelle, despite naval and military support from England, after a thirteen-month siege in October 1628. The following June, after more fighting, the Edict of Nîmes ended the Protestants' state within a state, and their right to garrison towns and hold political assemblies. Thereafter Louis XIII and Richelieu pursued an increasingly anti-Spanish foreign policy.

Desire for peace with Spain, and resentment at her declining influence in the King's council, led to Marie de Médicis' break with Richelieu. After a violent scene in the Luxembourg, her palace in Paris, on 11 November 1630, Marie de Médicis believed she had persuaded the King to dismiss the

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Cardinal. Richelieu, however, had remained in power by obeying Louis XIII's order to follow him to Versailles, his hunting lodge 5 miles south of Saint-Germain. His mother had not gone there herself, since she feared the boredom and discomfort.[7] After more disputes, she fled to the Spanish Netherlands in July 1631. In 1642 she would die in Cologne in the house of her favourite painter Rubens (who had decorated the gallery of the Luxembourg with pictures of her triumphs), abandoned by most of her household.

To the horror of devout Catholics, in 1631 France allied with the leading Protestant power Sweden, which was fighting the House of Austria in the Empire.[8] In 1633 French troops occupied Lorraine, in 1634 part of Alsace.[9] In 1635 Louis XIII declared war on Anne's brother Philip IV. France planned to break up the Southern Netherlands, then ruled by the King of Spain. France would take western Flanders and all French-speaking areas (present-day Wallonia), the United Provinces (as the northern Netherlands were then called) the rest.[10]

Security as well as territory would be secured by French expansion. As repeated invasions by English or Spanish armies had shown, no natural barriers defend Paris from armies invading from the north and the east. In what de Gaulle would call the 'fatal avenue' between France and Germany, every other town or village is the site of one battle, or more.* To this day farmers harvest weapons and bones, as well as crops.

In 1646 Richelieu's successor, Cardinal Mazarin, would write that acquisition of the Spanish Netherlands, Lorraine and Alsace – the heart of former 'Lotharingia' and 'Burgundy' – 'would form an inexpugnable bulwark for the city of Paris and it would then be truly called the heart of France and it would be placed in the most secure location in the kingdom. Its frontiers would have been extended as far as Holland, and in the direction of Germany, which is where one can also have much cause for fear, as far as the Rhine, by keeping Lorraine and Alsace.'[11] Louis XIV would also dream of making France's eastern boundary the Rhine.

Louis XIII and Richelieu often invoked the 'the good of the state' when defending their policies and condemning their enemies. 'The state' was a term much used in France since the dynastic instability and political anarchy of the period 1570–1600 had threatened the country's survival. 'The state' could refer not to the government and administration of France, but in reality to the King's will and policies. Louis XIII, when refusing to follow Marie de Médicis' pro-Spanish policies, said that, while he respected his mother, he had greater obligation to his state. In 1637 he told the Paris

* For example, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, Denain in Louis XIV's reign; later, to name only a few, Waterloo, Sedan, Ypres, Verdun, Dunkirk.

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Parlement that new taxes were needed for 'my State', not for himself.[12] Participants in the innumerable conspiracies and revolts, both popular and aristocratic, of Louis XIII's reign thought that in practice his wars, by increasing taxation, public misery and revolts, weakened France and 'the state'. War with Spain was pursued and Richelieu's political rivals executed, imprisoned or exiled, not to strengthen 'the state' but to strengthen Richelieu, and his domination of the King.[13] After 'the year of Corbie' in 1636, when a Spanish army had crossed the Somme and taken Corbie 70 miles from Paris, the tide of war turned in France's favour. Just before capturing Arras, capital of Artois, in August 1640, Louis XIII himself, lamenting 'the destruction of the people', claimed to the Venetian Ambassador that he made war only to limit the power of the House of Austria and give peace to Christianity.[14]

After the outbreak of war in 1635, Louis XIII's sister Elisabeth of France, Queen of Spain, showed herself passionately Spanish, selling jewels to raise soldiers for her husband's army.[15] The Queen of France, however, favoured her own dynasty. In August 1637, despite taking communion and swearing on the holy sacrament that she had not secretly corresponded with 'enemies of the state', Anne of Austria had been forced by Richelieu and the Chancellor Séguier (who had foraged for incriminating letters in the Queen's bodice) to sign a confession admitting that she had. Using the convent she had founded at Val-de-Grâce on the rue Saint-Jacques in 1624 as a letter drop, she had secretly corresponded over many years in Spanish or in cipher with Philip IV, with another brother the Cardinal Infante Ferdinand, Governor General of the Spanish Netherlands and with her exiled favourite the Duchesse de Chevreuse (one of those with the Queen in the Louvre when she had a miscarriage), and had tried to prevent agreements being concluded between France, England and Lorraine. One of her husband's *premiers valets de chambre*, Pierre de La Porte, acted as her encrypter.[16] She had to write to Richelieu and Louis XIII to ask forgiveness, while admitting she did not deserve it. They forgave her because repudiation would have caused a scandal, and the King needed an heir. Thenceforth, all her letters were sealed by ladies-in-waiting chosen by her husband, and she was forbidden to visit Val-de-Grâce.[17]

Despite the Queen's treason, miscarriages and advanced age (she was thirty-seven), Louis XIII's confessor, and his confidantes Louise de La Fayette and Marie d'Hautefort, urged him to continue trying to father children. Between 9 November and 1 December the King and Queen were together in the Château Vieux of Saint-Germain, 11 miles west of Paris, built by François I in 1540–47 (and covered with his symbols of the letter

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F and the salamander) on the foundations of a twelfth-century chateau. Saint-Germain is a tall, forbidding, five-sided castle constructed around a courtyard, now the Museum of National Archaeology, conveniently close to a forest where the King could go hunting.[18] On 1 December, since it was the beginning of winter, the royal couple moved to Paris.

Their son's conception may date from 30 November at Saint-Germain; the story of a conception after a storm out hunting had driven the King to accept last-minute hospitality in the Queen's apartment in the Louvre on 5 December is unproven. On 30 January her pregnancy was made public. Parisians reacted as if the Messiah was about to be born.[19]

Paris under Louis XIII and Louis XIV was so Catholic that it was called 'the second capital of Christendom'. It contained ten abbeys, eighty-four monasteries, eleven priories, fifty-nine parish churches and ninety chapels.[20] No Protestant services had been held there since the massacre of St Bartholomew's Eve. A visitor from Sicily wrote of the city: 'I have never seen a more devout people, better-behaved priests, a more organized clergy or monks giving a better example.'[21] Parisians regarded the Queen's conception as a miracle, a reward for the King's dedication of France to the Virgin Mary in 1637, in gratitude for her protection of his kingdom from the Spanish army in 1636.[22]

On 10 February 1638 Louis XIII formally published his *dédication*, declaring the 'Very Holy and Very Glorious Virgin Mary' France's 'special protectress', to whom he consecrated 'our Person, our State, our Crown and our Subjects' (the order is revealing – in France state and crown were already considered separate). He solemnized his *dédication* or vow by registering it in the supreme law court of the kingdom, the Parlement de Paris, and building a new high altar in Notre-Dame de Paris, the great cathedral with a façade decorated with statues of twenty-eight kings (whether of France or Judah is unclear) symbolizing the union of church and crown. His portrait by Philippe de Champaigne was placed on the altar. It shows the dark-faced King, in coronation robes and watched by angels, offering on his knees his crown and sceptre to the Virgin, who holds Jesus Christ after his descent from the cross.

Another portrait by Philippe de Champaigne – of the young Louis XIV offering his crown and sceptre to the Virgin and Jesus Christ, watched by his mother and brother – as well as the two life-size marble statues of Louis XIII and Louis XIV still on either side of the high altar of Notre-Dame, offering their crowns to Jesus Christ and the Virgin, also commemorate the vow of Louis XIII. For most Frenchmen in the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, Christianity and monarchy were similar cults of hierarchy and obedience.[23] Louis XIV would write to his son that

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all authority was ordained by God, whose lieutenants kings were. The king of France was known as 'the Most Christian King' and 'the Lord's Anointed'. For his part Jesus Christ, 'Son of God', was 'King of kings'. The Virgin, 'Mother of God', was 'Queen of heaven', frequently depicted seated on a throne and wearing a crown. Until the fall of the monarchy, the vow of Louis XIII would be honoured on the king's orders by processions throughout France on the feast day celebrating the Assumption of the Virgin into heaven. The 15th of August is still a national holiday in France today.[24]

As the Queen's pregnancy advanced, the King requested public prayers throughout France to implore God to bless 'la royale et très heureuse grossesse de nostre très-grande et très-Auguste Reyne' ('the royal and very fortunate pregnancy of our very great and very August Queen') with a son and heir. The holy sacrament was exposed day and night in churches: a dauphin would prevent the King's brother Gaston from ascending the throne. Jacqueline Pascal, sister of the philosopher Blaise Pascal, declaimed in front of the pregnant Queen verses praising the 'invincible son of an invincible father', who even in his mother's womb, by his kicks, 'makes himself feared and desired'.[25] She hoped that his kicks were a foretaste of the blows he would strike against France's enemies.[26]

The Queen moved to the Château Neuf of Saint-Germain, built in 1594–9 by Henri IV 200 yards east of the Château Vieux. Spectacular gardens, grottoes and fountains descended on a series of colonnaded terraces from the palace down to the Seine. The site combined the advantages of salubrity, proximity to hunting forests and 'the finest view in the world', a 180-degree panorama of Paris and the entire surrounding plain.[27]* Sometimes called 'the mountain of good air', in contrast to the fumes and smells of the capital, Saint-Germain was the Queen's main country residence. In a sign of their mutual distaste, if the Queen stayed in the Château Neuf, the King moved to the Château Vieux, and vice versa.

In the Château Neuf of Saint-Germain, at 11 a.m. on 5 September 1638, after a labour of twelve hours, the miracle occurred. At the age of thirty-eight, in the presence of praying nuns, holy relics, Princesses of the Blood, the King's brother and the King himself, the Queen gave birth to a healthy boy. 'Sire, c'est un dauphin!' a midwife told Louis XIII.[28] Te Deums, processions and fireworks were arranged throughout France in celebration. So much wine flowed in fountains at Saint-Germain that guards had to be posted at the entrance of the town to check the flood of people coming to drink it.[29] As far away as Constantinople, the French Ambassador

* Now blocked by the skyscrapers of La Défense.

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fired so many cannon in celebration that the ladies of the imperial harem assumed that Christians had risen in revolt.

Prints commemorated 'the joy', 'the happiness' and 'the hopes of France'. The King and 'la reine notre très chère épouse' were depicted presenting the Dauphin to the Virgin in heaven.[30] His birth was compared to that of Jesus Christ – also born after a miraculous conception. One print called Jesus Christ, Son of God, 'the Dauphin in the skies' – Jesus thus named after the French Prince, not the other way round. Richelieu wrote to the King that 'God having given him to you, he has given him to the world for great things.'[31] On 6 March 1639 Louis' birth was further celebrated, in a manner especially appreciated at the French court, by a *Ballet de la Félicité* danced before the King and Queen.[32]

The Dauphin's Governess, the Gouvernante des Enfants de France, was called Madame de Lansac. She was a protégée of Richelieu, and daughter of the Maréchal de Souvré, who had been Louis XIII's governor. A portrait survives of Louis, tightly swaddled in accordance with French practice, round his neck the blue ribbon of the grandest French royal order, the Order of the Holy Spirit. One large naked breast of his wet nurse, 'dame Longuet de la Geraudières', wife of a royal tax official, is near his lips. The young Louis was voracious, with strong teeth, and hurt his wet nurses' nipples: he would run through eight nurses in all. The Swedish diplomat Grotius remarked that 'the neighbours of France should beware such a precocious rapacity.' In September 1640 his mother bore the Dauphin a brother, named Philippe, Duc d'Anjou (known as Monsieur, like Gaston before him, after Louis XIII's death in 1643).[33] The *Gazette de France* referred to Louis and his brother as 'these columns destined to assure our conquests'.[34]

Starved of affection by her husband, the Queen adored her elder son and, far more than most royal mothers of the day, brought him up herself. One observer noted in April 1639, 'The Queen hardly leaves him. She takes great pleasure in playing with him and in taking him out in her carriage when the weather is fine. It is her whole amusement; so there is no other in her court.'[35] Another witness wrote that he made a 'maddening noise in the bedchamber of the Queen but that does not bother Her Majesty'.[36]

For his part Louis XIII complained in a letter to Richelieu that the Dauphin preferred the company of women: 'from the moment he sees me, he cries as if he saw the devil, he always cries for maman. He must . . . be taken from the Queen at the earliest possible moment.' The King followed Richelieu's advice and threatened to send his son to Versailles. Four days later, proving the Queen's survival instinct, he wrote: 'my son demanded forgiveness on his knees and played with me more than one long hour. I

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gave him some toys to play with; we are the best friends in the world.' The following day: 'since that time he cannot bear to be without me' and followed the King everywhere.[37] Even at the age of two, Louis was a pawn in his parents' marriage. His feelings and manners were used as political weapons.

Louis XIII was a soldier king. Gédéon Tallemant des Réaux, author of a celebrated collection of anecdotes on the French court entitled *Historiettes*, remarked of Louis XIII's control over the guard and army that he was 'more jealous of that than of anything else'.[38]The French royal guard had been strengthened by Louis and before him by Henri IV with smaller units of Chevau-légers (1593), Gendarmes (1611) and Mousquetaires (1622) de la Garde, later known as the Maison du Roi or Household Cavalry, 'of which the King is extremely fond and which he puts on duty in front of his residence in the palaces where he goes'. The King himself was captain of each unit, and sometimes chose to serve as a sentry on guard duty at night. Louis XIII also added, during a rebellion by his cousin the Prince de Condé in 1616, a regiment of 3,000 Swiss Guards.[39]

Numbering 6,000 in all, the guards not only protected the King but acted as a training school for officers and as a shock force on the battlefield where Louis XIII, like Henri IV, spent much of his life. Louis XIII had also used his guards to kill another overmighty subject, the Queen Mother's favourite Concino Concini, Maréchal d'Ancre, outside the Louvre in April 1617. Concini's corpse was hung on the Pont Neuf, where it suffered 'every indignity' at the hands of jeering Parisians, before being dragged through the streets. On hearing news of the murder, Louis XIII had exclaimed, 'praise be to God, I am now king.'[40]

Guards were 'a mark of sovereignty', as the States General had declared in 1614 when asking for them to be reserved to the King and his family alone.[41] Only Richelieu's particular combination of authority and vulnerability after the conspiracy of Chalais in 1626 had persuaded Louis XIII to grant him the unique privilege of maintaining his own foot and horse guards – about 420 well-paid and magnificently uniformed Chevau-légers, Gendarmes and Mousquetaires. They not only guarded his residences, but accompanied him wherever he went, through the streets of Paris and to the King's palaces (although they were not allowed to follow him into the King's apartments). There was a ceremonial changing of the Cardinal's guard every morning in front of the Palais Cardinal, the present Palais Royal north of the Louvre, like that of the King's guard in front of the Louvre.[42]

Louis XIII devoted more time to his guard and his army than to his

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court. Richelieu complained to him of its loss of splendour. 'Foreigners who visited France were often surprised to see a State raised so high and a household so debased . . . everything in it was in confusion from the kitchens to the study . . . entry to your study has been permitted to everyone.' The courts of Spain and England, he continued, were not only more dignified but more secure.[43]

In 1642, when the Dauphin was four, yet another 'court tempest' (*orage de la cour*) hinged in part on the guards. It showed, as the murder of the Duc de Guise had done in 1588, that at the French court every nuance of human relationships, and every inch of the royal apartments, could have political consequences. The court was a zone of negotiation, and a school of psychology, as well as a battlefield. Since 1637 Louis XIII had been besotted with the Marquis de Cinq-Mars, handsome, witty and well built, who, at nineteen, was half his age. M. de Chavigny, a secretary of state, had written: 'never has the King had a more violent passion for anyone.'[44] In 1638 Cinq-Mars was appointed one of two *maîtres de la garde-robe*, in charge of the King's clothes, with constant access to his person. In 1639 he rose to be *grand écuyer de France* – 'Monsieur le Grand' in the language of the court – a vital post placing him in charge of the royal horses and carriages on which the King's security depended. Henri III had been able to flee from Paris to Chartres in May 1588 only because he could use the horses and stables which he kept beside the Tuileries garden outside the city walls, beyond the control of the master of Paris, the Duc de Guise.[45]

Louis XIII complained to Richelieu, who had favoured the rise of Cinq-Mars, of the impertinence, extravagance and bad temper of 'Monsieur le Grand'. Cinq-Mars snapped at the King, said he smelt and continued visiting mistresses in Paris. After their quarrels, he and the King would sign treaties, guaranteed by Richelieu, promising 'to be perfectly contented and satisfied with each other' (26 November 1639), or not to lose their tempers with each other (9 May 1640). Tallemant des Réaux claimed that at night Cinq-Mars would 'oil himself for combat' with the King.[46]

Encouraged by the King's confidence, and by his frequent complaints about Richelieu, Cinq-Mars launched a plot to kill the Cardinal, enter the council and make peace with Spain. Fellow conspirators included the Duc de Bouillon, Gaston, Duc d'Orléans and perhaps the Queen. In January 1642 a treaty promising peace and an end to France's alliances with Protestant powers, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, was signed by Cinq-Mars' agent Fontrailles with Philip IV.[47]

In June that year, however, possibly through Anne of Austria (who as a reward retained control of her sons), or more likely through an intercepted Spanish courier, Richelieu made a 'marvellous discovery': a copy

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of the treaty with Philip IV.[48] At that point Cinq-Mars had seemed in higher favour than ever. The King was showing him increasing 'warmth'. Richelieu feared assassination and the Papal Nuncio predicted his fall.[49] Cinq-Mars had developed the habit, when Richelieu was away from the court, of attending council meetings standing behind the King's chair in his capacity as Monsieur le Grand, literally inching his way to power: the embodiment of the court official trying to dominate the government – as, earlier in Louis XIII's reign in 1617–21, another of his handsome courtier favourites, the Duc de Luynes, one of Concini's assassins, had done.[50]

On 12 June, returning from the capture of Perpignan, the King was staying in the palace of the Archbishop of Narbonne. Chavigny and Sublet de Noyers, two secretaries of state, showed the recently intercepted treaty to the King in an inner council room, when Cinq-Mars was, briefly, not beside him. They convinced him to sign an order for Cinq-Mars' arrest. In a crisis the council – the state – proved more powerful, and more trusted by the King, than the court.[51]

Even so Cinq-Mars was arrested only with difficulty. For hours he hid in the recesses of the Archbishop's palace. After his capture, he was entrusted to John Seton, one of the last Gardes du Corps of Scottish origin, presumably because the King's French guards were considered unreliable.[52] As in previous conspiracies, Gaston, Duc d'Orléans betrayed everyone in return for a pardon.

The King had 'le coeur fort serré', a heavy heart beset by 'l'acrimonie des humeurs'. Richelieu was furious, as he suspected that the King, tiring of the Cardinal's dominance, had listened to plans for his assassination and had appeared to favour them: after seventeen years, this old couple knew how to torture each other. The King admitted in a letter to Chancellor Séguier that Cinq-Mars had proposed such a plan and had offered to kill Richelieu himself.[53] He had not, however, given Cinq-Mars an order in writing.

Cinq-Mars and his adviser de Thou said they had acted only on the King's orders. Richelieu offered to retire to Le Havre, where his niece the Duchesse d'Aiguillon was governor, but the King refused to accept his resignation. 'Knowing of the King's consent he will always be afraid . . . as long as those who had been destined for the execution [of the plot against his life] will be present [at court],' wrote Richelieu in a secret letter on 6 November; he also referred to 'matters one cannot write'. For a time the Cardinal refused to visit Louis XIII at Saint-Germain, fearing the hostility of guards 'implicated in the past machinations of Monsieur le Grand'. Finally, much against his will (they were immediately recalled on the Cardinal's death), the King dismissed Troisville, the trusted

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commander of his Mousquetaires, and three officers of the Gardes Françaises, suspected of having also offered to kill Richelieu. Richelieu won increased powers and the right to enter the King's apartment with his own armed guards.[54]

Richelieu had achieved in 1642 what Guise had not in 1588: control of the King's guard. As the Venetian Ambassador wrote on 25 November: 'the court is thus purged and Monsieur le Cardinal in the most brilliant authority.'[55] But Richelieu was already dying. The epitome of the overmighty minister, he dared to sit in an armchair in the presence of the Queen as if he were her equal, when she visited him in his splendid chateau of Rueil, halfway between Saint-Germain and Paris, to enquire after, or gloat over, his health.[56] Richelieu died, widely detested, on 4 December. When asked to forgive his enemies, he said he had none but those of the state. The day before, Louis XIII, worried for the safety of his sons after his death, as he told members of the Parlement, had determined to exclude Gaston d'Orléans from any future regency council. In a letter to the Parlement of 9 December he announced that there would be 'no change' in his policies.[57] He chose as his new principal minister a protégé of Richelieu, an Italian called Giulio Mazarini.

The fierce sense of nationality in seventeenth-century Europe did not exclude flexible identities, as two powerful diasporas of the reign of Louis XIV, the Huguenots and the Jacobites, would demonstrate. Europe was, for some, an open market, in which states bid for talent as companies do today. The French monarchy, despite its commitment to territorial expansion, sometimes preferred to employ foreigners, such as its Scots and Swiss Guards. Mazarin, himself an outstanding example of this preference, would call foreign troops 'the surest support of the state'.[58] A new regiment of foreign guards, the Gardes Ecossaises, was raised in 1642.

The French court also employed Italians. The Gondi family from Florence, originally court officials (one had attended the council meeting which decided on the Massacre of St Barthomew's Eve), had been bishops, then archbishops, of Paris since 1602.[59] Mazarin himself was born in Rome in 1602, of a Sicilian father from the minor nobility and a Genoese mother. But he put into practice the popular saying *al galantuomo ogni paese è patria*: 'to a gentleman every country is a fatherland.'[60] In December 1639, at the age of thirty-seven, this brilliant papal diplomat had been persuaded by Richelieu to entered French service. Twice, in April 1639 and October 1643, in return for 'commendable and important services', he received letters of naturalization making him legally French. However, he continued to acquire property in Rome, to speak French with an Italian

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accent (pronouncing both 'union' and 'oignon' as 'ougnon') and to be hated as a foreigner.[61]

Mazarin was called to the council on 5 December 1642, the day after Richelieu's death. On 16 December the Venetian Ambassador wrote of the King's favour, esteem and confidence enjoyed by the man he called 'notre très cher cousin le Cardinal Mazarini': the Pope had made Mazarin a cardinal in order to honour Louis XIII's new favourite. He showed 'singular industry' and cleverness, 'instructed as he has been in the school of Rome and in the practices of the court'. The Princes of the Blood and the public were hostile, but Louis XIII appeared fonder of Mazarin than he had been of Richelieu.[62] The new Cardinal often dined with the King in his favourite hunting lodge, Versailles.

The King, however, was wasting away, losing weight by the day, through a combination of tuberculosis, intestinal problems (including worms), Crohn's disease and abcesses. Princes and great nobles, with their followers, gathered 'in very large numbers' round the royal deathbed. In January Gaston, on bended knee, begged the King's forgiveness. Louis replied that, for the sixth time, he had forgiven and forgotten.[63] When the Queen assured him she had never joined the Chalais conspiracy in 1626 or desired his death, he answered that in the state he was in he was obliged as a Christian to forgive her, but not to believe her.[64]

On 13 April 1643 Mazarin appointed the man who would be his most faithful ally, and father of the famous minister Louvois, Michel Le Tellier, as secretary of state for war. On 20 April in the presence of the royal family, ministers, marshals, officials and dukes, the King declared his desire for Anne to be regent. Her council would be presided over jointly by Gaston and the next heir to the throne, their second cousin the Prince de Condé:[65] the two heirs next in line to the throne, if the King's sons were to die, were to counterbalance each other. Anne agreed, but, characteristically, sent to a Paris notary a secret protest invalidating her agreement. Influential members of the Parlement also told her they secretly supported her. The court was divided between partisans of Queen and Gaston. The Queen, in the Château Vieux, held the trump-card, her sons.

According to the *Gazette de France*, the official newspaper founded by Richelieu in 1631, Louis XIII, looking from Saint-Germain towards Saint-Denis, said: 'Voilà ma dernière maison où je me prépare pour aller gaiement.' Convinced that Anne would be more generous or more malleable than the King, courtiers looked sad when his condition improved, cheerful when it worsened.[66]

All eyes turned to the Dauphin. In 1643 at the Cène – the annual ceremony on the Thursday of Holy Week when the King of France washed the feet of

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twelve poor men, as Jesus Christ was believed to have done for the Apostles, before helping to serve them a meal inspired by the Last Supper – the four-year-old Dauphin, replacing his father, was praised for his 'piety, grandeur, vigour and beauty'.[67] His formal baptism took place on 21 April that year, in the magnificent mid-thirteenth-century chapel which survives today in the Château Vieux of Saint-Germain. Like his father and his successors, he was named Louis, after St Louis, the revered patron saint of the French monarchy. Instead of the Pope (who had been godfather to Louis XIII) or his uncle Gaston, the 'most eminent personage Cardinal Mazarin' was selected by Louis XIII to be his godfather. His godmother was his second cousin the Princesse de Condé, the 'celestial' beauty for love of whom Henri IV had been planning in 1610 to invade the Spanish Netherlands.[68] In the words of the official account of the ceremony, the Dauphin was 'beau comme un ange, modeste et retenu [reserved]'. In his name his mother three times renounced Satan and all his works.[69]

On 23 April, on the King's orders, his own declaration of 1 December against Gaston (written in Richelieu's lifetime) was torn out of the registers of the Parlement so that he could be named a member of the regency council.[70] As he lay dying, he forgave all his enemies except the Queen's friend the Duchesse de Chevreuse, whom he regarded as a devil because she had launched so many plots against him.[71] According to his *valet de chambre* Marie Dubois, he addressed his family, and 'messieurs du parlement' who were also present, 'with remarks so touching that they could not console themselves'. When he officially declared Anne the future regent, everyone, including Anne herself, wept.

They saw this King 'charged with victory' (his cousin the Duc d'Enghien, son of Condé, would win the battle of Rocroi against the Spanish army on 19 May), leaving his sceptre and crown 'with as little regret as if he was leaving only a bale of rotten hay'. Looking at his wasted body, he said, 'my God, how thin I am.'[72] During what was called a 'conference', Anne talked to him alone for hours: he was giving her his last words of advice, probably to trust Mazarin and not to allow him to retire to Rome.[73] Nine years later Mazarin would remind Anne that the dying King had 'twice recapitulated to her my promise which I had made to him and told her that he made me godfather of his son to oblige me even more not to leave him and begged her strongly to uphold me against all the attacks which infallibly people would make against me, to disgust me and oblige me to retire'.[74] Then she brought their sons to receive their father's blessing. 'Airs of devotion' were sung as, in great pain, the King received the last rites. On 14 May he died.[75]

The great preacher and organizer of public charities Vincent de Paul

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(canonized nearly a century later), whom the King had summoned to his deathbed, declared: 'since I have been on this earth I have never seen anyone die in such a Christian manner.'[76] Mazarin, who had bought property in Paris close to the royal palaces the day before the King's death,[77] wrote to Richelieu's brother: 'it is impossible to imagine a greater spirit in a weaker body.' The younger brother of the Duc de Bouillon, Turenne, later one of Louis XIV's best generals, wrote to his sister: 'it is true that no one on earth has ever made such a fine and constant end. As for affliction at court, it has been very mediocre there.' Indeed there was an explosion of joy at the King's death and the prospect of Anne of Austria's regency.[78]

Fearing a coup by the large number of followers accompanying Gaston and Condé to court, Anne appointed the Duc de Beaufort as commander of the guard, and ordered the Swiss Guards to be ready. Beaufort was the second son of Henri IV's illegitimate son the Duc de Vendôme: a bastard line with no chance of succeeding could be more trusted than princes who might wish to eliminate lives standing between themselves and the crown.[79]

On 15 May the new King made a state entry from Saint-Germain into Paris. It was the first time he had seen his capital. He was surrounded by his French and Swiss guards, Gendarmes, Chevau-légers, Mousquetaires, Gardes du Corps and princes, and was preceded by the Duc de Saint-Simon, Premier Ecuyer and a former favourite of his father, carrying his sword. Royal power was based on force but strengthened by emotion. The city authorities came outside the walls to present Louis XIV with the keys of Paris watched by 'an innumerable multitude of people who received him with great cries and acclamations of joy and happiness', according to the parish registers of Saint-Germain.[80] The Queen promised to tell her son he should display benevolence to his peoples.[81] The procession then advanced through the city to the main royal palace, the Louvre.

Olivier d'Ormesson, a judge in the Parlement de Paris and member of a legal family which still possesses the Château d'Ormesson near the city, recorded in his diary the emotional charge, close to physical love, which could pass between the king of France and his subjects: 'there was a very great shout of Vive le roi as he passed. He displayed great joy to see so many people and was not surprised by it although he had not been in Paris [before]. I did not see him, but only Monsieur who is the handsomest prince you could possibly see. Everyone yearned to see these two princes and they argued together over which was the handsomer.'[82] The King's first contact with Paris had gone well.

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Our Good City of Paris

Cities were among Louis XIV's most persistent adversaries: provincial cities with republican aspirations like Marseille and Bordeaux; Protestant trading capitals, like Amsterdam and London; enemy cities whose bombardment he ordered, such as Algiers, Genoa and Brussels. Despite the acclamations at his entry, however, the most dangerous city of all to Louis XIV would be his own capital, 'notre bonne ville de Paris', as it was referred to in royal edicts.

Louis XIV's Paris was not one city, but four. Inscriptions on maps described it as 'la cité, ville, université et faubourgs de Paris'. The city's multiple identities help explain its rebelliousness and Madame de Motteville's remark, echoed by other admirers, that it was 'an entire world'.[1]

The *cité* was the Île de la Cité, the island in the middle of the River Seine, where kings of France had built a palace in the eleventh century, the period when Paris became the capital of France: the Gothic masterpiece the Sainte-Chapelle and some turrets of the Conciergerie prison are the palace's last physical remains today.[2] By the seventeenth century the kings had left 'le Palais', as it was called. But their law courts remained: the oldest, largest and most independent law courts in France: the Chambre des Comptes (checking government accounts), the Cour des Aides (dealing with taxation) and the Parlement de Paris. The Parlement de Paris had jurisdiction over most of the kingdom except the south. It applied the 'coutumier de Paris', the local laws first codified in 1510, which was later the principal source of the Code Napoléon.[3]

The Parlement's location is so convenient that the highest French law courts are still there today: 'le Palais' remains a synonym for 'the law courts'. About 140 judges and probably 5,000 clerks, lawyers and others worked there in the reign of Louis XIV. The building's halls and courtyards were among the main meeting places and shopping centres in the city, ten minutes' walk from the Louvre, on the right bank to the west, which by 1550 had become the principal royal palace in Paris. In 1644 the diarist John

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