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Coercion, Conversion and Counterinsurgency in Louis XIV's France

Roy L. McCullough

BRILL

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAE MD	Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Mémoires et Documents
AD	Archives Departmentales (various)
AM	Archives Municipales (various)
AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
Bib Ars	Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BN Clair	Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Collection Clairambault
BN Mél Colb	Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Mélanges Colbert
BN MF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Manuscrits Français
BSHPF	Bibliothèque de la Société de l'Histoire de Protestantisme Français, Paris
SHAT	Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes

INTRODUCTION

In the seventeenth century, the government of France embarked upon an ambitious agenda of centralization with the twin aims of taming the centrifugal forces of religious and provincial particularism, and imposing a pervasive fiscal system capable of supporting the voracious demands of an expanding military establishment. All levels of French society resisted this process and the early modern French state was plagued by a near-constant series of popular riots, revolts, and rebellions of varying scope, intensity, and duration. Scarcely a year passed without a violent incident of some kind and the frequency of popular uprisings is a conspicuous characteristic of the early modern French state.

Despite their significance, seventeenth-century popular uprisings did not become the subject of serious historical analysis until the mid-twentieth century. In 1948, Soviet historian Boris Porchnev published a comprehensive study that examined popular uprisings in France from 1623–1648.[1] Written in Russian, Porchnev's seminal work remained in a state of relative obscurity until the publication of a German translation in 1954.[2] In the mid-1950s, French historians began to question Porchnev's Marxist-inspired assertions about the social character and the social dynamics of seventeenth-century popular uprisings.[3] Even so, the subject did not achieve real currency among historians until a French translation of Porchnev's book appeared in 1963.[4]

The publication of *Les soulèvements populaires en France de 1623 à 1648* marked the beginning of a decades-long debate between Porchnev and French historian Roland Mousnier. The general subject of their sometimes acrimonious exchanges was the structure of seventeenth-century French society: was it divided horizontally along economic and class lines as suggested by Porchnev or, as Mousnier argued, were

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[1] *Narodnie Vosstaniya vo Frantsii pered Frondoi, 1623–1648* (Moscow, 1948).

[2] *Die Volksaufstande in Frankreich, 1623–1648* (Berlin, 1954).

[3] Roland Mousnier, "Recherches sur les soulèvements populaires en France avant la Fronde," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 5 (April–June, 1958), 81–113.

[4] *Les soulèvements populaires en France de 1623 à 1648* (Paris, 1963).

societal groupings primarily vertical in nature, with different strata of society displaying a common interest in protecting their various privileges from the unrelenting, if sometimes clumsy, encroachments of royal authority?[5]

The controversy between these two formidable historians was instrumental in generating a number of monographs examining seventeenth century peasant uprisings. The most significant contributions were those made by Mousnier's own students: Madeleine Foisil investigated the revolts that occurred in Normandy during the summer and fall of 1639;[6] Yves-Marie Bercé examined the series of disturbances that plagued much of southwestern France during the troubled 1630s and 1640s;[7] and Réné Pillorget produced a study of insurrections in Provence.[8] Considering the circumstances surrounding their origins, it is not surprising that the works produced in this golden period of research on popular uprisings in France concentrated primarily on those that occurred during the first half of the seventeenth century. With few exceptions, the historiography remains barren of any discussion of revolts under Louis XIV.[9] More significantly, each of the works mentioned above is concerned almost exclusively with the origins and social dynamics of popular resistance to royal initiatives. None of these works undertakes a systematic and comprehensive analysis of what must certainly be considered one of the most important stages in any popular revolt: the response of royal authorities.

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[5] The best summary of the debate between Porchnev and his primary opponent, French historian Roland Mousnier, remains J.H.M. Salmon, "Venality of Office and Popular Sedition in Seventeenth Century France: A Review of the Controversy," *Past and Present*, 37 (July, 1967), 21–43. Also of interest is the review written by Daniel Ligou in the *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale*, 62 (1964) and Robert Mandrou's review of the German translation of Porchnev's work in *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*, 14, no. 4 (October–December, 1959). The interested reader should also look at Porchnev's introduction to the 1963 French translation of his work, to Mousnier's introduction to his *Lettres et mémoires adressés au Chancelier Séguier (1633–1649)*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1964), and to Mousnier's *La vénalité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris, 1945). Also important are Mousnier, *Les Institutions de la France sous la monarchie d'ancien régime*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1975 and 1980) and Mousnier, *Fureurs paysannes: Les paysans dans les révoltes du XVIIe siècle (France, Russie, Chine)* (Paris, 1967) available in translation as *Peasant Uprisings in Seventeenth Century France, Russia and China*, trans. Brian Pearce (New York, 1970).

[6] *La Révolte des Nu-Pieds et les révoltes normandes de 1639* (Paris, 1970).

[7] *Histoire des Croquants: étude des soulèvements populaires au XVIIe siècle dans la sud-ouest de la France*, 2 vols. (Geneva, 1974).

[8] *Les mouvements insurrectionnels en Provence entre 1596 et 1715* (Paris, 1975).

[9] Leon Bernard, "French Society and Popular Uprisings under Louis XIV," *French Historical Studies*, vol. III, no. 4 (Fall, 1964), 454–474.

In the thirty years since the beginning of the Mousnier-Porchnev controversy, little has been produced that corrects these two glaring omissions in the historiography of seventeenth-century popular revolts. With the exception of the revolt of the Camisards in Languedoc, popular uprisings during the personal rule of Louis XIV remain little studied.[10] The discussions included in most histories of the reign can be counted in paragraphs rather than pages and tend to have the same lineage, use the same basic sources, and demonstrate little original research.[11] Since popular revolts under Louis XIV have failed to generate much interest among the scholarly community, it is not surprising that the royal response to the phenomenon has suffered from the same neglect.

The present work addresses these historiographical deficiencies by providing a detailed examination of the royal response to popular revolt, rebellion, and resistance under Louis XIV. Specifically, it examines the complexities authorities grappled with in deciding to use coercive force, complexities that remain unappreciated in overly simplistic portrayals of Louis XIV as a proud, absolutist, and brutal monarch unwilling to tolerate any opposition. Secondly, it will examine Louis XIV's reliance on his standing army to maintain order within the kingdom, questioning some common assumptions about the efficacy of this "giant of the grand siècle" as an instrument of domestic coercion, and highlighting other elements in the Crown's repertoire of coercive responses. Finally, it will explore the significant difficulties encountered by intendants, governors and other local authorities as they tried to implement the Crown's coercive policies.

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[10] Several important works extend the historiography of popular revolts through the minority of Louis XIV although they are also more concerned with the character and dynamic of the revolts rather than with the manner of their repression. See William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (New York, 1997) and Sharon Kettering, *Judicial Politics* and *Urban Revolt in Seventeenth-Century France: The Parlement of Aix, 1629–1659* (Princeton, 1978).

[11] Some examples are Ernest Lavisse, *Louis XIV: Histoire d'un grand règne, 1643–1715* (Paris, 1989 [1908]); François Bluche, *Louis XIV*, trans. Mark Greengrass (Oxford, 1990) or John Wolf, *Louis XIV* (New York, 1968). The works of some recent historians display an increased attention to the subject. See, for example, James B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, 1995); Roger Mettam, *Government and Society in Louis XIV's France* (London, 1977); Roger Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford, 1988); John Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV* (New York, 1999); John Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle* (Cambridge, 1997).

This work was not undertaken in the hope of joining the lists of any one particular historiographical tourney. The study of the coercive capabilities of the early modern French state resides in a field largely untrodden and certainly unbloodied by the lances of serious historiographical disputation. With that said, however, this subject does have some interesting implications for a number of more familiar debates, including the nature of French absolutism and the role of armed coercion in the process of seventeenth century state formation. These implications are discussed more fully in the concluding chapter but some introductory remarks are provided below.

Over the past several decades, the study of French absolutism has undergone a revolution of sorts.[12] The hoary tradition that viewed the Bourbon monarchs, and specifically Louis XIV, presiding with an iron hand over the centralization of the French state and the humbling of provincial institutions has been replaced by a revisionist theory focusing on the limits of French monarchical authority, one that emphasizes the Crown's posture of compromise, cooperation, and conciliation towards the elites of French society and the major provincial institutions such as the Estates and the Parlements. According to this revisionist theory, Louis XIV ruled most effectively by striking a bargain with provincial elites, promoting their social and economic interests while at the same time co-opting them into his system of government and persuading them to defend the interests of the French Crown.[13] Following the well-worn path of previous historiographical revolutions in the field of French history, however, this revisionist theory has since lost much of its Jacobin mystique and is currently enjoying a more mature and bourgeois existence as the new orthodoxy accepted and propounded by most historians of early modern France.[14]

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[12] Comprehensive discussions of the "absolutism debate" are available from a variety of other sources and its details will not be reproduced here. See, for example, William Beik, "The Absolutism of Louis XIV as Social Collaboration", *Past & Present*, 188 (August 2005) and the earlier discussion found in Beik's important work *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge, 1985), 3–33; Guy Rowlands, *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV* (Cambridge, 2002), 1–23; Richard Bonney, "Absolutism: What's in a Name?" *French History*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1987), 93–117; Mark Potter, *Corps and Clienteles: Public Finance and Political Change in France, 1688–1715* (Aldershot, 2003), 1–24.

[13] Albert N. Hamscher and William Beik were the first scholars to propound this view. See Hamscher, *The Parlement of Paris after the Fronde, 1653–1673* (Pittsburgh, 1976), and Beik's *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France.*

[14] Some examples include the work of James B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern*

There are some small and recent signs, however, that a historiographical counterrevolution looms on the horizon. In his recent work on Louis XIV and the Parlements, for example, John Hurt has argued that Louis XIV succeeded in depriving the provincial Parlements of their political powers and, not incidentally, in removing large sums of money from the pockets of the *parlementaires*.[15] Hurt argues that at least with respect to the Parlements the model of absolutism emphasizing the cooperative relationship of the Crown with provincial elites must be reconsidered. More recently, Guy Rowlands seeks to recast the very terms of the debate on French absolutism by suggesting it is fundamentally wrongheaded to center the argument around the success or failure of state centralization *vis à vis* the provincial elites and provincial privileges. According to Rowlands, "centralization" was an alien concept to Louis XIV. The fundamental dynamic driving the development of the French state was not centralization or state formation, but dynasticism.[16]

It is curious to note, however, that as these and other scholars argue for or against the existence of a collaborative relationship between local elites and the Crown and the implications for our understanding of French absolutism, none has examined in a serious and sustained manner the degree to which provincial elites cooperated in the armed suppression of popular revolts. Nor have they explored the extent to which the Crown used the opportunity provided by popular revolts to deprive provincial and municipal institutions of their traditional privileges. Both subjects would seem to place the question of popular revolts and their repression squarely at the center of debates about French absolutism.

A related and equally curious omission in the historiography of French absolutism is the lack of any discussion on the role of armed coercion in the process of state formation. Louis XIV, in his *Mémoires*

France (Cambridge, 1995), *Classes, Estates, and Order in Early Modern* Brittany (Cambridge, 1994), and *Fiscal Limits of Absolutism: Direct Taxation in Early Modern France* (Berkeley, 1988); Roger Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford, 1988); Nicholas Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism: Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy* (London, 1992); Richard Bonney, *The Limits of Absolutism in* Ancien Régime *France* (Aldershot, 1995); Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1986).

[15] John J. Hurt, *Louis XIV and the Parlements: The Assertion of Royal Authority* (Manchester, 2002).

[16] Guy Rowlands, *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV: Royal Service and Private Interest, 1661–1701* (Cambridge, 2002).

pour l'instruction du Dauphin, made it clear that he saw an important role for his army in the maintenance of public order. In describing the construction of citadels at Bordeaux and Montpellier in 1661, the king wrote,

> [I did this] not because I had anything to fear from these two towns at the time [but] for [their] future security and to serve as an example to all of the others. There was no unrest in the kingdom, but [anything that approached disobedience], as happened on some occasions at Montauban, Dieppe, in Provence [and] La Rochelle, was repressed and punished openly … [T]he peace and the troops that I had resolved to support in good numbers gave me sufficient means.[17]

Some early theorists of absolutism also supported the idea of maintaining a standing army and employing it to ensure the domestic tranquility of the kingdom. Jean Domat, for example, argued that a sovereign had two responsibilities: to protect the kingdom against external enemies and to repress violence and injustice inside the kingdom. To fulfill this latter responsibility the sovereign had the right to deploy force against his own subjects. "The use of force within the state includes all that is required to protect the sovereign from rebellions that would be frequent if authority and force were not united." "Since the use of force and the occasions that require it are never-ending," added Domat, "the government of the sovereign must maintain the force needed [to ensure] the rule of justice."[18]

More recently, historians and political scientists have examined important questions relating to the capacity of states to impose their will upon unruly subjects. However, the existing body of work produced by both disciplines is lacking in several respects. Political scientists, in their attempt to fashion theories that are applicable across historical time and space, tend to approach the subject of coercion and state formation from overly Olympian perspectives.[19] In doing so, however,

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[17] *Mémoires pour l'instruction du Dauphin*, ed. P. Goubert (Paris, 1992), 69.

[18] Cited in William F. Church, *The Impact of Absolutism in France Richelieu, Mazarin and Louis XIV* (New York, 1969).

[19] Some examples include Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1990* (1990); Charles Tilly, *The Contentious French* (Cambridge, 1986); Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975); and Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, 1968). For a diagnosis of the theoretical failings of political science-derived theories of coercion, including those suggested in some of Tilly's earlier work, see David Snyder, "Theoretical and Methodological Problems in the Analysis of Governmental Coercion and Collective Violence", *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Fall, 1976), 277–293. When a state

they are tempted into making broad generalizations that ignore important historical details and significant problems of historical context. The work of historians on the role of armed coercion in the process of state formation is also unsatisfying. Although several works discuss the relationship between the fiscal and administrative demands of war and the growth of military organizations as a driving force in the process of centralization and state formation,[20] there exists no systematic investigation of how this enlarged military establishment was actually *used* within the frontiers of an absolutist state. As a result, scholars often simply assume that large armies were used as instruments of domestic coercion and make overly bold claims as to their effectiveness.

In *The Pursuit of Power*, for example, William McNeill asserts that the "standing army was initially designed to assure [Louis XIV's] superiority over any and every challenge to his authority within France, and only secondarily intended for foreign adventure."[21] Yves-Marie Bercé, the renowned historian of seventeenth-century popular revolts in France, suggested that the reign of Louis XIV saw "government troops poured into every province in France" and that consequently it was a reign largely "untroubled by civil unrest."[22] "The authorities," writes Bercé, "had equipped themselves with the weapons of absolute power [and the king] maintained a standing army large enough to allow him to spread his troops throughout every province in the land." As a result, the government was able "to break up any rebel gathering by force of arms as soon as it took shape.[23] Similarly, Charles Tilly has argued that with respect to the issue of state formation and the fundamental question of tax collection, standing armies "provided the largest single incentive to [resource] extraction and the largest single means of state

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resorts to armed coercion it is often interpreted as an indication that the state is fragmenting and not centralizing. See, for example Timothy Bushnell (ed.), *State Organized Terror: The Case of Violent Internal Repression* (Boulder, 1991). An interesting corrective to this view is provided in Youssef Cohen, Brian R. Brown, A.F.K. Organski, "The Paradoxical Nature of State Making: The Violent Creation of Order", *American Political Science Review*, vol. 75, no. 4 (December 1981).

[20] Some examples are Bruce D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State: The Military Foundations of Modern Politics* (New York, 1994); Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, 1992).

[21] William McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power* (Chicago, 1982), 125.

[22] Bercé, *History of Peasant Revolts* (trans. Whitmore), 314–315.

[23] Ibid., 315.

coercion over the long run of European state-making."[24] Despite such bold assertions, however, the army's role as an instrument of domestic coercion under Louis XIV has never been the subject of a systematic and comprehensive investigation. The present work attempts to remedy this oversight by reconstructing the specific details surrounding the royal response to episodes of resistance and rebellion in Louis XIV's France. In so doing, this work will demonstrate that every one of the above claims concerning the efficacy of the army as an instrument of domestic coercion is exaggerated, sometimes greatly so.

Chapter 1 examines the role of coercive force in the process of tax collection under Louis XIV. It describes the contrast between the *voie ordinaire* method of fiscal coercion (a method characterized by livestock seizures, physical imprisonment of debtors, and other punishments) and the *voie militaire* (a method that involved the establishment of "garrisons" in the households of those who refused to pay). This chapter discusses the intense debate about which method was more humane and cost-

[24] Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," in Tilly (ed.) *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975), 73. Some scholars have ventured observations about the difficulties of using the army as an instrument of domestic coercion. Brian Downing, for example, has argued that involving soldiers in "internal" operations was unlikely during war and dangerous during peacetime, as it could leave France in a vulnerable position (*The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 133). Georges Carrot, in his excellent work on a later period, has suggested that the army's "concentration in garrisons, the slowness of its movements, the dangers of dividing up in small detachments, [and] the lack of adaptation to policing operations" made it ill-suited for the work of suppression (*Le Maintien de l'ordre en France depuis la fin de l'ancien régime jusqu'a 1968*, I, xix). Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie once described the repressive measures available to the French Crown as "non-existent, inefficient, or unthinkable" ("Révolte et contestations rurales en France de 1675 à 1788," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, vol. 29, January–February 1974). The inadequacy of the army as an instrument of repression is also suggested by William Beik (see *Absolutism and Society*, 179–197). In his recent work on the French army, Guy Rowlands, although devoting a full third of the book to the development and characteristics of the standing army, never discusses its role as a coercive instrument. See Rowlands, *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV: Royal Service and Private Interest, 1661–1701* (Cambridge, 2002). There are only two correctives to this persistent neglect of the subject. The first is provided in an article by Howard Brown ("Domestic State Violence: Repression from the Croquants to the Commune," *The Historical Journal*, 43, 3 (1999), 597–622). Unfortunately, the extensive chronological span under investigation and Brown's reliance on secondary sources limits its originality. The four paragraphs he devotes to the reign of Louis XIV shed little new light on the subject. The second corrective is provided by John Lynn who, in the Epilogue to his monumental work on the French army of the seventeenth century, has made some provocative observations about armed coercion and state formation in the France of Louis XIV. See John Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle*: *The French Army, 1610–1815* (New York, 1997).

effective. The chapter also suggests that the use of military-style terminology to describe such coercive "garrisons" has led to a misunderstanding of the role played by the professional military in this process. Finally, the chapter examines the use of various paramilitary coercive institutions employed for the collection of taxes, including the *fusiliers du taille* and the *brigades du sel*.

Chapter 2 provides a broad overview of instances of revolt and rebellion during the first decades of Louis XIV's personal reign, including the Boulonnais Revolt (1662), the Audijos Revolt (1664–1665) and the Roure Revolt in the Vivarais (1670). This chapter demonstrates that from the beginning of his reign Louis XIV confronted serious instances of resistance and rebellion and introduces, in abbreviated form, some of the themes discussed in later chapters.

Chapter 3 examines the response of royal authorities to the so-called Papier Timbré and Bonnets Rouge revolt in Brittany (1675) and a sympathetic revolt of that same year in Bordeaux. These disturbances were the last in a long series of tax revolts that plagued France throughout much of the seventeenth-century and their repression marks a significant milestone in the long march of royal consolidation and centralization of authority. Louis XIV's response to this revolt is usually portrayed as that of an absolutist monarch who used the impressive professional military force at his disposal to brutally crush the rebellion and restore his wounded *gloire*. This chapter demonstrates that, in fact, Louis XIV reacted in a rather restrained manner and the coercive capabilities of the army were limited by several practical and logistical problems. Urban militias played a key role in the drama, in some cases challenging the king's authority and in others contributing to the restoration of order. This chapter also demonstrates that Louis XIV took advantage of the opportunity provided by the revolt to implicate certain obstructive provincial institutions in the troubles, to humble them with fines and sentences of exile, and thereby consolidate royal power in one of the more challenging regions of his kingdom.

Chapter 4 examines the use of coercive force to execute, enforce, and police the religious policies of Louis XIV. This is done through the examination of several important coercive events both before and after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The primary focus is on the *dragonnades*, perhaps the most famous yet surprisingly little-studied, acts of religious coercion in seventeenth century France. This chapter outlines the continuing debates among royal officials about the efficacy of such coercive actions and traces the ebb and flow of royal support

for such a policy. The chapter also examines the growth of Protestant resistance in southern France, the problematic nature of the subsequent military occupation of the remaining bastions of Protestantism in southern France, and the counterinsurgency operations undertaken against armed Protestant groups. The chapter finishes by examining the creation and use of various special militias intended to maintain order and to surveil suspect individuals and communities.

Chapter 5 examines the military response to the revolt of the Camisards in Languedoc, the greatest domestic challenge of Louis XIV's reign and the bloodiest civil conflict France would experience until the Revolution. The conflict is unique in that the rebel Camisards, operating in small, well-organized units, taking advantage of the mountainous and forested terrain of the Cévennes in Languedoc, and enjoying the support of a majority of the rural population, engaged in a form of resistance markedly different from that which characterized previous rebellions. This chapter highlights the sequence of strategies adopted and discarded by the royal authorities in their attempts to suppress the revolt. This chapter also emphasizes the degree to which authorities relied upon a diverse array of coercive institutions, including royal troops, local militias, and foreign fighters, in their efforts to stamp out the flames of a dangerous rebellion that threatened a strategically vital province in the midst of a desperate international war.

CHAPTER ONE

'HUISSIER, GARNISAIRE ET SOLDAT': COERCION AND TAX COLLECTION UNDER LOUIS XIV

Introduction

There are a number of excellent works discussing the economic and institutional details of seventeenth-century French financial administration, as well as a quantity of works examining the many instances of large-scale popular resistance to taxation. Courtesy of these works, we now know quite a bit about the bewildering variety of direct and indirect taxes, the attempts at economic reforms, the important role of financiers and tax farmers, and the quantitative aspects of revenue flowing into and out of the royal coffers.[1] Similarly, we also know quite a bit about the fiscal origins of the many popular revolts of the period, the social composition and agendas of various groups engaged in tax resistance and rebellion, and the tensions resulting from the conflict of particularist traditions with attempts at administrative and fiscal centralization.[2] However, in both the works examining the French financial administration of the seventeenth century and those which examine popular rebellions of the period, a fundamental question remains unanswered: How did the French Crown overcome the endemic resistance to taxation that characterized the period? In the simplest of terms, what

[1] See Julian Dent, *Crisis in Finance: Crown Financiers and Society in Seventeenth-Century France* (Newton Abbot, 1973); James Collins, *The Fiscal Limits of Absolutism: Direct Taxation in Early Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 1988); Francoise Bayard, *Le monde des financiers au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1988); Daniel Dessert, *Argent, pouvoir et société au Grand Siècle* (Paris, 1984); and more recently, Mark Potter, *Corps and Clientele: Public Finance and Political Change in France, 1688–1715* (Ashgate, 2003). Richard Bonney has also made a number of important contributions to the history of French finance of the seventeenth century, including *The King's Debts: Finance and Politics in France, 1589–1661* (Oxford, 1981); "France, 1994–1815", in Bonney (ed.), *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe, c. 1200–1815* (Oxford, 1999), and Richard Bonney and Margaret Bonney, *Jean-Roland Malet: premier historien des finances de la monarchie française* (Paris, 1993).

[2] The best examples are the works of Roland Mousnier, Boris Porchnev and Yves-Marie Bercé.

tools and procedures did the Crown have at its disposal to force reluctant individuals to pay their taxes and to bring troublesome towns and provinces to heel?

The common assumption is that the Crown relied heavily upon the coercive capabilities of a large and growing army for this task. When faced with an episode of tax resistance or rebellion, the government would simply dispatch large contingents of professional soldiers to defeat the "rebels" in battle, to restore order to the troubled regions, to ensure the execution of justice, and, most importantly, to reestablish the flow of revenue to the royal coffers. It is argued elsewhere in this work that it is too simplistic to portray the Crown as having such an instinctive recourse to crude military force when faced with large-scale tax resistance. It is similarly misguided to assume that Louis XIV relied on his military forces to handle instances of individual or small-scale tax evasion and resistance. It can be argued that resistance of this type, systemic and enduring, represented a greater threat to royal authority than the much more dramatic yet typically short-lived instances of overt rebellion. In a study of domestic institutions of coercion, therefore, an examination of the manner in which the Crown met this daily and systemic challenge is warranted.

The government employed a variety of means to force delinquent individuals to pay their allotted taxes. These measures differed according to regional traditions and the personal inclinations of the royal agents charged with overseeing the collection. In general, however, the coercive measures can be categorized as follows: 1) the seizure of livestock and property belonging to the individual debtor; 2) the physical imprisonment of the individual debtor; 3) the establishment of a *contrainte solidaire* in which the tax burdens allotted to a certain parish were borne entirely by five or six of its wealthiest members, and 4) the sending of *garnisaires*, or garrisons, into debtors' households with orders to remain there until the taxes were paid.

The collection procedures were initiated by the *receveur des tailles* and typically targeted the local *collecteurs*. These *collecteurs*, like the *receveurs*, were personally responsible for delivering the tax revenues to their superiors at the allotted times.[3] If they failed to do so, they were

[3] Tax collection and its transfer to the royal treasury was assured by the *collecteurs* in the towns and parishes, the *receveurs particuliers* at the seat of the *élection* and the *receveurs généraux* at the seat of the *généralité*. Originally, the *taille* was paid in four installments (1 December, 1 February, 1 August, and the last day of September) thus leaving the

personally subject to seizures, imprisonment, and garrisons at the order of the *receveur*. In certain circumstances, for example if the *collecteur* was deemed to be insolvent, these punishments could be redirected onto individual taxpayers within the same parish.

The officials responsible for carrying out these seizures, imprisonments, and garrisons were broadly known as *porteurs de contraintes*. This was a nebulous term used for various agents of the *receveurs*. At different times and in different regions the title of *porteurs de contraintes* could be applied to *huissiers*, *sergents*, *brigadiers, archers*, and others. The officials most frequently charged with carrying out acts of fiscal coercion were the *huissiers*. Adding to the confusion, the *huissiers* did not always bear the title of *porteur de contraintes* when carrying out their duties. Furthermore, in some regions (such as Bordeaux) a formal distinction appears to have developed between the *huissiers* and the *porteurs de contraintes*. The *huissiers* seemed to be associated primarily with the *voie ordinaire* of fiscal coercion that relied upon livestock seizures and the physical imprisonment of debtors while the *porteurs de contraintes* were associated with the *voie militaire*, or the lodging of *garnisaires*, on delinquent households.[4] As with everything else in the French fiscal administration of the seventeenth century, this clear distinction did not apply throughout the kingdom and the exact titles and responsibilities of the agents of fiscal coercion varied from region to region.

Like the seizures and imprisonments, the establishment of *garnisaires* also usually targeted delinquent *collecteurs*. When a *collecteur's* household received a *garnisaire*, the daily expense of supporting the *garnisaire* was added to the total tax debt owed. These costs varied, but generally involved the payment of daily wages in addition to the provision of room and board. On occasion, the room and board could be converted to a cash sum that allowed the *garnisaire* to take up lodging in the local tavern until the delinquent taxes were paid. This practice permitted the debtor to avoid some of the cruder discomforts associated with having a *garnisaire* physically present in his home. As with the other punish-

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spring free for people to work their fields. This system was changed in January 1634, with payments required on 1 December, 1 February, the last day of April, and 1 October. With the new schedule, no payment was required in August when the harvests had not yet been sold. See Jean Villain, *Le recouvrement des impôts directs sous l'ancien régime*, (Paris, 1952), 22.

[4] The confusion surrounding the title and duties of *porteur de contraintes* and *huissiers* was not resolved until the mid-nineteenth century. See Anselme Batbie, *Traité théorique et pratique de droit public et administratif*, 7 vols (Paris, 1862), v. 6, 206.

ments, an indebted *collecteur* could in certain circumstances deflect the punishment by sending the *garnisaire* into the homes of the delinquent taxpayers of his parish.

This chapter will examine these two approaches to collecting taxes: coercion by *huissier* and coercion by *garnisaire*. This chapter will also attempt to clarify some problematic issues relating to the use of the term *garnisaire* and, in so doing, highlight some erroneous assumptions that have been made concerning the role of the standing army in this particular aspect of "resource extraction."[5]

Finally, it must be remembered that direct taxes such as the *taille* were not the only source of tax revenue available to the French government. There were a host of indirect taxes, the most important of these being the *gabelle*, or salt tax. As with the *taille*, there were a variety of coercive institutions involved with the enforcement and collection of this unpopular tax. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of *gabelle*-related coercive institutions, with a particular focus on their role both in the repression and in the practice of *faux-saunage*, or salt smuggling.

[5] Villain includes some general information on tax collection at the local level. A valuable discussion of the institution of *huissiers* and *sergents* and their responsibilities can be found in Pierre Vieuille, *Nouveau traité des élections contenant l'origine de la taille, aides, gabelle octrois, et autres impositions, leurs différences … l'institution et création des officiers des élections pour le département desdites impositions dans les paroisses … les rangs … desdits officiers, les privilèges des ecclésiastiques, de la noblesse … des exemptions de taille et autres privilèges*… (Paris, 1739). Some interesting details can also be found in BNMF 11096. The best detailed treatment of the exorbitant expenses claimed by those involved in the collection of the *taille* can be found in Edmund Esmonin, *La taille en Normandie au temps de Colbert, 1661–1683* (Paris, 1913). Most of the important correspondence concerning the relative effectiveness of the various methods of tax collection can be found scattered among the pages of Pierre Clément (ed.), *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert* (7 vols, Paris, 1861–1873), A.M. de Boislisle, *Correspondance des contrôleurs-généraux des finances avec les intendants des provinces, 1683–1715* (3 vols, Paris, 1874–1879), and G.B. Depping, *Correspondance administrative sous le règne de Louis XIV entre le cabinet du roi, les secrétaires d'état, le chancelier de France, et les intendants et gouverneurs des provinces, les présidents, procureurs et avocats généraux des parlements, et autres cours de justice, le gouverneur de la Bastille, les évêques, les corps municipaux, etc., etc.* (4 vols, Paris, 1850–1855).

The 'Voie Ordinaire': Collecteurs, Huissiers, and Sergents

Of the myriad offices comprising the financial hierarchy of early modern France, perhaps none was less desired than that of *collecteur*. The position was dreaded not only because of the local resentment and personal dangers resulting from attempts to extract money from one's neighbors, but also because of the very real risk of financial ruin incurred by such a position. If the *collecteur* did not provide the tax revenue to his superior, the *receveur*, by the traditional deadline, he could be personally targeted for punishment. These punishments were typically carried out by the *huissiers* and *sergents*[6] and usually involved the seizures of livestock, furniture and other personal possessions.[7] These possessions were held for one week. If in that time the *collecteur* had not come up with the money, the seized items were sold at auction and the proceeds used to pay off the *collecteur*'s debt.[8] The *collecteur* could also be physically imprisoned, in which case he was required to pay not only the owed taxes, but also all of the various daily costs and fees associated with his own imprisonment. These additional expenses represented a heavy charge to an imprisoned *collecteur*. As one intendant pointed out, an imprisonment that was worth 30 *sols* to the *huissier* who carried it out, could easily cost the already-indebted *collecteur* an additional 100 livres in expenses.[9]

In addition to the extra costs associated with imprisonment, there were also the indirect costs resulting from the loss of productivity during the period of imprisonment. Jean-Baptiste Colbert, *contrôleur généneral* of finances, was particularly sensitive to this problem. Writing in 1670, he asserted there was "nothing so precious as a man's work" and there was nothing "so prejudicial to the state than the imprisonment of the king's subjects."[10] "The imprisonment of a man," he wrote again in 1680, "takes away his ability to work and to feed his family, who then fall inevitably into beggary."[11] The physical imprisonment of a debtor could

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[6] The offices of *huissier* and *sergent* were roughly identical in their responsibilities. See, Marcel Marion, *Dictionnaire des institutions de la France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1923), 279.

[7] In Normandy, for example, one cow was seized for each 20–25 livres of back taxes. See Esmonin, 476.

[8] BN MF 11096, 18.

[9] Boislisle, I, 606.

[10] Colbert, *Lettres*, II, 71, cited in Esmonin, 491.

[11] Ibid., 137, cited in Esmonin, 491, note #1.

be particularly harsh if it occurred at harvest time. One intendant, lamenting that the *receveurs particuliers* had issued orders to imprison a great number of *collecteurs* during the harvest, complained that the imprisonment of these able-bodied men represented "a considerable loss for the countryside" and pointed out that without the harvest there could be no collection of taxes.[12]

Widespread corruption within the ranks of the fiscal agents compounded the hardships visited upon the populace. Since the wages and expenses paid to *huissiers* and *sergents* were directly tied to the number of *exploits*, or activity reports, these officials submitted to the *receveur*,[13] it was clearly in their interest to increase this number whenever possible. Many *huissiers* did not keep a formal log of their activities and instead inscribed their reports on loose sheets of paper. This allowed them to insert new sheets and modify the details of their activities at will, prior to submitting them for verification and thus, according to one disgruntled official, "determine their expenses according to their fantasy."[14] In one example, *huissiers* charged with collecting the *taille* in the sixty parishes of the *éléction* of Saint-Maxent recorded the astonishing total of 302 *exploits* one year (1673) and 360 *exploits* in another year (1677).[15]

In addition to their wages, the *huissiers* could also claim reimbursement for expenses associated with the preparing paperwork, guarding and feeding seized livestock, and, if necessary, managing the sale of seized goods. The expenses associated with such activities could be quite high, and once again, the *huissiers* and *sergents* routinely falsified their records. One intendant noted that the sale of 80 livres of confiscated goods resulted in 100 livres of claimed expenses by the *huissiers*![16] Still another intendant pointed out that in following such practices a single *huissier* responsible for thirty or forty parishes could in one year receive as much as 1,000 livres.[17]

Huissiers found still other creative ways to increase their claimed expenses. *Huissiers* sent to collect payment from one *collecteur*, for exam-

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[12] Boislisle, II, 1269.

[13] One estimate places the *huissier*'s fee at 21 *sous* per *exécution*. See C. Ambrosi, "Aperçus sur la répartition et la perception de la taille au XVIIIe siècle", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, VIII (1961), 296.

[14] BN MF 11096, 16.

[15] AD Deux-Sèvres, C 113, cited in Bercé, I, 97.

[16] Esmonin, 424.

[17] AN G^7 449, Marillac to Colbert (13 May 1681) in Bercé, I, 97.

ple, found and arrested the individual but, upon receipt of a small payment, released him immediately. This produced no real effect in terms of producing the owed taxes, but allowed the *huissier* to claim the expenses associated with preparing a report. The *huissier* in question then proceeded to repeat the process with other indebted *collecteurs*.[18]

In many regions, the appearance of *huissiers* and *sergents* carrying out actions against the local *collecteur* was a common, even routine occurrence. The intendant of Rouen found himself forced to forbid *huissiers* from visiting the *élections* more than once a month.[19] This is significant because it speaks not only to the desire of *huissiers* to inflate their wages, but also to a generalized and traditional spirit of resistance to tax collection in the countryside, a resistance that was clearly expected, if not accepted, by royal officials.

The actions of such fiscal agents could be quite dramatic and extreme. As the intendant Le Blanc wrote, after visiting a parish where a *huissier* was executing a *contrainte solidaire*: "I have found more disorder in this town than if two battalions had passed through." For a debt of only 14 livres, the *huissier* had seized several animals, taken various possessions, mistreated several individuals, and collected 40 livres.[20]

The situation was further aggravated by the fact that the officials generally responsible for ordering the *huissiers* to make a seizure or arrest, the *receveurs particuliers*, were themselves often involved in questionable practices. The *curé* of Saintonge, for example, complained that the *receveur* conspired with the *porteurs de contraintes* to increase the number of their activities and to share in a portion of their claimed expenses.[21] Some *receveurs* also demonstrated a tendency to appoint relatives or domestics to the position of *huissier*, a practice with obvious and potentially lucrative benefits for the *receveur*.[22]

Because of this panoply of corrupt practices, the expenses associated with this manner of forced collection, and consequently the amount of

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[18] Boislisle, I, 184.

[19] AD Seine-Inferieure C 2 215, in Esmonin, 475, note #2.

[20] AN G^7 491, in Esmonin, 482.

[21] Boislisle, II, 1646.

[22] The practice of using relatives or domestic servants to execute *contraintes* is identified as an abuse in need of correction in a "Memoire concernant l'imposition et levée des tailles ordonnées par S[a] M[ajesté] être faites sur les 18 généralités des pays d'éléctions de son royaume", in BN MF 11096, 17. This document is undated but information within the document suggests it dates to 1687. An *arrêt* of 4 July 1664 forbade *receveurs* from using their own domestic servants to execute *contraintes*. See *Memorial Alphabetique*, 647.

revenue that never made it to the king's coffers, were considerable. In one *éléction* of the *généralité* of Rouen, for example, it cost 3,202 livres to collect 127,139 livres of the tax due for the year 1678, or 25.18 livres of expenses for every 1,000 livres collected.[23] It should be noted that these sums represent only what was officially reported by the *receveurs* and probably underestimate the actual expenses involved.[24]

As late as 1706 one finds Charles de Luynes, duke de Chevreuse and governor of Guyenne writing to Michel Chamillart, secretary of state for war, complaining of the excessive costs associated with tax collection undertaken by *huissiers*, the corruption of the *receveurs*, and the impact on the king's revenues. To support his assertions he attached two letters, apparently written by men familiar with the province but who wished to remain anonymous. The first letter pointed out that the level of taxation was so high that it was impossible for people to pay. But what was even worse, said the anonymous author, were the fiscal agents sent to collect the back taxes. These agents maintained a nearly continuous presence in the parishes and reaped a huge profit from their claimed expenses, a profit often higher than the actual amount of the *taille* owed to the king.[25] The author of the second letter complained that the *receveurs* had increased "by more than a third" the cost of the *contraintes*. "These [costs] absorb nearly everything that should go to the king." The writer warned that if the *receveurs* remained the masters of regulating the costs of the *contraintes* "His Majesty can be assured that in the future, he will receive nothing from the people."[26]

In the body of the letter, Chevreuse highlighted the most nettlesome problem. "There are two kinds of men charged with paying taxes," wrote the governor, "those who cannot pay, and those who do not want to pay." The second man can be coerced. But as for the first, "not only does one ruin them when one forces them to pay immediately by the sale of what little possessions remain to them, but one puts them out of a state to cultivate their land in the future" and thus "ruins the kingdom."[27] This observation nicely captures the fundamental problem

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[23] Esmonin, 477. Esmonin emphasizes the high costs of this collection by comparing it with the figures of his own time (1913): 2 livres of expenses for every 1,000 livres collected. Esmonin, 478.

[24] Colbert was quite cognizant of this. See his circular of 19 September 1681 in Colbert, *Lettres*, VII, 269 cited in Esmonin, 479.

[25] Boislisle, II, 1120.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

that plagued the fiscal administration under Louis XIV with its imprecise instruments of coercion: How could one deploy coercive measures in such a way as to compel those who are capable of paying without ruining those who cannot?

In an attempt to distinguish between those who cannot pay and those who do not want to pay, the government authorized *receveurs* to establish *contraintes solidaires* in a debtor parish. This expedient forced a small number of the parish's wealthiest inhabitants, usually 4 to 6 individuals, to pay the entire sum owed. *Receveurs* could order a *contrainte solidaire* only in three situations: 1) if the inhabitants refused to nominate *collecteurs*, or if the *collecteurs* had not prepared their tax rolls by the allotted time; 2) if the *collecteur* was deemed bankrupt; or 3) in cases of rebellion. The *élus* were the final arbiters of any decision to issue a *contrainte solidaire*. The *receveur* first had to demonstrate that all other means of collection had failed, whereupon the *élus* prepared a list of goods owned by the *collecteur* to verify that he was indeed bankrupt and that there were no remaining possessions liable to seizure. The *receveur* then prepared a list with the names of twelve wealthy notables in the parish. The *élus* selected six from this list and proceeded to declare a *contrainte solidaire* against them. As might be expected, the *contrainte solidaire* was particularly detested because it forced wealthy individuals to pay sums owed by others in the parish, in addition to their own individual portion of the tax.

Louis XIII had first tried to regulate some of the corrupt practices of officials charged with executing *contraintes* by placing strict limits on who would be allowed to undertake the collection. In 1637, he ordered that henceforth all collections would be undertaken by three *huissiers* and *sergents* who would be commissioned by the intendants in the *généralités*, thus removing some of the responsibility away from the *receveurs*.[28] However, as with so many royal orders of the period, this did not appear to have a significant effect on local practices. The abuses and, more importantly, the diversions of royal revenue continued throughout his reign and that of his son.

Under Louis XIV, there were also several attempts to mitigate the abuses and hardships visited upon the general population, including a ruling of 4 July 1664 declaring that one cannot seize, either from the *collecteur* from the taxpayers, "beds, clothing, bread, horses and cattle

[28] This decree was repeated in 1643. *Memorial Alphabetique*, 182. See also AD Gard C 811. *Ordinance* of Baltazar, *maitre des requêtes*, 4 December 1644.

serving for labor [or] the tools with which the artisans and workers earn their living."[29] Similarly, a decree of 22 February 1664 ordered all fiscal agents to "observe the ordinances, rulings, and edicts", forbidding them, "on pain of death, to mistreat … or to use violence … against the *collecteurs* and other taxpayers." They were to demand nothing from the *collecteurs* or the taxpayers. The agents' salaries would be paid directly by the *receveur* from a tax that would be subsequently levied by the *élus*.[30] Another decree, delivered in 1661, forbade the execution of *contraintes* on festival days and Sundays. These were seen as the most convenient times to confront debtors, as all one had to do was wait outside the local church for the delinquent individuals to appear. As a result, people soon became afraid to attend church. The decree lamented the fact that fear of the *huissiers* prevented many individuals from doing their Christian duty and thereby deprived them "of the instruction necessary for their salvation."[31]

It is difficult to determine the extent to which these prohibitions and regulations were enforced. Local traditions, patron-client ties, and geographical distance from Paris combined to limit the effectiveness of such declarations. Nevertheless, punishments, some of them quite severe, were indeed visited upon overzealous or corrupt *receveurs* who incurred expenses that seemed disproportionate or who otherwise mismanaged the king's revenues. Colbert, for example, fired one *receveur* from Caen for having expenses that he thought too high. At the same time, he awarded a thriftier *receveur* from the *éléction* of Vire with a gift of 400 livres.[32] In another example, in June of 1665, a *receveur* for Rouen and Ponthoise, Francois de Lempereur and his son Remy, himself a *receveur de taillon*, were punished for illegal diversions of royal revenue. The father and son were banished from the jurisdictions of the Parlements of Paris and Rouen for a period of nine years. In addition, they were forced to pay restitution of 50,000 livres to the king, an additional 10,000 livres to local charities, and to return all sums they had extorted from the *collecteurs*. A *huissier* implicated in the activity was sentenced to the galleys for a period of nine years.[33] In a somewhat harsher sen-

[29] Similar decrees were passed in 1634, 1643, 1664, and 1665. See *Memorial Alphabetique*, 767. BN MF 11096, 15.

[30] *Arrêts de la chambre de justice 1663–1665*, 22 February 1664. See also *arrêt* of 1 March 1663 and 26 June 1663.

[31] *Arrêts du Conseil d'Etat, 1660–1661*, 10 February 1661.

[32] Colbert, II, 168.

[33] *Arrêts de la chambre de justice 1663–1665*, 18 June 1665.

tence, in February of 1664, fifteen individuals were arrested and two men sentenced to death in the *généralité* of Orléans for irregularities in the collection of the *taille*.[34]

It is clear that considerable efforts were made to regulate the collection of the *taille*, limit the abuses of the *huissiers*, and reduce the hardships experienced by the *collecteurs* and the general population by limiting the use of seizures and personal imprisonment, and by using the *contrainte solidaire* to effect a redistribution of the tax burden. However, these efforts met with only limited success. The continued abuses of the fiscal agents and the counterproductive consequences of the hardships visited upon the populace prompted some officials to argue that it was more cost-effective and more humane to rely on another expedient for the collection of back taxes: the use of the *garnisaire*.

The 'Voie Militaire': Garnisaires, Fusiliers, and Brigades

Before examining the use of *garnisaires* to collect taxes, an important clarification is necessary. Despite the military connotations inherent in the term and the description of the practice as the *voie militaire*, such garrisons were not always composed of individuals drawn from the ranks of the professional army. In fact, such garrisons were quite frequently composed of men without any formal military experience.[35] In some cases, domestic servants and relatives of the *receveurs* were made *garnisaires*. Members of the *maréchaussée* were also called upon to serve as *garnisaires*. In some regions special companies were created, such as the *brigades* of Auvergne and Rouergue, and the *fusiliers* of Limoges, and ordered to assist with tax collection and, if necessary, serve as *garnisaires*. On occasion, even members of the local militia could be called on to serve as *garnisaires*.[36]

The use of military titles and terminology in describing individuals charged with this method of tax collection (e.g. *garnisaire, brigadier*, and *fusilier*) has created some confusion among scholars and has resulted in a tendency to overemphasize the role played by the professional

[34] Ibid., 22 February 1664.
[35] Villain, 92–93.
[36] The intendant Basville, for example, used members of the militia as *garnisaires*. See Boislisle, II, 884.

soldier in this particular form of fiscal coercion.[37] This is not to suggest that soldiers from the ranks of the regular army were never used as *garnisaires*. Their use, however, seems to have been favored in regions close to the frontier where regular army units were typically stationed and where soldiers were readily available for such duties. In addition, companies *en route* to the frontier could be temporarily diverted to assist local authorities with tax collection.

By the mid-seventeenth century, the use of *garnisaires* for tax collection was an entrenched practice, one that dated back at least four hundred years.[38] These early *garnisaires* were called by a variety of names, including the appropriately descriptive labels of *mangeurs* and *gasteurs*. Even in these early years, the use of *garnisaires* was well regulated. Limitations were placed on the maximum duration of a garrison, and it was even suggested that the *garnisaires* be chosen from among persons of quality and taste, so that the debtors could suffer this punishment in good company.[39]

The use of *garnisaires* met with just as much criticism in the 13th century as it would in the 17th century. Opponents argued that the practice often had the reverse of the desired effect, with the ill discipline of the *garnisaires* and associated costs making a debtor's financial situation even more burdensom. As a result, the 13th and 14th centuries witnessed numerous declarations, ordinances, and edicts aimed at suppressing this practice.[40]

The procedures involved in establishing a *garnisaire* varied greatly but usually involved the issuance of a *billet* that named the *garnisaires*, detailed the sums owed, and identified the parishes of the targeted col-

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[37] Marion is simply mistaken when he claims that all *garnisaires* were "militaires ou d'anciens militaires ou invalides." See his *Dictionnaire des institutions de la France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1923), 255. Similarly, Bercé, among others, seems to treat the term *fusilier* or *brigade* as interchangeable with that of soldier. Godard appears to make the same mistake. See Godard, 254.

[38] A brief history of the practice is provided in Denis Lechouarn, *Le Profession d'Huissier* (1999).

[39] Ibid.

[40] The Council of Château-Gontier (1268) and the Council of Tours (1282) forbade the establishment of *mangeurs* on Church officials. In 1285, the *parlement* of Paris suppressed the practice in the *baillages* of Amiens, Senlis, and Vermandois. An *ordinance* of June 1338 abolished their use in Languedoc. Despite these efforts, however, the use of *garnisaires* to collect taxes continued throughout the following centuries and even expanded to reach its most widespread use during the period of the French Revolution and the First Empire. The practice was not definitively abolished until 1877.

lectors.[41] The *garnisaires* were then dispatched to the delinquent parishes to take up residence, usually in the homes of the *collecteurs*. Occasionally, a targeted *collecteur* received authorization to displace the *garnisaires* onto other taxpayers. If this occurred, in a variation on the concept of *contrainte solidaire*, it was generally the wealthiest individuals of the parish, those taxed at a level equal to at least 50 livres on the tax rolls, who were targeted with *garnisaires*. Individuals taxed at a lesser rate could still receive *garnisaires*, although in some cases delinquent and obviously impoverished individuals were allowed to pool their resources to provide support for a single *garnisaire*.[42]

As with the *huissiers* and all other institutions associated with tax collection, the use of *garnisaires* provided many opportunities for corruption. The *garnisaires*, quite naturally, availed themselves of every opportunity to collect their pay while suffering the least inconvenience. One intendant, for example, complained that the *garnisaires* sent to communities by the *receveur des tailles* had adopted the habit of lodging in the local taverns and not in the homes of the delinquent taxpayers. The *garnisaires* collected their salaries while enjoying comforts much greater than those available in the house of a debtor, while the delinquent taxpayers themselves "ordinarily do not know that [the *garnisaires*] were in the community at their expense and suffer no inconvenience during the time that they remain there."[43] In another example, a *huissier* claimed to have established *garnisaires* on thirty or forty households when, in fact, no such *garnisaires* existed. This allowed the *huissier* to submit claims for additional expenses. The daily costs of these fictional *garnisaires* eventually rose to a sum that was five or six times that of the original tax owed.[44]

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[41] A reproduction of one of these *billets* can be found in Godard, 507.

[42] In the correspondence of the time, these garrisons were often referred to as *logements effectifs*, or *logements actuelles*. These terms appear to have been used to distinguish the establishment of physical garrisons from the practice of simply issuing *billets* that announced the *intention* and the *right* to establish such a garrison. The issuance of such a *billet* marked the point at which the standard daily costs of supporting a *garnisaire* began to accrue, regardless of the actual physical presence of a *garnisaire*. This allowed the financial penalty to be imposed without the inconveniences associated with assigning an actual *garnisaire*. Marion assumes that the establishment of these fictional garrisons was the normal procedure, but the repeated references to *logements effectifs* and to the physical presence of *garnisaires* in the correspondence suggests that he is mistaken on this point. Similarly, Bercé seems to suggest that the term *logements effectifs* denoted only the use of professional soldiers as *garnisaires*. See Marion, 255–256. Bercé, 105.

[43] LeBret to the *contrôleur général* (6 December 1684) in Boislisle, I, 81.

[44] Godard, 251.

The intendants were ostensibly responsible for fixing the number of *garnisaires* in a particular *généralité*. This number was reviewed and revised each year.[45] The pay of the *garnisaires* was also supposed to be determined by the intendants. This varied widely but was generally fixed at a maximum of 3 livres per day for the *chef*, and 30 *sous* per day for the men.[46] The salary of the *chef* was to be paid by the *collecteur*, while that of the men was to be paid by the taxpayers.[47]

Despite the intendants' official responsibility for all things associated with the *garnisaires*, the complex financial administration caused confusion and a significant diffusion of authority. This was particularly the case with the system of tax farming in which a degree of coercive authority was farmed out along with the taxes themselves. "One complains often," wrote Chamillart to the intendants in 1705, "of the great expenses made by the *commis des traitants* in the provinces,"

> But above all, one complains of the *garnisaires* they establish on their own authority. It appears to me that it would be useful for the good of the service of the king not to leave the *traitants* with entire liberty to establish these *garnisaires*. To stop this abuse, which could have dangerous consequences, you will please make sure that the *traitants* do not establish any *garnisaires* without your permission.[48]

In several regions, *garnisaires* were often members of special armed companies formed expressly for the purposes of tax collection. Richelieu and Louis XIII first authorized the creation of such armed companies in the turbulent and cash-strapped 1630s. Members of these companies served as protective escorts for fiscal agents as they made their rounds in the parishes, and as *garnisaires* when necessary.[49]

These companies went by a variety of names, with the most common being *fusiliers des tailles*. As with the term *garnisaire*, one should guard against the temptation of equating these provincial *fusiliers* with those from the regular army.[50] Recruited locally, these *fusiliers* were never destined for military service. They were nominally under the control

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[45] Villain, 94.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Boislisle, II, 816.
[49] Bercé, 108.
[50] Bercé is the only scholar to attempt a discussion of the *fusiliers des tailles*. His brief treatment is invaluable although strangely inconsistent, in places clearly delineating how these companies differed from those of the regular army and, in other passages, appearing to equate one with the other. See Bercé, I, 108–112.

of the intendant and operated completely outside the normal military hierarchy.

The first company of *fusiliers des tailles* appears to have been established in Angoumois and placed under the command of a *sieur* de Combisan. Combisan received a commission on 11 May 1636 to raise a mounted force of 100 men, known as "the Combisans".[51] In 1643, the intendant criticized this company for its excesses and it disbanded. Six companies of *fusiliers* soon replaced it. Each company included nine mounted, and thirty-three unmounted men. These six companies remained active until 1648.[52] In Lauson, a company of fifty *fusiliers* was formed in 1644 for use in Guyenne and Perigord.[53] In Limousin, a company of forty *carabins* was formed in May 1640. Two years later, the intendant raised an additional 100 infantry and 2 companies of *chevaux-légers* to assist with tax collection.[54]

The troubled years that followed, filled as they were with fiscal resistance and rebellion, saw both the temporary elimination of the intendants and the temporary disbandment of the *fusiliers des tailles*. However, in 1656, after the anti-fiscal furor had died down, these paramilitary companies were reestablished. In December of that year, a force of thirty *fusiliers* and forty *chevaux-légers* were raised in Guyenne. In January 1659, with these forces occupied in Saintonge and Bordelais, the intendant of Guyenne received instructions to raise a second company of *fusiliers* to be dispersed in brigades throughout the other *élections* of the *généralité*. In Gascony, additional companies were raised in 1658 to assist with tax collection: forty-three *fusiliers* in Comminges and sixty-four *fusiliers* in Gascony.[55]

Similarly, the king ordered that a company of 30 *carabiniers*, commanded by a *maréchal des logis*, be raised in the *élection* of Bordeaux to assist the *sergents des tailles* in their efforts at collection. In 1658, the king "having learned that this company is not sufficient to repress the rebellions which occur daily in the said *éléction* of Bordeaux" and that "the *huissiers* and *brigadiers* are not able to carry out the *contraintes* of the *receveurs du tailles*" decreed the immediate levy of a company of *chevaux-légers* for deployment in the *élections* of Bordeaux, La Lannes, Condom,

[51] Ibid., 109.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., 110.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 111.

and Cognac. It is interesting to note that the cost to support this company, consisting of one captain, one lieutenant, a *maréchal des logis*, four *brigadiers*, and forty *chevaux-légers*, was estimated at 25,000 livres. It is also significant to note that with the levy of this company, all *brigadiers* who had previously established themselves in the four *élections* were dismissed, suggesting that the Crown was perhaps attempting to exert greater control over the collection by consolidating what had become a chaos of coercive local institutions.[56]

In that same year, a similar company was established to assist with tax collection in Montauban and the Comté de Foix. The instructions for the establishment of this company are revealing, for in perusing the correspondance of the time it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between references to these paramilitary companies and to those of regular soldiers, and it is not always evident that the correspondents themselves made the distinction. However, the following instructions make clear that the king and his officials were aware that these paramilitary companies were to be considered distinct from regular army units and enjoyed certain advantages over the latter when employed in tax collection. "Being made aware of the frequent rebellions," began the instructions:[57]

> [A]gainst the *huissiers*, *sergents* and *archers* employed for the execution of *contraintes* … against the consuls, *collecteurs* and individuals of the towns and communities owing taxes from the *taille* and [those of] the winter quarters … His Majesty, wanting to prevent such seditions and provide for the levy of his *deniers* in a way … that will not cause any hardships for his obedient subjects, such as would occur by sending a number of soldiers sufficient to make the rebels obey [and] from which would follow notable damages to those who had not participated in these rebellions … [His Majesty] has deemed it necessary to establish in the said *généralité* … a company of cavalry composed of 60 *maistres*, including the captain, lieutenant and *maréchal de logis* and *trompette*, to lodge in the town, bourgs, parishes and delinquent jurisdictions, at the cost and expense of the said delinquents without, nevertheless, making any lodgment on those who have paid their quota.

This company was to be raised immediately and armed with pistols and muskets. It was charged to "provide assistance to the *sergents*, *archers* and [the] *executions* of the *contraintes* of the *receveur des tailles*" of Montauban. Each member of this company was to be paid by the *receveur des*

[56] AN E 1708, f. 421.
[57] Ibid., f. 405.

tailles, with the total cost coming to 3,710 livres per month, or 48,289 livres per year. The *receveur* would advance the necessary sums and they would be recouped later with taxes levied on the 11 *élections* of the *généralité* of Montauban, taxes that were to be added to the *tailles* and other impositions for the next year (1659).[58]

The institution of *fusiliers des tailles* appears to have been largely limited to the southwestern regions of France and they seem to be much less prevalent following the beginning of the personal reign of Louis XIV. However, paramilitary institutions remained common in other regions. In Dauphiné, Auvergne, and Rouergue, for example, *brigades* appear to have played a significant role as *garnisaires* in the collection of taxes. The term *brigade* is yet another nebulous term in the vocabulary of French fiscal coercion. It appears to be both a general term referring to any small squad of men, usually *archers* or *cavaliers*, that assisted in the collection of the taille, and a term applied to a particular institution with a specific coercive purpose, such as the *brigades du sel*. At the same time, it is a term applied to units of *maréchaussée*. The exact size of the *brigades* used in the collection of the taille was determined each year by the intendant. This varied widely, but the typical *brigade* included one commanding officer, the *chef* or the *brigadier*, and a number of subordinates ranging from two to four men.[59]

These special companies used in tax collection, the *fusiliers* and the *brigades*, occupy an interesting middle ground between central and local authority, and between civilian and military jurisdictions. They were recruited at the local level and controlled by the intendant but, in contrast to other individuals occasionally assigned as *garnisaires*, such as the *archers* of the *maréchaussée*, they did not own their offices. They also possessed an organization and hierarchy obviously modeled along military lines, yet they remained totally independent of the military hierarchy.[60]

[58] AN E 1708, f. 405.

[59] These should not be confused with contingents of the *maréchaussée*, although at times it is quite difficult to distinguish the two.

[60] Bercé, 108.

Huissiers vs. Garnisaires: The Debate Under Colbert

From the very beginning, Colbert applied himself to eliminate the use of *garnisaires* in the collection of taxes while also reducing the expenses associated with the use of *huissiers*. Colbert disliked all forms of fiscal coercion and occasionally entertained utopian visions of achieving the moment when taxes would be paid in "regular fashion", without the need for *huissiers* or *garnisaires*.[61]

Colbert was also a realist and realized that the twin traditions of tax resistance and tax avoidance were strongly entrenched in a great part of the populace and that some form of coercion was necessary to collect the king's *deniers*. Forced to choose between *huissiers* or *garnisaires*, Colbert preferred the former, believing that the use of *huissiers* was much more humane and cost-effective, and less of a burden on the taxpayers.[62] Accordingly, Colbert put in motion a plan to replace the *voie militaire* with what the "traditional" method of collection using *huissiers* and *sergents*. Colbert met with some initial success. In 1662, for example, Guyenne, a region that in the previous decade had hosted countless companies of paramilitary tax collectors, had just one company of *fusiliers* remaining.[63]

The use of *garnisaires* was well-entrenched, however, and the practice continued in Limoges, Bordeaux and Montauban.[64] Colbert was frustrated in his efforts and confessed as much to the intendant of Montauban. "[I]n all the conduct of the finances of the kingdom up to the present," he wrote, "[there is] nothing which gives me such pain as the *contraintes* by *logement effectif* practiced in the *généralités* of Bordeaux and Montauban."[65] Colbert sent repeated admonitions to the intendants of these and other regions requesting them to eliminate the *brigades* but met with little success. Writing in 1680 to the intendant at Rioms, Colbert mentioned he was told that *garnisaires* were being used in the collection of the taille. "Let me know if this is true," he wrote,

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[61] Colbert, *Lettres, instructions, et mémoires*, II *supplement*, 257.

[62] It is also possible that Colbert favored this system because the office of *huissier* and *sergent* were royal and venal and therefore more susceptible to his control than were the *brigades*. See Antoinette Smedley-Weil, *Les intendants de Louis XIV* (1995).

[63] Bercé, I, 111.

[64] Bercé (I, 111), seems to claim that Colbert's efforts had succeeded in replacing the *voie militaire* with the "voies d'*huissiers*" nearly everywhere in the kingdom with the exception of Limoges, Bordeaux and Montauban. However, it appears that the practice of using *garnisaires* was never as widespread throughout the kingdom as Bercé assumes.

[65] Colbert to Feydeau de Brou (21 Oct 1672) in Colbert, II, 254.

> [A]nd, if so, examine if there is not a way to reestablish the traditional manner of making the collection by the *huissiers* and *sergents* and to suppress the *porteurs de contraintes* and … *logement effectifs*, which always cause very great abuses and [impose] considerable costs on the people.[66]

That same year Colbert requested that the intendant of Limoges investigate the possibility of replacing *fusiliers* with *huissiers* and *sergents*. "With regard to the *fusiliers*," wrote Colbert, "examine with care all the means possible of getting rid of this manner of collecting the *taille*, which is assuredly a heavy charge on the people, and try to re-institute the use of … the *huissiers* and *sergents* of the *taille*." Always a realist, Colbert continued, "Although you will perhaps find some difficulty in completely uprooting this bad practice in one year, I … believe that … you can do it in two or three years."[67]

Colbert put similar pressure on Faucon de Ris, the intendant at Bordeaux, whose *généralité* had long been accustomed to using *garnisaires* to collect the *taille*. The intendant claimed he had eliminated the use of *porteurs de contraintes* in two of his *élections*, Cognac and Saintes, and instead forced the *receveurs* to use *huissiers* and *sergents* for the collection. However, as this had caused considerable delay in the collection of the taxes, and the costs of the *huissiers* and *sergents* represented a greater charge on the people, he had reinstituted the *porteurs de contraintes*. In order to allay Colbert's concerns at this development, however, the intendant was careful to point out that he had imposed significant restrictions and measures of economy to minimize the hardships and costs involved. First, he eliminated the *archer à cheval* that had accompanied some of the brigades and whose support cost significantly more than a simple *archer à pied*. He also regulated the number of *porteurs de contraintes* and *archers* for each *élection* of his *généralité*: Bordeaux would have six *porteurs de contraintes* and 24 *archers*; Périgueux, seven *porteurs de contraintes* and thirty *archers*; Agen, six *porteurs de contrainte* and twenty-four *archers*; Condom, 3 *porteurs de contraintes* and 16 *archers*; Lannes, 3 *porteurs de contraintes* and 12 *archers*; Cognac, 5 *porteurs de contraintes* and 20 *archers*; and Sarlat 5 *porteurs de contraintes* and 12 *archers*. Finally, the intendant regulated the pay for each *porteur de contraintes* at 25 *sols* per day, and for each *archer* at five *sols* per day not including food, or seven *sols* per day if the *archer* was to feed himself.[68]

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[66] Colbert to M. de Marle (7 August 1680) in Colbert, I, 138.
[67] Colbert to LeBret (2 July 1681) in Colbert, I, 160.
[68] AN G^7 133, f. 202 (1 July 1681).

Two months later an unconvinced Colbert responded to the intendant. "I have received," he wrote, "the report concerning the collection of the *taille* by way of *porteurs de contraintes*,"

> [A]nd I have to tell you that despite your opinion that this way is less [of] a hardship to the king's subjects and that it is absolutely necessary for the collection … of the *taille*, it is nevertheless very necessary that you establish the use of *huissiers* and *sergents* in some of the *élections* of your *généralité* … His Majesty is quite persuaded that the *logements effectifs* are unnatural [and that] the people will receive more relief if one [uses] *huissiers* and *sergents*. However, you have done very well to get rid of the *archer à cheval* that was in each brigade.[69]

That same year (1681), Colbert informed intendant Foucault at Montauban, that the king desired to eliminate the use of *brigades* as a means of tax collection. "There is nothing His Majesty desires more," wrote Colbert, "than to return the [method of tax] collection to where it was in peacetime. His Majesty cannot persuade himself that the introduction of the *brigades*, done during the war, is capable of producing relief for his people."[70]

Despite his best efforts, Colbert was fighting a losing battle against a practice that many intendants believed was the only effective way to force a recalcitrant populace to pay taxes. In 1683, two years after his exchange of letters on the subject with Faucon de Ris, Colbert found himself writing once again to the intendant at Bordeaux, informing him that the king remained unhappy with the reliance on *archers* and *porteurs de contraintes* in the *généralité*, and that the intendant should apply himself to reestablishing the "old" manner of collecting the *taille*.

> His Majesty finds that the [expenses incurred by the] food, support and the disorder that these men cause in the *logements effectifs* they make are a great charge to the people of this *généralité*. Thus, he desires that you apply yourself with great care to reestablish the old form of making [the population] pay the *taille* by means of *huissiers* and *sergents* or, at the least, that you … eliminate half of these *porteurs de contraintes* and *archers*. His Majesty does not want more than two *porteurs de contraintes* and 8–10 *archers* in each *élection*. I have to tell you also that, although it appears by the table you have sent me, that the *porteurs de contraintes* and the *archers* only consumed 47,630 livres during the first 11 months of last year, His Majesty is persuaded that this sum only includes that which is counted for each day's salary, and that, to the contrary, one of these men costs … three or four times as much to the peasants in the homes

[69] Colbert to M. de Ris (24 September 1681) in Colbert, I, 166.
[70] Colbert to Foucault (22 May 1681) in Colbert, I, 154.

> where they have established themselves …You should examine this with great care, it being impossible to persuade His Majesty that these men content themselves with their pay without making any other charge on the inhabitants on whom they lodge.[71]

Despite these efforts, Colbert would never succeed in eliminating the use of such *brigades* in the *généralité* of Bordeaux. One year after Colbert's death, Faucon de Ris wrote to the new *contrôleur général*, Claude Le Peletier, informing him that the collection of the *taille* was proceeding well, "albeit by way of *porteurs de contraintes* and *logements effectifs*." He continued, acknowledging his failure to fulfill the late Colbert's desires:

> M[onsieur] Colbert had wanted to replace this system with that … of [the] *huissiers*, but did not succeed because of the stubbornness of the people and the misery of the farmers; thus, one is content to diminish the number of the *porteurs de contraintes* and of the *archers* as well as the amount of their expenses.[72]

As with the *brigades* of Bordeaux, Colbert's repeated efforts to halt the use of *fusiliers* in Limoges to collect taxes proved disappointing. Their use continued throughout his time as *contrôleur général* and continued long after his death. In 1689, one finds the intendant informing the *contrôleur général* that he has been forced to acknowledge the necessity of maintaining the use of *fusiliers* for the collection of the *taille*, although he went on to suggest that the power of the *receveurs* to regulate their use led to much corruption and extraordinary costs.[73]

The matter remained unresolved long after Colbert's death, for just as the king had an interest in establishing or maintaining the use of royal and venal officials such as *huissiers* and *sergents* for the collection of the *taille*, there were powerful local interests that, for a variety of reasons, sought to preserve the use of the *porteurs de contraintes* and *garnisaires*. As one intendant wrote:

> Regarding *porteurs de contraintes*, whose usage is ancient and generally preferred for the collection of the *taille*, one can only suppress it and substitute that of the *huissiers*, little by little … the *receveurs particuliers* complain about it because they find advantages in using *logements effectifs*, and … profits for their *commis*, which relieves them from having to pay their wages.[74]

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[71] Colbert to M. de Ris (6 June 1683) in Colbert, I, 213.
[72] Boislisle, I.
[73] Letter of M. de Bourville (24 May 1689) in Boislisle, I, 706.
[74] Boislisle, I, 203.

While some intendants may have agreed with Colbert's plan in principle, but harbored doubts about the practicalities of implementation in the face of bureaucratic self-interest and provincial particularism, other intendants opposed the abolition of the *garnisaires* on principle, arguing that it was a much more humane and cost-effective approach to the collection of taxes. The most comprehensive and convincing defense of the use of *brigades* and *garnisaires* came from the intendant of Dauphiné. The new *contrôleur général*, Le Peletier, wrote a letter to intendant Le Bret on 18 April 1685, informing him that the king had resolved to abolish the use of *logement effectifs* in all three *généralités* of the *taille réelle* because of the hardships this method of collection imposed upon his subjects.[75] Le Bret responded with a lengthy memo, arguing that the use of *brigades* was in reality less onerous to the king's subjects than the system of *huissiers* and *sergents*. In fact, Le Bret did not limit himself to a simple defense of the practice in his *généralité*; he argued that the use of *garnisaires* should be expanded to include all *généralités* of the kingdom.[76]

One reason that *garnisaires* caused little hardship for the populace, Le Bret argued, was that they were generally chosen from among the town's inhabitants who had never been to war. These *garnisaires* "no longer have anything military about them" and for that reason their behavior would be all the more civilized. The taxpayer was only required to provide them with a simple bed and, if one watched over their conduct, the *garnisaires* would not make any trouble for the inhabitants. By contrast, the memo continued, "the *huissiers* and *sergents* commence by seizing, transporting and selling [taxpayer] possessions [and] imprisoning … a great number of *collecteurs*, who idle away their time in the prisons." When, as a result, the *collecteurs* became bankrupt, "the *receveur* orders a *contrainte solidaire* against the richest members of the parish, who are forced, by this means, to pay that which they do not owe." Secondly, LeBret argued that *logement effectif* is much fairer than using *huissiers* and *sergents* because the *brigadier* and his men always lodge on those who refuse to pay the *taille* and who, "by their negligence or bad will," have caused the *brigade* to be sent in the first place. By contrast, the *huissiers* and *sergents* only address themselves to the *collecteurs*, who "they torment in every manner despite the fact that they have often made all attempts … to pay" but who nevertheless

[75] Ibid., 176.
[76] Le Bret to *contrôleur général* Le Peletier (2 May 1685) in Boislisle, I, 176.

often find themselves powerless in the face of the "bad will" and resistance on the part of the taxpayers. Finally, the expenses incurred by the *huissiers* and *sergents*, and thus the costs passed on to the taxpayers, are "infinitely greater and more considerable" than those incurred by the *brigades*. "[T]he seizure, transportation and sale … of goods at low price," continued LeBret, and "the imprisonment of the *collecteurs*, their expenses, the jailers' fees, the taxes levied for the *procès-verbaux*, the reimbursement sought by the *collecteurs* against the taxpayers for the costs that the *receveur* makes them support" and all of the "infinite trials" this produces causes an "unbelievable" level of expenses. A garrison undertaken by a *brigade*, on the other hand, cost only 59 *sols* per day and was levied only on those who refused or neglected to pay their taxes. The expenses associated with this manner of collection were so minimal, said Lebret, that "I have found the means to make the collection of nearly 1,500,000 livres at a cost of [only] 10,000 livres in expenses.[77]

Finally, it should be noted that despite their small numbers, the *archers* of the *maréchaussée* also served as *garnisaires* on occasion. In Auvergne, for example, where the entire force of *maréchaussée* for the province consisted of one *prévôt de maréchaussée* and a company of 29 *archers*, the *commis des traitants*, in another example of an appropriation of coercive authority, had taken up the habit of using them for tax collection. LeBlanc was annoyed that the *commis des traitants* had appropriated the *archers* of the *maréchaussée* for their own purposes and complained to the *contrôleur général* that "the *archers* like this job much better … than that of patrolling the roads."[78] LeBlanc requested a letter clearly stating that the king's intention was for the *prévôt* and his *archers* to patrol the roads and not to be used for tax collection except in the event of trouble. In the latter case the intendants, and not the *commis*, would authorize the *archers* to enter the troubled areas.[79]

In the end, provincial tradition, bureaucratic inertia, individual self-interest, the misery and stubbornness of the populace, and the increased fiscal demands of war combined to foil Colbert's ambitious plan to rid the kingdom of the *garnisaire* and to rely entirely upon the *voies ordinaire* of tax collection.

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[77] Ibid.
[78] LeBlanc to *contrôleur général* (26 September 1704) in Depping, II, 668.
[79] Ibid.

Some historians have labeled the use of *garnisaires* in the time of Louis XIII and Louis XIV as an ominous innovation marking the advent of a new form of "fiscal terrorism" carried out using the "most radical" forms of military coercion. The development, it is argued, marked one of the "gravest advances" of the absolutist state.[80] Although Colbert's efforts met with little success, he is praised for his attempts to "de-militarize" the process of tax collection and to make the process more efficient by reducing the expenses associated with the collection. However, as this discussion demonstrates, the use of *garnisaires* did not usher in a new era of repression. The debates about their use did not stem from a desire to resort to the easy expedient of force to extract revenue from a miserable population. On the contrary, the arguments in their favor were based on the viable premise that their use would result in *less* hardship for the taxpayers and help to make the French fiscal administration *more* efficient by eliminating the corrupt and largely unregulated practices associated with the use of *huissiers*. More importantly, it is clear that it is inaccurate to describe all *garnisaires* as members of the professional military and, from that mistaken premise, to make broader assumptions about the growing role of Louis XIV's expanding army as an instrument of domestic coercion or about the militarization of tax collection under the Sun King. However, to say that *garnisaires* came from a variety of institutions and from a variety of backgrounds is not to say that the professional soldiers had no role in the process.

The Army and the Collection of the Taille

Units of the professional army were occasionally used to assist in tax collection. This usually occurred when units were already stationed in or near a delinquent area, whether as a result of a frontier campaign or of their winter quarters. Units fortuitously passing through delinquent regions could also be temporarily diverted to assist local officials in the task of tax collection. Soldiers were also used to collect taxes in areas that had engaged in open resistance to the collection of taxes as part of the punishment for these regions. The correspondence of the time is full of requests for soldiers to assist in tax collection. However,

[80] Bercé, I, 109. See also Ardant, 2, 871–883.

the correspondence also makes clear that the decision to use troops in such a role was one that was weighed carefully and generally required approval from Paris (or Versailles). Under Louis XIV, the use of professional soldiers to enforce fiscal policy should be viewed as the exception and not the rule.

The situation was quite different during the decades prior to the reign of Louis XIV. In the troubled 1640s and 1650s, soldiers were frequently used as tax collectors, a practice that contributed significantly to the misery of the people and little or nothing to the king's coffers. "One raises the *taille* [with] sword in hand in all the provinces surrounding this *généralité*," wrote one official in 1644. "[T]he first *deniers* that are found are taken by the soldiers and none go to the *recette*."[81]

The decision to use soldiers to collect the *taille* was a delicate one. The hardships that a large detachment of soldiers could inflict on a region, and the all-important consequences on that region's ability to pay future taxes, were recognized. Calibrating a punishment that targeted only those who had refused to pay while sparing those who could not was difficult if not impossible. As a result, an ill-considered or heavy-handed use of soldiers could have disastrous consequences on popular perceptions of royal authority and risked driving an ambivalent populace into open resistance.

All of these concerns dictated that when soldiers were sent into a region great care was taken to ensure that they did not ruin the area. When inhabitants in the *généralité* of Moulins and Riom refused to pay the *taille* in 1649, for example, a detachment of soldiers were ordered to take up their winter quarters in the area and to remain there until the arrears had been paid.[82] Their instructions demonstrate the difficulty of making a distinction between those that chose not to pay their taxes and those that could not, and the Crown's desire to make it known that it attempted to recognize such a distinction in its policies:

> His Majesty, having been informed that several parishes in the *généralité* of Moulins refuse to pay … the *taille*, the *taillon* and the *crues* … *although they are not powerless to do so* [italics mine] … and that some inhabitants have even taken up arms against those employed to make the collection of the *deniers* of 1647, 1648 and the present year, and seeing with much regret that it is necessary to use force to repress their disobedience and force them to submit themselves to their work … [His Majesty] orders the officers and soldiers of the infantry and cavalry troops that

[81] Bercé, 107.
[82] BN MF 4180, f. 200.

> are remaining in diverse areas of the *généralité* … for winter quarters to transport themselves to the [rebellious] areas [and] to stay there for as long as necessary to convince them to pay their arrears.[83]

While so employed, the soldiers were ordered to subsist "in such good order and discipline that, in obliging the inhabitants to pay, they will not be ruined."[84] The officers were held responsible for the behavior of their soldiers on penalty of "their proper and private name" while the soldiers themselves could be put to death if they behaved badly.[85]

A subsequent letter enjoined the *trésoriers* to do all that was possible to obtain the revenue "by the ordinary ways" without resorting to force and *logement actuelle* of the soldiers "which could only cause great hardship in the areas where they will be sent." The *trésoriers* were also ordered to provide *étapes* for the soldiers, in order to "deprive them … of all pretext, which most of them would willingly take, to live in disorder."[86]

As with other types of *garnisaires*, Colbert opposed the use of soldiers in the collection of taxes, while acknowledging, however, that it was in some cases necessary. As with the other *garnisaires*, his opposition to the use of soldiers was based on both humanitarian and practical grounds. The humanitarian Colbert chastised one intendant for using soldiers to collect the taxes during harvest time, causing much distress among the population. The practical Colbert then directed the intendant to not make any *contraintes* in the months of July and August to allow people to bring in their harvest so they could then "satisfy that which they owe."[87] In 1663, writing to the intendant of Poitiers, he complained of the fact that most of the expected tax revenue was consumed in support of the troops involved in the collection. He also suggested that in order to minimize the collateral damage involved in such collection procedures, the communities should be required to pay a daily sum to the infantry and cavalrymen so that "if the soldiers commit any disorder one can severely punish them."[88] Colbert also pointed out

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[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., 203. The *étapes* system consisted of prearranged stockpiles of food and supplies, paid for by the entire province. It was intended to lessen the hardships experienced by the inhabitants of regions through which the troops marched.
[87] Colbert, II, 226.
[88] Colbert to Pellot (22 June 1663) in Colbert, I, 2.

that if it was necessary to use troops, than one must do so but "in the time of calm and repose that we find ourselves, these measures are very odious, and one should only use them when no other option is available."[89]

Many others, however, did not share Colbert's reservations about the use of troops for the purposes of tax collection. Intendants were constantly requesting troops to assist in the collection of taxes and to preempt fiscal rebellions. The professional character and fierce mien of the soldiers in the king's armies presented a stark contrast to the ill-trained personnel available to assist local officials with the collection. "[T]he *cavaliers* and dragoons," wrote one official, "accomplish more in eight days than the *archers* and others do in three months."[90] Marshal de Montrevel continued to view the use of soldiers as the appropriate palliative for popular resentment, even after the miserable failure of his brutal attempts to repress the Camisard uprising. Having been removed from his command in the Cévennes and appointed governor in Montauban, Montrevel had trouble collecting the tax arrears from his new charges. "[T]he spirits are so agitated at the weight of taxes," Montrevel wrote in 1705, "one fears that as long as there are no troops in the province to suppress them they will make an uprising on the least occasion … It is of the greatest importance … to have some troops in this province."[91]

In another instance, the intendant of Poitou wrote to *contrôleur général* Chamillart, that he was attempting to collect the *capitation*. The intendant pointed out that during 1697 he had been required to use "10 or 12 dragoons with a *maréchal de logis*" to get what was owed from the *capitation* of 1695 and 1696. "If I had some troops here," he continued, "I would ask the same liberty." Each dragoon would be paid 20 *sols* per day, and the *maréchal des logis* would receive 30 *sols*. The "gentlemen" would be responsible for feeding the dragoon and his horse. However, the intendant continued, "since there are no troops here, one will use *archers* [of the *maréchaussée*] if you think it is appropriate. One will send 10 *archers* with a determined *prévôt*."[92] Chamillart's response, scribbled in the margin of the letter, reveals something about how the Crown viewed such measures: "Try every other option before you have

89 Ibid., Colbert, I, 2.
90 Boislisle, I, 1580.
91 Boislisle, II, 799.
92 Boislisle, II, 363.

recourse to this one, which seems to me quite violent for a province [situated] in the middle of the kingdom."[93]

Some officials favored using soldiers as *garnisaires* over other individuals, not because they were more intimidating and therefore more effective, but because they were cheaper. Intendant Le Blanc of Auvergne, for example, obtained permission to use dragoons instead of the normal *garnisaires* taken, in this case, from the ranks of the *huissiers*. These latter were expected to cost five or six livres per day as *garnisaire*. The dragoons, on the other hand, cost only 15 *sols* per day.[94]

Even the vaunted Gardes Suisse were suggested as possible *garnisaires*. In 1711, the *prévôt des marchands* of Paris argued that, contrary to tradition, *garnisaires* should be used against debtors in Paris and that, in fact, members of the Gardes Suisse were the most appropriate institution to render such a service to the king. "I believe," wrote the *prévôt*, that if "one puts a single Swiss soldier [in garrison], at 20 *sols* per day … the delinquent taxpayers will pay more promptly and, as a result, will be exposed to less [additional] costs" than if other *garnisaires* were used that are supposed to be paid 30 *sols* per day. Furthermore, it was often difficult to force the other *garnisaires* to remain in the targeted home. "They appear there from time to time [but] far from encouraging the debtor to pay, [the *garnisaires*] delay payment … to prolong the punishment" and thereby increase their personal profit. A member of the Gardes Suisse, on the other hand, "once stationed, will only leave the area where he has been assigned when the payments have been made."[95]

A governor's personal guards could also be called upon on occasion to serve as *garnisaires* or to exert other forms of pressure on those who refused to pay. The additional clout of a governor's guard was particularly useful in collecting taxes from powerful local notables in areas of the *taille réelle*, who would not otherwise have been subject to the *taille*. In 1672 for example, the duke de Verneuil, governor of Languedoc, was presented with a request from the *syndic* Rochepierre, pointing out that a number of *gens de main-forte* living in places of "difficult access" were refusing to pay their *taille*. The Estates of Vivarais had passed a resolution that the *collecteur* should prepare three *actes* demanding payment, but not a soul could be found who was willing to deliver them to the

93 Ibid.
94 Boislisle, II, 125.
95 Boislisle, II, 1153.

ruffians for fear of being "mistreated." The *syndic* asked the governor for the use of some of his guards to enforce payment.[96]

The soldiers themselves did not always receive requests to act as tax collectors with enthusiasm. In 1696, the intendant Sanson thought that the collection was going too slowly and decided to take advantage of some troops that happened to be in the province. He issued instructions to several officers in the area and decreed that the inhabitants would each pay 20 *sols* per day until the tax debt was settled. Several officers, however, refused his instructions. As the intendant later explained: "The *sieur* de Thibaudaye, captain of dragoons of the regiment of Brittany … informed me that his dragoons had told him … that they had enrolled as dragoons and not as *sergents* and *porteurs de contraintes*."[97] Similarly, the officers themselves sometimes voiced their discontent at being assigned such a role, viewing tax collection as a task not worthy of their position and status.[98]

Even when officers and men accepted the role of tax collector, the deployment of professional soldiers to assist in the collection of the *taille* did not always guarantee that the money would be forthcoming. It was always a tricky business sending soldiers into a demonstrably hostile parish, and such an action risked exacerbating an already smoldering situation, as demonstrated by the experience of one officer serving in the infantry regiment of Harcourt. In 1662, the marquis de Saint-Luc ordered Lieutenant Alexandre Pansoit to go with several of his men to Flanhac to assist in the collection of taxes. Arriving on 28 December he and his men took up lodging in various locations throughout the town. Around noon, "numerous persons armed with halberds, pistols and other weapons" descended on several of the locations and attacked. Two soldiers were killed outright, and several others were either mortally wounded or beaten and robbed of their possessions.[99] The unfortunate lieutenant's experience was certainly not unique and the archives are full of similar accounts concerning isolated groups of soldiers suffering abuse and death at the hands of angry crowds.

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[96] AD Ardèche, C 1197, f. 100, "Extrait des Actes du Pays de Vivarais" (1 May 1672). A similar request was made to Verneuil in 1667 (AD Ardèche, C 1481, f. 53) and to his predecessor the Count de Roure in 1658 (AD Ardèche, C 1193, f. 18).

[97] Boislisle, I, 1580.

[98] See, for example, Julien's letter of 12 May 1707 in Boislisle, II, 1252.

[99] BN Mél Colbert 107 *bis*, 890 (2 January 1662). See also BN Mél Colbert 107 *bis*, 826.

There could also be some administrative problems associated with using soldiers for tax collection. In 1707, a *receveur général des finances* at Bordeaux, having been ordered to use troops instead of the *porteurs de contraintes* and perhaps suffering some anxiety at seeing his personal financial fiefdom thus encroached upon, complained to the *contrôleur général*:

> It is important to point out to you that, although this measure could be useful in that soldiers and dragoons lodged in the parishes and households of the delinquents, instead of the *archers du taille*, will make more of an impression and will force the *taillables* to pay sooner, it could nevertheless be dangerous, and perhaps ruin the collection.[100]

According to the *receveur général*, the problem was that one would have to confide the tax rolls to the officers so that they could determine where and against whom to send *garnisaires*. The officers, however, were largely mathematically illiterate and incapable of performing the tasks necessary for accurate record keeping. The *receveur* suggested that the intendant appoint someone to work with the officers who would "calculate and examine the rolls…which the officer alone is not capable of doing and who will request from him the soldiers and dragoons necessary to be sent into the parishes, and who will have the responsibility to inspect these soldiers and explain to them what they are required to do, and who, above all, will instruct the *collecteurs* he will find there of the manner in which they should use the troops to advance the collection."[101]

The *receveur* also suggested that these officials should have a certain disciplinary control over the troops. It is likely this *receveur* was motivated more by fear of a possible diminution of his role in the process of tax collection, resulting in a smaller profit for himself, rather than by a genuine concern over the record-keeping chaos that would result from the officers' lack of education. His concerns were about influence and jurisdictions and not about equity and accuracy.

In the maze that was French financial administration, questions of influence, jurisdiction, and competing authority were paramount. Resolving conflicts over questions of authority with regard to institutions of domestic coercion seem particularly relevant for a state that was in the midst of a centralizing process and it seems clear that the involvement of soldiers in the process of tax collection provided, at least

[100] Boislisle, II, 1265.
[101] Ibid.

in theory, an avenue through which royal authority could make significant advances against provincial particularism, resistance and inefficiency. Perhaps the most important of these advances was represented by giving military command authority to the intendants, placing coercive options directly between the hands of a king's representative in the province and thereby avoiding the quagmire created by the competing authorities and jurisdictions of local officials. Perhaps the use of soldiers in the process of tax collection does not simply represent a crude manner of extracting resources from reluctant taxpayers, or an additional source of convenient *garnisaires*. Perhaps it in fact represents a subtle manner through which the Crown could insinuate itself into the local financial administration, bypassing the existing corrupt, wasteful, and entrenched system.

On this same subject, it is interesting to note a letter written from Colbert to the intendant Pellot during an episode of tax resistance in 1662. Colbert informed Pellot that he would write in advance to the *sieur* de Saint-Luc, *lieutenant-général* in Guyenne and commander of all military forces in the province, instructing him to provide the intendant with anything he might need. "And I assure you," Colbert continued, "that His Majesty will approve the sending of [troops] into the difficult parishes *on your orders alone* [italics mine], as soon as I explain to [Saint-Luc] the necessity of giving you this power."[102]

Soldiers were not only used to assist in the collection of the *taille* but also in the collection of other taxes, the most important being the *gabelle*, but also such revenues as the *don gratuit* from *pays d'états* and even the *décimes*.[103] The king, always careful of his standing among the clergy, was not entirely comfortable with this latter employ. When the bishop of Cahors implied that troops be used to threaten those members of the clergy who were late in their payments of the *décimes*, the *contrôleur général* informed the overzealous bishop that "the king is not in the habit of using troops to force payment of that which is due for the *décimes* and other taxes on the clergy."[104]

With this brief overview of the use of the army to collect the *taille* and other taxes, a few observations can be made. First, it seems clear that the use of soldiers as *garnisaires* was determined more by conve-

[102] Colbert, II, 235.

[103] Letter of the count de Guiche, governor of Navarre and Béarn in the absence of the duke de Gramont, his father, in Depping, III, 54, 1670.

[104] Boislisle, II, 1248.

nience than by policy. Soldiers used in this fashion were usually among those stationed in the area for other purposes (usually along the frontier), those *en route* to a different destination and temporarily diverted, or those sent to the region to take up their winter quarters. This last scenario is significant, because on occasion a region was given the responsibility of supporting regiments during winter quarters as punishment for a previous failure to pay their taxes, or for engaging in open rebellion. This is interesting not because it is evidence of the king's intention to use the army as an effective instrument of tax collection, but because it provided a *convenient justification* for sending soldiers into a particular area that may not otherwise have been required to support soldiers during winter quarters or which may have even enjoyed privileged immunity from such a heavy charge. By sending soldiers to these regions, the king was also sparing the rest of his well-behaved and well-paying subjects the costs of supporting soldiers in winter quarters.

The archives of this period are full of letters from intendants requesting more troops to assist in the process of tax collection. These ubiquitous requests, often accompanied by lengthy justifications, argue against the idea that the use of troops in such a role had become a commonplace or accepted practice. It is also clear that the government rarely supported or encouraged the use of troops in such a role without significant qualms or reservations. When troops were used in such a role, the action was often explained as a last resort and the extent of their involvement downplayed.

The Gabelle

After the *taille*, the most important tax in seventeenth-century France was the *gabelle*, or salt tax. The *gabelle* provided an enormous amount of revenue to the French state. In the preamble to an edict of June 1660, a young king Louis XIV recognized the *ferme générale des gabelles* as "one of the principal supports for the expenses of our state."[105]

With regard to the administration of the *gabelle*, the regions of France were divided into several categories. The *provinces franches*, or "free provinces," were exempt from the tax because of their location adjacent to salt marshes or as a result of agreements made during their

[105] Cited in Beaulieu, xv.

attachment or reunion to the kingdom.[106] In these areas, the sale of salt was untaxed and the price varied from 1 livre, 10 *sols* to 8 livres per *minot.*[107] The *provinces rédimées* were not subject to the *gabelle* per se, but instead paid either one large lump sum of money or a supplement to the *taille.* They were then able to purchase their salt at untaxed rates. In these provinces a *minot* of salt cost between 6–9 livres.[108] The *pays de salines* produced *sel gemme*, or crystallized salt mined from the earth, and the price ranged from 12 livres, 10 *sols* to 36 livres the *minot.*[109] In the regions of the *quart-bouillon* (essentially the Cotentin peninsula), the inhabitants obtained their salt directly from the ocean on condition of paying a fee equivalent to 1/4 of the value of the salt obtained. In these regions salt cost about 13 livres per *minot.*

The remainder, and greater part of the kingdom, was divided into the *pays de petites gabelles* and the *pays de grandes gabelles.* In the *pays de petites gabelles*, including a large part of southeastern France, the consumer had to buy salt from the *greniers*, or warehouses, established for that purpose. Here, the price of salt fluctuated between 15 livres, 8 *sols* and 57 livres, 10 *sols* per *minot.*[110] The majority of France was within the *pays de grandes gabelles*, where the price ranged from 54 livres, 10 *sols*, to 61 livres, 10 *sols* per *minot.* The *pays de grandes gabelles* were responsible for two-thirds of all of the *gabelles* paid in France.[111]

In the regions subject to the *gabelle*, the inhabitants were required to buy a certain amount of salt at a price determined by the tax farmers. In the *pays de grandes gabelles* this quantity was fixed at one *minot* per year

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[106] These free provinces include Brittany, Boulonnais, Calaisis, Hainault, Artois, Flanders, Cambrésis, the principalities of Sedan and Raucour, Nebouzan, Béarn, Soule, Lower Navarre, Labours, the region of Gex, Arles, the islands of Ré and Oleron, and the parts of Aunis and Poitou that were near the *salines* of the Atlantic.

[107] The *minot* was equal to about 100 pounds. Other frequently used measures were the *sétier* (equal to 4 *minots*) and the *muid* (equal to 12 *sétiers*). See Briais, 12, note #1.

[108] The *provinces rédimées* included Poitou, Limousin, Auvergne, Marche, Guyenne, Périgord, Bigorre, Pays de Foix, Comminges. See Briais, 12.

[109] The *pays de salines* included Franche Comté, Lorraine, the Trois Evêchés (Metz, Toul and Verdun) and Alsace.

[110] The *pays de petites gabelles* included Lyonnais, Maconnais, Bresse, Bugey, Forez, Beaujolais, Dauphiné, Provence, Roussillon, Languedoc, Rouergue, Gevaudan, Velay, Vivarais, and part of Haute-Auvergne.

[111] The *pays de grandes gabelles* included the Parisian Basin and the oldest provinces of the kingdom: Ile de France, Orléanais, Touraine, Anjou, Maine, Berry, Bourbonnais, Bourgogne, Champagne (except the Rethelois who had conserved their privileges), Picardy (except Boulonnais and Cambrésis), Normandy (except the area around Avranches which was the *pays of quart bouillon*) and le Perche.

for every 14 persons over the age of eight years (or approximately 3.5 kilograms per person). To clarify what this meant to the average French family, a family living in the Ile de France with two children older than 8 years old would be subject to an annual cost of 16 livres, 16 *sols*. This amounted to nearly a month's salary for a man earning on average 12 *sols* per day.[112]

Individuals forced to pay this excessive tax naturally sought ways to get around it. In many cases, this involved simply looking over to the next parish that was perhaps situated in a free province. In Berry, for example, salt cost 60–61 livres per *minot* while in neighboring Limousin a *minot* of salt sold for 8–9 livres.[113] When one sees such dramatic differences in price, it is easy to understand how the frontier areas between such regions were plagued by the practice of *faux-saunage*, or salt smuggling. This smuggling attained epidemic proportions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reaching its apogee in the final years of Louis XIV's reign.[114] *Faux-saunage* was practiced by all levels of French society, from peasant to noble, making attempts at its repression a dangerous undertaking that risked precipitating a popular uprising.[115]

The practice of *faux-saunage* and popular resistance to the *gabelle* prompted tax farmers and royal authorities to organize and field a substantial coercive domestic force. Estimates vary as to its exact size, with one placing it at approximately 36,000 men by 1689[116] while another suggests approximately 20,000 effectives at the beginning of the 18th century.[117] This force of *gabelous*, as they were derisively called, was organized and financed by the tax farmers with the support of royal authorities. The force was organized into *brigades de la gabelle*, and stationed by the tax farmers along a system of interior "frontier" lines among the provinces, the key points determined by geography and, of course, the province's status under the *gabelle*.[118] The Farm

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[112] Briais, 16.

[113] Ibid., 25, note #1.

[114] Ibid., 153.

[115] The most significant example is the revolt led by Audijos in 1664. Fear of the imposition of the *gabelle* also played a key role in precipitating and aggravating many other large-scale disturbances of the period, including those of 1668 (Roussillon), 1670 (Roussillon and Vivarais), and 1675 (Bordeaux and Brittany).

[116] Boulainvilliers, *Mémoire contenant les moiens d'établir le droit d'amortissement des gabelles et la conversion du revenu des aydes en droit de bouchon avec les avantages que le roi et les sujets en peuvent retirer* (BN MF 7732, f. 19). See also Beaulieu, xvii.

[117] Briais, 120.

[118] See Beaulieu, *Les Gabelles sous Louis XIV* (reprint 1974), 56.

had about 1,200 leagues of such interior frontiers to guard. As much as possible, these lines were set up along natural boundaries.[119] Some lines, for example, followed the contours of the Meuse River in the east, the Mayenne to the west, and Vienne and La Creuse in the region between Poitou and Touraine. For greater effectiveness a "defense in depth" composed of several parallel lines, was occasionally established. These lines were manned by a variety of *brigades*: the *brigades sedentaires* guarded the passages and manned fixed positions and the mounted *brigades ambulantes* patrolled the frontier areas, arresting smugglers who had already succeeded in crossing the frontier. There were also special *brigades* assigned to patrol along the rivers in small boats. In general, each *brigade* was composed of 2–6 men, but sometimes more.[120]

A typical example of how this force was deployed in an area plagued by *faux-saunage*, can be seen along the Brittany frontier in 1690. There were 6 *brigades* guarding the eastern frontier, with 48 additional *brigades* stationed a half-league away in Maine and Anjou. These *brigades* were under the command of two captains *à cheval* and 10 captains *à pied*. Each individual *brigade* included three *archers* or *gardes*, commanded by a lieutenant. A "second line of defense" was established behind the *bureaux d'entrée*, including 12 *brigades ambulantes* (each composed of three *gardes* led by a lieutenant). The command of these 12 *brigades* was divided between 2 captains.

Other positions included 13 *gardes* at Laval, 6 *gardes* and a lieutenant at Mayenne and 12 *gardes* at Château-Gontier. Fourteen *brigades ambulantes* were established "en embuscade" at Mayenne, apparently with the intent of providing a quick reaction force to surprise smugglers.[121] In addition, nine mounted and seven foot *brigades* were stationed around Dax (Bayonne).[122] In 1710, several *brigades* were also established along the line of the Meuse, while others formed a second line stretching from Soissons to Droulincourt.[123] It should be noted that the exact dispositions of the *brigades* changed constantly according to the current situation and to the whims of the *fermiers généraux*.[124]

Archers of the *gabelle* received about 2–300 livres per year, lieutenants, 360 livres per year, and captains, 500 livres. They also received prize

[119] Briais, 109.
[120] Briais, 109–110.
[121] AN G^7 1143, cited in Beaulieu, 156–157.
[122] Ibid., 158.
[123] AN G^7 1258, cited in Beaulieu, 158.
[124] Beaulieu, 156.

money ranging from 6–30 livres for capturing smugglers, and a percentage of the sale of salt and captured horses seized from the smugglers. Additional benefits included exemptions from certain taxes, from the lodgment of soldiers, from service in the *guet* or from participating in the *tirage au sort* for the militia. There was even a type of retirement fund that *archers* could contribute to and draw on after twenty years of service.[125] According to one estimate, the support of this force cost the Farm nearly half of the receipts coming in from the sale of salt.[126]

Even with this large armed force at their disposal, the tax farmers experienced considerable difficulty in controlling the practice of *faux-saunage*. It is important to realize that smuggling was not just carried out by small bands of two or three individuals in the middle of the night but also by bands of smugglers numbering in the hundreds. Such large groups could be quite brazen in their actions. In 1704, for example, the intendant at Moulins wrote of a large number of armed *faux-sauniers* that had gathered together and were marching across the countryside in 120-man bands. The same intendant later wrote of a group of 800 smugglers gathered in a forest.[127] In 1705, the director of the tax farms at Laval and of Mans complained of groups as large as 200–250 smugglers, riding off in broad daylight to seek salt in Brittany. At the other end of the kingdom, the intendant of Champagne described bands of 60–80 well-armed men who "march with some order and camp in the plains where[ever] they find themselves."[128]

These large groups often proved too powerful for the small and scattered *brigades*. To assist the *brigades* in their efforts at controlling the smuggling, the tax farmers received support in various forms from both local authorities and the Crown. Reliance was also placed on other local institutions and communities to help stop the smuggling. In the south, urban militias appear to have played a large role in the pursuit of smugglers with militia officers and soldiers often testifying at smugglers' trials. The Parlement of Brittany issued many decrees against the practice of *faux-saunage* and the governor of the province ordered members of his personal guard, members of the local militia, and *archers* of the *maréchaussée* to assist the *brigades* if necessary.[129] When two consuls of

[125] Briais, 120.
[126] Ibid., 112.
[127] Ibid., 156.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Beaulieu, 161.

the diocese of Montréal in Carcassonne were convicted of not assisting a *garde de gabelle* in the pursuit of his duties, one was banished for 3 years while the other was banished for one year and forced to pay a fine of 300 livres.[130] It is clear that an essential element of the struggle against *faux-saunage* was the cooperation of local authorities.

Royal officials and soldiers in the royal armies also assisted the tax farmers in their struggle against *faux-saunage*. In 1710, for example, the duke de Roquelaire, *commandant en chef* in Languedoc, the intendant Basville and the Farmer-General met for a conference in which they decided to send royal troops into Gevaudan to combat rampant smuggling activity. For greater effect, this action was to be coordinated with that of the intendant of Montauban who was overseeing a similar action in Rouergue.[131] The king himself was not averse to sending detachments from his own Guards regiments to assist the tax farmers.[132] In such instances the troops were, in theory, to be compensated for their time and effort by the tax farmers.[133]

There were problems, however, with engaging soldiers to act against the smugglers, the greatest being the fact that the soldiers themselves were some of the most active and effective participants in the smuggling trade. Since time immemorial, soldiers have sought means to supplement their meager pay by undertaking extracurricular activities, and the French soldiers of the seventeenth century were no exception.[134]

Faux-saunage among soldiers was typically worse during winter quarters. During the winter of 1692–1693, for example, there were complaints against the *faux-saunage* of soldiers in Picardy, Soissons, Champagne, Bourgogne, Bourbonnais, Berry, Touraine, and Caen.[135] Soldiers participating in *faux-saunage* lacked nothing in boldness. In 1704, in the midst of the War of Spanish Succession, one witnessed in Bourbonnais bands of 60 to 200 mounted smugglers, armed with *fusils*, *pistolets*, halberds, and swords, marching in full daylight to the strains of fifes and *musettes*.[136] In 1709, in Touraine, *cavaliers* in three regiments were brazen enough to enter Tours with 55 horses loaded with smuggled salt, despite the presence of the intendant and the general staff in the town. The sol-

[130] AD Herault C 5380.
[131] AN G^7 1176, cited in Beaulieu, 164.
[132] Beaulieu, 165.
[133] Boislisle, II, 421 (letter of 23 May 1709). See also, Beaulieu, 165.
[134] See, for example, a letter from the *trésoriers* at Amiens, cited in Colbert, I, 81.
[135] Beaulieu, 168–171.
[136] AN G^7 1225, cited in Beaulieu, 163.

diers beat upon the door of the *gabelous* and threatened to shoot them "like rabbits" if they encountered them.[137]

Other examples abound, with the border between Brittany and Normandy being a particularly active area for solider involvement in smuggling. In one particularly blatant case, a force of no less than 500 *cavaliers* stationed in Normandy smuggled salt across the Breton frontier.[138] In Touraine, it was said that the *faux-saunage* of soldiers was so great that "the province was going to be supplied with salt for four years."[139]

The officers either turned a blind eye or joined in these smuggling activities, as they promised to provide a nice supplement to their incomes. During the winter of 1689–1693, for example, officers from the regiment of Asfeld, then stationed near the frontier of Brittany, collected a profit from each *faux-saunage* expedition conducted by their men.[140] When a *lieutenant-colonel* from the regiment of Vendôme was confronted with the fact that his men were engaged in the sale of smuggled salt, he simply replied, "it is necessary that these soldiers go out a bit to take some air."[141]

It is interesting to note that the majority of soldiers engaged in *faux-saunage* were of French origin and that even the vaunted French guards participated in the smuggling of salt.[142] As a result, many requests for assistance stipulated the sending of foreign troops as they tended not to participate in *faux-saunage* to the same extent as the French soldiers.[143] In 1696 and 1697, foreign regiments were sent to several towns in Picardy because "the French troops do more smuggling in four days time than the foreign troops do during the [entire winter] quarters."[144]

There was great tension and frequent conflict between the agents of the Farms and soldiers engaged in smuggling. At Craon, a force of 60–80 dragoons, marching in order of battle and loaded down with salt from Brittany "so intimidated the *archers* and menaced to burn them alive in their guardhouse, that it became impossible to assemble them."[145] As one official described the situation in the winter of 1693,

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137 Ibid.
138 Beaulieu, 170.
139 Ibid., 171.
140 Briais, 179.
141 Ibid.
142 Beaulieu, 171.
143 Ibid., 169.
144 AN G^7 1216, 1217, cited in Beaulieu, 170.
145 Beaulieu, 169.

"It is a declared war and the *cavaliers* are searching day and night for employees [of the farm] to cut their throats."[146] As a director of *gabelles* at Caen wrote, "When the troops get involved [in smuggling], the *brigades* are useless, the [guards] fear them and avoid them."[147]

In actual military encounters, the professional soldiers generally prevailed over the *archers* of the *gabelle*. The soldiers' victories resulted as much from simple numerical superiority as from any greater experience at the profession of arms. To counter this numerical disadvantage, the farmers sometimes combined several *brigades* together and occasionally even paid other soldiers to assist the *archers* in combat against their smuggling comrades-in-arms. This latter approach generally failed, however, as the hired soldiers proved reluctant to take up arms against their comrades.[148]

The king was in the midst of a desperate war and needed every man he could find for his armies. Consequently, although the announced punishments were very severe for soldiers accused of smuggling, in practice the punishments were often more moderate. In January 1707, for example, the marquis de Saint-Germain imprisoned 13 cavalrymen of his regiment for smuggling. He received a letter from the intendant asking him to show clemency: "This number appears large to me," wrote the intendant,

> "and I do not believe that your intention is to punish them all. This would be a considerable loss for the troops of the king and principally for this regiment. If one can find some bad individual among them [and punish him], I believe that will suffice as an example."[149]

Typical punishments for non-military smugglers could be a public flogging, a sentence to the galleys, exile to an overseas colony, or death. Under Louis XIV, convicted smugglers were also subjected to forcible recruitment into the army.[150]

Faux-saunage was an enormous problem during the reign of Louis XIV. Striking as it did at one of the greatest sources of revenue for the French state, the *gabelle*, it attracted considerable attention from royal authorities and influential tax farmers. A true army of *archers de la gabelle* was created in an attempt to stop the practice. When this failed,

146 Briais, 192.
147 Ibid., 178.
148 Ibid., 199–200.
149 Cited in Briais, 199.
150 Briais, 144.

local coercive agents such as urban militias, the *maréchaussée*, and even a governor's personal guards could be called upon for assistance.[151] The final recourse was the use of royal troops but, as has been seen, these soldiers could be just as much a part of the problem as they were a part of the solution.

Conclusion

Other chapters in this work discuss the deployment and relative effectiveness of coercive force in response to unusual or extraordinary events, such as revolts, rebellions, and forcible religious conversions. This chapter, by contrast, examined the coercive practices and institutions used to handle the more mundane task of tax collection. Arriving at an understanding of these practices and institutions is important, for the ability to collect taxes is a fundamental requirement for a state to remain viable.

The manner and effectiveness with which a state undertakes the process of tax collection also serves as a useful indicator of the degree of state centralization. If a state seems to be achieving a greater degree of centralization at the same time that its armed forces are becoming larger and more powerful, it is appropriate to examine if there is some correlation between these two phenomena. One of the primary objectives of this chapter, therefore, was to examine the relative importance of Louis XIV's growing army in the process of tax collection.

Speaking in general terms, it can be said that the army did have a role to play in the process of tax collection, albeit a much more circumscribed role than is generally assumed. Individual soldiers sometimes acted as *garnisaires* or served as escorts for the *porteurs de contraintes* when they ventured into dangerous regions. Entire units could also play a role, although decisions about their use required considerable thought about the counter-productive dangers resulting from relying on such an imprecise instrument of punishment. Entire companies and regiments of the regular army also played a role in tax collection, but this was largely limited to suppressing large-scale resistance and open rebellions related to fiscal issues.

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[151] On the role of governor's guards in a variety of coercive roles, see Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 184.

The role of the army in tax collection was not an exclusive one and any examination of the army's relative importance in the process necessarily entails an examination of the role of other institutions possessing coercive potential. It is interesting to note that there has been no systematic study of such institutions of coercion when it comes to tax collection and it is hoped that this chapter, among other ambitions, may provide the impetus for more detailed examinations of neglected institutions such as the *garnisaires*, the *fusiliers des tailles*, and the *brigades du sel*.

In most cases, quibbles over terminology are best relegated to a footnote at the bottom of the page. The issue surrounding the term *garnisaire*, however, is central to any examination of Louis XIV's soldiers as instruments of domestic coercion and consequently this particular quibble has found an appropriate home in the text. It is clear that one should make no generalizations about *garnisaires*. Some were indeed soldiers, while others were members of armed companies raised up for the express purpose of tax collection. Some were simply independent agents or relatives of the *receveurs*. Still others were agents of established institutions such as the *maréchaussée* or, on very rare occasions, militias. Despite this variety, however, the military connotations of the term *garnisaire* have led to confusion among historians and an overemphasis on the role of the professional military in the process of tax collection.

Some suggest that Louis XIV initiated dramatic changes in the method of tax collection, relying on his armed forces to collect taxes by force from a population that had traditionally possessed the right of consent. This amounted to a form of "fiscal terrorism" in which "the state had renounced seeking the consent of the taxpayers. It chose, in deliberate fashion, to use the most radical [form of] coercion." Such a development marked "one of the gravest advances of the absolutist state."[152] It is hoped that this chapter has demonstrated that such a characterization seriously exaggerates Louis XIV's coercive inclinations, greatly oversimplifies the complexities associated with the use of coercive force in the collection of taxes, and clearly fails to appreciate the variety of coercive institutions engaged in the process of tax collection.[153]

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[152] Bercé, I, 108.

[153] There is even evidence that, far from initiating a new era of fiscal terrorism, the reign of Louis XIV saw a considerable diminution in acts of overt armed coercion in the process of tax collection. See Clamageran, vol. 2, 625.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RESPONSE TO POPULAR REVOLT, 1662–1670

Introduction

Louis XIV was born into a French state plagued by popular unrest. As the *Dieudonné* drew his first breath on 5 September 1638, the great wave of revolt that had ravaged much of southwestern France for the previous three years, known as the revolt of the Croquants, must have cast a long shadow over the joyous celebrations at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.[1] One year later, Normandy erupted in the revolt of the Nu-Pieds (1639),[2] followed soon after by a second Croquant revolt in Guyenne (1643–1645).[3] Three years later, the series of aristocratic and popular revolts known as the Fronde (1648–1653) proved challenging and embarrassing for the French monarchy and made a lasting impression on the young boy king. The end of the Fronde, however, did not end popular unrest in France, and the decade of the 1650s was checkered by revolts of varied scope and intensity, including urban uprisings at Nîmes and at Aix, a peasant uprising in Sologne, and ominous assemblies of nobility in Normandy, Anjou, and Poitou that, in the post-Fronde atmosphere, attracted close royal scrutiny. These were followed by yet more revolts at Marseille, Benauge, and Montpellier.[4]

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[1] The best discussion of the Croquant revolts is Yves-Marie Bercé, *Histoire des croquants: études des soulèvements populaires au XVIIe siècle dans le sud-ouest de la France*, 2 vols (Paris, 1974). See also Bercé, *History of Peasant Revolts: The Social Origins of Rebellion in Early Modern France*, trans. Amanda Whitmore (Ithaca, 1990). A useful collection of documents has been compiled by Urbain Cabrol, *Documents sur le soulèvement des paysans du Bas-Rouergue, dits croquants au commencement du règne de Louis XIV* (Pont-les-Bains, 1984 [1910]).

[2] Madeline Foisil, *La révolte des nu-pieds et les révoltes normandes de 1639* (Paris, 1970).

[3] On revolts during this period, see Boris Porchnev, *Les soulèvements populaires en France de 1623 à 1648* (Paris, 1963). Porchnev has identified no less than 118 significant disturbances during the period covered in his book and admits that this count is far from comprehensive. See Porchnev, 133–134. William Beik, however, has argued that Porchnev's list of revolts for this period is "wildly inaccurate." See Beik, *Urban Protest*, 116.

[4] On Nîmes, see Léon Menard, *Histoire civile, ecclésiastique et litteraire de la ville de*

The litany of troubles continued after Louis XIV began his personal reign in March 1661. The first major challenge to the young king was the 1662 revolt of the Boulonnais.[5] This was soon followed by the outbreak of a difficult and stubborn revolt against the *gabelle* in southwestern France that lasted from 1664–1665,[6] while similar revolts took place in Roussillon and the Vallespir region from 1668 to 1670.[7] Both of these latter revolts took on added seriousness in the eyes of royal authorities because they occurred in the mountains and valleys of the Pyrenees and raised the ominous prospect of Spanish interference in French domestic affairs. Finally, in the spring of 1670, the Vivarais erupted in a large-scale peasant rebellion.[8]

Nîmes (Paris, 1750–1758, Lafitte reprint [Marseille, 1976]). On Aix, see Sharon Kettering, *Judicial Politics and Urban Revolt in Seventeenth-Century France: The Parlement of Aix, 1629–1659* (Princeton, 1978). On Sologne, and the interesting but little-studied assemblies of nobility, see L. Jarry, *La guerre des sabotiers de Sologne et les assemblées de la noblesse, 1653–1660* (Orléans, 1880) and Jean Dominique Lassaigne, *Les assemblées de la noblesse de France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1965). Some correspondence on the noble assemblies can be found in Colbert, *Lettres*, I, 172–173, 209, 217. A pardon (dated September 1658) issued for noblemen involved in these plots can be found in BN MF 17355, f. 396. On Marseille, Depping, *Correspondance administrative*, I, 649–651. On the revolt at Benauge, see F. Loirette, "Une émeute paysanne au début du gouvernement personnel de Louis XIV: la sédition de Benauge (décembre 1661 – janvier 1662)", *Annales du Midi*, 78 (1966), 515–536. On Montpellier, see Colbert, *Lettres*, IV, 5. This list of revolts is far from comprehensive and represents only a small sample of the revolts that took place during the 1650s and early 1660s.

[5] On this revolt, see Gérard Simon, *La révolte du Boulonnais devant la violation de ses privilèges* (Boulougne, 1983); Pierre Clément, *La police sous Louis XIV* (Geneva, 1978), 282–289; Louis XIV, *Mémoires pour l'instruction du Dauphin*, ed. P. Goubert (Paris, 1992).

[6] The best source for the details of this revolt is the massive collection of documents compiled in Armand Communay (ed.) *Audijos: La gabelle en Gascogne: documents inédits* (Archives historiques de la Gascogne, vols. 24–25, 1893–1894). Dozens of relevant correspondence is found in Depping (vol. III). Also useful are E. O'Reilly, *Mémoires sur la vie publique et privée de Claude Pellot*, 2 vols (Paris, 1881–1882); Michel Ferron, *Un cadet de Gascogne: Bernard Daudijos (1638–1677)* (Extrait du Bulletin de la Société de Borda, 1962) and J.H.M Salmon, "The Audijos Revolt: Provincial Liberties and Institutional Rivalries under Louis XIV", *European History Quarterly*, 14 (1984), 119–149.

[7] On this revolt see Alain Ayats, *Les guerres de Josep de la Trinxeria (1637–1694): La guerre du sel et les autres* (Perpinyá, 1997); Alain Ayats, "La lutte entre les pouvoirs locaux et le povoir central à travers la révolte des angelets", in *La Roussillon de la Marca Hispanica aux Pyrenées-Orientales (VIIIe–XXe siècles)*: *Actes du LXVIIe congrès de la fédération historique du Languedoc méditerranéan et du Roussillon*, Société agricole, scientifique, et litteraire des pyrénées-orientales, 103 (Perpignan, 1995); Alice-Marcet-Juncona, "La résistance antifiscale et nationale des Catalans après l'annexion de 1659", in Giorgio Lombardi (ed.), *La Guerra del Sale (1680–1699): rivolte e frontiere del Piemonte barocco*, 3 vols (Milan, 1986). See also BN Clair. 792 and Depping, *Correspondance administrative*, passim.

[8] There are several useful sources for this little-studied revolt. Most accounts rely

Obviously, the young Louis XIV gained considerable experience dealing with incidents of popular resistance and rebellion. Although the Sun King would face greater and far more serious revolts later in his reign, it is both interesting and instructive to examine the manner in which the young king dealt with the less significant disorders that troubled the first two decades of his personal reign. Space considerations preclude a comprehensive and detailed treatment of all instances of popular revolts in these early years. Instead, this chapter will examine the royal response to just three of the early revolts: the Boulonnais revolt of 1662, the Audijos revolt of 1663–1665, and the Vivarais revolt of 1670.

Each of these revolts has certain characteristics that illuminate themes found in later chapters. The revolt of the Boulonnais, for example, is of interest not only because it was the first revolt faced by the young king after he began his personal reign, but also because the origins of the revolt and the nature of the royal response centered on the contest between local privileges and royal centralization. The Audijos revolt of 1664–1665 also concerned questions of local privilege in the face of attempts at fiscal centralization. This revolt evolved into a low-intensity, guerrilla-style conflict along the Spanish border that challenged the military capabilities of both royal and local forces. The 1670 revolt in the Vivarais was a large popular revolt that demonstrated the

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heavily on the "Fidèle relation de ce qui s'est passé en la ville d'Aubenas pendant les derniers mouvements du pays-bas du Vivarais, ou récit de la révolte de Roure", written by an anonymous inhabitant of the town of Aubenas. There are at least three versions of this account available and I have used the one reproduced in J.-L. Laboissière, *Les Commentaires du soldat du Vivarais, où se voit l'origine de la rébellion de la France et toutes les guerres que durant icelle le pays du Vivarais a souffertes, divisés en trois livres … Suivis du voyage du duc de Rohan en Vivarais l'an 1628, de la relation de la révolte de Roure en 1670, et d'une anecdote extraite du journal manuscrit de J. de Banne, chanoine de Viviers* (Privas, 1811). Also useful are Joseph Dourille, *Histoire des guerres civiles du Vivarais* (Valence, 1846); and the marquis de Vogüé, *Une famille vivaroise: histoire d'autrefois racontées à ses enfants*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1912). This last work must be used with some caution, however, as the author can be suspected of trying to rehabilitate the reputation of his ancestor, Georges de Vogüé, who, in 1670, held the office of *grand bailli* of Vivarais, Viennois and Velantinois and was criticized by the author of the *Fidèle relation* for not acting more aggressively in the early stages of the revolt (*Fidèle relation*, 392). See also a manuscript written in 1670 and preserved in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled "Histoire de la guerre du Roure en 1670 escrite par moi Jehean Bonhomme feodiste d'Antraigues" (AAE MD France 1626, f. 369). An important collection of letters written by the marquis de Castries to Colbert is located in BN Clair. 791 and BN Clair. 792. Some of Castries' orders regarding troop movements and instructions to local consuls are found in AD Ardèche C 1059 and C 1482.

complex nature of the Crown's royal response to popular uprisings and the Crown's expectations regarding forces other than the professional, standing army to maintain order.

The Boulonnais Revolt, 1662

The county of Boulonnais was located in the frontier province of Picardy. Its strategic location on the border with the Spanish Netherlands caused it to suffer greatly during the war with Spain that ended in 1659. Like the communities along the border with Spain, the Boulonnais supported their own local militia, the *troupes boulonnaises*, that helped guard the frontiers of the kingdom. In recognition of their privileged status, they enjoyed certain tax exemptions but had always suffered under the weight of troops that regularly took their winter quarters on the frontier. In 1658, the Boulonnais offered the Crown the sum of 40,000 livres to be spared the burden of winter quarters. The following year, however, peace with Spain was concluded and no winter quarters were assigned. Despite this development, the Crown still demanded a *contribution extraordinaire* from the Boulonnais in the amount of 30,000 livres. The Boulonnais sent a deputation to Paris to protest, but this mission achieved nothing. When news of this reached the province, a revolt ensued. The largely peasant uprising was led by a petty noble of the region, Bertrand Postel, *sieur* du Clivet. The troubles grew quickly and there was some fear that it could spread to Artois, a recently conquered province also dissatisfied with the prospect of new taxes.[9]

The Crown's response to this revolt was swift. Ten companies of Gardes Françaises, 5 companies of Gardes Suisses, and 23 cavalry companies were dispatched to the region. They were accompanied by the *sieur* de Machault and a *maître des requêtes* charged with conducting the anticipated trials.[10] On 11 July 1662, the royal forces engaged and destroyed a large band of rebels at Hucquelièrs and the revolt came to an abrupt end.

The punishment would be harsh. On the judicial side, the *Gazette de France* reported that the king intended to inflict a severe punishment on the rebels. Twelve hundred rebels were to be put on trial and 400 would

[9] Simon, 17–19.

[10] Reported in the *Gazette de France* (1662) and cited in Pierre Clément, *Histoire de Colbert*, 240–241.

receive a life sentence to the galleys.[11] Colbert instructed Machault to use foreign judges since those of the region "would have too much indulgence and compassion to give an example of terror."[12] Two rebels were broken on the wheel, including Postel. Postel's family was deprived of all titles and their property confiscated.[13]

Even more ominous for the region was a letter written by Colbert to Machault in July:

> I have to tell you, secretly, that this revolt could well [persuade] the king to annul all the privileges of the Boulonnais …[These privileges] are very considerable, the people being exempt from the *tailles*, *aides*, *gabelles* and generally all sorts of taxes. [This is] why it is very important that you direct your investigations and your procedures in such a manner that it will be clear [to all] that His Majesty would be justified in carrying out this idea in case he decides to do so.[14]

Colbert informed Machault that if these privileges were eliminated they could then create *élections* in all of the parishes of Boulonnais. However, the intendant should be careful not to arbitrarily implicate neighboring regions in the revolt simply because they enjoyed similar privileges and exemptions. This would not be just, and although the king wanted to punish the *séditieux*, he also wanted to allow those who had remained loyal to retain their privileges.[15] After the initial judicial punishments were meted out, the military commander in the region, the Marshal d'Aumont, received eight blank *lettres de cachet* with orders to deliver them to eight principal inhabitants of the town of Boulougne. The Marshal was to select the eight from among those he thought had encouraged the revolt.

In reality, the town of Boulougne had had nothing to do with the revolt. The Crown chose to believe otherwise, however, and the Marshal complied with the order. Immediately, the three estates of the *hôtel de ville* of Boulougne met and decided to send another deputation to the king. In addition to requesting the release of the eight exiles, the deputation also requested the reestablishment of their region's privileges, the suppression of the 40,000 livres charge for winter quarters, a general amnesty, and a pardon for all those being sent to the galleys. In an interesting compromise, the king agreed to allow the exiles to return

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[11] *Gazette de France* (1662), cited in Simon, 20.
[12] Cited in Clément, *Histoire de Colbert*, 242.
[13] Simon, 20–22.
[14] Colbert to Machault (11 July 1662), in Colbert, *Lettres*, IV, 1.
[15] Ibid.

and restored the Boulonnais' tax privileges, but the 40,000 livres annual tax for winter quarters remained. This was certainly a significant victory for the Crown.

Because it occurred so early in the reign of Louis XIV, the revolt of the Boulonnais also has the distinction of being the only revolt that receives substantial mention in the king's memoirs, prepared in 1670 and intended for the instruction of the Dauphin. The king discusses the Boulonnais militia, commenting that it was dispersed throughout the region but could be easily assembled if needed. "Under this pretext," wrote the king,

> [The Boulonnais] have for a long time considered themselves exempt from contributing in any fashion to the *taille*. I wanted to impose on them a very small sum, solely to make them know that I have the power and the right to do so. At first, this produced a bad effect, but the use that I made of [the opportunity], albeit with pain and difficulty, has had a good outcome [with respect to] the future. The people, frightened by something that appeared new to them, or secretly incited by the nobility, rose up against my orders. The consideration and compassion of those to whom I confided the execution of [the edict] being mistaken for timidity or for weakness … augmented the revolt instead of appeasing it. Six thousand rebels assembled in various areas. Their fury could not be calmed. I sent troops to punish them. They dispersed for the most part [and] I pardoned those whose retreat demonstrated [their] remorse. Some, more obstinate in their error, were taken arms in hand and delivered to justice. Their crime merited death [but] I saw to it that most of them were only sentenced to the galleys. I would have spared them even this punishment if I had not thought [that] in this circumstance I should follow my reason rather than my inclination."[16]

One can only wonder if the king's comment about a "good outcome for the future" referred to the impression the punishment would make on other potential troublemakers, or the 40,000 livres per year that would now be entering the royal coffers. However this may be, the royal response to the revolt of the Boulonnais demonstrates a number of interesting points. First, the revolt was repressed quickly and effectively by the dispatch of royal troops detached from the regular army. As shall be seen, this stands in stark contrast to the promptness and efficacy of the royal response to subsequent revolts. This uncharacteristic effectiveness resulted from the rebellious region's proximity to the frontier and the fact that large bodies of regular troops were already

[16] Louis XIV, *Mémoires pour l'instruction*, 145.

garrisoned along the frontier and in nearby towns.[17] The revolt is also of interest because it demonstrates a willingness to use the pretext of punishing a revolt to either strip regions of privileges and tax exemptions that stood in the way of greater fiscal centralization or to use the threat of such an action to impose new taxes. In either case, the result would be a new source of revenue for the king's coffers. In the case of the Boulonais revolt, the Crown made it known that because of the revolt the province might lose all of its privileges. This made the Boulonnais notables more amenable to the idea of a compromise in which the region would retain its traditional privileges but would henceforth agree to pay a new annual tax for the support of the king's armies.

Finally, Louis XIV's own account of the revolt, wherein he suggests that perhaps the people were "secretly incited by the nobility" suggests a distrust of that class, likely stemming from his recent experience with the Fronde. The unsettling noble assemblies in Normandy, Anjou, and Poitou in the late 1650s only reinforced this sentiment. This distrust would remain with the king throughout his reign and, as will be demonstrated in later chapters, is clearly expressed in the royal correspondence regarding subsequent revolts. This enduring royal suspicion of aristocratic involvement in popular rebellion is something that should be considered when discussing the development of a collaborative relationship between the Crown and the French nobility under Louis XIV.

The Audijos Revolt, 1664–1665

The Audijos revolt began when the French Crown attempted to expand the collection of the *gabelle* into regions that had been traditionally exempt from this hated salt tax.[18] Initial resistance took the familiar forms of attacks on royal officials, the sacking of royal tax bureaus, and the widespread salt smuggling to evade and undermine the collection of the new tax. Unlike other examples of popular resistance to the *gabelle*, the revolt that began in Chalosse in 1664 represented a particularly grave threat because it took place in a region that bordered France's

[17] SHAT A[1] 174, f. 9. Troops were garrisoned at Abbéville, Amiens, and Montreuil.

[18] The regions of Labourd, Navarre, Soule, Béarn and Bigorre were *pays francs*, or outside of the royal monopoly on the sale of salt.

longtime adversary: Spain. Widespread popular support along with the proximity of a foreign sanctuary for the rebels allowed the revolt to develop into a sustained, small-scale, low-intensity guerrilla conflict that lasted for several years. Because of these unique characteristics, the Audijos revolt also generated a more vigorous royal response than other *gabelle*-related disturbances.

The first stirrings of revolt appeared in April 1664, when approximately twenty agents and guards of the new tax bureaus established in Hagetmau were attacked. The agents retreated and their bureaus were sacked. This calmed the situation for a time, but the troubles soon recommenced. The intendant with responsibility for the region was Claude Pellot, a *client* of Colbert and related to him by marriage. Pellot was assisted in his efforts by two officers: François d'Epinay, marquis de Saint-Luc and *lieutenant général* of Lower Guyenne, and Henri de Baylens, marquis de Poyanne and *lieutenant général* in Béarn and Navarre.

Pellot was a man with some experience dealing with discontented populations, and had earned a reputation for being merciless in his punishments of those who engaged in revolt.[19] When the disturbances began in April, there were two companies of dragoons stationed in the province. Pellot immediately requested permission to send them to Hagetmau to end the revolt and to remain there until the guilty had been tried and punished.[20] Hagetmau, however, was situated in a barony that belonged to Duke Antoine III de Gramont, an influential nobleman who was also absentee governor of Béarn and Navarre and the town of Bayonne. Gramont, who did not wish to see royal troops entering his lands and visiting hardships upon his people, lobbied successfully at court to delay the dragoons' marching orders. As a result, it was not until July, three months after the first troubles, that the dragoons finally arrived in Hagetmau.[21]

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[19] After the 1639 revolt of the Nu-Pieds in Normandy, Pellot's first patron, Chancellor Pierre Séguier, appointed him to the *parlement* of Rouen. Pellot subsequently served as *maître des requêtes* and then intendant in Grenoble. This was followed by appointments in French-occupied Catalonia, Poitou, and Limousin. For Pellot's biography see O'Reilly, *Mémoires sur la vie publique et privée de Claude Pellot*, 2 vols (Paris, 1881).

[20] BN Mél Colb 120, f. 329, Pellot to Colbert (26 May 1664) in Communay, 93.

[21] Pellot to Colbert (25 July 1664) in Communay, 116. When the dragoons did arrive, Gramont, no doubt seeing an opportunity for compensation, complained that the soldiers pillaged the region around Hagetmau and burned several houses, including those belonging to members of the local nobility. Pellot explained that the houses had

By the end of August, several of those involved in the revolt at Hagetmau had been captured and executed. This did not end the troubles, however, and the revolt continued to enjoy support from a large percentage of the population.[22] The intendant also suspected that the local nobility were involved in the troubles and wrote as much to Colbert.[23]

It was also around this time that Bernard d'Audijos, a petty noble from Chalosse, assumed *de facto* leadership of the revolt. Audijos had some military experience, having served for several years in the royal regiment Créqui during the Fronde. When the regiment disbanded in 1661, Audijos returned to his home town of Coudures in Chalosse, the birthplace of the current revolt.[24]

In October 1664, Captain Boisset, leading one of the *brigades du sel* stationed at Landes, warned a group of stakeholders in Paris that the situation in the region was increasingly unstable and perilous for him and his men. "The number of [rebel] bands grows every day," wrote the officer. "This past night they have been here to see our positions … everyone is against us … [I]t is extremely tiring to be always on guard [and] stationed in two houses that have no defenses."[25] The captain requested that regular troops be sent to support him, arguing that infantry were preferable to cavalry as the latter were ill suited for the region's terrain. One month later, this same Boisset was killed in an ambush.[26]

Over the winter, the revolt threatened to expand beyond Chalosse and intercepted letters suggested that Audijos enjoyed growing support throughout Guyenne. Pellot complained that the two dragoon companies at his disposal were ineffective and that their officers "lacked vigor."[27] In January, the marquis de Saint-Luc informed one of the companies' officers of the intendant's concerns:

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been burned to provide better security for the troops. Pellot to Colbert (6 August 1664) in Communay, 117.

[22] No less than forty parishes according to the intendant. Pellot to Colbert (6 August 1664) in Communay, 117.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Michel Ferron, *Un cadet de Gascogne: Bernard Daudijos (1638–1677)* (Extrait du Bulletin de la Société de Borda, 1962).

[25] M. de Boisset to "Messieurs les intéressés du convoi de Bordeaux à Paris" (1 October 1664) in Communay, 121.

[26] Pellot to Colbert (31 October 1664) in Communay, 128.

[27] Pellot to Colbert (29 December 1664) in Communay, 140.

> Monsieur, I am obliged to advise you that some are complaining to the king of the modest effort you are making to repress the raids and thievery of Audijos and [to seek justice for] the assassinations of several officers and *cavaliers* of the *convoi*. With [Audijos] being so close, if you do not act against him, I myself will be forced to complain [and] I am quite sure that this will create a very unpleasant situation for you. At the Court, I have been informed that they want to recall you and replace you with other troops.[28]

In January, Pellot and Saint-Luc requested additional forces from the Crown.[29] Although the intendant originally requested two additional companies of cavalry and twenty of infantry, this was later reduced to seven companies of dragoons and cavalry and four of infantry. In addition, Saint-Luc detached companies from the royal garrisons at Blaye, Chateau Trompette (in Bordeaux), Saint Jean de Pied de Port, and Navanans to support the dragoons who were to occupy Saint Sever, Mont-de Marsan, and Grenade.[30] Saint-Luc also wanted to send forces into Béarn because Audijos and his men frequently sought refuge in the lands of the duke de Gramont. Saint-Luc, however, feared that ordering troops into Béarn would offend Gramont and insisted on obtaining Colbert's permission before ordering the dragoons to march.[31]

By late January 1665, approximately 1,200 soldiers were either in the region or marching towards it, including four companies of dragoons, one company of cavalry and several companies of infantry.[32] Saint-Luc was encouraged by this and reported to Colbert that the mere news of the march of reinforcements would inspire the local nobility and the communities to take "vigorous action against Audijos and his accomplices" and prompt them to take personal responsibility for the security of the tax bureaus and the guards.[33]

Despite this influx of troops, Audijos continued to elude the authorities and to stage raids and ambushes against the agents of the tax bureaus. On numerous occasions when the royal forces pressed him too closely, he crossed into Spain. The annoyed intendant organized a

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[28] Letter of 3 January 1665 in Communay, 142.
[29] Pellot to Colbert (29 December 1664) in Communay, 140–141.
[30] Saint-Luc to Colbert (19 January 1665) in Communay, 146.
[31] Saint-Luc to Colbert (16 January 1665) in Communay, 145.
[32] "Controlle des troupes qui marchent en Chalosse" (26 January 1665) in Communay, 152.
[33] Saint-Luc to Colbert (9 January 1665) in Communay, 143.

raid into Spanish territory to capture Audijos. When this venture failed and the Spanish complained of the violation, Pellot accused them of giving asylum to the rebel.

In early 1665, the revolt took on a new and dangerous aspect when the inhabitants of the valleys of the Lavedan, near Tarbes, rose in revolt. The intendant and Saint-Luc told Colbert that Audijos had persuaded the Lavedannais to revolt with false rumors about the Crown's desire to impose the *gabelle*.[34] In reality, the revolts were sparked by the arrival of a regiment of dragoons at Lourdes, a key town of the region that controlled access to the valleys. Audijos had frequently sought refuge in these valleys and the authorities had decided to send a force into the region to hunt him down.

In February, soon after the regiment arrived at Lourdes, the inhabitants of the Lavedan valleys assembled a 6,000 strong "peasant army," seized all the mountain passes, and marched on the town. According to an account provided by the bishop of Tarbes, the commander of the dragoons met with the representatives of the Lavedannais outside the city walls and informed them that his orders were to demand Audijos, dead or alive. If they did this, his dragoons would leave the town within an hour after taking Audijos. The representatives of the Lavedannais said they would have to consult with the *syndics* of all the valleys and would send the commander a written reply the following day.[35]

Despite this promising start, the situation developed into a stalemate that extended into March and saw the dragoons essentially besieged in the town. In early March, however, Saint-Luc and Pellot arrived at the head of reinforcements consisting of four companies of infantry and one company of cavalry. A militia force of 300 men had also assembled from the nearby towns.[36] According to Saint-Luc, when these troops arrived the rebellious Lavedannais dispersed.

This short-lived revolt ended peacefully, with no military encounters between royal forces and the rebels. Saint-Luc petitioned for a royal pardon on behalf of the Lavedannais, arguing that they had always been loyal subjects of the Crown and had frequently provided a valuable service by guarding the mountain passes against any Spanish undertakings. Saint-Luc also claimed that during the recent trou-

[34] Pellot to Colbert (1 March 1665) in Communay, 164; Saint-Luc to Colbert (5 March 1665) in Communay, 165.

[35] Letter of the bishop of Tarbes (28 February 1665) in Communay, 160.

[36] Ferron, 460.

bles they had turned down an offer from a "Spanish gentleman" of weapons and money to assist them with their revolt.[37] Perhaps in recognition of their past service, or more likely to undermine the efforts of Spanish agents and avoid further destabilization of the region, the king pardoned the Lavedannais and reaffirmed their exemption from the *gabelle*.

To the west, the city of Bayonne represented another related "front" in the operations against Audijos. The intendant was convinced the city was providing refuge and support for the rebel leader. When he sent men into Bayonne to arrest a known accomplice of Audijos, it caused a riot in the streets.[38] Following this incident Pellot told the *échevins* that he would be sure to inform the king that they were incapable of controlling the rabble in their streets and could not enforce the king's orders.[39] To Colbert, the intendant wrote that he found it frustrating that "the magistrates of a city of this importance cannot control the people and that the murderers and assassins, guilty of so many enormous crimes, find refuge and asylum there."[40] More importantly, Pellot warned, "If there is no punishment, I fear for the security of the *droits du sel* in this region."[41] According to the intendant, Bayonne was the only city in France where the authority of the king was challenged and the current circumstances presented an excellent opportunity to rectify that situation.[42] Pellot requested that sufficient troops, preferably infantry, be sent to Bayonne to enforce the king's authority.

The intendant must not have concealed his true objectives very carefully because one town official complained to Colbert that Pellot's plan to send troops into Bayonne created great suspicions in the city, among the Basques, and all along the border that the troops were merely a pretense to establish new taxes "contrary to the conditions under which they had gladly become subjects of His Majesty."[43] As was the case with Béarn, however, the marquis de Saint-Luc refused to order troops into Bayonne without the explicit order of the king.

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[37] Saint-Luc to Colbert (20 March 1665) in Communay, 171.
[38] Communay, 190.
[39] Pellot to the *échevins* and *jurats* of Bayonne (2 May 1665) in Communay, 195.
[40] Pellot to Colbert (5 May 1665) in Communay, 199.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] De Cheveney to Colbert (3 July 1665) in Communay, 237.

After Pellot made several requests to Colbert, the necessary orders were finally obtained.[44] However, it was not until July that three companies of infantry finally entered Bayonne. Such a small force perhaps suggests that the Crown did not share the intendant's conviction as to the seriousness of the town's crimes.

In his attempts to repress the revolt waged by Audijos, Béarn proved to be a source of continual frustration for the intendant. He was convinced that many in Béarn were aiding Audijos and his men.[45] As mentioned earlier, the duke de Gramont did not like the prospect of soldiers marching across his lands and at the beginning of the revolt his efforts delayed attempts to have two companies of dragoons sent to Hagetmau, the birthplace of the revolt situated on his lands. Although eventually these dragoons were ordered to Hagetmau (in July 1664) the duke obtained a royal order for their withdrawal in early 1665, much to the chagrin of the intendant.[46]

The military commander in Lower Guyenne, the marquis de Saint-Luc, repeatedly resisted Pellot's suggestions to send soldiers into Béarn until he had received written orders from the king. Béarn was outside of Saint-Luc's jurisdiction and he did not want to exceed his authority. The complications created by Béarn's unique situation prompted Pellot to complain to Colbert. "Béarn is indebted to M. Gramont because it deserves to be punished," wrote the intendant. "Audijos has been received in Orteis, Marsan, and other areas [of the province] as a liberator [even] after the murder of [Captain] Boisset."[47] According to the intendant, Audijos' audacity was inspired at least in part by knowledge of the sanctuary awaiting him in Béarn and the support he could expect from the province's inhabitants.[48]

In August 1665, one again finds Pellot pressuring Colbert to send troops into Béarn to punish those involved in the revolt. In an appeal to Colbert's concern for the royal coffers, the intendant argued that without troops the communities would never pay the fines and arrears that they owed to the *fermier générale*. If the *fermier générale* could not collect revenue from the Béarnaise communities, he would then be

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[44] Pellot to Colbert (10 May 1665), in Communay, 208; Pellot to Colbert (2 July 1665) in Communay, 235.

[45] Pellot to Colbert (13 March 1665) in Communay, 166.

[46] Communay, 147.

[47] Pellot to Colbert (1 March 1665) in Communay, 165.

[48] Ibid.

justified in turning to the king to get payment for the great sums he had advanced.[49]

When Saint-Luc eventually did send several companies of dragoons into Béarn in 1665, the bishop of Lescar, president of the Estates of Béarn, complained to Colbert that Saint-Luc had not let the Parlement verify his commission to command troops in Béarn in the absence of the duke de Gramont. In a letter of 5 September 1665, the bishop defended the province from the intendant's attacks and tried to demonstrate that Béarn had no need of royal troops to deal with Audijos. The bishop argued that the province had acted quickly when Audijos and his men had entered Béarn, and their action forced the rebels to flee across the border into Spain:

> "Yes, Monsieur, I can tell you in truth that it was not the dragoons of the king that chased these *séditieux* from this province. It was the Parlement, the nobility, the militia [and] the people who raised up against [Audijos] … after the Parlement made them aware of his crimes."[50]

The bishop's testimony on the effectiveness of the local forces in the struggle against Audijos was well timed. Soon after, Pellot was informed that five companies of the regiment of Navarre originally slated to remain in the province during winter quarters were needed elsewhere. This again left Pellot with just two dragoon companies and prompted renewed efforts to find adequate military forces to maintain order. Pellot's first action was to request that Saint-Luc and the marquis de Poyanne, *lieutenant du roi* in Béarn, governor of Dax and Saint Sever, and *sénéchal* of Lannes, be permitted to use detachments of soldiers from the small royal garrisons already established at Dax, Bayonne, Lourde, Navanains, and Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port.[51] He also stressed that Poyanne should be able to assemble enough forces from his own lands and from those among his powerful friends to maintain order "if he applies himself as he should." To aid Poyanne, Pellot suggested it would be a good idea if Colbert sent him orders to assemble the militia and again suggested that Poyanne be allowed to make detachments from nearby garrisons.[52]

In the months that followed, efforts to capture or kill Audijos continued to meet with little success. In June 1666, after several fruitless

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[49] Pellot to Colbert (20 August 1665) in Communay, 312.
[50] Bishop of Lescar to Colbert (5 September 1665) in Communay, 326.
[51] Pellot to Colbert (20 November 1665) in Communay, 352.
[52] Pellot to Colbert (30 December 1665) in Communay, 367.

years of chasing his elusive quarry, Pellot finally admitted defeat. "If one wants to pull this thorn from one's foot, one could pardon him and give him some employ outside the kingdom so that no one talks more of him. One can leave the details to M. de Poyanne who will do it … in such a manner that the authority of the king will not be harmed."[53] Pellot's intriguing suggestion was not acted upon and Audijos remained free for another nine years. However, in July 1675, Audijos did receive a royal pardon and an employ that would take him outside the kingdom: he was given command of a regiment of dragoons comprising four companies whose ranks were filled with many of his old followers.[54] He died two years later fighting at Messina in Sicily.

An examination of the royal response to the Audijos Revolt reveals, albeit on a much smaller scale, many of the same issues that characterized the royal response to revolts in the later years of the reign of Louis XIV. It proved difficult to find sufficient regular forces to serve in the province and when they were deployed to the province it was often only after a long delay and they rarely remained in the province for extended periods. Consequently, the royal authorities relied upon a mix of coercive forces to maintain order, including militia, forces raised from among the local nobility, paramilitary units like the *brigades du sel* as well as regular infantry, and dragoons.

When it came to military operations involving regular troops, the king or Colbert insisted on overseeing even the smallest details. On 7 October 1664, for instance, Pellot requested permission to change the location of two dragoon companies stationed in the province. The intendant did not receive the necessary orders until 3 November.[55] Similarly, Saint-Luc and the intendant had to request permission before they were allowed to make use of detachments from the royal garrisons situated in some of the towns along the Spanish border. The tendency to micromanage military operations from Paris (and later Versailles) would be a significant factor in subsequent revolts.

Military operations were also plagued by questions of jurisdiction, as evidenced by Saint-Luc's refusal to send troops into Béarn and Bayonne for fear of angering the duke de Gramont, as well as the bishop of Lescar's insistence on seeing Saint Luc's commission authorizing

[53] Pellot to Colbert (5 June 1666) in Communay, 393.

[54] It seems likely that the revolts in Brittany in 1675 influenced the decision to give Audijos a pardon and to remove him from the volatile region.

[55] Communay, 128–130.

him to command troops in Béarn in the absence of the Gramont. Colbert likely entertained notions of using the opportunity provided by the revolt to reduce provincial privileges and to weaken obstructive provincial institutions such as the Estates of Béarn and the Parlement at Pau. The successful efforts by Gramont to restrict the use of royal soldiers in Béarn, despite the fact that this region was supporting Audijos and providing sanctuary for him and his band, suggests that Louis XIV was not yet comfortable with the idea of destroying provincial liberties, confronting powerful members of the nobility, and risking turmoil in a province situated on such an important frontier. The limitations of the coercive tools at the Crown's disposal are best demonstrated by the fact that after several years of revolt, the Crown emerged from the revolt with little to show for its efforts. One historian of the revolt accurately summarized the scorecard of the conflict from the royal perspective, observing that "the extension of the fisc had been successfully resisted … independent local bodies had remained intact, and an audacious rebel had become the commander of a royal regiment. Even absolutism, it seems, was obliged to govern through consent."[56]

The Roure Revolt, 1670

Like so many other revolts of the period, the one that exploded in the Vivarais in the spring of 1670 resulted from the rumor of a new tax. According to one chronicler, "every day one talked of new taxes, real or not, that threatened to plunge [the people of Vivarais] into their final misery."[57] The wildest rumor involved a tax targeting the families of newborn children. According to the rumor, those families blessed with a newborn son would be charged 10 livres while those with a newborn girl would pay just five. Adding to the misery and tension, the province had recently suffered through an extremely harsh winter that had killed off all of Languedoc's olive trees from Montpellier to Aubenas. Finally, the spring of 1670 began with a series of violent storms that threatened to complete the devastation of the region.[58] The growing fear of famine,

[56] Salmon, 145.
[57] Dourille, 340.
[58] As one chronicler observed, "The loss of all [these] symbols of peace could only presage a disastrous war." See *Fidèle relation*, 377.

economic hardship, and the rampant rumors of new taxes, created an explosive atmosphere.

In the midst of this situation, a *commis* of one of the tax farms arrived in Aubenas and announced a new contract for the collection of a tax on workhorses and *cabaretiers*. Anyone who wished to participate in either of these contracts was told to go see the *receveur des tailles* of the diocese who would be putting the contract up for bid.[59] Upon hearing this news, the people of Aubenas rose up in revolt and chased the *commis* out of the town.

The spark at Aubenas started a fire that soon engulfed a large portion of the region, including the towns and villages of Vogüé, La Chapelle, Ailhon, and La Villedieu. On 12 May, a large group of 3–4,000 peasants entered the town of Joyeuse and pillaged the merchants's shops. On 14 May, another group of 800–900 peasants rampaged throughout the town of l'Argentière until they were eventually driven off. At the same time, other peasant mobs roamed the countryside, pillaging several small villages and the lands and houses of local officials.[60]

The peasants of Vivarais, armed with pitchforks, axes, and old muskets, had initially taken to the roads with no real organization and without formulating any precise goals.[61] Some among them, however, realized they needed a leader. In May, they found one in Antoine du Roure. Roure was a petty noble whose military experience included serving as captain of a militia company. His company was later incorporated into a militia regiment that marched in support of the king's armies, campaigning in both Flanders and Roussillon. Relying on this background, Roure tried to instill a degree of order and military discipline among the peasant mobs.[62]

On 14 May, Roure approached Aubenas with approximately 300 men. The town closed its gates, but rebel sympathizers within the town subsequently opened them. Roure's men entered, plundering several houses. The town officials and several noblemen took refuge in the chateau and did nothing.[63] Left to their own devices, thirty townsmen,

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[59] Dourille, 340.
[60] Dourille, 342–343.
[61] Vogüé, I, 307.
[62] The *Fidèle relation* identifies the man as Jacques Roure and suggests he was forced to lead the rebels against his will. "Jacques" was a generic name often applied to those involved in peasant rebellions (derived from *la jacquerie*). See *Fidèle relation*, 382.
[63] *Fidèle relation*, 392.

"consulting nothing but their courage," armed themselves as best they could and attacked a group of Roure's men as they were leaving, arms loaded down with booty. Four of the rebels were killed, several were taken prisoner, and the gates were closed once again.[64] The town bells sounded, however, and peasants from 17 surrounding parishes marched on Aubenas, threatening to burn country houses and to destroy the harvest if the prisoners were not freed. The townsmen of Aubenas decided to release the prisoners.

At this moment, the *lieutenant général* in the province, the marquis de Castries, was at Bourg-Saint-Andéol. On 15 May, he issued an edict forbidding armed assemblies and the spreading of false rumors about new taxes on penalty of death. Castries also ordered "all gentlemen and magistrates" to hunt down and arrest anyone who failed to obey the edict.[65]

Castries began trying to assemble a military force that could be used against the rebels. He ordered the governor's company of guards to march to his aid, as well as the cavalry company of the region's *prévôt general*; issued orders to raise up the militia and sent requests to his friends among the local nobility to come join him as soon as possible, and began preparations to stockpile food and forage for the troops that he expected to come into the province.[66] He then traveled to Nîmes and asked the town to provide him with 200 men to use against the rebels. When he was informed that no men were ready, the marquis warned the officials of the heavily Protestant town that he would be sure to let the king know that "when it was a question of [His Majesty's] service one could barely find 200 men in Nîmes, but when it was a question of engaging in [acts of disobedience] and revolt one could find 3,000."[67]

While Castries was preparing the royal response, Roure decided to attack Villeneuve-de-Berg. Roure's goal was to drive out the *grand prévôt* and his company of *archers* who were stationed there and to "exterminate" any tax collectors they could find.[68] Leaving about 6,000 men near Aubenas, Roure marched on Villeneuve-de-Berg with a force of 2,000 men.[69] The *grand prévôt* fled to Bourg-Saint-Andéol while the consuls of Villeneuve-de-Berg, forewarned of the approaching rebels,

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[64] Dourille, 343–344.
[65] *Fidèle relation*, 384; BN Clair. 791, f. 397; AD Ardèche C 1482, f. 90.
[66] AD Ardèche C 1482, f. 78–79.
[67] BN Clair. 791, f. 431. *Receveur des tailles* to Colbert (27 May 1670).
[68] *Fidèle relation*, 387.
[69] Ibid.

hastily organized the town's militia. Roure and his band arrived before the town on 24 May. Finding the gates closed, Roure ransacked the town's *faubourgs* and then pulled back.

In the meantime, Castries' preparations continued. The first companies of militia arrived, including a company of 53 from Villeneuve-sur-Avignon and 100 militia marching from Beaucaire who were joined by members of the local nobility. Other companies were on the way from Nîmes and Uzès.[70] "The nobility from all parts of lower Languedoc," wrote Castries, "have rushed forth to proclaim their attachment and loyalty to the king. I will leave it to M. Tremolet who knows them all, to tell you their names and [the details of] the assistance they are providing us on this occasion."[71] Castries was quick to point out, however, that the militias were of dubious quality and that if the king wished to reestablish his authority he must send a quantity of regular troops.[72]

Soon after, Castries received delegations from both Aubenas and the town of L'Argentière requesting that he provide them with royal garrisons to assist in maintaining order. Castries granted both of these requests, but officials in Aubenas greeted the news with mixed feelings.[73] The commander of the town militia, for example, feared that the arrival of royal troops would only serve to aggravate the situation.[74] His fears were well founded, for when the garrison arrived at Aubenas, it did in fact spark a new and more ferocious uprising.[75] The newly arrived soldiers, many of them Swiss, were driven into the chateau, leaving the rebels masters of the city.[76] Roure asked the soldiers to surrender. The *commandant* refused and the king's soldiers suddenly found themselves in the ignominious position of being besieged by a mob of peasants.[77]

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[70] BN Clair. 791, f. 439, Castries to Colbert (27 May 1670).

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

[73] *Fidèle relation*, 386; Dourille, 346.

[74] *Fidèle relation*, 393, 397; Dourille, 350.

[75] The author of the *Fidèle relation* suggests that "one can truthfully say that the sending of this garrison was the cause of all the misfortunes that followed." *Fidèle relation*, 396.

[76] The author of the *Fidèle relation* takes great pains to defend the Aubenais for their failure to defend the city, arguing that they had tried to assist the soldiers, but when they saw the soldiers taking refuge in the chateau "in a shocking and precipitous" manner, such "cowardice disconcerted these brave townsmen and convinced them that the entire town had declared [itself] against the orders of the king," whereupon they themselves took refuge in the Jesuit college. See *Fidèle relation*, 399.

[77] Dourille, 350.

The local lord, the prince d'Harcourt and his brother-in-law, the count de Brancas, negotiated with Roure, promising that if the peasants laid down their arms the two of them would use all of their influence with the king to obtain a general amnesty. They assured Roure that the king would agree to this and that they would inform him of the king's will in fifteen days. During this fifteen-day period, no one was to be allowed to leave the chateau and Roure was responsible for providing supplies to the beleaguered garrison.[78] Fifteen days passed with no word from the king and Roure suddenly realized he had been tricked. The 15-day truce had been a delaying tactic, giving the Crown time to dispatch additional forces to the province and allowing Castries to make additional preparations.

On 18 June, Castries wrote Colbert that he was still awaiting the king's troops that had been ordered to march from Guyenne and Auvergne. In the meantime, he wanted to pull a company from Montpellier and one from Aiguesmortes and use them to reinforce the garrison of the chateau at Sommières. He also requested that Colbert ask the king to order the *syndics* of the dioceses of Nîmes and Uzès to pay the *subsistance* of the 4–500 militia from their dioceses for one month, beginning on the first day that their march took them out of their home dioceses.[79]

In July, units of the royal army began to arrive. Some units marched from Lyon while others came from Roussillon.[80] The *faux* negotiations then underway with Roure made the timing of the troops' arrival very important. In a letter to Colbert, Castries noted that the troops marching from Roussillon would not arrive until late July. Since a premature arrival of troops coming from Lyon would reveal the insincerity of the negotiations, Castries wanted to have those troops remain near Montelimar for several days until they could coordinate with the troops coming from Roussillon. This would allow all of the units "to enter into Vivarais together" in a much more impressive display of military might.[81]

The little army that eventually assembled near Viviers, just south of Montelimar, was impressive and included a number of the most

[78] Ibid.

[79] BN Clair. 791, f. 527, Castries to Colbert (18 June 1670). See also AD Ardèche C 1482, f. 74.

[80] BN Clair. 792, f. 43, Castries to Colbert (19 July 1670).

[81] BN Clair. 792, f. 51, Castries to Colbert (17 July 1670).

experienced units in the French army: the musketeer companies of the *maison du roi* (under the command of *monsieur* D'Artagnan); six companies of Gardes Françaises, 3–400 Gardes Suisses, 3 regiments of infantry, four squadrons of cavalry, two companies of dragoons, 7–800 militia from local towns and a "quantity" of local nobility called up under the *ban* and *arrière ban*. The total force numbered approximately 3,000 infantry and 1500–1600 cavalry and dragoons.[82]

In the meantime, the king let the rebels know through Castries that although he intended to pardon most of the guilty, he was going to punish those most directly involved. It was also announced that the king expected full compliance with his edicts on several of the new taxes. According to one chronicler, the king wanted these taxes levied just for one year as a symbolic gesture of obedience and nothing more. Nevertheless, this resulted in a new explosion of violence.[83]

By this time, however, the royal troops were already in place and ready to march. On 25 July, the royal forces arrived at Pradel. Roure was camped nearby at La Villedieu with a force of approximately 2,000 men. Castries attacked the rebels, surprising them in their sleep and killed hundreds in an action that was more butchery than combat. Roure fled and was subsequently captured at Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port as he prepared to flee into the Pyrenees. On 20 October 1670, the rebel leader was executed at Montpellier. On 26 July, the royal troops met no resistance as they entered Aubenas, the massacre at Pradel having cowed the rebels. On 30 July, Castries followed up this victory by promising a pardon to all those who returned to their homes within three days.[84] By 7 August, Castries proclaimed the revolt ended, the king's authority reestablished, and justice satisfied.[85]

The punishments for the rebellious inhabitants and parishes included numerous executions, banishments, and life sentences to service in the galleys. Later in August, however, the king issued a general pardon for all of the inhabitants of the regions, with the exception of Roure and 50–60 of his followers.[86]

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[82] Dourille, 423; Vogüé, I, 309.

[83] *Fidèle relation*, 390.

[84] BN Clair. 792, f. 109.

[85] BN Clair. 792, f. 147, Castries to Colbert (7 August 1670).

[86] *Fidèle relation*, 428. In formulating the wording of the pardon, it was mentioned explicitly that the rebels already sentenced to death or to the galleys were not included in the amnesty, thus giving the royal authorities the legal justification to proceed with the confiscation of their property.

In addition to the human costs of the repression, there were other prices to be paid. The city of Aubenas was deprived of its representation to both the Estates of Languedoc and to the *états particuliers* of Vivarais. The bell towers of the towns of Vogüé, Ailhon, La Chapelle, and La Villedieu were demolished and even the bells themselves were destroyed.[87] The guiltiest towns received fines to defray the costs of the damages they caused: Aubenas was ordered to pay 500 *écus*, La Chapelle, 800 livres, and Vogüé, 500 livres. La Villedieu and Ailhon were both ordered to pay 300 livres in addition to the "the costs of justice" meaning the costs and fees associated with trials and sentencing.[88]

A number of royal troops remained in the area for several months and the author of the main source for the revolt paints a stark portrait of the hardships inflicted on the general population by the occupying soldiers. "The foragers of the army spread out throughout the region … livestock, grains, money, furnishings, everything was taken … entire villages were pillaged [and] hamlets burned, and anyone found with arms in hand was executed on the spot."[89] A more recent historian writes of the military occupation as a "terroristic repression" inflicted by authorities.[90]

There is a distinct possibility, however, that such claims are exaggerated. It should be noted that all accounts of the revolt and its repression rely exclusively on the few, short sentences appearing in the "Fidèle rélation de ce qui s'est passé en la ville d'Aubenas pendant les derniers mouvements du pays-bas du Vivarais, ou récit de la révolte de Roure" written in 1670 by an anonymous citizen of Aubenas. An investigation of the communal and municipal archives reveals numerous claims that show a great percentage of the costs associated with supporting the troops was paid through a series of loans arranged by one of the local *syndics*. These claims were then presented at the next meeting of the Estates for reimbursement.[91] When one remembers that the *Fidèle relation* appeared in 1670, one can speculate that its author might have

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[87] Vogüé, I, 310.

[88] *Fidèle relation*, 435.

[89] *Fidèle relation*, 427. See also Dourille, 369.

[90] Gerard Sabatier, "De la révolte de Roure (1670) aux masques armés (1783): la mutation du phénomène contestaire en Vivarais", in Jean Nicolas (ed.), *Mouvements populaires et conscience sociale, XVIe–XIXe siècles* (Actes du colloque de Paris, 24–26 May 1984).

[91] Some of these claims can be found in AD Ardèche C 1482 and AD Ardèche C 1059.

had a personal interest, or have been convinced by local officials, to exaggerate the sufferings of the region in order to garner support for upcoming reimbursement claims.[92] In August, one also finds the intendant, Claude Bazin de Bezons, writing to Colbert about arranging payment for the support of the troops:

> I have written to M. the marquis de Louvois and have sent him an *état* of the troops [in the province] …[The] *subsistance* amounts to 75,000 livres per month, not counting expenses for … transports, etc … I have only received [from Louvois] 40,000 livres and have had to borrow 10,000 livres from the *receveveur des tailles* to cover the [rest] … [This will] be reimbursed from the money that will be sent [later].[93]

Six days later the intendant reported that the funds had been received and that the *receveur* would be reimbursed.[94] It must be recognized that there were numerous hardships associated with supporting a garrison of the king's soldiers, including physical abuse, stolen or broken possessions, and extortion. It is nevertheless interesting to note that during what is often portrayed as a brutal and exemplary punishment visited upon a rebellious region, the Crown supported a large portion of the costs associated with the military occupation.

The Roure revolt of 1670, like other revolts covered in this chapter, illustrates a number of themes that will be developed more fully in the subsequent pages. First among these is the slow response of the royal troops to the revolt. It required more than two months for regular units to arrive on the scene, marching from both Lyon and Roussillon. In the meantime, royal authorities engaged in deceptive negotiations in

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[92] A similar dynamic appears to have been at work with regard to the *dragonnades* in Languedoc and Vivarais, wherein a significant amount of the lodging costs associated with the forced conversions were covered by loans, issued either voluntarily or under duress, by local notables, often Protestant, who could then claim reimbursement with interest at the next meeting of the estates. It might also have been a simple case of royal propaganda, similar to that which one sees on the pages of the *Gazette de France*, where one finds the brutality and implacable nature of royal justice exaggerated in order to impress foreign and domestic audiences. Similarly, some inhabitants of Aubenas claimed that authorities in the province exaggerated the extent of the revolt in order to present a more dramatic picture of their success in achieving its repression: "[The authorities] exaggerate the events to make themselves important for having stopped it …From a stinging fly [*mouche*] [they] make an elephant and from this general revolt of a capital city of one diocese [they make] a monster of frightening proportions that they have crushed like … Hercules, although in reality it was only a phantom that disappeared at the mere sound of the drums of His Majesty's troops." Cited in Sabatier, 141.

[93] BN Clair. 792, f. 191, Bézons to Colbert (17 August 1670).

[94] BN Clair. 792, f. 219, Bézons to Colbert (23 August 1670).

order to win the necessary time for troops to arrive. In the interim, one again witnesses anxious attempts by the royal authorities to assemble the necessary manpower from whatever sources available, in this case town militias, members of the local nobility, the governor's guards, and the *grand prévôt*'s company of *archers* of the *maréchaussée*.

One also sees the Crown taking advantage of the revolt to strip rebellious entities, in this case individual communities and towns, of various privileges. Several communities lost their right to have consuls and in the future, their affairs were to be handled by the *syndics*. For its supposed role as the primary foyer of the revolt, the town of Aubenas was deprived of its participation in the Estates of Languedoc and the *états particuliers* of Vivarais.[95]

Conclusion

This overview of the royal response to three revolts during the first decade of the Sun King's personal reign is by necessity more of a survey rather than a comprehensive historical analysis of the phenomenon of revolt during these early years. The 1670s were a turbulent period, particularly along the frontier with Spain and although several revolts along that frontier are not covered in this chapter they are nevertheless important and worthy of future study. Despite with such omissions and limitations this chapter reveals some interesting characteristics of the royal response to revolts and introduces several key themes that will be explored more fully in subsequent chapters.

First, the response to these revolts demonstrates the Crown's reliance on a mix of forces to contain popular uprisings and to maintain order. For instance, the Boulonnais revolt was crushed by a force of regular infantry and cavalry dispatched from a nearby region. During the long struggle against Audijos the Crown relied, at various times, on a combination of town militias, hastily assembled members of the local nobility, forces raised by the local tax farmers, and a combination of dragoons and infantry detached from service with the regular army. The Roure revolt of 1670 also relied heavily on local town militias, forces raised by the local nobility and the dispatch of regular soldiers.

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[95] The authorities also considered depriving Aubenas of its right to hold its fair and its market but it was feared that this would create hardships for other communities in the region. See BN Clair. 792, f. 287, Bézons to Colbert (16 September 1670).

Secondly, the response to these revolts demonstrates that the time required for regular army units to arrive in a region could sometimes be quite long. In both the Audijos and the Roure revolts, for example, it was several months before regular units even received orders to march to the troubled areas. Such a delay argues against the idea that regular military units were poised and ready to act as effective repressive instruments of the Crown at the first sign of trouble. The Boulonnais revolt is a notable exception, resulting from the fact that the troubled region was situated along a strategic frontier and consequently was heavily occupied and frequently traversed by the king's soldiers. When the revolt took place, the king's soldiers were conveniently positioned nearby and able to make a rapid march to the rebellious area.

Thirdly, examining the response to these revolts, and particularly that of Audijos, reveals complex issues of command, control, and jurisdiction in executing military operations aimed at restoring and maintaining order. Intendants and military commanders wrote their own letters and provided their own accounts of events to Colbert, who then presumably compared and contrasted the information arriving from these multiple sources to make his own analysis of the situation on the ground. Although in each of the above examples the intendants and the military commanders appear to have worked together in relative harmony, this would not always be the case. Jurisdictionally, such instances as the initially successful resistance of the duke de Gramont to Pellot's request to send troops into his lands to pursue Audijos and his band, and Saint-Luc's reluctance to act without an express order from the king, highlights the degree to which the interests of the nobility, local or otherwise, could influence or hinder the royal response to revolt.

Fourthly, the royal response demonstrates a desire to weaken obstructive provincial and municipal institutions and to strip them of some of their privileges. On this issue, the Crown adopted a pragmatic, opportunistic approach and we see that the Crown emerged from these three revolts with three different outcomes: In the Audijos revolt, the Crown failed to impose its will in Béarn and the neighboring regions with regard to their exemptions from taxation. The Crown chose not to press the issue, perhaps fearing continued unrest in such a strategically important region along the frontier with Spain. In 1662, the Boulonnais retained many of their original privileges and tax exemptions, but were forced to pay a newly instituted tax to support the cost of winter quarters. In the 1670 Roure revolt, we see a complete royal victory, with the

town of Aubenas deprived of its right to send deputations to both the Estates of Languedoc and to the *états particuliers* of Vivarais.

It has long been suggested that Louis XIV's experience as a child greatly influenced the manner in which he approached the phenomenon of resistance to the royal will later in his reign. The violence, popular unrest, and eventual royal humiliation that resulted from the Fronde, instilled in the Sun King a resolve to tolerate no resistance to the royal will, to rule with an iron fist, and to act quickly and ruthlessly at the first signs of popular unrest. The decisiveness and brutality with which the Crown responded to instances of popular resistance and revolt is often identified as one of the novel and defining characteristics of French absolutism under Louis XIV. While the Fronde most certainly had a traumatic impact on the young King's psyche, the character and dynamics of the royal response to popular revolts in these early years suggest that the Crown's coervive repertoire during the first years of the personal reign of Louis XIV was varied, limited, and unpredictable. Although the Fronde may have inspired in Louis XIV the desire to respond quickly and decisively to any incidents of popular resistance, he did not always possess the necessary means.

CHAPTER THREE

REGIONAL CRISIS AND ROYAL CONSOLIDATION: THE REVOLTS OF 1675

Introduction

The year 1675 was an important one in the reign of Louis XIV. In addition to the important international events revolving around the prosecution of one of Louis XIV's earliest wars, it also saw an explosion of popular violence in the western and southwestern regions of France. These revolts in Brittany and Bordeaux were the last in a long series of fiscally inspired popular disturbances that plagued France throughout much of the seventeenth-century. The royal response to these revolts represents a significant milestone in the consolidation and centralization of authority under Louis XIV.[1]

Louis XIV's response to the revolt in Brittany is usually portrayed as the brutal and bloody reaction of an absolutist monarch all too willing to use military force to crush any attempt at rebellion.[2] Nineteenth century historians reproached the governor of Brittany, the duke de

[1] The best treatment of this revolt remains Jean Lemoine, *La dévolte dite du Papier Timbré ou des Bonnets Rouges en Bretagne en 1675* (Paris, Rennes, 1898). This work contains an invaluable appendix of documents pulled from various archival sources and much of my initial narrative follows Lemoine. Also useful is Arthur de la Borderie, *La Révolte du Papier Timbré en Bretagne* (St. Brieuc, 1884) and Barthélemy Pocquet, *Histoire de Bretagne*, vol. V (Rennes, 1913). The contribution of Yvon Garlan and Claude Nières, *Les révoltes bretonnes de 1675: Papier Timbré et Bonnets Rouges* (Paris, 1975) is a convenient summation of the work done by these previous authors. Brief discussions of the revolt can also be found in Roland Mousnier, *Fureurs paysannes: Les paysans dans les révoltes du XVIIe siècle (France, Russie, Chine)* (Paris, 1967) available in translation as *Peasant Uprisings in Seventeenth Century France, Russia and China*, trans. Brian Pearce (New York, 1970). James Collins includes a chapter on the revolt in his *Classes, Estates and Order in Early Modern Brittany* (Cambridge, 1994). See also William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (New York, 1997) and Howard G. Brown, "Domestic State Violence: Repression from the Croquants to the Commune", *The Historical Journal*, 43, 3 (1999), 597–622.

[2] See, for example, Ernest Lavisse, *Louis XIV: Histoire d'un grand règne, 1643–1715* (Paris, 1908) and, more recently, Joël Cornette, *Le roi de guerre: essai sur la souveraineté dans la France du grand siècle* (Paris, 1993).

Chaulnes, for suppressing the revolt by "drowning" it in the blood of Breton peasants.[3] Another French historian has labeled the repression as one of "the most spectacular" examples of government brutality in early modern France.[4]

This harsh portrayal owes much to the celebrated letters of Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, *marquise* de Sévigné (1626–1696). Residing at Vitré in eastern Brittany at the time of the revolt, Madame de Sévigné maintained a lively correspondence with a number of individuals in Paris and elsewhere. This correspondence includes several observations on the revolt and the repression that followed. In these letters, Madame de Sévigné laments the hardships visited upon the poor peasants, and talks of the mass hanging of rebellious Bretons.[5] She dwells upon the actions of the soldiers sent to punish the revolt who, according to her, behaved "as if they were in a conquered country." These soldiers, she reported, "amuse themselves by stealing [and] the other day they roasted a little child on a spit."[6] In another letter, she describes "the sadness and desolation of the entire province" and suggests that Brittany would never recover from the harshness of the military repression.[7] It is always dangerous to ascribe undue historical influence to the writings of a single individual, but it seems clear that the letters of Madame de Sévigné had a profound influence on subsequent perceptions of the 1675 revolt. One finds her evocative statements about the revolt reproduced in nearly every general work dealing with this period, despite the fact that little of real substance concerning the revolt is contained in her letters.

This chapter will demonstrate two things: first, that the generally accepted interpretation of the repression is inaccurate: Louis XIV was not a brutal monarch seeking to inflict a severe punishment on a rebellious populace, using the army as his instrument of bloody retribution. On the contrary, Louis XIV reacted in a rather restrained fashion to a revolt that represented the most serious incidence of fiscally-inspired domestic resistance of his reign, and the role of professional soldiers in the repression was limited by numerous problems associated with relying upon the army as an instrument of domestic coercion. The second argument of this chapter is that in his response to this revolt, Louis XIV

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[3] Cited in Pocquet, 518.

[4] Cornette, 90. Cornette places the Camisards revolt in this category as well.

[5] *Lettres de Madame de Sévigné de sa famille et de ses amis*, ed. M. Monmerqué, 14 vols (Paris, 1862–1868), IV, 183.

[6] Sévigné, *Lettres*, IV, 320.

[7] *Lettres*, vol. IV, 192.

was driven more by opportunistic calculations than by a sense of righteous indignation or wounded *gloire*. The revolt presented Louis XIV with the excuse and the opportunity to extract enormous sums of money from the province in the form of punitive fines. These sums represented a windfall at a time when France was engaged in a war against the Dutch. In addition, the revolt provided Louis XIV with an excellent opportunity to weaken certain Breton provincial and municipal institutions, particularly the Parlement of Brittany, and to advance his own centralizing ambitions by implicating them in the revolt and punishing them for not fulfilling their responsibilities in maintaining public order. Similarly, the revolt in Bordeaux provided Louis XIV with the excuse to strip the troublesome municipality of many of the military exemptions and fiscal privileges it had enjoyed since its incorporation into the kingdom of France.

The chapter begins with a narrative of the revolt in the two key cities of Rennes and Nantes and in the countryside of Lower Brittany. The chapter then continues with a discussion of the royal response. This response can be divided into three phases: 1) the dispatch of a regiment of infantry and a force of 600 *maréchaussée* in the spring of 1675; 2) the arrival of an additional 6,000 soldiers in the summer and early fall of 1675; and 3) the sending of 10,000 soldiers into winter quarters in the province that December.

The revolts of 1675 in Brittany will receive the lion's share of attention in the current chapter. However, these revolts were linked to similar disturbances in Bordeaux, and the Breton uprisings should not be considered in isolation from those of the Bordelais. The chapter will therefore conclude with a brief narrative and analysis of events at Bordeaux during that troubled spring of 1675.

April–June, 1675: Troubles at Rennes and Nantes and the Response of Local Authorities

In the spring and summer of 1675, a series of popular uprisings swept through the French province of Brittany. These disturbances affected not only a significant area of the Breton countryside, but also the two premier cities of the province, Rennes and Nantes. The origins of these disturbances lay primarily in the fiscal initiatives undertaken by Louis XIV and his *contrôleur général des finances*, Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Between 1664 and 1675, no less than twelve new royal taxes drained

the financial resources of nobleman and commoner alike.[8] In 1672, Colbert drew up a budget that amounted to 71,339,000 livres, including 37,000,000 livres slated for military expenses. He had underestimated costs by a considerable margin and the actual expenses amounted to 87,000,000 livres.[9] The unexpected length of Louis XIV's Dutch War (1672–1679) resulted in additional financial burdens.

In 1674, crowning what amounted to a decade-long fiscal offensive, three new taxes were established to help offset these costs: a stamp tax required on certain official documents (the *papier timbré*); a tobacco tax; and a tax on the sale of tin- and pewter-ware. In the spring of 1675, the enforcement of these new taxes resulted in serious riots at Bordeaux. On 3 April 1675, news of the turmoil at Bordeaux arrived at Rennes and ignited a series of sympathetic disturbances. These initial troubles were relatively minor and quickly contained. Over the course of the next two weeks, however, tensions increased and on 18 April, an angry populace threatened to burn several tobacco sellers and tin- and pewter-craftsmen in their homes unless they sold their goods at the old price.[10] That afternoon a crowd of approximately 2,000 individuals descended on the place Camp-Jacquet and broke into the tobacco bureau, carrying off the furnishings and, of course, the tobacco. The crowd continued their rampage for several hours, sacking a number of other official bureaus, including that of the *papier timbré*.

The authorities were slow to respond. The governor of Rennes, Coëtlogon, was in Paris at the time and had left his son in control of the city. The younger Coëtlogon ordered Rennes' sixteen militia companies to assemble. Realizing this would take some time, and not having a moment to lose, Coëtlogon gathered a small group of about thirty noblemen and, together with some councilors of the Parlement, sallied forth into the streets and dispersed the angry crowds. Coëtlogon then ordered the gates of the city closed to "ward off a descent from the *faubourgs*" where the majority of the rioters lived.[11] The night passed relatively quietly and the next day the Parlement issued a decree for-

[8] Mousnier, *Peasant Uprisings*, 119.

[9] Pocquet, vol. V, 480.

[10] Pocquet, vol. V, 482.

[11] SHAT A^1 439, f. 495. M. de Coëtlogon *fils* to Louvois (19 April 1675). See also AD Ile et Vilaine 1BB 574. This quick response pleased the king who awarded Coëtlogon *fils* an annual pension of 1,000 *écus*. *Gazette d'Amsterdam* (2 May 1675), cited in Lemoine, 13.

bidding assemblies and the carrying of arms in the streets.[12] The situation in the city remained calm for the next several days until 25 April, when a crowd of students, butchers and *boulangers* set fire to a Protestant temple situated southwest of the town. They had heard rumors that the *commisaires* of tobacco and *papier timbré* were Protestants. Coëtlogon rode out to the site, accompanied by 200 "gentlemen and notables" but arrived too late and the temple burned to the ground.[13]

The marquis de Lavardin, *lieutenant général du roi*, arrived at Rennes later that evening. The next day he summoned the municipal assembly and offered to protect the city from the king's displeasure provided that they took measures to maintain order and punish the guilty.[14] Two days later the assembly received a letter from the duke de Chaulnes, governor of Brittany. Writing from Paris, Chaulnes informed them that Louis XIV was satisfied with their conduct thus far, being "so persuaded of your loyalty and zeal that I have had no difficulty in persuading him that [you] have played no part in this sedition."[15] Like Lavardin, however, he warned them that they must continue their work and punish the guilty individuals. The letter closed with Chaulnes announcing that he would be arriving in the province shortly.

At this point, two things should be noted about the initial response to the revolt. First, the initial disturbance at Rennes was a relatively short-lived event quickly suppressed by the quick actions of the younger Coëtlogon and his entourage of nobles. Second, neither Lavardin's announcement to the assembly, nor Chaulnes' letter suggest that Louis XIV had, as of 25 April, decided on punishing Rennes in any way. The king appeared satisfied with the way the local authorities were handling the situation.

Sometime over the course of the next week, however, it appears that Louis XIV changed his mind. On 2 May, Chaulnes arrived in the city.[16] In an ominous gesture, he refused to visit the *premier président* of the Parlement, who was waiting to receive the returning governor.[17] The

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[12] BN Clair. 796, f. 43. See also AM Rennes 561.

[13] AD Ile et Vilaine 1BB 574, letter of Lavardin (27 April 1675). See also Pocquet, 484.

[14] AM Rennes 561, f. 20.

[15] Ibid, f. 21.

[16] AM Nantes, BB 48, cited in Lemoine, 20.

[17] The relationship between the *premier président* and Chaulnes seems to have been strained long before the revolt. One must keep this in mind when evaluating Chaulnes later assertions that the *premier président* had not fulfilled his responsibilities with regard to the revolt.

premier président took it upon himself to see the governor and the two met privately. They talked for some time but unfortunately, there is no surviving record of their conversation. The next day the governor visited the municipal assembly and announced the king was not fully satisfied with their conduct and was particularly disappointed with their failure to nip the revolt in the bud.[18] On 14 May, the assembly received an ominous letter (dated 8 May) from the king. "We have written you this letter," it began, "to inform you that, to the same degree that we assure ourselves of your loyalty, we hold you responsible for all … that could happen"[19] The same day, Louvois penned a letter to Chaulnes informing him that the king would no longer tolerate the "bad conduct" of the towns in Brittany and that the governor should make an example of them "severe enough to contain the rest of the province."[20] To assist Chaulnes, Louvois announced the king was sending one battalion from the regiment de la Couronne and 600 men assembled from various units of *maréchaussée*.[21] These troops were to go to Nantes and remain there, living at the expense of the city, until a "rude example" had been made. They were then to proceed to Rennes and repeat the exercise.[22]

This marks a significant change in the king's attitude. On 25 April, he had been pleased with the response of the municipal authorities of Rennes. Nevertheless, eleven days later, Louis XIV had resolved that a much harsher course of action was needed. Why this dramatic change in attitude when the city of Rennes remained calm and had experienced no new troubles? Part of the answer lies in the troubles taking place at Nantes and elsewhere. By 8 May, Louis XIV had certainly received word that trouble was brewing in Nantes. Perhaps he realized, after a week's reflection, that these new troubles presented him with an opportunity to deal a heavy blow to the prestige of the Parlement of Brittany sitting at Rennes. By associating the relatively tranquil city of Rennes with the parts of the province that were engaged in much more serious acts of rebellion, Louis XIV could strike a blow

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[18] AM Rennes 561, f. 24.

[19] Ibid., f. 29.

[20] SHAT A^1 433, f. 201, Louvois to Chaulnes (8 May 1675).

[21] The *maréchaussée* were a type of rural constabulary force.

[22] SHAT A^1 433, f. 201. On the assembly of the *maréchaussée*, see SHAT A^1 433, f. 205 "Ordre du Roi à M. de Breteuil, intendant de la généralité d'Amiens" (8 May 1675). Breteuil is instructed to provide 15 *archers* for the expedition. Identical letters were sent to the intendants of other *généralités*.

at this traditional defender of provincial liberties. This will be discussed in more detail below, but first it is necessary to examine the sequence of events at Nantes.

On 20 April, news of the riots at Rennes reached Nantes.[23] People gathered in the streets and spoke angrily about the new taxes. Aware of the growing tension, the authorities at Nantes began planning the best way to prevent any disturbances. The governor, the marquis de Rosmadec de Molac, was not present in the city at this time. In his absence, M. de Morveau, governor of the chateau at Nantes and *lieutenant de roi*, met with the *maire* and the *échevins* to discuss the best means to prevent, and if necessary, to repress any disturbances. Unlike Rennes, however, neither the city militia nor the local nobility seemed inclined to take serious action against the rioters. A *commissaire de guerre* deplored the passivity of the urban militia and the local nobility, complaining that "not one inhabitant would take up arms" to preserve order.[24] Faced with the apathy of the nobility and urban militias, city authorities decided to make use of the garrison of the chateau at Nantes, at the moment comprised of only a single company from the regiment du Dauphin.[25] The *commissaire de guerre*, Jonville, protested against this course of action, arguing that the garrison was too small a force and that one should not so lightly expose the king's arms to possible insult. He also pointed out that such an action would leave the chateau vulnerable to attack. Jonville's advice was ignored, however, and the plans were readied.

The 20th and 21st passed without incident, but on the 22nd crowds gathered in the streets and demanded an end to the new taxes. Morveaux and the *maire* of Nantes took to the streets accompanied by about thirty musketeers who, according to Jonville, marched in menacing fashion with "matches lit and drums beating".[26] This martial display aggravated the situation and it appears that only the quick thinking and fast-talking of Jonville and Morveaux averted an even more serious crisis.[27] With nightfall, calm returned to the city.

The next day, however, the troubles recommenced. A crowd took to the streets and sacked several tax bureaus. They were preparing to

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[23] It is interesting to note how quickly the news traveled. The troubles at Rennes took place on 18 April.

[24] SHAT A[1] 439, f. 580, Jonville to Louvois (23 April 1675).

[25] Ibid., f. 499, Jonville to Louvois (20 April 1675).

[26] SHAT A[1] 439, f. 581, Jonville to Louvois (23 April 1675).

[27] Ibid. See also Pocquet, vol. V, 486.

do the same to the bureau of the *papier timbré*, but were peacefully dissuaded by Morveaux and Jonville "accompanied by 20–30 gentlemen and some of the more honest men of the city." They had deemed it wise not to bring any soldiers along with them.[28]

Nantes enjoyed a period of uneasy calm for the next several days, but on 3 May, a much more serious disturbance took place. Molac, who had since returned, wrote to Louvois that the revolt of 3 May was "one of the largest and most considerable that this city has ever seen" and that "the entire city was in turmoil and, for several hours, at the mercy of the mobs."[29] It seems that the crowd attempted to attack the chateau and succeeded in pillaging the bureau of the *papier timbré*. During the course of this riot, a woman named Michelle Roux, who seemed to have taken charge of the movement, was arrested and imprisoned in the chateau. Shortly thereafter, the bishop of Nantes went into the streets and tried to calm the crowd but was taken hostage. The rioters claimed that if Molac hanged Roux then they would hang the bishop. Molac had no choice but to release the prisoner. Satisfied by this triumph, the angry crowds dispersed and the town settled back into an uneasy calm.

Things were now relatively calm in the two cities. The fires of revolt at Rennes had been extinguished by the quick action of Coëtlogon *fils* and a handful of local notables, while those at Nantes had subsided largely of their own accord. Yet despite this apparent tranquility, Louis XIV resolved to punish the two cities for their revolts.

The Military Response and Renewed Violence

Officials in Paris kept a close eye on events. Both Colbert and the secretary of state for war, the marquis de Louvois, agreed that strong measures should be taken against the rebels. It was all the more important to display a firm hand as the Breton troubles came so soon after the Bordeaux uprising and in the midst of the war being waged against the Dutch.[30]

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[28] Ibid.

[29] SHAT A[1] 440, f. 443.

[30] The Bordeaux revolt was all the more serious since the city had actually sent emissaries to the Dutch asking for support.

On 8 May, the same day that Louis XIV wrote his ominous letter to the municipal assembly at Rennes, Chaulnes received instructions from Louvois. As mentioned above, Louvois informed the governor that the king was sending one battalion, or sixteen companies, from the regiment de la Couronne and 600 men assembled from various units of *maréchaussée*. Louvois forbade the governor to detach troops from the royal garrisons of the chateaux and fortresses in the province, fearing that such an action would compromise their security.

The subsequent correspondence between Chaulnes and Louvois is quite revealing. In this exchange of letters, we are treated to the interesting spectacle of a governor charged with the suppression of a popular revolt requesting the recall of the armed forces being sent to aid him. Although he believed a strong response was necessary, Chaulnes feared the consequences of a large number of troops entering the province. Chaulnes first mentioned his concerns in a letter of 15 May, explaining that the situation in the province had calmed down, and that he did not wish to interfere with the service the troops could provide on other, more important, fronts.[31] Four days later, Chaulnes informed Louvois that if a large body of troops should indeed enter the province, "the service of the king will not require them to remain long." He suggested that he would need a maximum of three companies to maintain order in Rennes and other areas of the province, with the possible exception of Nantes. As for the units of the *maréchaussée*, Chaulnes pointed out that these mounted troops would be of little use in the towns.[32] Louvois was not swayed by these arguments and informed Chaulnes that the king desired the battalion of the regiment de la Couronne and the 600-strong force of the *maréchaussée* to remain in Nantes and live there at the expense of the inhabitants "until a full and entire justice has been made [with regard to] the past seditions."[33]

The battalion de la Couronne entered Nantes on June 3, less three companies sent to Rennes as requested by Chaulnes. Chaulnes, realizing that these troops would be a heavy burden for those that had not participated in the revolt, granted permission to the municipal assembly to take out a loan to pay for food and lodging of the soldiers. This

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[31] SHAT A[1] 440, f. 285, Chaulnes to Louvois (15 May 1675).

[32] SHAT A[1] 440, f. 380, Chaulnes to Louvois (19 May 1675). Lavardin also tried to convince Colbert that the troops were no longer needed "seeing that the authority and the presence of the duke de Chaulnes has…put everything back in order" BN Mél. Colb. 171, f. 321 (27 May 1675).

[33] SHAT A[1] 433, f. 403, Louvois to Chaulnes (27 May 1675).

loan, both principal and interest, was to be paid off later by a general tax on the inhabitants. By this expedient, Chaulnes hoped "to avoid the oppression that the soldiers would otherwise cause."[34] The soldiers themselves were forbidden, on pain of death, to make any demands of their hosts in excess of the standard *ustencile*.[35] The loan certainly defrayed much, if not all of the immediate financial costs of the occupation, and provided the lenders with a handsome profit as well. The other 'costs' inflicted upon a civilian population faced with a military occupation, the various extortions, assaults and murders committed by soldiers against their civilian hosts, seem to have been partially mitigated by Chaulnes' orders. One wonders what Louvois thought about Chaulnes' actions, desirous as he was of obtaining "a full and entire justice" from the rebellious population.

Despite these ameliorations, the presence of soldiers created a great deal of resentment among the civilian population. In a letter of 8 June, the new governor of Nantes, the marquis de Lavardin, wrote to Colbert stressing the difficult coexistence of soldier and townsman. "I am doing everything I can to accommodate two things so antipathetic, the bourgeois and the soldiers, and am attempting to make both of them live together peacefully."[36] Chaulnes continued to request that the king recall the troops.[37] These requests appear to have had their intended

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[34] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 379, Chaulnes to Colbert (2 June 1675). See also the request by the municipal assembly of Nantes to exempt them from the troop lodgments. AM Nantes BB 48, *séance* of 28 May 1675.

[35] The *ustencile* typically encompassed a candle, a bed and sheets, and "a place at the fire".

[36] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 393. Lavardin to Colbert (4 June 1675). In the middle of May the previous governor of Nantes, the marquis de Molac, had been relieved of his command for failing to respond effectively to the revolt. He was, in fact, absent from the city during the first days of the revolt. It seems more likely that there were other motivations for his dismissal. It is common knowledge that there was no love lost between the two most powerful advisors of Louis XIV, the secretary of state for war and the *contrôleur général* of finances. At the time of the revolt, Louvois and Colbert were engaged in a rivalry to gain the ear of the king and to increase their personal influence at the Court. This rivalry encompassed the two men's network of *clienteles*, both in Paris and in the provinces. When examining the correspondence of the key players involved in the repression of the revolt it seems clear that each man had a network of *clients* placed in key positions in the province: Chaulnes and Lavardin can be placed in the camp of Colbert, while Molac and *commissaire de guerre* Jonville appear to have been Louvois' men. The *parlement*, and particularly the *premier président* of the *parlement*, if not pro-Louvois, seem to have been a least anti-Chaulnes. The removal of Molac thus signified a minor triumph for the Colbertian client network.

[37] BN Mél. Colb. 171 bis, f. 416.

results, for the troops remained at Nantes for only three weeks.[38] On June 21, it was mysteriously decided that the proper punishment had been administered and the battalion left for Le Mans. In a telling observation of the resentment aroused by this brief sojourn of troops at Nantes, one historian suggests that "the last traces of revolt disappeared with the departure of the troops from Nantes."[39]

Unlike Nantes, which because of its strategic location was accustomed to dealing with soldiers as they passed through on their way to other fronts, Rennes was a city traditionally exempt from all lodgment of troops. Chaulnes commented that with the exception of some unarmed recruits the inhabitants of Rennes had never even seen soldiers.[40] Twenty-six companies of urban militia maintained order: eighteen recruited from within the walls of the city and eight others drawn from the *faubourgs*. The city was fiercely protective of its privileges, and Chaulnes greatly feared the consequences of introducing a large body of soldiers into the city. Before dispatching the three companies of the battalion de la Couronne to the city, Chaulnes, not entirely trusting the already-existing militia companies, tried to organize four new companies to take responsibility for the maintenance of order. The enrollment began in May, but when the volunteers learned that their primary responsibility would be to guard the newly reestablished tax bureaus, they refused to serve and chose to pay a sum of money in lieu of service.[41] As a result, the three companies of la Couronne continued on their way to Rennes.

The arrival of these three companies at Rennes, a total of 150 men, created a much more volatile situation than that which had greeted the thirteen companies sent to Nantes. They entered Rennes on 8 June "in warlike fashion … matches lit and marching four abreast".[42] As one historian remarks, "This ferocious attitude in the middle of a city

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[38] The *commissaire de guerre* Jonville, accused Chaulnes and Lavardin of accepting a bribe of 10,000 livres from the *maire* and *échevins* of Nantes, in return for a promise to spare them from troop lodgments. See SHAT A[1] 441, f. 585, Jonville to Louvois (29 June 1675). Lemoine's judgment on this issue is that there is no proof to this assertion and that the accusation resulted from the resentment of a *commisaire de guerre* who saw himself relegated to a secondary position in the conduct of the military occupation (Lemoine, 24).

[39] Lemoine, 24.

[40] SHAT A[1] 441, f. 154.

[41] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 534, Chaulnes to Colbert (15 June 1675).

[42] Borderie, 42.

[that was] perfectly calm…was a most grave mistake."[43] In fact, the arrival of the soldiers set off a new round of troubles far more serious than the previous riots. The soldiers were ordered to take up positions outside the Hotel-de-Ville, but a company of urban militia, placed there previously by order of the governor and the city officials, refused to yield their places. A crowd began to gather, hurling insults and taunts at the soldiers.[44] The tension mounted, and Chaulnes himself rushed to the scene. He ordered the soldiers to take up positions elsewhere in the city and this calmed the crowd. The alarm spread, however, and the night was a troubled one with particularly large disturbances in the heavily populated *faubourgs* surrounding the city.

The troubles continued the next morning and Chaulnes received word that the militia companies of the *faubourgs* had taken up arms and joined the crowd. To avoid aggravating the delicate situation, Chaulnes confined the regular troops to their barracks and hastily called out the reliable militia companies recruited from the center of the city, hoping to oppose one group of militia with the other. That evening, a great crowd from the *faubourgs* swarmed into the city and headed towards the governor's residence. This mob invaded the courtyard of the residence, throwing stones against the windows, and shouting insults at the governor. When the governor made an appearance to try and calm the crowd they pelted him with stones. The officers of the governor's personal guard wanted to advance and fire on the rioters, but the governor forbade them, warning them that "we are lost if you command your soldiers to fire."[45] Eventually, a detachment of militia arrived and convinced the mob to disperse.[46] In an attempt to defuse the situation, Chaulnes ordered the three companies of La Couronne out of the city. On 10 June, just two days after their arrival, the soldiers departed Rennes "in a pathetic manner," with two companies of the urban militia serving as an escort to prevent further conflict.[47]

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[43] Ibid.

[44] SHAT A[1] 441, f. 585, Jonville to Louvois (29 June 1675).

[45] Pocquet, vol. V, 489.

[46] Chaulnes explains his decision by the fact that there were some members of the urban militias within the crowd. He feared that if the soldiers killed a member of the militia, the other companies would rise up and he would have a general insurrection on his hands. See a letter of Chaulnes to Colbert, BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 534.

[47] BN Mél. Colb., 171 *bis*, f. 434, Chaulnes to Colbert (9 June 1675). See also Pocquet, V, 489.

After these events, an uneasy calm prevailed in the city. The bureaus of the *papier timbré* were reestablished and Chaulnes ordered thirteen of the most reliable militia companies to mount guard on a rotating basis. The other companies recruited from within the city had proven themselves unreliable by joining with the companies recruited in the *faubourgs* during the riots against the arrival of the soldiers. He admitted having some doubts about even some of these companies because, as he wrote to Colbert, "it is possible that among them, there are some that are not well-intentioned [and] who have an interest in [the revocation] of the edicts." Nevertheless, he felt that the majority of these companies were reliable and that the troublemakers would be contained by those possessed of "better sentiments."[48]

On 19 June, Chaulnes informed Colbert that the city was relatively calm, and that the only thing that kept spirits aroused was the fear of the arrival of more troops. He suggested that news of the march of more troops could have dire consequences, not only in Rennes, but in Lower Brittany as well, where a series of recent disturbances had escalated in alarming fashion. "[I]f more troops are sent into the province at this moment", he wrote, "they will cause such alarm [there] that one would not be able to rely on the militias."[49] The mere rumor of a march of troops, even if they were destined specifically for Rennes, could have a "bad effect" in Lower Brittany. Chaulnes suggested such an "effect" could have serious consequences on a much larger scale, since the war with the Dutch was still raging. There had already been rumors of foreign intervention in the province and Chaulnes pointed out that if the scope of the revolt widened and the militia of the region became untrustworthy because of the march of the troops, this might tempt the Dutch to undertake some damaging enterprise in the province.[50]

Alarmed by reports coming from Lower Brittany, the governor resolved to see for himself what was transpiring in that region. On 4 July, the governor felt secure enough in the situation at Rennes to make a voyage to Lower Brittany and evaluate the situation. One week after his departure, a final disturbance took place at Rennes. On 17 July, an angry crowd attacked and pillaged the newly reestablished tax bureaus. A detachment of militia quickly arrived on the scene and fired on the

[48] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis* f. 565 (16 June 1675).
[49] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 646.
[50] Ibid.

crowd, killing one of the rioters and wounding several others. This action sufficed to restore calm to the city.

It should be noted that although the companies of the battalion de la Couronne had left Rennes, the 600 *archers* of the *maréchaussée*, amassed from all corners of the kingdom, were still on their way.[51] Chaulnes tried to obtain their recall and had gone so far as to send their commander a letter on his own initiative, informing him that his men were no longer needed.[52] In a letter to Louvois of 20 June, Chaulnes repeats that the *archers* were no longer needed. All was calm in the two cities and the king' authority had been entirely reestablished. "I will be happy to place myself at their head, if His Majesty commands me to do so," continued Chaulnes, "but perhaps [the king] could not know that the calm is entirely reestablished not only in Rennes, but in the entire province, except the bishopric of Quimper." This force of cavalry, Chaulnes argued, would in fact be counterproductive, "since it was only the fear of these troops that had prolonged … the sedition [of Rennes]." There could be no doubt, according to Chaulnes, that their arrival would result in a difficult situation that "would be difficult to remedy."[53]

On the same day, Chaulnes wrote in a similar vein to Colbert, stating, "if this order [regarding the *maréchaussée*] is executed, we are going to pass from [the current] state of tranquility to the greatest of disorders." The first news of the assembly of the *archers*, says Chaulnes, "is likely not only to excite a new sedition in [Rennes], but also to raise up the entire countryside." "I find myself forced," he continued, "to decline any responsibility for what might occur if this new assembly of *archers* troubles the calm that today appears so solid."[54] It would be difficult to find better testimony about the dangers of using military units as instruments of domestic. When using such units, one always risked aggravating the situation, as Chaulnes himself had learned earlier that month. However, it did not take the arrival of the *archers* to stir up trouble. By July, a full-scale rural insurrection was already underway in Lower Brittany.

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[51] At a snail's pace, however. On the slow response of the units of the *maréchaussée*, see SHAT A[1] 426, f. 110; SHAT A[1] 429 f. 56.

[52] SHAT A[1] 440, f. 571, Chaulnes to Louvois (28 May 1675).

[53] SHAT A[1] 441, f. 633, Chaulnes to Louvois (30 June 1675).

[54] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 772, Chaulnes to Colbert (30 June 1675).

June–August, 1675: Rural Uprising

The events in Lower Brittany are not as well documented as those of the two premier cities of the province. Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstruct a general course of events. A series of isolated and relatively minor disturbances took place in April and May. These quickly escalated, taking a more serious turn in the first weeks of June. On 9 June, the same day that the angry crowd besieged the governor in his hotel at Rennes, the marquis de la Coste, *lieutenant du roi* in the Four Bishoprics of Lower Brittany, was seriously wounded in an encounter with angry peasants at Chateaulin. He was taken prisoner and only regained his freedom by agreeing to various demands imposed upon him by his captors.

The primary causes of the rural revolt were not the various taxes on tobacco, pewter, and stamped paper that had precipitated the risings in both Rennes and Nantes. These played a certain role, but far more important was the rumor that the king intended to institute the *gabelle* in Brittany, a province traditionally exempt from this hated salt tax. All contemporary accounts agree that the Breton peasants were living in a condition of dire poverty. "That which is most important," Colbert observed, "and upon which it is necessary to reflect at length, is the great misery of the people. All the letters…speak of it, whether from the *intendants*, the *receveurs général*, [or] the bishops."[55] Chaulnes himself wrote to Louvois that "the misery is so great among them that one should fear that they will be driven to some extreme."[56] He also wrote to Colbert the same day, saying that the marquis de la Roche, governor of Quimper, "assures me that the misery among the people is so great that one should fear the consequences of their rage and their brutality."[57] This general misery was caused primarily by the hardships imposed upon the peasants by the local seigneurs. This generated a feeling of resentment among the peasants that fed into the already troubled times of the province and gave the rural revolt an element of class warfare lacking in the urban revolts at Rennes and Nantes.

The authorities recognized this dangerous dimension of the problem. In his letter to Colbert of 30 June 1675, Chaulnes stated, "It is certain

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[55] Forbonnais, *Recherches et considérations sur les finances de la France, année 1681*, vol. I, 529 (cited in Pocquet, vol. V, 494.

[56] SHAT A[1] 441, f. 536 (26 June 1675), cited in Lemoine, 148.

[57] BN Mél. Colb. 171 bis, f. 714, cited in Lemoine, 150.

that the nobility has treated their peasants very rudely" and that "all of [the peasant's] rage is currently against the gentlemen from whom they have received bad treatment."[58] By the beginning of July, 18–20,000 men from forty different parishes were in revolt and, according to Chaulnes, two-thirds of this number were armed with muskets.[59] The situation became increasingly serious as attacks on chateaus and murders of nobles continued. In July and August, the peasants were masters of the countryside and had adopted a rudimentary military organization. In July of 1675, representatives of fourteen parishes drafted a list of demands known as the "Peasant Code", a unique document that anticipated by more than a century the demands contained in the *cahiers des doléances* of 1789.[60]

In an attempt to calm this agitated populace, the Parlement issued a decree announcing that the king had no intention of instituting the *gabelle* in Brittany and called for punishments against those who spread false rumors about new taxes. In another conciliatory gesture Chaulnes issued an ordinance in early June providing a convenient way for those who had taken up arms to escape punishment. "Since we have been informed," reads the ordinance,[61]

> that several parishes … have only taken arms at the sound of the town bells, which is the signal that we have ordered be made when enemy vessels appear on the coast, [and] believing that [these parishes] have no bad intentions, we order them to lay down their arms until the service of

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[58] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 772 (30 June 1675).

[59] BN Mél. Colb., 172, f. 80, Chaulnes to Colbert (13 July 1675).

[60] The Peasant Code envisioned a fundamental social realignment that freed the peasant of all the charges weighing upon him. The ecclesiastical *dimes*, feudal obligations, and all other taxes established for the profit of the central power were targeted for elimination. The list of demands included: 1) representation at the next meeting of the provincial Estates to 'explain the reasons for their uprising'; 2) the abolition of the *champart* and the *corvée*, a harvest and labor tax imposed by the local seigneurs and labeled an "enemy of Armoric liberty"; 3) arranged marriages between the daughters of noble families and those from the 'common condition' in order 'to affirm the peace and agreement' between the seigneurs and the inhabitants; 4) a tax ceiling on wine and cider; 5) the free distribution of bread and tobacco; 6) limitations on the salaries of priests and *curés*; 7) elimination of the noble hunt from 1 March to the middle of September, with the inhabitants having the right to hunt pigeons freely in the countryside; 8) freedom to choose which mill one wished to use to mill their flour (abolishing the seigneur's monopoly); and 9) the right for the population to choose their own magistrates and forbidding these magistrates from using the *papier timbré*, saying that the stamp was an 'abomination'. See Lemoine, 39.

[61] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 109. "Ordonnance du duc de Chaulnes" (12 June 1675).

> the king requires them to take them up again, and [we] assure them that they will not be prosecuted.

Despite these attempts at calming the countryside, the troubles persisted and became even more dangerous, soon spreading to much of the southern and southwestern regions of the province.[62] In their movement, the peasants benefited from the leadership of one Sebastian Le Balp, a notary recently imprisoned for fraud. Throughout the summer and into September, Le Balp led a large band of peasants on what amounted to a rampage throughout the countryside. He imposed a rudimentary organization upon his "army", managed to capture some cannon, and actually planned to march on the port city of Morlaix to establish contact with the Dutch fleet of De Ruyter, cruising off the Breton coasts. This was an ambitious plan that could have had far-reaching consequences for Louis XIV's war against the Dutch. Fortunately for the Crown, a quick-thinking nobleman, Charles de Persin, marquis de Montgaillard, frustrated this enterprise by tricking Le Balp into delaying his march on Morlaix by falsely announcing that he had received word that 6,000 royal troops were about to arrive in the province. This cooled the group's ardor somewhat, but Le Balp soon realized he had been tricked and, as punishment, decided to force the marquis to lead the peasants in their march on the port of Morlaix. Le Balp arrived at the residence of the marquis on 2 September. Le Balp issued an ultimatum: Montgaillard would lead the peasants in their march on Morlaix, or he would die. Faced with this choice, Montgaillard, decided "to risk all [in order] to save all", pulled his sword from its scabbard and killed La Balp.[63] The news of La Balp's death spread quickly. The next morning, 4,000 peasants assembled before Montgaillard's chateau and sent in six delegates to confirm that La Balp was indeed dead. Montgaillard showed them the body and sent some of his loyal peasants out to mix among the crowd to cry that all was lost and that the troops of the king were due to arrive at any moment. The crowd dispersed within

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[62] Lemoine includes a useful discussion of the numerous revolts that occurred in various parts of the province at this time, 41–47.

[63] "Sébastien Le Balp et le marquis de Montgaillard-Factum de la marquise de Montgaillard contre les sieurs de Pongan et de Beaumont" BN Recueil Thoisy, 99 (1677), cited in Lemoine, 266. Note that this somewhat romantic account of the death of Le Balp (the only account in existence as far as I am aware) comes from a deposition given by his widow after the marquis' assassination and thus should not be considered the most objective of sources. In fact, before his death Montgaillard had been accused of collaborating with Le Balp.

an hour. Montgaillard also sent agents in the surrounding parishes to announce that Chaulnes was approaching and had announced he would hang all rebels found bearing arms and pardon all those who returned to their homes. The sudden death of Le Balp left the revolt leaderless and this, combined with the offer of amnesty, ended the uprising. One of the largest rural revolts of the seventeenth century thus ended without a confrontation between soldier and peasant. In the revealing words of one historian, "the revolt died out on its own … the government had not known how to prevent, or to stop it."[64] However, the fact that the revolt extinguished itself with no help from the army did not mean there would be no punishment.

The Royal Response to the Rural Revolt

While perhaps more willing to resort to force when faced with this large-scale rural revolt than when dealing with the smaller municipal risings, Chaulnes was also well aware of the problems and risks involved in such measures. The terrain itself presented an obstacle to any large-scale military repression and the governor was particularly wary of provoking a more widespread insurrection. He revealed his concerns in a letter written to Colbert on 13 July in which he discussed measures to punish the rebels. After first requesting a body of 1,500 infantry and 3–400 dragoons, "since the terrain makes cavalry that cannot dismount useless", he continued:[65]

> [I]t is necessary that these troops be paid because … there is not an area where they would be able to subsist at the expense of the rebels since no town [in lower Brittany] has stirred and the villages in the [Breton] countryside are unlike those in the rest of France, there not being one in which the houses are close together … The houses are separated two by two [or] three by three in remote areas. [As a result] the dwellings are too far apart to provide secure lodging for the troops … It also must be considered that from Nantes to Quimper there are more than 60 leagues of country that remain obedient… [I]t is feared that it will not remain so if oppressed by the passage of troops.

As in the case of the urban uprisings, Chaulnes faced serious difficulties in undertaking a military repression. Given the resource requirements

[64] Pocquet, vol. V, 517.
[65] BN Mél. Colb., 172, f. 80, Chaulnes to Colbert (13 July 1675).

of soldiers involved in such operations, it was nearly impossible to avoid alienating those segments of the population that might otherwise remain supportive or, at least, uninvolved.

In late July, the king decided to send a large military force into the province of Brittany. In order to avoid the problems that would arise should the soldiers be required to march through innocent parishes en route to Lower Brittany, Chaulnes suggested that the units be transported from Nantes by sea. The king agreed and transports were assembled in early August. By the end of August 6,000 men were assembled at Port Louis, Hennebont and Quimperlé in Lower Brittany. This force included several companies of Swiss and French Guards, the regiment de la Couronne, the regiment de Navailles, and eight companies of infantry drawn from the garrisons in the nearby islands of Ré, d'Oléron, and Brouagie. This force also included a regiment of dragoons sent from Guyenne by the governor, Marshal d'Albret, the man who had so recently presided over the suppression of the revolt at Bordeaux.[66]

No arrangements were made for the payment of these troops however, and in a letter to Louvois, Chaulnes once again repeated his concerns about the possible consequences of subjecting the loyal towns to troop lodgments. "The towns have alone stopped … the seditions," wrote Chaulnes, "and if they are punished by the *subsistance* of the troops it is to be feared that on similar occasions the memory of their punishment [will] carry them to extremes prejudicial to the service of the king." "This is all the more to be feared," he continued, "as I have held them in obedience by the hope of the grace they will receive if they do not follow the example of Rennes and Nantes."[67] Louvois responded nine days later, telling Chaulnes that the king wished the soldiers to live by *étapes* while marching through Lower Brittany. Those units stationed in loyal towns were to live from their pay alone "that *commissaire* Jonville will deliver to them promptly." In contrast, units sent to areas implicated in the rebellion were to live "at the expense of the region."[68]

The work of repression proceeded rapidly. The death of Le Balp, coupled with the arrival of the royal troops, had taken much of the fire out of the movement and many of the rebels returned to their

[66] SHAT A[1] 443, f. 38, Marshal d'Albret to Louvois (3 August 1675).
[67] SHAT A[1] 443, f. 37, Chaulnes to Louvois (3 August 1675).
[68] SHAT A[1] 427, f. 192, Louvois to Chaulnes (12 August 1675).

fields for the harvest.[69] To organize the punishment, Chaulnes divided the forty rebellious parishes into three distinct categories. First, were those parishes that had only taken a minor or, in some cases, forced part in the uprising. These received a full pardon. Second, were those parishes that had, to some extent, actively engaged in the insurrection. In general, the inhabitants of these parishes were required to deposit their arms with the local nobility, take down the church bells from their steeples, restore the pillaged tax bureaus, repair the losses and damages caused to the local nobility, and hand over two or three of the guiltiest individuals to be judged. In the third category were those parishes that instigated the revolt. The unfortunate inhabitants of these parishes were exempted from the amnesty.[70]

It is during this phase of the repression that Chaulnes earned his reputation for cruelty because of his supposed conduct towards the Breton peasants. It is interesting to note, however, that only three of the forty parishes were subjected to military occupation. The records do not provide details as to the total number of summary executions that took place in these three parishes, but we do know that in one of the most harshly treated parishes, where a nobleman had been murdered, fourteen peasants were hanged.[71] In the region of Cornouailles and around Quimper several peasants were hanged or broken on the wheel. Many of the guiltiest individuals fled, seeking refuge on the Gelnan Isles, and traveling from there, on Dutch boats, to Jersey. Still others hid themselves in the *faubourgs* of Rennes. Such a large number tried this latter course of action that the Parlement of Rennes was forced to issue a decree of expulsion.[72] A number of the guilty were handed over to a *commission extraordinaire* presided over by M. de Marillac, former intendant of Poitou, and a man more familiar for his role in the infamous *dragonnades* years later.

Thus were the troubles of Lower Brittany brought to an end. Less than two weeks after the troops landed in the towns along the southern coast, Louvois began issuing orders for their withdrawal. On 12 September, he informed Chaulnes that the king did not wish the troops to remain in the province and ordered the return of the two companies

[69] Pocquet, V, 504.
[70] Lemoine, 76.
[71] Ibid.
[72] AD Ile-et-Vilaine 1BB 575.

of musketeers and those of the French and Swiss guards.[73] He wrote a similar letter to commissaire Jonville the following day.[74] Five days later, however, Louvois countermanded his own orders and informed Chaulnes that the king had "judged it appropriate to reestablish his authority in the town of Rennes [and had therefore] resolved to leave all of the troops in the province."[75] Once again, Louis XIV appeared to have experienced a change of heart. Why did Louis XIV change his mind about withdrawing his troops from Brittany and instead send a contingent to Rennes?

When it is realized that the announcement of the exile of the Parlement of Brittany came just four days after the entry of the soldiers, and that Louis XIV had delayed the opening of the provincial Estates from the original date of 25 August to 10 September, the answer seems clear. Louis XIV hoped to use the excuse provided by the revolt and the resulting troop presence to humble the provincial Parlement and influence the deliberations of the provincial Estates. In addition, it is possible that Louis XIV remembered the humiliation the inhabitants of Rennes had inflicted on his soldiers earlier that spring and had resolved to punish them for their insults. The king's concern for his *gloire* was not limited to foreign adventures alone.

The Military Occupation of Rennes and the Exile of the Parlement

On 12 October, Chaulnes entered Rennes at the head of an army of 6,000 men. These were the same troops who had served in Lower Brittany: two companies of musketeers (the *gris* and *noir* companies, totaling 600 men); three companies of Gardes Françaises; one company of Gardes Suisses; 500 dragoons; infantry pulled from the regiments of Picardy, Marin, Navailles, and Couronne; and a large contingent of *maréchaussée*.[76] Their entry into the town was clearly intended to impress the inhabitants. The soldiers entered simultaneously through all five of the city gates, marching with loaded weapons and smoldering matchcords. This had the desired effect, particularly since earlier that sum-

[73] SHAT A[1] 428 f. 175, cited in Lemoine, 222.
[74] SHAT A[1] 428 f. 209, cited in Lemoine, 223.
[75] SHAT A[1] 428 f. 292, cited in Lemoine, 227.
[76] *Journal d'un bourgeois de Rennes au 17e siècle* (Rennes, 1992). The manuscript of this journal can be found in AD Ile-et-Vilaine, 1 F 306.

mer the governor himself had assured the inhabitants of Rennes that the troops being sent by the king were intended to pacify Lower Brittany and had nothing to do Rennes.[77] In order to avoid any potential problems, Chaulnes issued a decree disarming all of the inhabitants, "without exception" and confiscated the city's artillery.[78]

The news of the march on Rennes generated panic among the inhabitants. On 8 October, the *procureur général* of the king informed the Parlement that hearing of the march of the troops, the wealthier inhabitants of Rennes had emptied their houses of goods and furnishings. This could have serious consequences for the soldiers since the wealthier inhabitants were exactly those individuals who possessed beds, linens, and other items necessary for the soldiers' lodging. If they hid their possessions, the poorer citizens would be forced to bear the brunt of the burden.[79] The Parlement reacted by issuing a decree giving three days for the inhabitants to "refurnish" their houses.

On 20 October, Chaulnes announced to the municipal assembly that the king desired the troops to live at the inhabitants' expense. Chaulnes gave the assembly a choice to have the inabitants pay for the food and forage in kind or coin. The assembly chose the latter option.[80] Tax rolls were drawn up and the inhabitants of Rennes were divided into three classes: the first class would pay 36 livres, the second class 18 livres, and the third class 9 livres. The *syndic* warned that many people were too poor to pay this tax and the assembly sent a deputation to Chaulnes in an attempt to convince him to lower the rates. In the meantime, the assembly took it upon itself to lower the rates to 24 livres, 12 livres, and 6 livres.[81]

Chaulnes soon began hearing complaints about the division of the tax burden. On 28 October, he held a meeting at the *hotel de ville* and after hearing many complaints decided to revise his system. He went from three to eight taxpayer classifications. In the first six of these categories the people would pay according to their ability, in the seventh were the tax exempt and privileged individuals, in the eighth were the

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[77] In a letter of 5 August, Chaulnes assured the city notables that "the march of the troops [heading for Lower Brittany] is nothing that you should be concerned with." See AM Rennes 561 f. 119.

[78] *Journal d'un bourgeois de Rennes au 17e siècle*, 178.

[79] AD Ile et Vilaine 1BB 575, f. 20.

[80] AM Rennes 561, f. 66.

[81] AM Rennes 561, f. 67.

poor, also exempted.[82] In this new system, the first six classes paid 30 *sols*, 3 livres, 6 livres, 12 livres, 18 livres, and 24 livres respectively.[83] In addition to these taxes on the inhabitants of Rennes, all parishes within six leagues were ordered to provide food and forage to the town, up to a value of 500 livres, to aid in supporting the soldiers.[84] According to one estimate, all of these taxes raised 102,000 livres.[85] It is interesting to note the care with which Chaulnes divided responsibility for paying the tax. All would share in the burden according to their ability to pay. Many city officials and other notables came to him claiming they were exempt from such taxes, but Chaulnes forced them to contribute.

This particular phase of the punishment was relatively short-lived. On 27 October, the dragoons left Rennes and on 28 October, Louvois sent the governor orders to have the musketeer companies and 200 of the *maréchaussée* depart, just two weeks after their arrival.[86] On 1 November, 600 men left for Belle-Isle, where the Dutch had attempted a belated, and doomed, landing. These were followed on 3 November by the remaining *maréchaussée*.[87] On 6 November, half of the remaining troops left while the rest were to stay until the establishment of winter quarters. The remaining soldiers and *archers* were to live at the inhabitants' expense until 15 November and thereafter live solely from their pay that "His Majesty will provide punctually."[88] Thus, the inhabitants of Rennes supported the full cost of the troop lodgments for only thirty-four days. As a further amelioration, Chaulnes was authorized to supplement the soldier's pay as of 15 November "to give them the means to subsist without making any disorder.[89]

Chaulnes held the soldiers to a strict standard of discipline. He forbade them to take anything but the *ustencile* from their hosts without

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[82] Ibid., f. 69.

[83] Ibid., f. 72. Influential individuals could still avoid paying their allotted share and transfer the burden to the poorer classes, using municipal patronage ties and local influence peddling but such relationships are particularly difficult to reconstruct. A close analysis of the thousands of *billets* and *quittances* that recorded troop lodgments (and that often passed through many hands) may provide some interesting information. There is some disagreement about the exact amounts of each of these taxes. See Borderie, 173.

[84] Borderie, 172.

[85] *Journal d'un bourgeois de Rennes au 17e siècle*,180.

[86] Ibid, 178–179.

[87] Ibid.

[88] SHAT A[1] 429, f. 541.

[89] SHAT A[1] 430, f. 296, cited in Lemoine, 229.

payment and warned officers that they would be held responsible if they failed to enforce this order.[90] In an attempt to avoid dangerous encounters between civilians and soldiers, Chaulnes established four cabarets for the soldiers exclusive use. Soldiers were forbidden to drink elsewhere and the inhabitants were forbidden to sell them alcohol at any other establishment.[91] Only one day after issuing these orders, however, five soldiers were found guilty of mistreating their hosts. One among them was condemned to death. The five drew lots to determine who would die and the entire contingent of soldiers then in the city were drawn up in formation to witness the execution.[92] It seems clear that Chaulnes took great pains to limit the damages caused by the soldiers during their time at Rennes while at the same time, shifting the burden of their support from the royal coffers to the municipal chests of Rennes.

One other factor needs to be discussed when examining the punishments visited upon the populace of Rennes. The *faubourg* of the rue Haute, deemed particularly guilty for its involvement in the revolts, was singled out for a particularly brutal punishment: It was to be razed to the ground. Chaulnes had suggested this extreme measure as early as 12 June, calling the measure "a little violent" but necessary to assure continued respect for the king's will and to maintain obedience.[93] By October, the king had given his assent and, on 23 October, the inhabitants were ordered to abandon their houses. Madame de Sévigné described the exodus: "One has chased out and banished all of the inhabitants [of the rue Haute], and forbidden them to return on pain of their life. One sees…the poor, elderly, pregnant women [and] children, wandering around in tears, not knowing where to go, with nothing to eat and nowhere to sleep."[94] Undoubtedly, it made a lasting impact upon those who witnessed this brutal treatment. It is interesting to note, however, that the actual demolition of the houses did not begin until 20 April 1676, or six months later, and even then two-thirds of the houses were spared. After a period of time, and for an appropriate price, the inhabitants were allowed to return to their homes, or rebuild them if necessary.[95]

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[90] Borderie, 176.
[91] Pocquet, V, 523.
[92] Borderie, 177.
[93] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis* f. 478.
[94] *Lettres*, IV, 206.
[95] Pocquet, 525.

Finally, one has to discuss the judicial punishments visited upon individuals implicated in the revolt. The justice meted out at Rennes, as in lower Brittany, is often seen as harsh and undiscriminating. Once again, Madame de Sévigné seems to have played a major role in the propagation of this image. On 27 October, she wrote that Chaulnes "has arrested 25 or 30 men at random [and they] are going to be hanged."[96] In another letter she recounts that "sixty [bourgeois] have been taken, [and they] will start hanging them tomorrow."[97] She concludes rather wryly, "This province is a good example for the others" and should teach them "above all to respect their governors and governesses, not to insult them and to never throw stones in their gardens."[98] Once again, the marquise had engaged in a bit of exaggeration. There were a large number of arrests but most of these individuals were subsequently released. In reality, it appears that only seven individuals were executed for their actions during the revolt at Rennes, while twenty-two others were condemned to the galleys.

The Exile of the Parlement

The crowning punishment visited upon Rennes was the exile of the Parlement of Brittany. In his correspondence, Chaulnes repeatedly implicated the *parlementaires* in the recent troubles. It appears likely there was a long-standing personal rivalry between the king's representative in the province and certain members of this traditional defender of provincial liberties. Chaulnes resented the influence of the Parlement on his government of the province and over the course of the revolt, Chaulnes and the Parlement wrangled more than once over judicial proceedings relating to the trials of those found guilty.[99] Chaulnes seized on the opportunity provided by the revolt to discredit his institutional rival in the eyes of Louis XIV. In June, for example, Chaulnes wrote Colbert that the "true source of these troubles comes from the Parlement."[100] That same month, he wrote suggestively: "The more I see

[96] *Lettres*, IV, 202.
[97] Ibid., 207.
[98] Ibid.
[99] For one example, see BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis* 434, Chaulnes to Colbert (June 1675). The judicial proceedings were removed from the jurisdiction of the *parlement* and placed in the hands of military authorities, most notably the *maréchaussée*.
[100] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 478.

of this revolt, the more I come to realize that it [has been] planned."[101] Yet again, in a letter of 21 June, Chaulnes tells Colbert of cliques and cabals based in Rennes that were agitating against him (one of which, interestingly enough, included Molac). "The profound silence of the Parlement," wrote Chaulnes, "which has not been interrupted by any assembly [or] decree condemning this revolt has given heart to the rebels [and] it is no longer considered a tribunal to be feared."[102] Lavardin joined in this chorus of accusation: "I am too good and too loyal a servant of the king, and you [Colbert] … to dissimulate [the fact] that the slowness of the Parlement, to say nothing of the lack of vigor … of [the *premier* président] … are the principal causes of that which has occurred at Rennes."[103]

Although there is no convincing evidence that the Parlement instigated the revolt, it is interesting to observe that the *papier timbré* tax would have had more of a direct impact on the *parlementaires*, awash in their sea of paperwork, than upon the people who appear to have made up the bulk of the troublemakers. Whatever the case may be, on 16 October, Chaulnes' efforts at discrediting the Parlement bore fruit when Louis XIV decreed that the members of this august body should remove themselves to Vannes.[104] The doors of the Palais were closed immediately and, five days later, the *parlementaires* left town. This was a double-edged punishment inflicted upon the inhabitants of Rennes. The first struck the *parlementaires* themselves who were uprooted and removed from both their commercial endeavors and their clientage networks. As one historian describes the exile:

> "The 100 councilors [of the Parlement], all rich men and living grandly, [and] the judicial world that surrounded them—the army of lawyers, the *procurereurs*, the clerks, the secretaries and the sergeants—had to leave the city, abandon their homes, their families, [and] their affairs, to go camp in a little town where they could not even find lodging."

Both the inhabitants and the economy suffered from the exile of the Parlement. Rennes was not a commercial center by any means and its economic activity centered on the business generated by the *parlementaires* and their entourages, as well as the crowd of plaintiffs that constantly descended upon the city to have their cases heard. One his-

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[101] Ibid., f. 565.
[102] Ibid., f. 644.
[103] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 515.
[104] AD Ile et Vilaine 1BB 575.

torian writes, "the exile of the Parlement was, for all the Rennais, landlords, merchants and workers, a total ruin."[105] Another historian made the rather wry commentary that, "It was sad to see the poor men hang, but it was much more painful still to see the building rent depreciate."[106]

It is interesting to note that the decree exiling the Parlement was announced just four days after the arrival of troops. Similarly, the first troops were ordered to depart just seven days after the *parlementaires* left for Rennes. It seems clear that Louis XIV intended these troops less as a direct instrument of retribution against the rebellious inhabitants of Rennes, than as an additional tool to give him leverage in his power play against the *parlementaires*.

As a final note, it should be pointed out that the exile of the Breton Parlement would last for fifteen years. During the War of the League of Augsburg, when the king's financial needs were extreme, the Parlement and the city of Rennes combined their resources and offered the king 700,000 livres, ostensibly to support the war effort. This sum amounted to little more than a bribe, albeit an effective one. On 1 February 1690, the Parlement returned to Rennes.

The Provincial Estates

The Breton Estates was a powerful assembly composed of representatives drawn from the "three Estates" of the province: the nobles, the clergy, and provincial notables belonging primarily to the merchant and commercial classes.[107] The Breton Estates met once every two years and, like the *parlementaires*, the deputies were fierce defenders of their privileges and the privileges of the province, including the theoretical right to determine how much money they would give each year to the Crown in the form of the *don gratuit*.

In 1673, the Breton Estates discussed the host of new taxes and commissions imposed upon the province and resolved to take a stand against these new demands.[108] That year, they made their offer of the *don gratuit* (2,600,000 livres) contingent upon the revocation of no less

[105] Ropartz, 105.
[106] Pocquet, 527.
[107] It should be noted that the representation was far from proportional. This meeting of the Estates included 4 bishops, 20 *abbés*, 231 nobles, and 52 deputies from the third Estate.
[108] AD Loire Atlantique C 419.

than 17 edicts dealing with new taxes and commissions for the investigation into the origins of certain Breton noblemen. Louis XIV thanked them for their generosity and assured them he would look into the possibility of revoking some of the edicts and perhaps modifying others.[109] Colbert, with his desire to increase crown revenues and streamline financial administration, detested the provincial Estates and their obstructive practices, and sought their abolition.

Chaulnes was given the responsibility of choosing a meeting place for the Estates. After much consideration, he chose the small town of Dinan, northwest of Rennes. The care with which he made the choice, and an examination for the reasoning behind selection, is indicative of how much influence the Breton provincial Estates wielded among the general population in the province. He withdrew Nantes from consideration because of the fiery and unpredictable nature of the inhabitants, "ready to explode at the least provocation."[110] He also noted that the Nantois country's principal commerce was wine, and since the tax on this beverage could only be discussed in the Estates, the choice of Nantes seemed inappropriate and dangerous.

The Estates were originally set to meet on 25 August.[111] As we have seen, however, Louis XIV decided to delay the Estates, first until September 10th and then 9 November.[112] This seems likely to have been a ploy to give him time to maneuver his troops from Lower Brittany into a position to influence the deliberations of the Estates.

The Estates' first order of business was to request the recall of the Parlement to Rennes; the second was to request the revocation of the new taxes. Neither initiative succeeded.[113] As for Louis XIV, he sent very specific instructions with his *commissaires* to the Breton Estates. These instructions made it clear that for the province to reenter into the good graces of the king it would be required to make important sacrifices. The *commissaires* were instructed to make known to the Estates that the disorders of the province had caused a severe disruption in the levy of the taxes owed to the king, and that the lost revenue amounted to 1,200,000 livres. The *commissaires* were instructed to point out that this would have had dire consequences if the king had not been able,

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[109] Ibid.

[110] BNF Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 772, Chaulnes to Colbert (30 June 1675), cited in Lemoine, 164.

[111] AM Rennes 561.

[112] AM Rennes 561, f. 151.

[113] AD Ile et Vilaine C 2658, f. 159–161.

"by extraordinary measures, to provide payment to his armies." They were also instructed to inform the deputies that the Breton rebels had placed the State in grave danger and that they could have merited an "exemplary punishment" in the form of "the complete revocation of all the privileges and immunities that had been accorded to them by His Majesty and his predecessors."

The *commissaires* were to emphasize that the province had an obligation "to contribute to the prodigious expenses that His Majesty is obliged to sustain for the support of his armies [the size of which] he is forced to increase every day because of the great number of enemies allied against him." The *commissaires* were told to point out to the Estates that the army amounted to more than 100,000 men, and that these were divided into five armies serving on widely distant fronts. To help support this army, the king demanded not only the payment of 1,200,000 livres due for back taxes and the lost revenue owed to the tax farmers, but also demanded an additional 3,000,000 livres for the *don gratuit*, payable in monthly installments beginning the following November.[114] The financial opportunities present in a province found guilty of sedition were clear and the *commissaires*' instructions revealed that this was one of the key rationales of the cash-strapped Crown's approach to the punishment of the rebellious province.

There was another manner that the king sought to shift some of the costs incurred by the Dutch War onto the rebellious province. One of the traditional privileges enjoyed by Brittany was the exemption from hosting soldiers during winter quarters. After hearing the king's demands, and amid rumors that the king had resolved to send troops into the province for winter quarters, an anxious Estates immediately approved the 3,000,000 livres for the *don gratuit*.[115] Their hope was that such a display of generosity would allow them to avoid this burden.[116] They were to be disappointed. The king graciously accepted these funds and, at the end of the month, announced he was sending 10,000 troops to take up winter quarters in the province.

The Estates, of course, immediately complained, stating this action violated past contracts and that the support of the troops would ruin

[114] AAE MD France 1511, f. 229.

[115] S. Canal, "Essai sur Auguste-Robert de Pomeru, intendant d'armée en Bretagne, 1675–1676", *Annales de Bretagne*, t. XXIV (Paris 1908–1909), 498.

[116] Borderie, 197.

the province and make it impossible to pay the promised *don gratuit.*[117] The king's response was an interesting one. Louis XIV claimed he had no choice: his army was now so large that the troops had to be sent somewhere.[118] All provinces must share the burden of supporting his growing military establishment. One finds the same explanation presented in a letter to the intendant charged with establishing winter quarters. "The indispensable necessity in which we find ourselves of supporting an army so considerable and numerous as the one we have now, obliges us to send some part of these troops in our country and duchy of Brittany."[119]

Madame de Sévigné writes about the soldiers "who lived as if they were in a conquered country" and speaks at length about the desolation caused by the arrival of these soldiers. However, it should be noted that Louis XIV makes no mention of any specifically punitive intent with this new dispatch of soldiers and the hardships suffered by the Bretons appear no worse than those suffered by any other province subject to winter quarters. Perhaps Louis XIV saw the revolt as an opportunity to "kill two birds with one stone": Since he needed somewhere to send his soldiers for their winter quarters, what better place than a rebellious province? At the very least, Brittany could not protest too loudly because it had indeed engaged in open rebellion.

Winter Quarters

These new troops entered Brittany in early December. On 9 December, the regiment de La Reine and the regiment du Dauphiné arrived at Rennes. The remaining troops at Rennes, left over from the October "occupation", left that same day, with the exception of the companies from the battalion de la Couronne. These were joined at Rennes by the rest of their regiment on the 24 and 25 December.[120] These three royal regiments (de la Reine, du Dauphiné and de la Couronne), combined with several squadrons of *maréchaussées*, brought the total garrison of Rennes to 5,000 men.[121] The arrival of this new contingent of troops

[117] AD Ile et Vilaine C 2658, f. 166 (27 Nov 1675).
[118] AD Loire Atlantique C 419, f. 448.
[119] AAE MD France 1511, f. 250.
[120] Borderie, 199.
[121] Ibid., 200.

resulted in yet another tax levied on the inhabitants of Rennes. This time the inhabitants were divided into six classes and the tax produced 40,000 livres. In January another tax was levied that divided the inhabitants into five classes, with the highest class owing 64 livres and the lowest 10 livres.[122]

Once again, there were attempts to mitigate the hardships suffered by the inhabitants of Rennes. Louvois instructed the army intendant accompanying the soldiers, Auguste-Robert de Pomereau, to see that the wealthiest individuals received the greatest number of soldiers to lodge.[123] In addition, Pomereau reassigned two battalions of the regiment de la Reine to two nearby towns. It is interesting to note that despite the relocation of these two battalions, Rennes was still forced to pay an amount equivalent to their *ustensile*.[124] As a special favor from the king, three battalions at Rennes were paid from the *Extraordinaire des Guerres*, the venal treasury responsible for handling the bulk of royal military expenditures.[125] Finally, Louvois suggested that the troops could leave Rennes in early March. The official end of winter quarters, however, was 15 April, and Pomereau was instructed to ensure that this last month's *ustensile* be paid in full before any of the troops left.[126] Pomereau met with Chaulnes to discuss the early departure of the troops and the amount of compensation required. Chaulnes consulted with the *trésorier* of the Estates and arrived at the figure of 200,000 livres. 93,750 livres of this sum would go to the officers' *gratifications*, and 106,250 would return to the royal coffers of the *Extraordinaire des Guerres*.[127] The troops left Rennes on 1 March 1676, less than three months after their arrival.

Two important consequences should be noted about these winter quarters. First, Louis XIV had used the excuse of the revolt to violate Brittany's traditional privileges that exempted the province from the burden of winter quarters. This set a dangerous precedent. Second, the military intendant sent to oversee winter quarters in the province was the first intendant ever to set foot in Brittany. This precedent

[122] Ibid., 209.
[123] Canal, 504.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., 506. The best discussion of this extraordinarily complex institution can be found in Rowlands, 109–134.
[126] Ibid., 505.
[127] Canal, 507. Louvois later modified this so that the majority of the *gratifications* would also end up in the *Extraordinaire des Guerres*.

set the stage for the official establishment in 1689 of an intendant for the province.[128] The consequences of establishing this most powerful of royal officials in the province were profound.

The Revolt at Bordeaux

Roughly concurrent with the unrest in Brittany were a series of popular disturbances in the city of Bordeaux.[129] The first troubles in this traditionally troublesome city occurred in March of 1675. On the 28th of that month there was an uprising in the rue de Loup when several *traitants* attempted to mark the wares of the pewter artisans. The people refused the mark, crying out that it was the *gabelle*.[130] The *traitants* were assaulted and fled. They returned later, escorted by a *jurat*,[131] an officer of the town watch, and four *archers*.[132] The *traitants* attempted to continue their work, but the crowd grew more agitated and began throwing stones at the small group. The *jurats*, *traitants*, and *archers* soon beat a retreat to the *maison de ville*. The crowd subsequently attacked and killed an individual they mistook for one of the hated *gabelous* and, according to one account, dragged his body before the door of the intendant's lodging, and proceeded to deliver one hundred more blows upon the bloodied corpse.[133] From the *hotel de ville*, the *Jurade* sent deputations to Marshal d'Albret, the governor of the province, and to the Bordeaux Parlement, informing them of the events.[134] They also issued an ordinance enjoining "all townsmen… of whatever qual-

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[128] Ibid.

[129] The account of this revolt has been compiled from several different sources. The most important of these are the incredibly useful yet little exploited collection of local documents (taken primarily from the deliberations of the Jurade), compiled and published by J. Barraud in volume 41 of the *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, t. 41. Also useful are BN Mél. Colb. 171 to 172 *bis*. Details about troop deployments are scattered about in series A^1 at SHAT. C. Boscheron des Portes' *Histoire du parlement de Bordeaux*, 2 vols (Bordeaux, 1877) is also useful, although it should be noted that for the period of the revolt there are no surviving registers of the Bordeaux *parlement*.

[130] This seems to be yet another example of a generalized misunderstanding of the nature of the *gabelle* and the tendency to associate any and all taxes with this hated salt tax.

[131] An officer of the Bordeaux municipal assembly, the *Jurade*.

[132] *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. LXXXVIII, doc. LXXXVI.

[133] BN Mél. Colb. 171, f. 126. This account was written on 30 March 1675 by a *commis* of the *receveur général des finances* of Bordeaux.

[134] *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. LXXXVI.

ity and condition they be, to arm themselves."[135] Despite this appeal, there was no immediate response by the local notables. Town officials, according to one account, were in a state of "great disorder" and all of the "good bourgeois" were distrustful of their neighbors and afraid to speak out or to otherwise get involved. The mob was left to roam the streets of the city "without anyone from the town presenting themselves to stop it".[136] At 8:00 pm, however, the commander of the Chateau Trompette,[137] the count de Montegu, *lieutenant général* in Guyenne, put the garrison under arms and ordered two companies to leave the chateau and present themselves in formation along the rue de Chapeau Rouge. There was a small skirmish in which 7–8 rioters were killed after which things appeared to calm down. The companies returned to the Chateau Trompette.[138]

The next day the troubles continued. The *Jurade* remained very worried about security around the *hotel de ville* and again sought to put the town militia under arms and again met with little success. According to one account, it was difficult to get the militia companies to form up because the "spirit of sedition" was widespread among the artisans and craftsmen, while the bourgeois were "in such a grand consternation that they did not dare to leave their houses" to form up with their captains. The militia captains only managed to assemble some valets, a few artisans and some domestic servants sent by the bourgeois to serve in their place.[139] To d'Albret, however, the problem was not the cowardice of the bourgeois, but their seditious disposition. He made this point in a letter to Louvois that April in which he requested regular troops because "the militias are so full of the same spirit of sedition [as the rioters] that it would be very dangerous to form them up."[140]

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[135] *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. LXXXIX. See also AM Bordeaux, BB 68, f. 83–89.

[136] BN Mél. Colb. 171, f. 126.

[137] The Chateau Trompette was the royal fortress in Bordeaux. A good discussion of the history of this now-demolished fortification can be found in Paul Corteault, "Le role du Chateau-Trompette dans l'histoire de Bordeaux", *Revue historique de Bordeaux et du departement de la Gironde*, t. III (1910), 398–409.

[138] BN Mél. Colb. 171, f. 126.

[139] *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI (28 March 1675).

[140] SHAT A^1 439, f. 71. D'Albret to Louvois (3 April 1675). In this letter, d'Albret also mentioned the risks of using the nobility to suppress the rebellion, as word of their assembly could not be concealed from the rioters and would only enrage them further.

Faced with little armed resistance, the crowd charged through the streets, seized the gate of Saint Croix and allowed access to several hundred peasants who had assembled outside the walls after hearing of the troubles in the city.[141] Crying "*vive le roi, sans gabelle*" (and providing another example of popular misconceptions about the nature of the *gabelle*) the crowd marched on the Parlement. In the ensuing chaos, the crowd killed a *conseiller du roi* and seized the *président* of the Parlement and several other *parlementaires*. They demanded the abolition of various taxes and called for the release of several citizens arrested the previous day and imprisoned in the Chateau Trompette. They warned if the prisoners were not released they would put everything to fire and sword. At the Chateau Trompette, count de Montegu released the prisoners, and things calmed down for the night. The rioters returned to the cemetery of Saint Michel and Sainte Croix and, according to one account, sent letters to the surrounding parishes to summon additional help from the peasants in the countryside. For their part, the *jurats* spent the night sending emissaries throughout the town in an attempt to "stir the bourgeois from their lethargy."[142]

The troubles continued the following day with more demonstrations at the cemeteries of Saint Michel and Sainte Croix. Marshal d'Albret was informed that the revolt now included approximately 4–5,000 rioters, with a similar number expected to arrive from the countryside. At this point, d'Albret informed the *jurats* that they must tell the townsmen it was now imperative to place themselves under arms and form up. He told them that he himself would come with a force composed of members of the nobility raised from within the town and the surrounding countryside.[143] Once this force was assembled, d'Albret resolved to talk with the rioters.

At the head of 1,200 men of the nobility and a detachment of 100 men from the garrison of the Chateau Trompette, d'Albret went to Saint Michel.[144] At Saint Michel, this group encountered 3–4,000 rioters and a similar number at Saint Croix who were "dug in at the cemetery." While there, they saw another crowd of 4–500 peasants enter by the gate of Saint Croix. D'Albret promised the rioters an

[141] SHAT A[1] 439, f. 16; *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI (28 March 1675).
[142] Ibid.
[143] *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. XLII (29 March 1675).
[144] BN Mél. Colb. 171, f. 126.

amnesty if they would lay down their arms.[145] The Parlement, after a vain attempt to issue an order forbidding assemblies, issued another decree (with the consent of d'Albret) abolishing the taxes that sparked the unrest.[146] Later that month the king issued an amnesty for those involved in the revolt.[147]

Despite these concessions, however, tensions remained high. In June, a placard was affixed to the gate of the *hotel de ville*. "We know that the intendant has given an ordinance to reestablish the *papier timbré*," read the placard, and "we [intend] to do as before and kill and burn the *jurats* who enforce this tyranny." The placard threatened a similar fate for "the Marshal and all of his followers." The placard was signed "*Les enfants perdus*."[148] These "lost children" soon made good on their promise, for another revolt broke out in August occasioned by a new royal decree that did indeed threaten to reestablish the *papier timbré*.[149] The revolt was put down with the aid of three hundred troops now stationed in the Chateau Trompette and twenty rebels were killed in the repression that followed. The rebels asked for a pardon, to which d'Albret agreed only on the condition that those responsible for the second rebellion be delivered to justice. For its part, the Parlement retracted its previous decree abolishing the taxes in question, explaining that it had been issued under duress, and once again issued another decree forbidding assemblies.[150]

Following this second revolt, the *jurats* also issued an ordinance for the policing of the town. In the event of future revolts, it stipulated that all captains, lieutenants and *enseignes* were required to assemble their companies, while all *prieurs*, *gardiens*, *superieures des couvents … curés*, *vicaires*, *syndics*, and others in charge of parish churches were ordered to ring the tocsin to warn authorities. Furthermore, all "vagabonds" and unemployed men were ordered to leave the town within twenty-four hours. Any inhabitants who sheltered them would face a fine of 100 livres. All hosts and *cabaretiers* were required to maintain a list containing the names of all their current lodgers, their origins, and their rea-

145 Ibid.

146 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. XLIII (29 March 1675).

147 The text of the amnesty, registered by the *parlement* on 6 April, can be found in *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CII. Royal amnesties are interesting documents and worthy of a study of their own.

148 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CXV (19 June 1675).

149 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CXIX (16 August 1675).

150 Ibid. (17 August 1675).

sons for being in the town, or face a fine of 1,000 livres. Furthermore, captains, lieutenants and *enseignes* were forbidden to leave the town for more than 24 hours without the permission of the *jurats*.[151] As for the corporal justice meted out to those who had actively participated in the revolt, three rebels were burned alive and nine others hanged. In what was a standard act of symbolism following the repression of a revolt, a "commemorative and expiatory" pyramid was erected before the house of the murdered *conseiller du roi*.[152]

The punishments visited upon Bordeaux were similar to those applied to other rebellious cities and targeted the guilty populace, the "lethargic" bourgeois, various municipal privileges and, perhaps most importantly, the various *cours superieures* located in the city. A number of Bordeaux's municipal privileges and exemptions were revoked, and Louis XIV took the opportunity to extort additional revenue from his subjects, ordering the city to pay 15,000 livres for the *taille* and an additional 15,000 livres for the *subsistance*. The gate of Saint Croix and a large expanse of its walls were demolished. Bells within towers of Saint Michel and Saint Eulalie, often used to signal a revolt and to summon support from the surrounding countryside, were taken down and removed to the Chateau Trompette, and the bell tower of Saint Michel, "the most beautiful monument in the city" was ordered destroyed.[153] The Bordelais were disarmed, and the weapons taken to the Chateau Trompette.[154] The Chateau Trompette itself was considerably expanded at the expense of the surrounding dwellings, over 300 of which were razed to the ground.

One of the most significant and effective punishments was the "transfer" of the Parlement of Bordeaux to Condom and of the *cours des aides* to Liborne.[155] In a royal declaration, registered in the Parlement on 20 November, the king declared the move was prompted by a desire

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[151] *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CXIX (31 August 1675).

[152] C. Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire du parlement de Bordeaux*, 2 vols (Bordeaux, 1877), 205. One sees such pyramids erected after nearly all of the popular revolts of the period.

[153] It is interesting to note that no one bid on the contract to undertake the demolition of the bell tower. The work of destruction remained undone and this penalty was eventually rescinded. See *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. III, doc. CXVI (22 January 1676).

[154] Boscheron, 206.

[155] The *parlement* transferred to Rede in 1678, where it remained until 1690. It was only permitted to return after making a large payment to a Crown that, at the time, was involved in a large and expensive war. One estimate puts the price for the *parlement*'s return to Bordeaux at 400,000 *francs*.

to give marks of his displeasure to the inhabitants of the town who had participated in a revolt that had spread "not only to the neighboring towns, but even to the province of Brittany." Louis XIV also suggested, perhaps a bit disengenously, that his desire to transfer the Parlement was not a punishment for this body's failure to repress the revolt, but because Bordeaux was too troubled by unrest and that the officers of the Parlement should be able to deliberate on the weighty matters of justice "in all security." The Parlement had even received assurances as recently as September that the king was satisfied with the Parlement's actions.[156] It is clear, however, that this "transfer" was in reality an exile. The royal declaration annulled the Parlement's decree of 29 March, ordered all taxes to be levied as before, and gave the officers and *parlementaires* just a week to get to Condom. Furthermore, the declaration revoked a number of tax privileges and collection rights the town had enjoyed and ordered that the town be taxed 15,000 livres for the *taillon* and a similar sum for the *subsistance*, without regard to exemptions enjoyed by the city since 1659.

With this decree, Louis XIV demolished Bordeaux's status as the seat for several *cours superieures* and revoked its cherished fiscal privileges. However, these were not the only privileges stripped from the city. Bordeaux regarded its exemption from supporting troop lodgments as one of its most cherished privileges and the garrison imposed on the city marked another advance of royal authority at the expense of municipal privilege. As with the repression of the revolt in Brittany, the garrisoning of Bordeaux can be divided into two phases: the initial arrival of troops in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion, and the selection of Bordeaux as a site for winter quarters.

In April, d'Albret informed Louvois that the Bordeaux militia were unreliable and requested a cavalry regiment to remain in the city during May and June. D'Albret would use this regiment, along with his own personal guards and members of the nobility, to reinforce the militia and to intimidate any troublemakers.[157] His request fell on sympathetic ears and in mid-April, the initial military occupation of Bordeaux began. Ten companies of the regiment of Navailles, dispatched from La Rochelle, occupied the Chateau Trompette. Four companies of d'Albret's own troops were sent to nearby Blaye. Two additional regi-

[156] *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CXXVII (2 September 1675).
[157] SHAT A[1] 420, f. 480 (28 April 1675).

ments were given orders to take up positions in the vicinity.[158] It is interesting to note, and testimony to the seriousness with which the authorities viewed the revolt, that Louvois explained these dispositions as necessary to put d'Albret in a position to stop the disorder from spreading throughout the province. If there should be additional problems, d'Albret was to administer a "severe punishment" so that the issuance of the king's amnesty would not lead the rest of the province to believe that such disobedience would go unpunished.[159] As an additional measure, orders were sent for two or three frigates to take up positions in the mouth of the river before Bordeaux, in order to search arriving ships and to intercept any seaborne attempts at foreign assistance to the rebels.[160]

In discussing the harsh punishments visited upon the city of Bordeaux after the troubles of 1675, it should be noted that the revolt was not entirely unexpected. Attempts to establish the *papier timbré* in Guyenne created similar difficulties as early as 1673.[161] In 1674, Colbert issued a stern warning to the *premier président* of the Parlement of Bordeaux, reminding him that it was the duty of the bourgeois to repress any sedition, and warned him of severe consequences should the city descend into revolt.[162] "We are born under the grandest king ever to carry a scepter," wrote Colbert in another letter, and "if Bordeaux makes the least seditious act it will most assuredly carry the memory of its bad will longer than it did under the reign of Henry II."[163] Colbert pointed out the recent military actions of the king's armies at Besançon, during which the French captured both the upper and lower cities as well as the citadel. "Judge for yourself," writes Colbert, "if after these masterstrokes we should fear the bad will of some *canaille* in Bordeaux."[164]

The consequences for Bordeaux were indeed severe, and the punishment did not cease with the military occupation in the spring of 1675.

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[158] The regiment of Tessé was ordered to Bazas and that of La Chau to Libourne. See SHAT A^1 433 (1 April 1675).

[159] SHAT A^1 433 (1 April 1675); See also SHAT A^1 439, f. 410 (17 April 1675).

[160] SHAT A^1 439, f. 564 (22 April 1675); SHAT A^1 433, f. 54 (11 April 1675).

[161] Depping, *Correspondence administrative sous le règne de Louis XIV*, vol. III, 71 (25 December 1673).

[162] Colbert, I, xcv (25 May 1674); II, 342 (15 June 1674).

[163] Colbert, *Lettres*, I, xciv (25 May 1674). Colbert is referring to the 1548 revolt against the *gabelle* in Guyenne, Angoumois and Saintonge. See Jonathan Powis, "Guyenne 1548: the Crown, the Province, and Social Order", *European Studies Review* (1982).

[164] Colbert, *Lettres*, II, 338 (5 May 1674).

As he had done in Brittany, Louis XIV sent troops to Bordeaux for their winter quarters, capitalizing on an incident of rebellion to strip a city of its cherished municipal privileges and using the pretext of punishment to force the town to support the soldiers of his expanding army. The exact point at which Louis XIV decided to assign winter quarters to Bordeaux is unclear, but it is likely that the decision was made by 3 November 1675.[165]

In the middle of that month, the *Jurade* heard rumors that a decision had been taken to assign Bordeaux as the winter quarters for troops returning from Catalonia. When asked, d'Albret confirmed these rumours.[166] The troops were scheduled to arrive on the afternoon of 16 November. Fearing disorder, d'Albret took control of two city gates prior to their arrival.[167] His fears, however, were not only directed towards the inhabitants. "The officers and soldiers," wrote d'Albret, "plan on coming here to live as if in an enemy city." D'Albret promised to restrain them.[168] On 17 November 1675, the first troops, composed of a mixture of cavalry, dragoons, and infantry, entered Bordeaux.[169] The infantry entered by Saint Jullian's gate, and the cavalry by the gates of Saint Croix and Saint Eulalie. D'Albret feared great disorder if the troops were not assigned lodgings by nightfall and the distribution of billets of lodgment began immediately.[170]

The lodgment of troops represented a serious hardship for those charged with housing the soldiers, both economically and in terms of the physical destruction wrought by the soldiers on their possessions and, on occasion, their persons. When news of the pending entry of troops into Bordeaux became known, many of the more well off Bordelais began abandoning the city and retiring to their country homes. The scale of this desertion prompted d'Albret to issue an order demanding that all bourgeois and inhabitants of the city, regardless of their quality and condition, return within three days or face the prospect of having soldiers lodged in their country houses.[171]

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165 SHAT A[1] 430, f. 21 (3 November 1675).

166 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CXXIX (16 November 1675). It appears that the *Jurade* was not informed of the intended lodgment of troops until the day before their arrival.

167 BN Clair. 796, f. 413 (16 November 1675).

168 Ibid.

169 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CXXXI (17 November 1675).

170 BN Clair. 796, 423.

171 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XVIII, doc. CCXXVII (6 November 1675). See also AM Bordeaux EE 208.

The expenses of such lodgment could reach enormous proportions, and it was the economic hardships, rather than the physical abuse, that prompted most of the complaints.[172] The total cost for two months of winter quarters at Bordeaux was estimated at 961,679 livres.[173] The support of cavalry was particularly expensive, as the inhabitants were required to provide forage for the horses as well as the daily requirements and payments for the soldiers.[174]

Soon after the arrival of the troops, the *jurats* sent a letter to Chateauneuf requesting the troops recall. "The severity that it pleases the king to use with [regard to] this city," wrote the *jurats*, "falls entirely on the innocent. The criminals left at the mere rumor of the march of the troops" and only innocents remain. "[T]hey happily sacrifice all their fortunes to the indignation of His Majesty, and we can assure you … that the loss of their possessions is neither as annoying nor as sensitive as the shameful marks for which posterity will continually reproach us."[175] To Louvois, the *jurats* penned a similar letter the same day: "We happily give all that is most precious to us to the army that it has pleased the king to send in this city," but "the great sums that we pay daily … renders us unable to support such a great number of troops … [As a result of] the departure of the *compagnies superieures* with their suite, and the flight of the guilty … only the innocent suffer."[176] The *jurats* also wrote a similar letter to Chateauneuf that same day.[177]

Some of these complaints did have an effect, and six regiments were ordered out of the city. However, shortly thereafter one finds the *jurats* again writing to both Colbert and Louvois, complaining of the rigors the city still endured. They appreciated the removal of the six regiments, but the exile of the *cours superieures* with their families and households, combined with the departure of those who had used the exile as a pretext to leave town and avoid the lodgment of soldiers, limited the benefits of the recall and brought little relief "because of the great number of houses that are deserted [and that] results in a shifting

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172 A breakdown of the expenses associated with the lodgings in Bordeaux can be found in *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. III, doc. CXVIII.

173 Ibid.

174 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XVIII, doc. CCXXVIII (16 November 1675).

175 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CXXXI (25 November 1675).

176 Ibid.

177 Ibid. It is interesting to see that the *jurats* felt compelled to write to every major official at the Court, perhaps suggesting that they were unsure exactly who held more influence with the king, or that the power to make decisions regarding troop deployments and punishments visited on rebellious cities was rather diffuse.

of the burden of lodgment to those that remained in the city.[178] After receiving a rebuff of sorts from Chateauneuf,[179] the *jurats* wrote him again, stressing the impact of the departure of the *cours superieures* on the city's ability to support the lodgments. "It may seem strange," they wrote, "that a city like Bordeaux has difficulty lodging five battalions of infantry and four regiments cavalry," but the problem, they argued, is that the demography of Bordeaux was not the same as it was before the arrival of the troops. Bordeaux "is composed primarily of the houses of the officers of the Parlement, of the *chambre de l'édit*, of the *cour des aides* and of all the associated justice officials." All of these officials and their families have left.

An *état* verified by the *commissaire des guerre*, suggested that there were more than 1,500 deserted houses, not including houses left vacant by the exile of the *cours superieures*. "If the troops remain much longer," warned the *jurats*, "the city will become a desert." Even foreigners were leaving. Portuguese traders "who controlled entire streets and made a considerable commerce" were asking for their passports. A good portion of the remaining houses in Bordeaux belonged to individuals and organizations exempt from lodgment, such as the *trésoriers*, the *secretaries du roi*, and members of the nobility and clergy. "Since all these houses combined, which are the most beautiful and the most suitable for lodgments, make up more than two-thirds of the city," the burden of the lodging soldiers has fallen on the rest of the population, primarily the bourgeois and the artisans.

As a further aggravation, commerce had practically ceased in the previously bustling port town. As a consequence of this dramatically changed demography, the eight regiments remaining in Bordeaux were a greater burden than the much larger force sent for winter quarters.[180] Following their previous strategy of contacting any official that might be able to bend the king's ear to their plight, the *jurats* sent out similar letters of complaint to Colbert, Louvois, and Chateauneuf.

Again, these efforts paid off and in the first week of January 1676, one sees the veritable flood of letters from the *jurats* to Colbert, Chateauneuf, and Louvois bemoaning the fate of the rebellious town replaced by a similar deluge thanking them for arranging the recall of the remaining cavalry. Although the *jurats* were careful to mix this gratitude

178 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. LXLII (2 December 1675).
179 *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CXLVII (18 December 1675).
180 Ibid. (21 December 1675).

with requests to recall the remaining infantry,[181] it appears, that the infantry remained at least until February 1676.

Considering the seriousness of the regional and international context, it is curious that the Bordeaux revolt has not received more attention,. The gravity with which the Crown viewed the revolt should not be underestimated and the maelstrom that descended on the province of Brittany at roughly the same moment was viewed by authorities as inextricably connected with the revolt in Bordeaux.[182] There were also numerous additional sympathetic revolts in the region during the spring and summer of 1675, including riots at Reolle, Bergerac, Monsegur, and Mormande.[183] The threat was heightened by reports that two men from Bordeaux had arrived at the Hague seeking the support of a Dutch fleet and promising, if one were provided, to provoke a general uprising in the entire province.[184] The need to suppress a revolt so fraught with danger caused the redeployment of several regiments and in all probability had some impact on the king's military plans and operations for the spring of 1675.[185]

As had been his practice in the suppression of previous revolts, Louis XIV was determined to gain as much advantage as possible. The exile of Parlement and the other courts, the revocation of municipal fiscal privileges and exemptions from winter quarters, and the levy of taxes to support the expanding army, all represent significant expansions of royal authority in a province and a city that had always been particularly troublesome. The repression and subsequent punishment marked an important stage in the subjection of Bordeaux to an authority emanating from Paris and Versailles.

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[181] *Arch. Hist. Gironde*, vol. XLI, doc. CLIV (4 January 1676); *Arch. Historiques Gironde* vol. XLI, doc. CLV (4 January 1676). It would be fascinating to delve into the *clientèle* networks at work here between town notables, the *Jurade*, the governor, and the officials in Paris.

[182] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, f. 594.

[183] BN Mél. Colb. 171 *bis*, 454, 458, 459, 523; BN Clair. 796, 147; BN Clair. 796, 83.

[184] Boscherons, 212. The specter of Dutch intervention in such revolts was a very real concern for the authorities during this period, one that was reinforced by the recent discovery of the *chevalier* de Rohan's plot to deliver the Norman town of Quilleboeuf to the Dutch.

[185] SHAT A^1 433 (3 April 1675); SHAT A^1 433, f. 147 (30 April 1675).

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to present the characteristics and underlying dynamics of the Crown's response to the revolts of 1675 in Brittany and Bordeaux. Several interesting observations can be made about some of the problems associated with using the army as an instrument of domestic coercion. First, the army was not used to crush the rebellion in Brittany and royal units were never used to stop a revolt in progress. There were no military engagements between soldier and peasant in Lower Brittany and none between soldier and civilian in the urban revolts at Rennes and Nantes. In every case, the revolt either ended of its own accord (as in Nantes and Lower Brittany) or local forces such as urban militias and members of the local nobility took the initiative and ended the revolt by their actions (as in Rennes). In Bordeaux, we are faced with a slightly different picture. The first revolts in April ended with a remarkable concession to the rebels, namely the abolition of the taxes in question. The second revolt in August was put down with the aid of royal troops recently garrisoned in the Chateau Trompette.

Secondly, when troops were sent into the province for punitive purposes or to maintain order in a region that was calm but unstable, great care was taken to avoid alienating those segments of the population that did not participate in the disturbances. This is particularly evident in the military response to the problems in Brittany. This revolt provides numerous examples where soldiers are seen as the potential and even primary cause of, rather than an effective coercive cure for, popular disturbances. As Chaulnes wrote to Colbert in a letter of 19 June, "The two principal causes of these troubles have been the fear of a large body of troops and the execution of the edicts." The order in which Chaulnes presents these two "principal causes" in his letter is not without some significance.

In addition, this chapter hopes to have demonstrated that the military repression was not as severe as is commonly claimed. The military occupation of Nantes lasted for only a matter of days. Rennes experienced several different phases of military occupation of somewhat longer duration, but considerable measures were taken to maintain discipline and to protect the inhabitants from the depredations of the soldiers. The soldiers at Bordeaux were also held to a strict standard of discipline. As in the case of several other revolts, a complicated system of loans ensured that much of the immediate financial burden of the punitive military occupations fell upon classes of society well able

to afford it, and usually enabled these individuals to make a tidy profit in the process.

While documentation detailing the events in the countryside of Lower Brittany is quite scarce, we do know that the rigors of a full military repression were inflicted on just three of the 40 insurrectionary parishes. We have also seen that the judicial repression in Rennes, a town that had embarrassed the king's own soldiers and insulted the governor and the governor's wife, was similarly restrained. Although there were many arrests, only a few individuals were found guilty and only a handful of capital sentences were imposed.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is hoped that this chapter has demonstrated that the French Crown viewed the revolts in Brittany and Bordeaux not only as threats, but also as excellent opportunities both to reap some financial advantage and to increase the Crown's leverage in the province. The revocation of long-standing municipal privileges, the establishment of winter quarters in the rebellious regions and, in the case of Brittany, the arrival of an intendant in the province after the revolt, mark significant advances of the king's authority in these traditionally particularist provinces. The potential financial advantages become even more significant when it is remembered that Brittany was a *pays d'état* and as such generally provided less money for the king's coffers than other provinces.

Whether one considers those parishes ordered to provide 500 livres worth of supplies to the soldiers occupying Rennes, the citizens of Rennes hit with a series of three different taxes in quick succession during the fall and winter of 1675–1676, the residents of that unfortunate *faubourg*, forced to pay a sum simply to move back into and repair their damaged homes, the hapless Estates, voting a large sum of money for the king's coffers in the failed hope that this would spare them the additional burden of having troops take up winter quarters in the province, or the Parlements who ended up paying 400–500,000 livres fifteen years after the revolts in order to be allowed to return to their traditional seats at Rennes and Bordeaux, it is evident that the Crown's response to this revolt was guided primarily by the principle of extracting as much money as possible from those individuals and institutions directly involved in, or who could be conveniently implicated in, the revolt. This is to say nothing of the savings incurred by having the provinces support the burden of winter quarters in 1675, a sum that in Brittany, according to Chaulnes himself, was estimated to be 2,000,000 livres.[186]

[186] Cited in Pocquet, vol. V, 533.

A recent historian has identified the Breton revolts as the "most serious breakdown of order [in France] in the period 1654 to 1689" and suggests that the response to the revolts provides a "prototypical example of how Louis XIV's government functioned."[187] The revolt was indeed serious, so serious in fact, that Louis XIV had made plans to travel to the province himself to oversee its punishment.[188] But if the royal response to the revolt does indeed provide a "prototypical example" of the manner in which the government of Louis XIV functioned, it seems clear that certain assumptions about how and why the army was used as an instrument of domestic coercion in France stand in need of reexamination.

[187] Collins, 117.
[188] See Lemoine, 58. The death of Turenne disrupted the king's plans.

CHAPTER FOUR

'LES MISSIONS BOTTÉS': RELIGIOUS COERCION UNDER LOUIS XIV

Introduction

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes ranks among the most dramatic and momentous events in the history of Louis XIV's reign. Its genesis and consequences have been the subject of considerable debate among generations of historians. Contemporaries explained the action on both theological and political grounds, to fulfill the ideal of "One Faith, One Law, One King," to bring the heretics and schismatics back into the arms of the one true Church, and to stamp out a particularly dangerous faction within the heart of the kingdom. Historians of later generations, from a more detached perspective, point to a king obsessed with his personal *gloire*, and one for whom the prospect of eliminating the problem of French Protestantism, a problem that plagued the reigns of seven of his predecessors, proved irresistible. They also reference Louis XIV's desire to reinforce his stature as the great defender and benefactor of the Catholic faith. At the time of the Revocation, the Sun King's reputation in this regard was tarnished by two developments: a long running dispute with Pope Innocent XI over various questions of papal and royal authority, and by Louis XIV's controversial decision to remain on the sidelines when, in 1683, an invading army of heathen Turks besieged Vienna, the bulwark of Western Christendom.

Whatever the immediate motivations for the Revocation, it is clear that the idea did not spring Athena-like, fully formed from the brow of Louis XIV. The Edict of Fontainebleau was the culmination of a long process of harassment and persecution dating back to 1598. Although the Edict of Nantes (and subsequent Grâce of Alès of 1629) ended a particularly bloody phase of French history, it also inaugurated an even longer period of religious tension. The brutal civil wars of the sixteenth century were replaced by a religious "cold war" in the seventeenth century. Waged by *arrêt* rather than by sword, this patient offensive sought to weaken the Huguenots, limit their freedoms, and ultimately, con-

vert them to the Catholic faith. Although the pressure applied to the Huguenots waxed and waned over the years in response to the changing internal and external situation of France, the ultimate objective remained conversion, and from the beginning of his reign, Louis XIV demonstrated his intent to further this ambitious design. In his *Memoirs for the Instruction of the Dauphin*, composed around 1670, Louis XIV detailed how he planned to deal with the Protestant problem in France:

> [A]s to my great number of subjects of the supposedly reformed religion, which was an evil that I always regarded, and still regard, with sorrow… It seems to me, my son, that those who want to use extreme and violent remedies do not understand the nature of this evil, caused in part by heated passions… it is necessary to let [them] run their course and die out rather than reignite them by some strong [measure]… particularly when the corruption is not limited to a certain, known number, but is spread throughout the state… I believed, my son, that the best means to gradually reduce the Huguenots in my kingdom was to not pressure them at all by any new rigors, to observe [the privileges] they had obtained under previous reigns, but also to grant them nothing further, and even to restrict [these privileges] within the narrowest limits that justice and propriety would permit."[1]

This chapter will not attempt to analyze the century-long persecution culminating in the Edict of Fontainebleau. Nor will it delve too deeply into the debates surrounding the justifications and rationales behind the Edict itself. Both of these issues have been ably investigated by a host of other scholars.[2] Instead, the current chapter will limit itself to examining the use of coercive force to execute, enforce, and police the religious policies of Louis XIV. This is accomplished by examining several important coercive events both before and after the Revocation, with

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[1] *Mémoires pour l'instruction du Dauphin* (ed. P. Goubert, 1992), 80.

[2] There is an enormous literature chronicling the persecution of the French Protestants in the seventeenth century and examining the issues surrounding Louis XIV's decision to revoke the Edict of Nantes. The interested reader might wish to begin with Jean Orcibal, *Louis XIV et les Protestants* (Paris, 1951) and Émile-G. Léonard, *Histoire générale du protestantisme*, 3 vols (Paris, 1961). Two compact works issued on the 300th anniversary of the revocation, also provide an excellent introduction to the subject. See Elisabeth Labrousse, *La révocation de l'Edit de Nantes* (Saint-Amand, 1985) and Janine Garrisson, *L'Édit de Nantes et sa révocation* (Paris, 1985). For a near-contemporary account, see Élie Benoist, *l'Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes*, appearing in 1693–1695. Two excellent works appearing after research for this chapter was completed are Brian Strayer, *Huguenots and Camisards as Aliens in France, 1598–1789: The Struggle for Religious Toleration* (New York, 2001) and Walter C. Utt and Brian Strayer, *The Bellicose Dove: Claude Brousson and Protestant Resistance to Louis XIV, 1647–1698* (Portland, 2003). For a convenient compilation of acts relating to the persecution of the Protestants, see BN MF 10623.

a primary focus on the *dragonnades*, probably the most famous, if little-studied, act of religious coercion in seventeenth century France, and on the subsequent military occupation and counterinsurgency operations undertaken against the remaining bastions of Protestantism in southern France.

Space considerations impose other limitations on this chapter. The geographic focus will concentrate primarily on the events in Languedoc and its neighboring regions. This area possessed the greatest concentration of Protestant subjects in the kingdom and it was here that the French Crown engaged in its most overt and widespread attempts at religious coercion. Chronologically, this chapter will limit itself to a discussion of the events of the 1680s and 1690s. While there were earlier acts of violence and coercion against Protestant populations in France, none reached the scale and intensity of the events of these two tumultuous decades. Following this period, Languedoc played host to the most serious episode of popular and religious violence in the reign of Louis XIV, the War of the Camisards. The significance of this bloody conflict, however, is such that it receives separate and detailed treatment in a later chapter.

The First Dragonnades

In seventeenth-century France, the requirement to lodge troops was a familiar and onerous duty for much of the French population. During the campaigning season, frontier areas bore the brunt of this responsibility, but during the winter months, large contingents of troops were dispatched to the interior of the country to take up winter quarters. Troop lodgments were dreaded primarily for the fiscal burden they entailed, and secondarily for the disruption and physical hardship suffered by the targeted households. As other chapters of this work have demonstrated, the Crown also frequently used troop lodgments to enforce fiscal policies, humble provincial and municipal authorities, and punish rebellious populations. In 1681, however, the longstanding and familiar practice of troop lodgment found a new employment in the form of the *dragonnades*.[3]

[3] Marillac's use of lodgments in 1681 is well known and is commonly referenced as marking the beginning of the *dragonnades*. Prior to 1681, however, there were other lesser-known instances where troop lodgments were used against the Protestants. In

In the immense body of literature available on the reign of Louis XIV, however, discussions of the *dragonnades* are generally limited to emotive descriptions and condemnatory analyses relying on the contemporary accounts of those subjected to the harsh financial and physical demands of quartering an expensive and uncouth soldiery. One rarely finds any attempt to analyze the phenomenon from the perspective of a royal officialdom struggling to realize the ambitious designs of their sovereign. This is unfortunate, for as will be seen in this chapter, such an analysis reveals an interesting and complex process beset by numerous problems and inconsistencies, and far removed from some of the simplistic portrayals encountered in most general treatments of the reign.

In 1681, the intendant of Poitou, René de Marillac, was fully engaged in the work of conversion.[4] He had made substantial progress in this task by imposing various financial demands on the Protestants, including the payment of arrears due from the previous years' taxes, increasing their burden of the *taille*, and the rates they paid to support regular troop lodgments. In a tactic common to the period, he coupled these financial threats with the simultaneous promise of tax exemptions for those who converted.[5] Despite the significant number of conversions obtained using such methods, Marillac remained unsatisfied. The conversions were coming too slowly for the zealous intendant, and he sought to increase both the pace and the quantity of conversions. As a royal official, he was well aware of the dread inspired among the king's subjects by the prospect of troop lodgments and believed that this fear could be used to great effect in obtaining conversions in Poitou. Accordingly, Marillac requested that royal soldiers be sent to the province.

In a letter of 18 March, Louvois informed the intendant that the king was pleased with the success of his efforts and had authorized the payment of the *gratifications* promised by the intendant to those who converted. He urged Marillac to continue his good work and informed him that Colbert was considering the possibility of providing additional

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1680, for example, the intendant of Rochefort was removed from his post for having stubbornly insisted on lodging troops on Protestants despite repeated orders to desist from the practice. See Léonard, II, 366.

[4] Marillac was the grandson of Michel de Marillac, Keeper of the Seals under Louis XIII.

[5] Garrisson, 153.

tax relief to those who converted. More significantly, Marillac's request for troops was approved and the intendant was told to expect the arrival of a cavalry regiment. The original plan called for the troops to arrive in November, roughly coinciding with the establishment of winter quarters.[6] The date was subsequently moved up, however, and four companies were dispatched to Poitou in May.[7]

Marillac was instructed to closely monitor the troop lodgments, and Louvois was careful to point out that he was also sending with his letter a copy of a royal ordinance giving those who converted a two-year exemption from the lodgments. Once again, the strategy was first to threaten the Protestants with the severe financial burden of troop lodgments, and then to offer them an irresistibly convenient way to escape those same burdens.[8] Louvois also noted, however, that although the king desired the majority of cavalry to lodge on Protestants, it was not necessary for them to support the entire force. To clarify his intentions even further, and revealing an often-evidenced penchant to delve into the minutest details of military matters, Louvois suggested that if, in a normal and fair distribution of a company of twenty-six *cavaliers* the Protestants would normally receive ten, in this instance, Marillac should give them twenty.[9]

Louvois also stressed that the soldiers should lodge only on the wealthiest Protestants. If the Protestant notables complained about their burden, the intendant was told to explain that in the event there were insufficient troops to lodge on everyone in equal fashion, it is only fair that the poor be exempt and that the wealthy bear the costs of the lodgments. The intendant was to give verbal instructions to the *maires* and *échevins* "without letting them know that His Majesty desires to convert the Huguenots by force."[10] The city officials were to be told that the distribution of lodgments was based solely upon the amount of credit available to the wealthy Protestants of the region. In short, the king and Louvois wanted the intendant to take every possible mea-

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[6] BN MF 7044, f. 39, Louvois to Marillac (18 March 1681).

[7] Louis André, *Michel Le Tellier et Louvois* (Paris, 1906), 485.

[8] Louvois also expected that the proffered exemptions would result in many conversions along the routes of *étapes*. He failed to see, however, the impact such exemptions would have on the ability of the region to support the troops marching on the routes of the *étapes*.

[9] BN MF 7044, f. 39, Louvois to Marillac (18 March 1681).

[10] Ibid.

sure to demonstrate that the unequal distribution of lodgments was a consequence of the hosts' wealth and not of their religion.

This letter is fascinating in that it reveals a king and his secretary of state for war who appear somewhat uncomfortable with what at the time was the novel practice of sending soldiers to carry out the work of religious conversion. They sought to conceal their true intentions from both the general population and, perhaps more importantly, from the disapproving gaze of foreign courts and notables. Although the troops arrived in May, it is worth noting that they were initially scheduled to arrive in Poitou during the winter months, thus allowing their presence to be explained as part of the routine practice of winter quarters. By ordering troops to take winter quarters in a region with a strong Protestant presence, the Crown could reap a dual advantage: the troops would be supported during the winter months and, as an added bonus, their presence might inspire conversions.[11] The lodgments were distributed so that it would be clear that the Catholics of the region were also shouldering some part of the burden while the Protestants' wealth provided a convenient cover for the fact they were required to support the greatest share of the economic burden.

Despite these stratagems, however, contemporary accounts of this first Poitevin dragonnade make clear that the Protestants themselves were under no illusions as to the real objective of the lodgments. "One saw that the *cavaliers* were only lodged on those of our religion," wrote Poitevin schoolmaster Jean Migault,

> "Every day one saw a great crowd [of] those who had, until then, made profession of our religion, attend Mass to be discharged of the *cavaliers* that one gave them… [T]hat which was most disgraceful and astonishing … is that the majority changed religion the day [the *cavaliers*] arrived in their house, without having suffered in the least."[12]

Marillac's confidence in the efficacy of lodgments to obtain conversions was well founded, and these first attempts at forced conversions achieved astonishing results. In one incident, a single *cavalier* obtained the conversions of three important families in the town of Fressines in less than two hours, simply by presenting them with "bits of paper that

[11] Although I have found no clear evidence of such a strategy in the correspondence, it is important to note that Louis XIV sought a similar dual advantage when he sent troops to take up winter quarters in provinces that had hosted popular rebellions.

[12] *Les Dragonnades en Poitou: Journal de Jean Migault, maître d'école (1681–1688)* (Paris 1988 [1910]), 66–67.

he claimed were certificates of lodgment."[13] In a matter of weeks, some 38,000 Poitevin Protestants converted to the Catholic faith.[14]

The tentative nature of these first attempts at conversion, however, and the uncertain resolve of the king and his ministers concerning this new tactic, is revealed by the subsequent course of events. Three months after the arrival of soldiers, the Protestant inhabitants of the Poitevin town of Châtellerault sent a letter to the king complaining about the troop's behavior. The king was surprised, wrote Louvois, that Marillac allowed such behavior. Marillac should see to it that the troops lodged by the Protestants were controlled in the same manner as those lodged by the Catholics. Louvois admonished the intendant for his overzealous conduct, lecturing Marillac that he should not threaten Protestants who did not want to convert, "it not being appropriate to [the king's] service that a man of your character speak [in a manner] so far removed from the observance of the edicts that the *religionnaires* enjoy."[15] The king desired the conversions to continue, but Marillac was to carry them out in such a way that the Protestants would "have no legitimate pretext to complain that they have been subject to violence or threats when they do not want to change their religion."[16] Louvois again emphasized that lodgments be distributed in a way that would present no appearance of attempting to weaken the *religionnaires*. "I have already told you," wrote Louvois, "that the king does not want all of the *cavaliers* … lodged on the *religionnaires*," so why were the Catholics of Châtellerault required to lodge just three or four *cavaliers* even though Catholics represented ninety percent of the population? By lodging three cavalry companies and a company of recruits almost entirely on the Protestants, Marillac had "acted against [the king's] intentions."[17] Louvois ordered the intendant to redistribute the lodgments so there could be no suggestion that they specifically targeted the Protestants. The objective, wrote Louvois, was to make it appear that the distribution of lodgments was an attempt to ensure that the powerful not exempt themselves from the lodgments at the expense of the poor.[18] In

[13] Ibid., 67.

[14] This was Marillac's estimate. See Léonard, II, 365. The estimate of 40,000 is provided by N. Weiss, "Aperçu de la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes en Poitou", BSHPF 54 (1905), 338.

[15] BN MF 7044, f. 49, Louvois to Marillac (2 June 1681).

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

September, Louvois again reprimanded Marillac, this time for allowing soldiers to demand payments from their hosts. "You have a great interest in ending these disorders," warned Louvois, "His Majesty appears disposed to take some unfavorable resolution against you if … they continue."[19]

Louvois revealed one of the reasons behind this uncharacteristic concern for public perceptions when he complained that Marillac's actions gave credibility to the rising tide of criticism throughout Europe.[20] In the summer and fall of 1681, the international outcry over events inside France was considerable. Charles II of England, Christian II of Denmark, and the city of Amsterdam all made official offers of refuge to Louis XIV's Protestant subjects, while the Grand Elector made his concerns known to the French ambassador. Perhaps because of this outcry, in November, the soldiers were withdrawn from Poitou and, in February 1682, Marillac was recalled. His replacement in Poitou was Nicolas de Lamoignon, *sieur* de Basville, an individual destined to have his own difficulties with the Huguenots in the course of a long and illustrious career in the king's service.

Marillac was not the only intendant who attempted to use royal troops to obtain conversions in 1681. In July of that year, viewing the success of Marillac's initiative, Nicolas-Joseph Foucault, intendant of Montauban, requested two companies of cavalry "to second the ecclesiastical missionaries" in Rouergue and Quercy.[21] Louvois rejected his request.[22] The intendant of Limoges, Pierre Cardin Le Bret, was reprimanded for his zeal when the Protestants of Angouleme complained that they alone were bearing the burden of troop lodgments and that the troops were behaving badly.[23] Le Bret was also told to stop lodging troops on the Protestant ministers who, according to the king's wishes, were supposed to be exempt.[24]

> "Having been informed of the current rumor that the troops His Majesty has sent into Dauphiné for their quarters have only marched [there] to contribute to the conversion of the Huguenots in the same manner that was done in Poitou, and His Majesty not presently judging it [useful] for his service to take any new [measures] with regard to the *religionnaires*

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[19] Cited in Adolphe Michel, *Louvois et les Protestants* (Paris, 1870), 53.
[20] Ibid., 53. See also, Labrousse, 161.
[21] *Mémoires*, 79.
[22] Louvois to Foucault (7 August 1681), in *Mémoires*, 509.
[23] BN MF 7044, f. 46, Louvois to LeBret (20 June 1681).
[24] Ibid.

> of Dauphiné, [he] has ordered me to advise you, without letting anyone know that you have received any orders on this subject, to make sure that the lodgment of troops is spread equally on the Catholics and the *religionnaires*.[25]

In 1681, then, we see Louis XIV entering warily into this new phase of his grand project for religious uniformity in France. He proceeded with caution and made repeated attempts to dispel any notion that the king of France would use force to harvest the souls of his subjects. It is also interesting to note that, as revealed by Louvois' closing caution to the intendant d'Herbigny cited above, Louis XIV also seemed concerned that his retreat from the policy of forced conversion not be mistaken as an unkingly concern for domestic or international perceptions.

Although Louis XIV retreated from this initial experiment with forced conversions, he did not forget the pleasing spectacle of the veritable flood of conversions obtained by the booted missionaries in Poitou. The remarkable success of Marillac's initiative opened up a host of attractive possibilities to a monarch like Louis XIV, one who viewed his responsibilities as the Most Christian King with the utmost seriousness and one who happened to have an immense military force at his disposal.

The Revolt of 1683

The royal retreat that characterized this first period of *dragonnades* did not signify a general withdrawal from the policy of reducing the Protestant presence in France. To the contrary, a new series of actions and decrees aimed at limiting the freedoms of the Huguenots soon followed.[26] In the southern regions, and particularly in the Vivarais and the Cévennes, these initiatives met with increasing resistance, and by the summer of 1683 royal officials were commenting regularly on ominous signs of unrest among the Protestants of the Midi. Crime and brigandage on the highways increased, caused and exacerbated by the proliferation of armed Protestant bands. The intendant and the governor of Languedoc both requested the establishment of a strong *prévoté*, backed by a force of *maréchaussée*, to help deal with the brigandage

[25] Ibid., f. 47, Louvois to d'Herbigny (7 June 1681).
[26] Labrousse, 163–170.

that plagued the province.[27] D'Aguesseau believed that such a measure would also help contain the *religionnaires* of the region who were "much more insolent than elsewhere because they are not restrained by the fear of justice."[28]

In May 1683, sixteen pastors from Dauphiné, the Cévennes, Haut- and Bas-Languedoc, Vivarais, Poitou, and Saintonge met in the house of Claude Brousson to discuss their options in the face of increasing royal pressure. Brousson, drawing on a similar example of resistance in Guyenne twelve years earlier, suggested a popular, non-violent demonstration. The pastors decided that on the last Sunday of June Protestants across France would hold simultaneous open-air sermons in areas where Protestant temples had been torn down and the Protestant religion abolished. This would demonstrate a resolve to remain true to their faith while the peaceful nature of the act would show their firm desire to remain the king's loyal subjects. The decision, however, was not unanimous with many churches refusing to participate. As a result, Brousson's vision of a grand protest encompassing all of France ended in disappointment.[29]

In the Cévennes and the Vivarais, however, Brousson's proposal was met with enthusiasm. In July, an assembly took place in the Cévenol village of Saint-Hippolyte whose Protestant temple had recently been demolished. This was followed by Protestant assemblies in the Vivarais and disturbances in the mountainous regions of Auvergne and the Alps. The usually moderate Colbert noted angrily that the Protestants were preaching in forbidden areas, "talking insolently, and using great threats."[30]

The military commander in the province, the duke de Noailles, warned of the gathering storm, noting that he had repeatedly warned about the threat of a Protestant rebellion in Languedoc, but that his warnings had been ignored.[31] "Since this winter, I have warned several times about everything that has come to pass … I talked of it at every opportunity [but] no one responded." One was always occu-

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[27] The office of *prévôt* was vacant following the death of its previous owner. See AN G^7 296, f. 326.

[28] AN G^7 296, f. 254, d'Aguesseau to Colbert (2 January 1683).

[29] The churches that refused to participate were those of Montpellier, Guyenne, Haut-Languedoc, Saintonge, and Poitou.

[30] AN G^7 296, f. 317.

[31] Dom Claude Devic and Dom J. Vaissette, *Histoire générale de Languedoc* (Toulouse, 1876), XIII, 530.

pied with other grand things, lamented Noailles, and paid no attention to the important events in the region.[32] In the summer of 1683, Catholics and Protestants alike were arming themselves and everyone expected the region to descend once again into the chaos of religious civil war.

On 29 July, more than ninety representatives of the Protestant temples of Vivarais, Languedoc and Dauphiné assembled at Chalençon and in a development the Crown must have viewed with considerable anxiety, several representatives of the local nobility attended as well. There they made a decision to resist royal oppression by force of arms. A rudimentary military organization was adopted, forming armed companies based on temple affiliation and establishing large military camps. They sought to demonstrate the seriousness of their intentions and to inspire others to join their ranks by portraying themselves as "the rampart" of the Protestant cause in the Midi.

The intendant d'Aguesseau decided to travel to Vivarais in person to take stock of the dangerous situation. On the road from Puy, the intendant encountered a group of armed and mounted nobles who warned him that the countryside was dangerous. If the king's intendant continued onward, he risked the ignominious prospect of being kidnapped. The group offered him a protective escort as he traveled through the troubled region but d'Aguesseau declined, saying that the rebels wanted nothing from him and that he would not accord them any respect by outfitting himself with a military escort. He told the gentlemen that the best service they could provide for the king would be to return to their homes and to keep order on their lands.[33]

Arriving at Tournon, d'Aguesseau found the town in an agitated state. The fear of civil war was widespread and everyone talked only of guarding the gates of the town and posting sentinels to avoid surprise attacks. Seeing the explosive nature of the situation, d'Aguesseau immediately began working to calm the situation. Following the tradition of the time, he focused his efforts on first detaching influential personages from the movement and then attempting to use them as agents of conciliation.[34]

Nevertheless, his efforts were in vain. In a letter of 1 August, Louvois informed the intendant that royal troops were on their way to punish

[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 531.
[34] Ibid.

the rebels.[35] On 7 August, the count de Roure warned the local bailiffs, *chatellains*, consuls, and other authorities in Vivarais that Protestant rebels were threatening to occupy the walled towns and chateaus of the region. He ordered them to guard against such attempts by selecting inhabitants with the most military experience to mount guard on the walls, particularly in the exposed towns and villages along the Rhone River.[36]

By the end of August, d'Aguesseau, while not ceasing his efforts at finding a peaceful solution to the looming conflict, acknowledged that the situation had become quite serious. The intendant informed Colbert that the Protestants continued to preach in various forbidden areas and to prepare for war. There were no leaders or nobles evident among the rebels, observed d'Aguesseau,

> "But they have formed a camp of sorts, have organized [themselves] by companies, seized various chateaus, [and] have supplies and arms … In short, they show every indication of wanting to resist the king's troops."[37]

After providing this précis of the situation, the intendant requested funds to support the king's troops. Three regiments of dragoons and three battalions of infantry under the command of Saint-Ruth, had arrived in Dauphiné and were presently camped on the east bank of the Rhone River.[38] To support these soldiers, d'Aguesseau requested funds for 20,000 rations of bread, 3,000 *sétiers* of wheat, and boats so that Saint-Ruth could cross the river and enter Vivarais.[39]

D'Aguesseau, however, did not truly wish to see Saint-Ruth's troops visit an exemplary punishment upon the Protestants of Vivarais. The intendant found the use of violence counterproductive because it invariably risked inflaming passions and further destabilizing the situation. He preferred to approach the problem of Protestantism indirectly, gradually undermining its position within the kingdom. The Protestant religion, wrote d'Aguesseau,

> "is like a citadel that one should not try to take by assault … [O]ne should attack *à la sape*, gaining ground on it every day, until one has

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[35] BN MF 7044, f. 73, Louvois to d'Aguesseau (1 August 1683).
[36] AD Ardèche, C 1060, f. 97.
[37] AN G^7 296, f. 326.
[38] Millot, *Mémoires politiques et militaires pour servir à l'histoire de Louis XIV et de Louis XIV*, 13.
[39] AN G^7 296, f. 326.

> gradually reduced it to such insignificance that it will, in the end, fall on its own."[40]

Consequently, d'Aguesseau prevailed upon Saint-Ruth to delay his crossing into Vivarais, an action that, as will be seen, was subsequently criticized by Louvois. With the troops of Saint-Ruth poised on the east bank of the Rhone, d'Aguesseau continued his efforts at conciliation.[41] With the cooperation of the Protestants of Bas-Languedoc, more moderate than their brethren of the Cévennes, d'Aguesseau and the count du Roure succeeded in arranging for the militants to lay down their arms and to sign a declaration of complete submission. He also succeeded in obtaining a general amnesty from the king. After additional provocations, however, the Crown informed its agents that the amnesty would exclude ministers who had preached in forbidden areas, that approximately forty notables and gentlemen would be put on trial, and that three Protestant temples would be demolished.[42]

These new measures destabilized the delicate situation and, on 19 September, the Protestants of the Vivarais took up arms once again. On 20 September, against the advice of the intendant, the 4,000 royal troops under the command of Saint-Ruth crossed the Rhone and, five days later, Noailles arrived to take personal command of this force. On 27 September, the combined force of infantry and dragoons encountered the main Protestant band of 5–600 men near the village of Herbasse. According to d'Aguesseau, what ensued was "butchery rather than a true combat." The Vivarais Protestants were massacred. Survivors were hunted down and many were hanged.

The military camp established in the Vivarais, however, was not the only such camp. Protestants of the Cévennes had also established a camp and soon after the Vivarais uprising, the Cévenol Protestants began a disturbance of their own, centered on the town of Saint-Hippolyte. After the victory at Herbasse, the duke de Noailles ordered a contingent of dragoons to move on Saint-Hippolyte and the rumor of approaching troops served to calm the spirits there.[43]

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[40] Cited in Labrousse, 109.

[41] Saint-Ruth was not idle. On 29 August, he fell upon an assembly of 200 Protestants near Bourdeaux in Dauphiné, killing several, taking others prisoner, and demolishing two temples. See Garrisson, 209.

[42] Millot, 11.

[43] Leonard, II, 367. See also Millot, 16.

The subsequent repression visited upon the region was severe. In the Vivarais, those who had taken up arms after the declaration of the first amnesty found themselves excluded from the second amnesty. Saint-Ruth lodged his troops in areas indicated by Noailles where they lived at the expense of the inhabitants. The guilty were to be handed over to d'Aguesseau for trial. The houses of rebels killed in battle and of those who failed to return to their homes after being ordered to do so, were to be demolished. Saint-Ruth was ordered to raze eight to ten of the principal Protestant temples in the Vivarais. The idea, wrote Louvois, "was to cause such devastation … that the example will contain the other *religionnaires* and teach them … how dangerous it is to rise up against the king."[44] However, if Louvois hoped that these actions would serve to enlighten other Protestants, the conflict and repression also provided sobering lessons to royal officials stationed in the province. Commenting on the executions of Protestant rebels, for example, Noailles observed,

> "These wretches … go to the gallows with the firm assurance of dying as martyrs and the only mercy they ask for is that one kills them quickly. They ask forgiveness from the soldiers but there is not one who wanted to ask forgiveness from the king."[45]

One can safely assume that such displays inspired much sober reflection among royal officials in the province as they remembered the long and bloody history of the region and pondered its uncertain future.

It is interesting to compare how Louvois' severe, yet general, directive to teach the rebels a lesson by causing great devastation was actually implemented by the intendant d'Aguesseau. On 29 September 1683, d'Aguesseau prepared a set of instructions for the consuls and inhabitants of Vivarais communities targeted for troop lodgments:

> Let it first be known that the dragoon should have 30 *sols* per day and the soldier 10 *sols*. This will be paid in coin or in food and other goods [in amounts] necessary for the daily subsistance of the troops or of their horses, at the choice of the inhabitant. If this is provided, the inhabitant must only provide a bed and nothing else, either under pretext of the *ustensile* or otherwise. The lodgment will be made only on [those of] the R[éligion] P[rétendue] R[éformée] and no Catholic will contribute to the lodgment or to the *subsistance*. If the troops are paid the said 30 *sols*, they will be obliged to buy the food, forage and other things they need, which the inhabitants cannot sell to them above the current price.

[44] Cited in Michel, 117–118.
[45] Cited in Millot, *Mémoires*, 14.

> In case of contestation, the price will be figured according to the three last markets preceding the arrival of troops. The 30 *sols* for the dragoon and the 10 *sols* for the soldier will be paid in money or in food … not in merchandise, livestock or other goods of this nature, on penalty of disobedience against the officer who allowed it and of exemplary punishment against the dragoon or the soldier. If the inhabitant has reason to complain about the dragoon or the soldier, he will begin by complaining to the commander. If [the commander] refuses or delays to give him justice, he will complain before the intendant or … his subdelegate.[46]

D'Aguesseau concluded by noting that the *nouveaux convertis* would be exempt from the lodgment and taxes from the moment of their conversionthey converted. It would be interesting to know what Louvois thought of the rather restrained and regulated manner in which d'Aguesseau interpreted his orders to cause "total devastation" but whatever his thoughts, it most certainly did nothing to change Louvois' conception of d'Aguesseau as too much of a moderate.[47]

The Cévenols were also punished for their abortive revolt. Dragoons were quartered in all of the important towns of the Cévennes, including Saint-Hippolyte, Anduze, Sauve, Saint-Germain, Vigan, and Ganges.[48] The economic hardships resulting from this military occupation of the Cévennes were particularly severe.[49] The punishments visited upon the rebellious regions were perhaps compounded by the fact that the conclusion of the hostilities in the Vivarais and Languedoc coincided with the death of Colbert. The removal of Colbert's moderating influence, combined with the audacity of the revolt itself, likely emboldened Louvois in his pursuit of a more aggressive policy towards the *religionnaires*. Officials that acted slowly against those who dared rise up against their sovereign became the particular targets of Louvois' criticisms. A letter written by Louvois to Noailles on 1 October made it clear that

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[46] AD Ardèche C 1485 *bis* f. 67.

[47] Beik suggests that d'Aguesseau was not so moderate as is often assumed. See Beik, *Absolutism and Society*, 300–301.

[48] Michel, 128.

[49] Claude Brousson calculated the costs of the occupation as follows: the regiment of Montpezat stayed in the region for 65 days and was paid 50,000 livres; three companies of 'Red Dragoons' received 30,000 livres for their 95 day sojourn; three companies of dragoons from the regiment of Villeneuve received 600 livres for 30 days; one company of *cravates* stayed for 14 days and was paid 1,400 livres. In addition, 10,000 livres were paid out during the passage of troops and the inhabitants lost an estimated 50,000 livres in possessions that were stolen, broken, "or sold at a low price". Brousson's calculations are reproduced in Michel, 129.

the winds had shifted at the Court and moderation was no longer in vogue. "It is difficult to understand," wrote Louvois, "what possessed M. d'Aguesseau to counsel patience to M. de Saint-Ruth while he was forced to suffer the insults of these *canailles*."[50] In what is perhaps an attempt to conceal his own miscalculations as to the stubbornness of the Protestant resistance, Louvois continued,

> "I am still less able to understand how M. de Saint-Ruth, having received a letter … in which I informed him that the king found it good that he not pass into Vivarais before the publication of the amnesty … could believe that this letter, which assumed that the people of the Vivarais were disposed to receive the amnesty with submission [should] inspire him to wait one moment to attack them [once] he saw … the *religionnaires* in arms."[51]

Noailles was ordered to read Louvois' letter to the intendant and to Saint-Ruth, but also to d'Aguesseau so that the intendant would see "how the conduct that he demanded of M. de Saint-Ruth … had been contrary to the intentions of His Majesty."[52] Suddenly, the future did not look so promising for a man of d'Aguesseau's moderation representing the king in a province as troubled as Languedoc.

The Grand Dragonnades

If the initial conversion attempts of 1681 were characterized by a certain trepidation in the royal policy, it is clear that this was not the case with the so-called *Grand Dragonnades* undertaken in the months preceding the Revocation. By 1684, the opinion of the king towards his Protestant subjects appears to have hardened considerably. Very few reprimands were issued to royal officials for overzealous behavior and there was little discussion of moderation. There are a number of possible reasons for this change in attitude and the death of Colbert in 1683 is certainly one of them. Colbert was never comfortable with the use of armed force against the king's subjects, whether for tax collection or religious conversion. Colbert believed, correctly as it would turn out, that such measures disrupted his attempts at improving the efficiency of the French economy and increasing royal revenues. The removal of his

[50] BN MF 7044, f. 79, Louvois to Noailles (1 October 1683).
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

moderating influence resulted in the primacy of Louvois and of his coercive agenda. Although Louvois' letters of 1681 reflect the cautious sentiments held by his sovereign at that time, Louvois himself nearly always preferred the use of force when it concerned persuading the king's subjects to comply with the royal will.

The change in Louis XIV's internal policy towards the Protestants was also inspired by changes in the international situation. In August 1684, the Truce of Ratisbon ended the War of the Reunions (1683–1684), the short-lived and little-studied conflict with Spain. As a result, a large number of troops that had been assembled along the Spanish frontier were suddenly made available for other duties. With the Spanish frontier conveniently located a short distance from the Protestant concentrations of the Midi, Louis XIV was presented with a propitious moment to resume that which was started in 1681 and to apply these troops to the work of conversion.

Finally, it seems likely that the revolt of 1683 in the Vivarais and the Cévennes played a role in the new and harsh policy towards the Protestants. The audacity of the rebels in taking up arms, particularly after having received, then rejected, the initial royal amnesty, likely reinforced Louvois in his hard-line position. More importantly, it made Louis XIV even less likely to heed his own counsel, proffered to the Dauphin fifteen years previously, to adopt a patient and prudent, if unrelenting, course of action with regard to the conversion of the Protestants. It is certainly no coincidence that a second and much harsher period of *dragonnades* commenced on the very heels of the revolt of 1683.

This second phase of forced conversions began in the spring of 1684 and targeted the long troublesome *généralité* of Béarn, one of the centers of Protestant resistance in the previous century. A new intendant had just arrived in Pau on 1 March and, unfortunately for the inhabitants of Béarn, Nicolas-Joseph Foucault was an intendant with something to prove.

Foucault came to Béarn after serving as intendant in Montauban. Still stinging from accusations of moderation during his tenure there, and no longer enjoying the support of his great patron and protector, Colbert, Foucault immediately sought to regain royal favor by demonstrating his zeal for the work of conversion.[53] Immediately after his

[53] Robert Garnson, *Essai sur l'histoire du protestantisme dans la généralité de Montauban sous l'intendance de N-J. Foucault, 1674–1684* (Mialet, 1935).

arrival, Foucault began distributing money to certain Protestant notables in an attempt to persuade them to convert and, by April, Foucault estimated that he had distributed funds to more than 200 families.[54] In August, Foucault traveled to Paris where he obtained an audience with the king at Fontainebleau. According to Foucault's own memoirs, the king and the intendant discussed the situation in Béarn while poring over a map showing the disposition of Protestant temples in the towns and villages of the province. The king informed the intendant that there were too many temples, and they were situated too close together.[55] Foucault proposed a plan to reduce the number of temples to five, and the king approved. In his memoirs, Foucault does not reveal if the king was aware of the second phase of his plan, to ensure that the five remaining temples belonged to ministers who had already committed violations that were punishable by the destruction of their temple. By this means, Foucault hoped to eliminate all the temples in Béarn.[56] When Foucault returned to Béarn in February 1685, he immediately set about destroying the Protestant temples.

The declaration of war against Spain in 1683 brought a large army of observation into the province. In the spring of 1685, this army remained in Béarn under the command of Louis-François, marquis de Boufflers. On 18 April, Foucault wrote to Louvois requesting orders to lodge troops on Protestant towns and villages, assuring him that "the mere approach of the troops will produce a great number of conversions."[57] Foucault believed many among the general population desired secretly to convert but did not want to be seen as having too-readily betrayed their brethren or their faith. Foucault thought that the presence of the troops would provide them with a necessary and convenient pretext to convert.[58] Perhaps remembering the unfortunate fate of Marillac some years earlier in Poitou, Foucault promised to hold himself personally responsible for the behavior of the troops.

Foucault's memoirs are silent on what happened next. Although Foucault himself provides no details on the troops lodgments in Béarn, it

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[54] Foucault, *Mémoires*, 36.

[55] This comment reveals the royal strategy of first destroying Protestant "hubs", represented by the temples, and then progressively cutting off communication between the outlying Protestant communities.

[56] Foucault, *Mémoires*, cxlvii; M.L. Soulice, *L'Intendant Foucault et la Révocation en Béarn* (Pau, 1885), 12.

[57] Foucault, *Mémoires*, 118–119; Soulice, 23.

[58] AN TT 257 (27 May 1685), cited in Soulice, 25.

is clear that such lodgments did indeed take place. Complaints about troop lodgments were registered with the Parlement of Pau, but far from listening with a sympathetic ear, the king reprimanded the *premier président* of the Parlement for having received the complaints and forbade him to receive such complaints in the future.[59] Later chroniclers and historians chastised Foucault for lodging troops on the Protestants of Béarn and permitting them to behave in brutal fashion.[60] Whatever his role in authorizing troop lodgments or in encouraging the brutal behavior of the troops, Foucault's efforts met with dramatic success. From March to May, Foucault registered 4,500 conversions.[61] By early September, the intendant could boast of some 20,000 conversions. According to the intendant, many of these were obtained by the mere rumor of the approach of troops.[62] Louvois congratulated the intendant for his success and, in July, Père La Chaise informed Foucault that the king took such pleasure in reading Foucault's accounts of the large number of conversions that he kept them, presumably to reread at his leisure. The Estates of Béarn struck a medal in honor of Foucault and the city of Pau held a Te Deum. In August, the king himself wrote to Foucault praising him for his work and was so impressed by this "miracle in Béarn" that he sought to honor Foucault by sending him to serve as intendant of Languedoc, replacing the departing d'Aguesseau. Chancellor Michel Le Tellier, however, persuaded the king to send the erstwhile Basville to Languedoc, while Foucault replaced Basville in Poitou.

Poitou, already bearing the unwelcome distinction of being the first test case for the *dragonnades*, was targeted once again during the Great *Dragonnades*. At the beginning of this new wave of *dragonnades*, the intendant of Poitou was the ubiquitous Basville, who had replaced the zealous and equally ubiquitous Marillac in 1682. On 3 March 1685, Louvois informed Basville that the king was issuing several ordinances in favor of those who convert and wanted to provide "considerable" relief from the *taille* for the *nouveaux convertis* of the region. Louvois also informed the intendant that the king was dispatching a regiment of

[59] *Mémoires*, cl.

[60] See, for example, the son of the intendant D'Aguesseau, who criticized Foucault without mentioning him by name, in his *Oeuvres de chancelier d'Aguesseau*, XIII, 51. See also Ruhlière, *Eclaircissements*, I, 291 and the contemporary work of Élie Benoît, *Histoire de l'édit de Nantes et sa révocation*, III, 833.

[61] BN MF 7044, f. 124 (1 June 1685).

[62] *Mémoires*, clii.

dragoons to Poitou the following month and that they were to lodge on those communities with the most Protestants. The intendant was instructed to keep the decision secret until the regiment began its march.[63]

Since members of the nobility and ministers were exempt from lodgments, however, it was necessary to devise a different approach that would persuade these key social pivots to convert. "As there are several [nobles] whose affairs are in a bad state and who are strongly pressed by their creditors," wrote Louvois, "His Majesty desires that you examine if one could give them some sum of money to pay a part of their debts in return for their conversion." Perhaps, ventured Louvois, this example would be followed by others. "His Majesty would not complain about considerable sums [if they were] distributed to those of the province in whom the [remainder of the] Protestant nobility have the most faith." However, Louvois cautioned that bribes such as these were only useful so long as they remained secret. If the disbursement of such monetary inducements became widely known, it would only make the work of conversion all the more difficult as some would delay their conversion in the expectation of receiving similar bribes, while others would be rendered more resolute by the knowledge of the base motivations behind the conversions of some of the most respected and esteemed members of the Protestant communities.[64]

Basville experienced significant success in his efforts.[65] In a letter of 29 August 1685, Basville informed Louvois that there had been 3,000 conversions "in the last ten days and that number will grow considerably." Basville told Louvois that he could "expect Poitou to be entirely converted within a month."[66] His success in Poitou no doubt played an important role in his selection as replacement for intendant d'Aguesseau in Languedoc, who did not wish, or was not sufficiently trusted by Louvois, to preside over the *dragonnades* in that tense province.

When Foucault arrived in Poitiers in September 1685, he found the work of conversion largely complete thanks to the efforts of Basville. During his tenure in Poitou, Foucault's star dimmed somewhat and, like Marillac in 1681, his excessive zeal brought reprimands from Louvois.

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63 BN MF 7044, f. 104, Louvois to Basville (22 March 1685).
64 SHAT A^1 755, f. 121 (3 March 1685).
65 SHAT A^1 756, f. 28, Louvois to Basville (8 September 1685).
66 Basville to Louvois (29 August 1685).

In a curious display of concern during the very month of the Revocation, for example, Louvois informed Foucault that the inhabitants of Niort were complaining because of the "excessive [troop] lodgments" they were suffering. Louvois informed Foucault that,

> "[W]hen there is only a very small number of *religionnaires* remaining in a town, [the king] does not think it appropriate that one stubbornly try to convert them with excessive lodgments … it is better to appear to pay no attention to them, it being impossible that … they not be reduced by all the opportunities that will arrive [in the future] to discomfit them, either by the imposition of the *taille* or by the lodgment of troops that will pass through by *étapes*."[67]

Foucault persisted in his zealous approach however, and later that same month received another reprimand from Louvois. "His Majesty has learned with chagrin," wrote Louvois,

> "That at Poitiers one has lodged a company and a half of dragoons on a woman to force her to convert. I have told you so many times that His Majesty finds this violence distasteful that I am left astonished that you do not follow his orders, which have been so often repeated to you. You have a great interest to not fail [in this regard] in the future."[68]

When reading such admonitions from Louvois, however, it must be remembered that the lands of the *généralité* of Poitou belonged to the secretary of state for war. As a result, it is quite likely that such calls for restraint stemmed just as much from Louvois' personal interest in protecting a significant source of his private income as from any true desire for moderation. This is borne out when one examines the care with which Louvois wished to treat the great Protestant merchants and nobility of Poitou. In a letter to the marquis d'Asfeld, who commanded a regiment of dragoons in the province, Louvois reminded him that the commerce of the foreign merchants was "very useful for the kingdom" and that one should be careful not to force them to leave France. Perhaps remembering the embarrassment and international condemnation that occurred in 1681, Louvois warned d'Asfeld to provide no pretext for the foreign Protestants "to write to their masters that they are oppressed."[69] As for the members of the Protestant nobility, Louvois wrote that the king "would willingly give some pensions to those gentlemen of the *réligion prétendue réformé* who are in a position to per-

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[67] Louvois to Foucault (2 October 1685), cited in Michel, 61.
[68] Louvois to Foucault (16 October 1685), cited in Michel, 62.
[69] SHAT A[1] 756, f. 146, Louvois to D'Asfeld (6 October 1685).

suade others to convert."[70] Louvois also commented on the success of *dragonnades* in other parts of France, noting that in two weeks 30,000 conversions were obtained in Dauphiné, while in Languedoc 25,000 conversions were obtained in six days.[71]

By January 1686, Foucault considered all of Poitiers converted, with the exception of 5–600 fugitives and prisoners.[72] From that point on, Foucault's primary duty was to maintain the *nouveaux convertis* in their newly embraced faith and to either slow or stop the mass emigration that was then taking place from the ports of Poitou.

While Foucault was engaged in the conversion of Poitou, the Protestants of Montauban and Guyenne suffered from the attention of the "booted missionaries" of the marquis de Boufflers. In July 1685, Boufflers received instructions to use the troops freed up along the Spanish frontier to "reduce as much as possible the great number of *religionnaires* in the *généralités* of Bordeaux and Montauban" and if possible, "to obtain as large a number of conversions as had been accomplished in Béarn."[73] Louvois' subsequent instructions to Boufflers represent what are perhaps the most comprehensive statement of the intent and procedure of the *dragonnades*.

Boufflers was instructed to begin with the cities and towns that had the strongest concentrations of Protestants and to diminish their numbers to such an extent that the Catholics would outnumber them by a ratio of two- or three-to-one, "so that [when] His Majesty will decide to no longer permit the exercise of this religion in his kingdom, there will be no fear that the small number of *religionnaires* that remain will attempt anything."[74] "You will send into each community," continued Louvois,

> "cavalry and infantry or dragoons, in numbers to be decided in consultation with [the intendants] … You will lodge them entirely on the *religionnaires*, and remove [the soldiers] from each household as they convert. When all of the *religionnaires* are converted, [or] even the majority, … you will pull the troops out … deferring the conversion of the rest to a later time."[75]

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[70] SHAT A[1] 756, f. 146, Louvois to D'Asfeld (6 October 1685).
[71] Ibid.
[72] *Mémoires*, clxi.
[73] BN MF 7044, f. 133, Louvois to Boufflers (31 July 1685).
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

If some Protestants took up arms, Boufflers was to inform Louvois immediately and, without waiting for further instructions, attack and disperse them. When the number of Protestants in a particular community was sufficiently reduced, Boufflers was to move his troops to another location and begin the process again. Boufflers and the *intendants* were instructed to maintain a personal presence in the targeted areas in order to oversee the lodgments and to maintain discipline among the soldiers. If this was not possible, Boufflers was to delegate the necessary authority to a Catholic officer. Finally, revealing yet another concern that complicated the business of the *dragonnades*, Boufflers was warned specifically to avoid using the Konigsmarck regiment because this regiment was "for the most part composed of Calvinists and Lutherans."[76]

On 18 August, Boufflers arrived in Montauban with two regiments of infantry and four companies of cavalry. From 20–29 August, 10,000 conversions were registered in Montauban.[77] By 4 September, the number of conversions had reached 20,000. Samuel de Péchels was a Montalbanais Protestant and notable ordered to provide lodging for a contingent of Boufflers' soldiers. "[M]y house was full of soldiers and the officers' horses," recounted de Péchels,

> These men took over all the rooms … I was not even able to keep one for my family. It was likewise impossible to make them understand that I was offering them everything I owned, without resistance. They broke down all the doors, and broke open the chests and armoires, preferring to pillage my belongings in this brutal fashion rather than accept the keys that my wife and I offered to them. They converted my barns, full of wheat and flour, into stables and the soldiers' horses trampled the grain underfoot."[78]

It is interesting to note that even at this moment, on the eve of the Revocation, the king remained worried about the spectacle created by such mass conversions, perhaps fearing that it would be obvious to all that conversions numbering in the thousands and obtained in a matter of days could not possibly be sincere. With this in mind, Louvois repeated his instructions to Boufflers that it was not necessary to convert the Protestant communities in their entirety. It was much better "to take them in detail and merely try and reduce their numbers so

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Francis Balestié, *Montauban, des dragonnades au Réveil* (1971), 29.
[78] Cited in Garrisson, 227.

that they will not be the majority in any community."[79] When Louvois heard of one stubborn *religionnaire* who persisted in his resistance, and that one had lodged eight dragoons on him while allowing them to live at discretion, Louvois informed Boufflers that this was against the desires of Louis XIV. The king, wrote Louvois, "is still persuaded that when there remains one stubborn [individual] in an area, it is necessary to leave him alone." The charges that the intendant will impose on him, combined with other measures "will result in the effect that one desires … without being obliged to undertake new violent measures."[80]

Louvois provided precise instructions on how to distribute the troops between Montauban and Bordeaux. Fifty-two companies of dragoons were to lodge in the *généralité* of Montauban, while 47 companies were ordered to Bordeaux. Boufflers could decide for himself how to divide his infantry between the two cities. Louvois graciously informed the Marshal that he would not dictate the dispositions of each and every company, but he did instruct Boufflers to station the regiments in adjacent parishes and to ensure that during the deployment the companies of one regiment not be interspersed with those of another. Boufflers was instructed to use detachments from his troops "to finish cleaning out the *religionnaires* in all the small towns and villages of these two *généralités* [Bordeaux and Montauban] and for this," wrote the indulgent Louvois, "you can use cavalry or infantry, as appropriate."[81]

In August, 34,000 conversions were registered in Montauban. By September, such great success had been achieved that it became increasingly clear that the exemptions from lodgments granted to *nouveaux convertis* threatened the region's ability to support Boufflers' troops. Consequently, Boufflers was advised to pull soldiers out of Montauban if the large number of conversions and subsequent exemptions granted to the *nouveaux convertis* resulted in *anciens catholiques* being overburdened.[82]

The region of Saintonge was also targeted by the troops of Boufflers. "You are to send the number of cavalry and dragoons that you deem appropriate to Saintonge," wrote Louvois, careful to remind Boufflers that "the regiment of Vendôme and the battalion of Bonnieux and some of the *fusiliers* that march to Xaintes and to Angoulême are not

[79] BN MF 7044, f. 142, Louvois to Boufflers (24 August 1685).
[80] Ibid., f. 159, Louvois to Boufflers (19 September 1685).
[81] Ibid., f. 145, Louvois to Boufflers (8 September 1685).
[82] SHAT A[1] 756, f. 55 (13 September 1685).

meant to remain there."[83] If Boufflers required additional troops he was to use infantry drawn from the regiments of Touraine, Louvigny, or Artois. Providing forage for the horses of dragoons or *cavaliers* dramatically increased the economic cost of supporting the soldiers and this preference for infantry likely stemmed from both logistical considerations and a desire not to overburden those areas experiencing rapid and numerous conversions.

In Saintonge, Boufflers was forced to deal with another consideration that was absent in the *dragonnades* of Montauban. "The land of Barbezieux in the Saintonge, where there are many stubborn *religionnaires*," wrote Louvois, "belongs to me." Boufflers was told to send troops into Barbezieux as well as into the dependant parishes. Louvois stressed that the marquis was to send all the troops necessary "to give a good example" to the *religionnaires*, and to do the same in all the lands belonging to men of the Court in which there were *religionnaires*. "Nothing could better persuade them of the king's desire to bring them into the Roman Church than by making them see that those to whom they belong are no longer able to give them any protection."[84]

After the conversions, Boufflers was to ensure that if troops were required to remain in the region they lodge on communities with Catholics in sufficient numbers to support the costs, it being "absolutely necessary that the new converts enjoy the exemptions from lodgment promised to them.[85] Just one month before the Revocation, Louvois wanted to be sure that the *nouveaux convertis* remained true to their newfound faith. However, it was simply not fiscally possible to exempt all of the *nouveaux convertis* who lived on the routes of the *étapes*.[86] To deal with this issue, Louvois asked Boufflers for his advice on the feasibility of providing some other form of relief, either through a reduction in their *taille*, or by reimbursing them for their incurred costs at a higher rate than those received by the *anciens catholiques*.[87]

As for the important city of Bordeaux, also within Boufflers' mandate for conversion, the marquis was informed that the king did not

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[83] Some of these troops were destined for La Rochelle, others for Saint-Martin de Ré.

[84] BN MF 7044, f. 145, Louvois to Boufflers (8 September 1685). Louvois was clearly less solicitous of the rights of those on his lands in Saintonge than he had been with those in Poitou.

[85] BN MF 7044, f. 145, Louvois to Boufflers (8 September 1685).

[86] SHAT A^1 756, f. 143 (6 October 1685).

[87] BN MF 7044, f. 145, Louvois to Boufflers (8 September 1685).

want to use troops to convert "the few *religionnaires*" there. If the "suggestions" of the intendant were not sufficient to persuade the most stubborn, the king would decide what to do with them after the remaining *religionnaires* in the town had converted.[88]

The conversions in the rest of the region proceeded rapidly. In the first week of September, Boufflers reported 60,000 conversions in the *généralité* of Bordeaux.[89] Louvois wrote Boufflers that he was pleased with the conversions and passed the happy news on to the chancellor.[90] Of the 150,000 Protestants counted in the *généralité* as of 15 August, Louvois expected only 10,000 to remain by the end of September.[91] On 17 September, Louvois sent another letter to the chancellor, informing him that the conversions were continuing in Bordeaux, Montauban, Limoges, and Poitiers. Since 20 August, more than 130,000 conversions had been obtained, including many members of the nobility. "By the end of the month," wrote Louvois, "one can expect that the few *religionnaires* that remain will be widely separated in the provinces."[92] Louvois' letters to the chancellor are intriguing in that the repeated references to achieving conversions "by the end of the month" seem to suggest a timeline envisioned for the process of conversions. Louvois thought it significant to achieve the dispersion of the Protestants by the end of September. It is not too great a leap to suggest that this concern stemmed from a realization of the pending Revocation and the desire to see the Protestants dispersed and weakened as much as possible before the grand announcement.

In October 1685, the dragoons arrived in Rouen, where the ubiquitous and irrepressible Marillac was again serving as intendant. Once again, Louvois advised Marillac to proceed with a certain moderation in converting the estimated 20,000 *religionnaires* residing in his jurisdiction. The best way to convert the Protestants would be "by deliberation," that is, when the population of a town or village converted en masse by public deliberation. This would avoid the hardship and violence associated with individual troops lodgments. He advised Marillac that if it would require "very considerable" violence and "excessive lodgments" to convert everyone, the king would find it acceptable if

[88] Ibid.
[89] SHAT A[1] 756, f. 3 (7 September 1685).
[90] BN MF 7044, f. 156, Louvois to Boufflers (15 September 1685).
[91] Ibid., f. 144 (7 September 1685). See also SHAT A[1] 756, f. 3 (7 September 1685).
[92] Ibid., f. 158 (17 September 1685).

4–5,000 *religionnaires* remain unconverted, at least for the present. Marillac was cautioned not to attempt to convert any foreign Protestants living in Rouen and was told to treat gently any Protestant merchants or factory-owners "whose work is useful for the province."[93] For the soldiers' payment, the *religionnaires* were to pay 20 *sols* per place for the *ustensile* and furnish forage for the horses and food for the soldiers. The soldiers' pay would come from the deniers of the *Extraordinaire des Guerres*.[94]

It is interesting to compare the tenor of these directives, issued a scant few days after the Revocation, with those one sees in the first days of December, after several weeks of continuing resistance to the king's policies and concomitant embarrassment for the Crown. On 2 December 1685, for example, Louvois told the marquis de Beaupré, the officer in charge of soldiers sent to the *généralité* of Rouen, that "with regard to the inhabitants of Rouen, who remain stubborn, it is necessary to give them lodgments so heavy and so numerous that they will be forced to convert and, if this is not sufficient, to put them in prison."[95] That same month Louvois was instructed to take a similarly harsh approach with members of the nobility that refused to convert: redouble their lodgments and if that did not work, throw them in prison.[96] It seems clear that as time passed and certain Protestants continued to resist conversion long after the revocation, the measures taken by the Crown took on a much more severe character. This was particularly true in the case of Dieppe.

By November 1685, the majority of Protestant communities throughout France had been forced to convert. However, enclaves of stubborn resistance remained and the *dragonnades* of November-December in Dieppe highlight the growing impatience of the royal authorities with those who persisted in their errors and whose resistance demonstrated how the king's grand pronouncements in the October Revocation did not reflect the situation on the ground.

Foregoing all semblance of moderation, Louvois gave explicit orders to Beaupré to allow his soldiers to behave in as destructive a manner as possible during the troop lodgments at Dieppe:

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[93] SHAT A[1] 756, f. 277 (21 October 1685); See also BN MF 7044, f. 173. Marillac also noted the deleterious impact of the troops in a letter of 5 November 1685 to the *contrôleur général des finances*. See Boislisle I, 211.

[94] BN MF 7044, f. 173, Louvois to Marillac (21 October 1685).

[95] SHAT A[1] 758, Louvois to Beaupré (2 December 1685).

[96] SHAT A[1] 758, Louvois to Beaupré (11 December 1685).

> "As these men are the only ones in all the kingdom … who have distinguished themselves by not wanting to submit to that which the king desires of them … you should no longer restrain yourself [from using] any of the measures that have [heretofore] been forbidden, and cannot make too rude and too onerous the *subsistance* for the troops in their homes."[97]

Beaupré was told to augment the lodgments in Dieppe as much as possible without having to pull troops from Rouen where, as we have seen, the Protestants were also suffering lodgments. Instead of charging 20 *sols* per place plus the cost of feeding the soldiers, Beaupré was to permit his soldiers to demand ten times that amount. The soldiers were given explicit orders to engage in the "disorder necessary to pull these men from their current state, and to make an example in the province that would be … useful for the conversion of the other *religionnaires*."[98] In a later letter, Louvois noted, "the king is far removed from wanting to give relief to the inhabitants of Dieppe, for whom it is not necessary to have any consideration."[99]

Despite this new rigor, Louvois remained aware of the impossibility of converting all of the *religionnaires* in Dieppe. His goal was to reduce their numbers to the greatest extent possible and to disrupt their ability to cooperate with one another. Individual resistance to the king's will was one thing, organized and widespread resistance was another. To this end, he told Marillac that it was not necessary to make all of the obstinate *religionnaires* leave, rather "the intention of His Majesty is that you put all of [the stubborn ones] in the prisons of your department, separately, where they will have no communication with one another." The intendant was also instructed to treat the children who did not want to convert in the same manner as their mothers and fathers.[100] These extreme measures met with success and, by the end of December, Dieppe was entirely converted.[101]

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[97] BN MF 7044, f. 200 (9 November 1685).
[98] Ibid.
[99] SHAT A^1 757 (21 November 1685). See also Michel, 251.
[100] SHAT A^1 758 (5 December 1685).
[101] On the conversions at Dieppe, see also SHAT A^1 758, Louvois to Marillac (5 December 1685).

From Conversion to Counterinsurgency: Languedoc, 1683–1698

The *dragonnades* in Languedoc present a special case. Although there is no doubt a causal connection between the revolt of 1683 and the subsequent *dragonnades* of 1684–1685, one should not confuse the military occupation of Languedoc and the Vivarais with the *dragonnades* themselves. In 1684–1685, the Crown was actually pursuing two objectives in its use of troops in Languedoc and the Vivarais: to convert the Protestants and, perhaps more important for the preservation of the royal *gloire*, to punish the populations of Vivarais and the Cévennes for their audacious attempt at revolt. While some soldiers were lodging among the Protestant households to obtain conversions, others were conducting raids and patrols in the countryside to disperse Protestant assemblies. The *dragonnades* in Languedoc should be seen as one part of a much larger military operation.

While undertaking these twin actions, however, it was necessary to ensure that the punishments and conversions did not spark another popular religious uprising that could send the restless region once again into the anarchy and chaos of religious civil war. A general insurrection was a very real possibility. Louvois acknowledged as much in a letter of July 1683 when, asking for advice about the number and disposition of troops to send to the region, he noted that "the intention of His Majesty is not to send a small number of troops that could be exposed to mistreatment if a great number of inhabitants should rise up against them."[102]

As a result of the Protestants' uncertain loyalty, the king and Louvois took great pains to ensure that those who had taken no part in the recent rebellion were spared the hardship of troop lodgments. In 1684, Louvois informed intendant d'Aguesseau, that the king did not want to lodge troops on those areas of the Vivarais and Languedoc that had remained loyal during the rebellion. Although the king strongly desires that such areas convert, wrote Louvois, "he realizes that it would provide a bad example if those who had conducted themselves well were treated like those who had taken part in the rebellion."[103] In November 1684, Louvois reprimanded one official, saying that the king "was surprised" to learn that he was lodging troops in areas of the Cévennes and Vivarais that had not participated in the recent rebellion,

[102] BN MF 7044, f. 72 (16 July 1683).
[103] Ibid., f. 90, Louvois to d'Aguesseau (12 December 1684).

since the king had sent orders explaining "very clearly" his intention to spare the innocent. The official was ordered to discharge the innocent areas immediately from their lodgments and warned that, in the future, he would do well to follow the king's orders.[104]

As a further measure to avoid visiting hardships upon the general population, Louvois informed d'Aguesseau that, beginning 1 January, the pay of the two regiments stationed in the Vivarais and the Cévennes would be taken from the king's *déniers*. The rebellious areas were to supplement the king's pay by providing 2 *sols* per *place* for the *ustensile*. Provided this was paid, the king expected the officers and soldiers to maintain the same standard of discipline expected from soldiers in the rest of the kingdom.[105] Two weeks later Louvois informed the intendant that the king was sending 22,000 livres to support the costs of the two regiments and that more would be provided in the future on a monthly basis.[106] For his part, d'Aguesseau distributed copies of his policy on how the troops should behave and took pains to inform provincial officials about his policy towards the *religionnaires*: "From the 1st of this month," wrote d'Aguesseau in January, "they should not, under any pretext whatsoever, pay anything but the 2 sols of *ustensile* without my orders … In case of violations, they will carry their complaints to you and [you] will give them justice."[107]

The moderate d'Aguesseau, who presided with some misgivings over the punishments meted out to the rebellious communities of Vivarais and Languedoc, was soon replaced by Basville. Basville was already familiar with the phenomenon of forced conversions as a result of his tenure as intendant of Poitou from January 1682 to August 1685. Having successfully directed the conversions in a province of some 90,000 Protestants, he was now charged to oversee the conversions of some 200,000 Protestants in Languedoc.

Basville arrived in Montpellier in September 1685. Once there he met with departing intendant d'Aguesseau and a bevy of provincial

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104 Ibid., f. 89, Louvois to Montenegre (27 November 1684).

105 Ibid., f. 90, Louvois to d'Aguesseau (12 December 1684).

106 BN MF 7044, f. 91, Louvois to d'Aguesseau (25 December 1684). It is interesting to note that there were limits to the king's indulgence with regard to the use of the royal deniers to provide for the support of his troops in Languedoc. "[Y]ou should make no expense from the *Extraordinaire des Guerres* for the payment of forage," wrote Louvois to Basville," the 20 *sols* per *place* paid by the *religionnaires* should suffice." See BN MF 7044, f. 139, Louvois to Basville (6 August 1685).

107 AD Ardèche C 1486, f. 112.

authorities, including the commander-in-chief and nominal governor in Languedoc, the duke de Noailles, and the influential cardinal de Bonzi. The conversions began immediately and proceeded with astonishing rapidity. The entire population of Montpellier converted by general deliberation in three days. Noailles assisted Basville in this effort, taking personal command of several companies and overseeing the work of conversion.[108] On 20 September 1685, Noailles and his soldiers arrived in the longstanding Protestant stronghold of Nîmes and informed the city's populace that they had a week to convert.[109]

The relatively easy conversions of Montpellier and Nîmes, the two most important Protestant strongholds in eastern Languedoc, were significant victories for the new intendant and set the stage for additional successes. "The example provided by the city of Nîmes is so great," wrote Basville, "that one has no doubt that it will soon carry over to the Vivarais and the Cévennes."[110] From Nîmes and Montpellier, the soldiers marched to Uzès (4 October), Anduze and Alès (7 October), Saint-Jean-du-Gard (8 October), Saint-Hippolyte and Ganges (10 October), Barre (12 October) and Florac and Vébron (15 October 1685). Those areas converted and additional conversions came pouring in from all corners of the province, including the bishoprics of Castries and Bexiers, and the villages of Aiguesmortes, Montagnac, and Sommières.

Basville noted with some satisfaction that the population of Haut-Languedoc had converted without the use of troops. "In the last ten days," wrote Basville, "I count more than 40,000 conversions" including the conversions of five Protestant ministers.[111] Leading his troops on a veritable *chévauchée* of conversions, Noailles complained, "I no longer know what to do with the troops because the areas where I send them convert *en masse* and this happens so quickly that the troops can only sleep [there] one night."[112] Noailles predicted that "by the first two weeks of [November] the R[*éligion*] P[*rétendue*] R[*éformée*] will be entirely abolished in Languedoc."[113] Indeed, by November 1685, 350 nobles, 54 ministers and 250,000 "others" had been converted.[114]

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108 Noailles, 21.
109 Menard, 285.
110 BN MF 7044, f. 160 (3 October 1685).
111 Ibid., f. 164 (3 October 1685).
112 Noailles, 21.
113 SHAT A^1 756 f. 201 (15 October 1685).
114 Noailles, 23.

In a letter of 19 October, Basville informed Claude Le Peletier, Colbert's successor as *contrôleur général*, that Languedoc and Vivarais were almost entirely converted and that "there are no parishes that have not been cleaned out."[115] "*Voilà*, a great work," continued the intendant,

> "[B]ut in truth, one should not yet believe it entirely completed. It requires much care. It is a question of winning hearts and to make the great number of *convertis*, who [converted] only because of a blind obedience to the orders of the king, understand that they have done well to take this route."[116]

The intendant was not the only one with misgivings about the sincerity or enduring quality of such mass conversions. As in previous instances, Louvois and the king received news of these conversions with a mixture of satisfaction and skepticism and, in the particular case of troublesome Languedoc, a strong dose of paranoia. "It is good," wrote Louvois in October 1685, "that the conversions are general. But it is necessary to be wary that this unanimous submission does not [indicate] some sort of conspiracy."[117] Louvois was concerned that such a mass conversion, undertaken *en masse* by entire communities through public deliberation, would allow the *nouveaux convertis* to retain a certain sense of unity and cohesion that would surely cause future problems. He cautioned the intendant to remain informed of all that happened in the province and, whenever possible, to foster divisions among the *nouveaux convertis*. He was to be careful, though, not to let them know that he distrusted them.[118]

As had occurred elsewhere, many Protestants fled their homes upon hearing news of the approach of royal troops. They hid their belongings or took them with them in the hopes that this would spare them from having to lodge troops. To counter this stratagem, Basville issued an ordinance of 28 September 1685 requiring Protestants "to keep their houses in a state to receive the troops and to furnish them lodging."[119] It was forbidden for anyone, "regardless of quality or condition," to remove or hide their possessions. Those who had already fled their

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115 AN G^7 296, f. 508, Basville to Colbert (19 October 1685).
116 Ibid.
117 BN MF 7044, f. 164, Louvois to Basville (9 October 1685).
118 Ibid.
119 AD Hérault C 159, *ordinance* of 28 September 1685.

homes were ordered to present themselves before the judges or consuls of the area within 24 hours or face a fine of 1,000 livres.[120]

Despite the success of the *dragonnades*, royal officials in the province, and particularly intendant Basville, were under no illusions as to the sincerity of the conversions. As Basville himself stated in an *état* prepared for the king, "It is necessary to attack the hearts [of the *religionnaires*], that is where the [Protestant] religion resides" and "since it is only the fear of punishment" that has prompted the *nouveaux convertis* to abjure their faith, "the [Catholic] religion has made no true progress in their hearts."[121] The intendant, fully aware of the tensions within the province, must have looked to the future with a sense of foreboding.

On 19 October 1685, four days after the revocation, Louvois informed Noailles of the troop distributions for the upcoming winter quarters. The infantry regiments of La Fère, Zurlauben, and six companies of the regiment of Konigsmark would remain in Languedoc for the winter, as would the dragoons of Fimarcon and seven companies from the regiment of Barbesières.[122] While in their winter quarters, the troops in Languedoc were under the command of the marquis de la Trousse. This heavy presence of soldiers during the winter months is evidence of the distrust and unease with which the royal authorities viewed the *nouveaux convertis* of Languedoc and the Vivarais in the first months after the revocation.

Basville in particular recognized that Languedoc and particularly the mountainous Cévennes region remained an explosive powder keg of religious tension and initiated an aggressive program of military preparations in anticipation of a possible future rebellion. Thus, while events in the rest of the kingdom seemed to enter a phase of relative tranquility after the *grand dragonnades* and subsequent Revocation, Languedoc continued to seethe with unrest. Throughout the late 1680s and into the 1690s royal officials were preparing against the possibility of a Protestant revolt.

The authorities did not have long to wait. On the night of 20–21 February 1686, acting on information provided by the *curé* of Lasalle, 15 *fusiliers* of the garrison at Lasalle set out to surprise a clandestine Protestant assembly near Saint-Félix-de-Pallières. Before dawn, the sol-

120 Ibid.
121 AAE MD France 1759, f. 52, 55.
122 SHAT A[1] 756, f. 260, Louvois to Noailles (19 October 1685).

diers located the assembly by following the sounds of voices singing psalms. When the soldiers fell upon the group, several shots were fired by armed Cévenols, wounding a lieutenant and two *fusiliers*. Nine individuals were seized, including three men, one woman, and five young girls.

Basville, upon hearing of this defiance, traveled to the region personally, accompanied by la Trousse, four councilors of the *présidial* at Nîmes, and four companies of dragoons. Still relatively new to the province, Basville thought it necessary to demonstrate his firmness and, following a further investigation, two men were hanged and three sentenced to the galleys for life.[123] On 2 March, in a letter to an acquaintance recounting his first months in Languedoc, Basville noted:

> "A region of the Cévennes had the foolish idea to rise up. I rushed there and I believe I have calmed this growing revolt. It cost the life of two men, among them the leader of the revolt, whom I arrested. This example, made with great diligence … has dissipated everything."[124]

However, Basville knew that not everything was calm in the Cévennes. The illegal nocturnal Protestant assemblies were not only continuing, but were growing in size and frequency. The mountainous and forested terrain made it nearly impossible to exercise effective control over the region. In a letter to Louvois of 1686, Basville wrote of the continuing troubles with a sense of foreboding:

> I learned that there was an assembly, on Sunday last, the 27th of this month, of nearly 400 men, some armed, in the diocese of Mende at the foot of Mount Lozère. I am surprised. I believed that the great example that I gave at Vigan and at Anduze had placed the Cévennes in [a state of] tranquility. However, since this accomplished nothing, I do not think that one can hope for anything to come from punishments of this type in the future and I fear that such condemnations to death, in an affair [so] steeped in religion, will only irritate the spirits and [that such actions] will only harden all of the *mauvais convertis*. [O]ne never ceases to be astonished that these same men, who expose themselves to death at the hands of the soldiers, or to be hanged for going to the assemblies, for the most part die Catholic, as have ten of the last eleven who have been condemned … [This demonstrates] that there is more of a light spirit and an inclination to revolt than sincere attachment to their ancient religion. Nevertheless, if this fire cannot be extinguished after so many punishments at a time when it is not sustained by any leader, not even by a minister in the midst of the [Protestant] troops, it is easy to see that

[123] This account is taken from Pojoul, 80, which is, in turn, derived from Bost, I, 110.
[124] Cited in Poujoul, 80.

> it will become much larger if there were some foreign support, or some men or money brought into the country.[125]

As a result of the continuing troubles, in 1687 the intendant ordered the construction of three new forts at Nîmes, Alès, and Saint-Hippolyte. This dramatic step represents a significant shift away from the traditional royal policy of limiting construction of such forts in the interior of the kingdom and demonstrates the seriousness with which the king, Louvois, and the provincial authorities viewed the unstable situation in this strategic southern province.

The construction of these three new forts began in January 1687 and was completed in the first months of 1688. According to one estimate, the cost of this construction likely exceeded 200,000 livres.[126] In addition to these new forts, existing chateaus and smaller forts throughout the Cévennes were reinforced and garrisoned to serve as operational bases and as part of a military surveillance network in the region.[127]

Complementing these new and fortified centers of royal power was a new road network. This road network, which certainly ranks as one of the most significant engineering feats of Louis XIV's reign, linked the three new royal forts and, more importantly, facilitated the movement of troops deep into the most inaccessible regions of the Cévennes. In a letter to the *contrôleur général* of 1688, Basville expressed satisfaction with the progress of his road-building project and requested additional funds to complete the task:

> "I visited the Cévennes and the three roads that I [built] linking the forts … I passed very easily in a carriage. All the roads are [now] 15 feet wide [whereas] one could barely pass [another] on horseback a year ago. Nothing could be more useful, not only for commerce, but also to control the people of the mountains, [the] past disturbances having been partly the result of their belief that one could not reach them …If one could have more funds this year to continue this design, I believe that it would be money well spent."[128]

In a memoir prepared in 1687, Basville again emphasized the importance of this road network:

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[125] Cited in Devic and Vaissette, XIII, 588.

[126] Figure cited in Poujoul, 84.

[127] A good discussion of the construction of these forts can be found in Nicolas Faucherre, "Les citadelles royales en Cévennes après la Révocation", *La Révocation de l'édit de Nantes dans les Cévennes et le bas-Languedoc* (Nîmes, 1986).

[128] AN G^7 298, cited in Faucherre, 137.

> "There [are] more than 100 roads, 12 feet wide, penetrating everywhere across the Cévennes and the Vivarais … all sorts of carriages now travel very easily into all the areas that were previously almost inaccessible, and there is no region where one cannot roll the cannon and transport the [cannon] balls, if necessary."[129]

The outbreak of war in 1688 made the situation in this strategic province all the more dangerous. In the first months of 1689, both the governor and the intendant prepared lengthy evaluations of the state of the province and the implications for the king's foreign wars. Basville in particular, having reflected at length on the quantity of troops necessary "to contain the *malintentionée* of this province at the time and conjuncture where the king finds himself otherwise occupied" prepared a lengthy memoir detailing desired troop dispositions within the province, careful to demonstrate his understanding of the king's priorities by noting that "if the number of troops appears too great to you, it can be reduced."[130]

This document merits a detailed examination for a number of reasons. First, it demonstrates the degree to which the *intendants*, and particularly Basville, were immersed in the finest details of military strategy and operations. Second, it demonstrates that when the Camisard rebellion ravaged the province little more than a decade letter, Basville already possessed considerable experience with the difficult terrain, with the use of troops in an unconventional conflict, with the populations' varying sympathies across the region, and with the need to work with a mixed coercive force of militia, cavalry and infantry.

Basville begins his analysis by dividing the province into three regions (the Vivarais, the Cévennes, and Haut-Languedoc) and meticulously detailing the military dispositions he envisioned for each of the regions. He suggested establishing three camps, one in each of the regions, each garrisoned by 200 *cavaliers* or dragoons. These camps would serve as a central base for military operations in the region and provide support to other smaller detachments and garrisons in the area.

The placement of these outlying garrisons was described in great detail. The Cévennes, for examples, would receive two companies of dragoons at Anduze, because it served as the rendezvous point "for all of the Cévennes when they rise up." Saint-Jean-de-Gardonneque would

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[129] Pojoul, 85. A good discussion of the road network is also included in Devic and Vaissette, XIII, 601–602.

[130] SHAT A[1] 902, f. 31 (7 January 1689).

receive one company of dragoons, and Vigan, La Salle, Mervier and Saint-Ambroise would each receive one of infantry. As for the larger towns, Basville suggested there was nothing to fear in Montpellier because there were many more *anciens catholiques* than *nouveaux convertis* in that town. Uzès would receive two companies of infantry.

"With the mouth of the Cévennes occupied by forts, and the interior of these mountains occupied by the camp on Mount Lozère and by the troops that will be in the areas indicated … it does not seem that anyone could make any trouble there." The camp in Haut-Languedoc would serve to stop any troubles that might arise from neighboring Guyenne. "A body like this one, although very small, would be capable of stopping communication between Guyenne and the Cévennes." The camp in the Vivarais would accomplish the same thing with regard to Dauphiné. Basville noted that "dragoons are better than cavalry in all areas, because the majority are surrounded by difficult mountains where it is necessary to go on foot if there is something that needs to be done." In other places, infantry would serve better than cavalry because of the lack of forage.

At the conclusion of his memoir, Basville summarized the forces he thought necessary to maintain order in the province: 12 companies in the Vivarais, 16 companies in the Cévennes, Lauvanage and Uzès, and 13 companies in Haut-Languedoc, for a total of 41 companies. Thirty-one of these companies would be cavalry or dragoons, 10 would be infantry.[131]

The duke de Noailles also prepared an analysis of the situation at about the same time. He pointed out that the areas of most concern were the Vivarais, the Cévennes, the diocese of Uzès and some dioceses of Haut-Languedoc. Noailles thought the forts of Saint-Hippolyte, Nîmes and Alès would be very useful, but the recently constructed road network would be more useful still. He suggested that a force of 800 horse and 700 infantry, or 1,000 dragoons and 500 infantry, would be required to contain the province. He also requested two officers to assist him with the command, one to be stationed in Vivarais and the other in Haut-Languedoc.

He divided the force as follows: in Vivarais, 300 dragoons and 300 infantry, or 200 cavalry and 400 infantry; in the Cévennes, Gevaudan, the diocese of Nîmes and the diocese of Uzès, 400 cavalry or dragoons

[131] SHAT A[1] 902, f. 32 (7 January 1689).

and 300 infantry; and in Haut-Languedoc, 300 cavalry. Noailles noted that the situation in neighboring Dauphiné was very dangerous because of the proximity of Geneva and the Protestant cantons of the Lucerne valley. Significantly, Noailles noted that among the ranks of the recently converted nobility of the region "there is not one among them capable of leading fifty men" and that despite his efforts at disarmament there remained some weapons hidden among the population, which was the result of "avarice [rather] than bad intentions."[132] Noailles prepared a detailed disposition of troops very similar to Basville's, cautioning that it was necessary to keep each garrison concentrated in two or three houses rather than attempting to cover all of the dispersed hamlets and villages of the region.

The military dispositions were largely informed by the distribution of the *nouveaux convertis* population. The archives are full of lists detailing the religious demographics of the province and it is clear that the royal authorities took a great interest in obtaining precise population counts within the various regions. According to one such *état* of March 1689, the estimated number of *nouveaux convertis* in the province was 189,088.[133]

To deal with the danger posed by such a large number of *nouveaux convertis* Basville established a number of militia companies to perform surveillance and enforcement duties in suspect communities. He planned to deploy these militias to interrupt communications and movement between cantons, hampering the ability of Protestant communities to cooperate with one another. If other troops began operations in a troubled area, the militia companies could also serve as blocking forces, cutting off escape routes of any fleeing rebels. Basville's project for this force of militia entailed raising 4,000 men and dividing them into seven militia regiments posted in the Vivarais (3), Velay (1), Gevaudan (1), Montpellier (1) and in Haut-Languedoc (1).[134]

Basville's plans for a force of militia took place in an atmosphere of nearly continual disturbances and illegal Protestant assemblies. A particularly large disturbance took place in Vivarais in the spring of 1689. Royal authorities responded vigorously and, in March 1689, the new

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[132] SHAT A[1] 903, f. 312 (1 February 1689).

[133] Ibid., f. 328 (1 March 1689). The same *état* breaks down the population of *nouveaux convertis* as follows: Uzès, 27,000; Montpellier, 10,350; Nîmes, 8,000; Mende, 18,000; Vivarais, 15,200; Valence en Vivarais, 4,200; Vienne en Vivarais, 980; Le Puy, 900; Agde, 1,514; Lodere, 350; Besièvre, 2,500; Saint-Pont, 1,024; Castries, 15,000; Lavau, 5,000; Toulouse, 500; Bas-Montauban, 1,240; Mirepoix, 1,165; and Rieux, 4,165.

[134] Ibid., f. 130 (6 March 1689).

military commander in the province and brother-in-law to Basville, Victor Maurice count de Broglie, noted with satisfaction that "there was not a seditious parish that was not charged with troops."[135] While in theory such a blanketing of the region with military forces might sound effective, the terrain and general poverty of the inhabitants created many problems and challenges to such a comprehensive military occupation. Concerning the punishment of the rebellious parishes of Vivarais, Basville notes in a letter of 13 March:

> "We decided that it was not possible that [the rebellious parishes] support more than four companies of dragoons and six companies of infantry because they are situated in a region … where the inhabitants are very poor, not having any commerce in these frightful mountains… In addition, it is absolutely impossible to support additional cavalry [since] there is no forage there."[136]

In August 1689, Broglie visited the Cévennes, where five companies of dragoons were stationed. He noted that the troops were well positioned to control the most dangerous areas and that they were making continuous patrols that criss-crossed the entire region.[137] In August and September, however, there was another series of disturbances in Languedoc and the Vivarais, this time caused by the preachings of Brousson and François Vivent. As the troubles continued, one sees Broglie's earlier optimism of March give way to an increasing anxiety in the fall.

Broglie's anxiety only increased when the military commander in Dauphiné requested eight additional companies of dragoons to reinforce those already there in the event of a feared Protestant march on the province from Geneva.[138] In a letter to Louvois in September, Broglie mentions that he has only one regiment of dragoons at his disposal and it is divided between the Cévennes, Haut-Languedoc and the Vivarais. Militia companies were positioned throughout the region, but he had no flexibility in their dispositions because he could not pull them out "without risking an uprising." If the Protestants saw an area without troops, they would assemble "and in the present situation, [once] the fire is lit, it will be difficult to extinguish."[139]

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135 Ibid., f. 144 (7 March 1689).
136 Ibid., f. 177 (13 March 1689).
137 SHAT A[1] 905, f. 185 (12 August 1689).
138 SHAT A[1] 906, f. 95 (1 October 1689).
139 Ibid., f. 62 (19 September 1689).

Basville reinforced Broglie's concerns in a letter of 19 September 1689. While the militias were advantageously posted to repress any movement as soon as it began, pulling them out would cause trouble. "We only have that which is absolutely necessary to master the countryside, and nothing more, and if one sends some regiments of militia" to Dauphiné there will be problems.[140] Despite these protestations, in October Broglie consented to sending four companies to Dauphiné.[141]

In this tense atmosphere, punishment was swift and uncompromising for those accused of holding illegal assemblies. "[I]t was necessary to make an example," wrote Broglie, "I had two entire hamlets razed [where there were] assemblies," men of the proper age were sentenced to the galleys, while others were thrown in prison." He ordered the execution of one man who made the mistake of arriving armed to a Protestant assembly, and of two others for providing the rebels with information and supplies. "This action, combined with all of the other houses I razed in other areas, had such a great effect that we have reason to believe that this will make them see reason and [will] contain them in the future."[142] A reward was offered for the troublesome Vivent, dead or alive, and Broglie sent agents into the countryside to gather intelligence.

It was during this tense period of assemblies, raids, executions, and reprisals that Basville first envisioned applying some truly dramatic and severe measures to punish rebellious communities, measures of a severity normally associated with the bloody repression of the Camisards twelve years later. In a letter of October 1689, Basville admits that when faced with the rebellion in Languedoc, he had thought it might be necessary "to depopulate a number of parishes located in the most inaccessible areas." However, the intendant continues, "I found many difficulties in the execution of this design …[T]here was such a great number of parishes that it would have been necessary to transport at least 28,000 souls" and there was no place to send this many refugees without risking a "great embarrassment". If a large-scale population transfer was impractical, a small-scale depopulation targeting only three or four parishes would be useless and without "exemplary effect."[143]

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[140] Ibid., f. 63 (19 September 1689). Basville and Broglie often wrote twin letters of nearly identical content to Louvois, presumably to show the brothers-in-law were of one mind in the matter under discussion and to support each other's decisions.

[141] Ibid., f. 96 (1 October 1689).

[142] Ibid., f. 115 (7 October 1689).

[143] Ibid., f. 116 (7 October 1689).

Instead of undertaking such draconian measures, Basville relied on the new road network, four companies of cavalry, a regiment of dragoons, and the militia to support royal authority in the province. As for the disposition of his forces in October of 1689, six companies of dragoons were stationed in the Cévennes, six companies of dragoons in the Vivarais, and four cavalry companies in Haut-Languedoc, the latter being described by Basville as "an easier region, completely separate and distant from the Cévennes."[144]

In October 1689, one sees another flurry of correspondence detailing the military dispositions within the province. Broglie again stressed that three places must be occupied: the Cévennes, the Vivarais, and the bishopric of Castries. Responding to concerns about the dispersed nature of his garrisons, Broglie pointed out that "in these three regions there are few large, walled towns where one could place several companies." In any event, the walled towns were inhabited by men involved in commerce who, according to Broglie, were "men who have something to lose." As a result, the towns were more reliable and better behaved than the rural villages and hamlets. Large garrisons would only ruin their commerce, and besides, wrote Broglie, if the companies were concentrated within the walls of these towns, the entire countryside could assemble and disperse before the commanders received any information and could react. As for the parishes,

> [T]hey are of such a great extent, and composed of little hamlets [that] one never dreamt of separating the companies among them … one has lodged [the militia companies] in the chief areas of the parish in one or two adjacent houses, as if in barracks, with posted guards and with the whole company ready to take arms at a moments notice.[145]

There was not a great distance between such posts and, as a result, the companies did not exhaust themselves on patrols. With the companies blanketing the region like this, Broglie claimed, "the *religionnaires* cannot assemble nor take up arms without revealing their movement and being promptly opposed."[146]

Once again, the intendant sent his own letter, timed to coincide with that of Broglie, providing the rationale behind the disposition of forces in the province. The intent, as much as possible, wrote Basville, was to place infantry close to the cavalry or dragoons so they could act

144 Ibid.
145 SHAT A[1] 906, f. 174 (28 October 1689).
146 Ibid.

in concert. The troops were deployed in such a way that "those of the Vivarais, the Cévennes or of Haut-Languedoc could be brought together in 48 hours." He hoped that the troops sent by the king to the province would be sufficient and reassured Louvois that, if needed, a force of more than 2,000 *anciens catholiques* could be assembled in a week's time. The only difficulty, warned Basville, would be in arming them. To that end, he wanted to establish a stock of muskets in Nîmes, Alès, and Saint-Hippolyte.[147]

Basville also felt compelled to defend the dispositions of the militia companies against the criticism that they were too dispersed. In a letter of 21 November 1689, Basville informed Louvois:

> I have received the letter … by which you say that one has written to you that the militia companies of this province are too separated and that they run the risk of being overrun if [a force of] 100 to 150 should assemble … [We decided] that it was absolutely necessary to contain all of the countryside … [W]e have observed that when one removes the troops from an area, the *prédicants* rush in and form assemblies that grow [in size] before one becomes aware of them … All these cantons are arranged in a manner that the [whole] regiment can assemble in less than six hours, and the *colonels* have orders to bring them together at the least sign of trouble.[148]

Basville reiterated that Broglie had ordered the individual companies to be placed in two or three contiguous houses to ensure that the detachments would not be surprised. Basville also noted that guards were posted everywhere and that in places deemed particularly dangerous, two militia companies had been garrisoned.[149]

It is clear that these militia companies played a key role in the defensive architecture of the province. In November 1689, Broglie told Louvois that the militia was more useful than regular soldiers because the latter "cared little for the conservation of the region." The militia companies, on the other hand, were "composed only of men from the region, who have a great interest in maintaining the peace and tranquility there, and [who] are accustomed to the mountains."[150]

Arming this new militia placed additional burdens on the provincial administration. In an *état* of 1689 Basville counted the cost of arming eight regiments of militia at 23,659 livres, 6 sols, including the purchase

147 SHAT A[1] 902, f. 184 (4 November 1689).
148 SHAT A[1] 906, f. 252 (21 November 1689).
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid., f. 115, Broglie to Louvois (7 October 1689).

of 1,134 new *fusils*, at prices ranging from 5 to 15 livres each (for a total of 10,905 livres), refitting a quantity of old *fusils* and swords, and the storage of 2,860 *fusils* in the citadels of Saint-Esprit and Saint-Germans-de-Comtat.[151]

As in the case of the *dragonnades*, the unique environment of Languedoc ensured that the employment of militia in that province differed considerably from that of other regions of France, regions that lacked Languedoc's dangerous combination of difficult terrain, a tradition of religious resistance and rebellion, and a unique brand of "exalted" Protestantism. In these other regions, the role of militia companies in the royal policy of religious coercion is less significant but in Languedoc these companies were integral to the Crown's attempts to control, monitor, repress, punish and fight Protestant rebels in what amounted to an enduring low-intensity conflict that, by 1689, had been going on for at least a decade. It is therefore important to enter into at least a brief discussion of this little-studied institution.

It is important to remember that militias have a long history in France and that they came in a variety of forms. These included militias identified with particular French regions, owing their existence to ancient royal concessions or traditional provincial liberties and charged with defending key frontier areas, as was the case with the militias of Boulougne, Bayonne, and Roussillon. There were local militias responsible for maintaining watch along the French coasts, as was the case in parts of Brittany and in southern France. There were urban militias who, as their name suggests, were recruited from within a given town and generally restricted their activities to maintaining order in and around that town. There were also the so-called "provincial militias," militia regiments raised in response to the manpower demands of the War of the League of Augsburg (1688–1697) and intended to garrison important frontier areas while the royal army was on campaign. Finally, there were the militia regiments with which this chapter is concerned, variously known as the "petite", or in Languedoc as the "second" militia, militias that remained in the interior of the kingdom and charged with policing those regions troubled by Protestant resistance and rebellion.[152]

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[151] SHAT A[1] 906, f. 268 (27 November 1689).

[152] There remains some confusion as to the exact nomenclature for these militias. Some accounts imply that the term "petite militia" referred only to militia regiments raised in Bordeaux, Montauban, and Dauphiné, while others seem to suggest that the

Regiments of petite militia were raised in Bordeaux, Montauban, Dauphiné, Languedoc, and Vivarais. These regiments were organized along the same lines as royal regiments, except that their ranks were filled exclusively by Catholics. The regiments served from May to October while the royal army was away campaigning, except for the regiments of Languedoc, where the degree of unrest obliged them to serve year round.

Provincial authorities found these regiments quite useful. As mentioned earlier, the count de Broglie, writing to Louvois in 1689, suggested that the militias were more useful than regular troops. Regular soldiers showed little regard for the region or its inhabitants and were unaccustomed to the rugged and complicated terrain of the Cévennes and the Vivarais. Local men, by contrast, had "a great interest in preserving the peace and tranquility of the region [and] are accustomed to the mountains."[153] Basville also found a mercantilist advantage in using local forces because money used to pay local militia would remain circulating within the province and not be carted off by the soldiers when they left for other fronts.[154]

The Languedoc militia regiments enjoyed a degree of success in disrupting Protestant assemblies and policing troubled areas. Regiments in other regions, however, were sometimes less helpful in the task of maintaining peace and tranquility among the population and their use occasionally proved counterproductive. Paying three months of support for the regiments at Montauban, for example, proved to be very expensive and provoked a popular outcry. In 1689, the intendant of Montauban wrote to Louvois arguing that the region's urban militias were sufficient to maintain order during the summer months when the royal army was on campaign, and that the petite militia regiments were unnecessary. Louvois, however, disagreed and ordered that the annual levy of the petite militia continue.[155]

In 1690, the outbreak of hostilities with the Duke of Savoy required a rapid mobilization of an army in the region. As a result, many militia companies raised in Guyenne, and Dauphiné were called upon

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name "second militia" referred only to certain militia regiments raised in Languedoc. Still others appear to combine all such regiments together under the rubric of petite militia, while still others make no distinction between the regular regiments of provincial militia and those regiments responsible for the surveillance of the Protestants.

153 SHAT A[1] 906, f. 115, Broglie to Louvois (7 October 1689).

154 Cited in Sautai, 89.

155 Balèstie, 82.

to reinforce the regular army along that frontier.[156] At the same time, Broglie was ordered to raise a number of 50-man militia companies to maintain order in the Vivarais.[157] It proved difficult, however, to convince some members of this new Vivarais militia that they were to remain within their region and not be required to march in support of the royal army. The consul of l'Argentière, for example, noted that the levy of the new militia companies was going well, "with the exception of five or six [individuals] who thought … they would soon be obliged to march to the frontier."[158]

Similarly, the consul of Serière wrote, on 15 June 1690, that "one has much difficulty persuading our inhabitants that this … is not a second levy of [provincial] militia."[159] The consul himself appears to have been skeptical on this subject, as he took pains to inform Broglie that the individuals selected for the companies were "family men whom, if some disorder should arrive in this region, are required in their households."[160] The levy of these companies proved difficult for other reasons as well. In an ordinance of 18 August 1690, Broglie noted that officers selected to lead the companies were complaining that most of the men able to carry arms had left the area "because they think themselves too important to march with artisans and farmers, or because of a lack of enthusiasm for their duty."[161] To counter these

156 Sautai, 102.

157 The departmental archives of Ardèche provides an exceptional record of the levy, including the number and character of these companies, as well as a fascinating account of the *syndic*'s veritable odyssey to procure funding to equip these companies. See in particular, AD Ardèche C 1061. The subsequent history of these units is unclear and demonstrates the confusion encountered in the archives when trying to distinguish between units of petite militia and the provincial militia. Vogüé claims that units raised in the Vivarais at this time were part of the provincial militia levy of 1688. After examining the records pertaining to this levy (found in AD Ardèche C 1061) it seems clear that these companies were intended to remain in Vivarais and to maintain order among the *nouveaux convertis*. See, for example, AD Ardèche C 1061, f. 7, an *état* of men selected by the consuls of Rochemaure intended, as per the orders of Broglie, "for the guard of said area," and AD Ardèche C 1061 f. 12, an *état* of those named to serve "in the jurisdiction of the barony of Bouloigne" as per the orders of Broglie. Similarly, see AD Ardèche C1061, f. 15, a letter from the consul of l'Argentière referencing the nomination of 25 men raised by the orders of Broglie "for the guard and conservation of our city and to oppose the *mal intentionnées* … who might conduct assemblies [contrary to] the orders of His Majesty."

158 See AD Ardèche C 1061 f. 15.

159 Ibid., f. 33.

160 Ibid.

161 Ibid., f. 81.

problems, Broglie ordered that if those who had been selected did not show up they would be fined 10 livres for the first offense and imprisoned for the second offense.

In some areas, the raising of such militia companies created more problems than they helped to solve. In 1693, for example, the intendant of Montauban complained that the petite militias, financed by a tax upon the *nouveaux convertis*, only exacerbated religious tensions in the region. Furthermore, the militia "without arms and nearly nude" were in such a decrepit state that their deterrent value was minimal. Their condition, wrote the intendant, increased "the misery of the *nouveaux convertis*, seeing themselves ruined and their money so badly and uselessly employed." It would be easy, wrote intendant d'Herbigny, "to do away with this militia without compromising any of the precautions necessary to ensure the submission of the *nouveaux convertis*."[162] Like his predecessor, d'Herbigny urged reliance upon the urban militias, which could "assemble up to 10,000 men in 8–10 days."[163] In 1694, the recruitment of the Montauban petite militia ceased. That same year, in violation of their mandate that guaranteed they would not be required to serve outside of their home province, several petite militia regiments, including three from Languedoc, were sent to reinforce the Army of Catalonia. They were never replaced.

The Strategy of Conversion

After having discussed some of the specific details concerning religious coercion under Louis XIV, it is appropriate to take a step back and examine some of the societal, cultural, and economic assumptions that informed the Crown's larger strategy towards the conversion of the Protestants. For the *dragonnades* were far from an impulsive application of coercive force by a willful monarch and pitiless minister who preferred the crude use of violence to the more subtle arts of persuasion. Rather, they represented one part of a comprehensive strategic plan of conversions dating back to the early years of Louis XIV's reign. The *dragonnades* were one element in this larger plan for conversion and it is important to recognize that, at least originally, they were planned and executed with an emphasis on efficiency. The goal was to obtain the

[162] Boislisle, I, 1158, d'Herbigny to Pontchartrain (7 January 1693).
[163] Ibid.

largest number of conversions with the least amount of coercive effort, and this was to be accomplished through the targeted application of coercive force.

The first point that must be considered is that French society of the seventeenth century was a hierarchical society and its pyramid-like nature, with a handful of powerful individuals perched at the pinnacle supported by a broad popular base, lent itself well to a strategy of targeted coercion. It was expected that the conversion of a few Protestant notables, whether members of the nobility or of the wealthier merchant classes, would create a "trickle down effect" of conversions among the lower classes of society. This assumption also demonstrates the degree to which the *dragonnades*, at least initially, were intended to be an instrument of economic intimidation rather than a tool of physical oppression. Wealthy Protestant notables were expected to convert, not because of broken windows and doors, but because of the larger financial burdens associated with the costs of supporting a number of soldiers, officers, and horses.

Initially, the *dragonnades* were an attempt to apply a precisely targeted economic coercion to the leadership of Protestant society. At the same time, economic incentives were offered to those Protestants identified as susceptible to this kind of enticement. This fiscal approach to conversion did not fundamentally change until after the Revocation when the Crown found itself embarrassed by the fact, increasingly obvious to all, that some of the fundamental assumptions behind the Revocation were demonstrably false. As the embarrassment grew, and as it became clear that those who could be enticed to convert financially had already done so, the coercive dynamic changed to the more physical application of force.

Physical coercion was not the first choice of the Crown with regard to the French nobility and notables. This initial reluctance stemmed from a number of factors, including the inconvenient fact that members of the nobility were, in most cases, exempt from the requirement to lodge soldiers. However, there appears to have been another concern as well: the genuine fear that members of the Protestant nobility could take up arms and lead their followers in a religious civil war against the forces of the Crown. It will be recalled that Louis XIV's concern about the possibility of igniting a widespread domestic conflict is suggested in the memoir he prepared for the Dauphin:

> It seems to me, my son, that those who want to use extreme and violent remedies do not understand the nature of this evil, caused in part by heated passions … it is necessary to let [them] run their course and die out rather than reignite them by some strong [measure] … particularly when the corruption is not limited to a certain, known number, but spread throughout the state."[164]

When one examines the care with which the lists of Protestant nobility were prepared, complete with annotations as to the fervor of their religious beliefs, the fortified chateaus under their control, and the number of men at their disposal, it seems clear that Louis XIV entertained very real fears as to the capacity of this nobility to engage in open rebellion and perhaps drag France back into the bloody chaos of religious civil war.[165]

Such concerns persuaded the king and his ministers to attempt other methods to obtain conversions among the nobility. The primary method was the threat of investigating the legitimacy of Protestant titles of nobility. The assumption, of course, was that many members of the nobility were enjoying these privileges under false pretenses and that, when faced with the choice of changing their religion or losing their claim to nobility, they would invariably choose the former.

Basville adopted this approach during his tenure in Poitiers and, in a letter of 22 March 1685, Louvois informed the intendant that he was sending the decrees necessary, although Louvois added that when doing the investigation, Basville was to "make no mention of … religion [although] the intention of His Majesty is that you only make use of this with regard to those of the *religion prétendue réformé*, not judging it appropriate that you make any research against Catholic gentlemen."[166] Writing to Foucault in Béarn, in July 1685, Louvois informed him that the king was sending him an *arrêt* "in which His Majesty orders you to oblige the gentlemen of Béarn to bring you their titles for verification, so that only those who are true gentlemen will be able to enjoy the privileges …of nobility."[167]

In September Foucault, now in Poitiers, was instructed to investigate the Poitevin nobility in the hopes that "by a prompt condemnation of

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[164] *Mémoires*, 80.

[165] Louis XIV's concern with the disposition of the Protestant nobility is even more apparent in the intelligence collection by his agents in the subsequent Camisard Revolt.

[166] SHAT A[1] 755 f. 157, Louvois to Basville (22 March 1685). See also, BN MF 7044, f. 104.

[167] Louvois to Foucault (July 1685) in Michel, 95.

those whose noble status is less well-established, you will cause enough apprehension among the others to persuade them to do what is necessary to avoid a similar fate."[168] "You will note," continued Louvois, "that the gentlemen whose nobility derives from letters accorded by His Majesty to men of the *religion prétendue réformé*, in which there are no clauses to indicate that the king … knew they were of the said religion, should be able to be declared invalid without difficulty."[169]

When threats such as these failed Louvois was not averse to taking somewhat harsher measures against select members of the Protestant nobility, particularly when it concerned regions with a history of resistance to Crown initiatives. Writing to Foucault in December 1685, for example, Louvois instructed the intendant that "[w]hen the dragoons you have lodged on the gentlemen no longer find what is necessary to subsist and the last gentlemen persist in their error … put them in prison until they convert." If targeted members of the nobility left town in order to escape punishment, the intendant was ordered to raze their houses."[170]

In Montauban, the king also seemed far less solicitous of the perquisites and privileges of the local nobility. In a letter of October 1685, Louvois informed Boufflers that,

> "the intention of His Majesty is that you not hesitate to deliver *lettres de cachet* to gentlemen of the religion who do not hold themselves in the respect that they should, and if there are some among them who associate with … the *religionnaires*, or [attempt] to stop the conversions, His Majesty desires that you arrest them [and once released] if … they continue this bad conduct, the intention of His Majesty is that you raze their houses."[171]

It is significant that this directive came just three days before the Revocation, and was perhaps a sign that the Crown dearly wanted to remove the threat of a noble-led resistance, either through their conversion, or their imprisonment.

One cannot help but remark on the inconsistency with which the nobles in various regions were treated. In Saintonge, for example, Boufflers was forbidden to establish lodgments on the households of Protestants currently serving in the army, or on those who had at

[168] SHAT A[1] 756, f. 40, Louvois to Foucault (12 September 1685).
[169] Ibid.
[170] BN MF 7044, f. 221, Louvois to Foucault (20 December 1685).
[171] Michel, 206, Louvois to Boufflers (12 October 1685).

least twenty years of military service. In general, he was to refrain from lodging soldiers on anyone of a "distinguished quality" although Boufflers was also instructed not to let the gentlemen of Saintonge know that he had received this directive. He was to let them assume that they would be targeted with lodgments if they did not "quit a religion that displeases His Majesty." If they remain obstinant, Boufflers was to serve them with *lettres de cachet* but Louvois cautioned Boufflers that "you should only use this expedient with much discretion, it being of little significance … if some [Protestant] gentlemen remain in the provinces provided there are no people left to follow them should they undertake something against the tranquility of the state."[172] Louvois believed that most of the population would eventually convert anyway once there were no more areas of Protestant worship and once they found themselves surrounded by Catholics.[173]

Another class of individuals perched at the pinnacle of the French societal pyramid and therefore, theoretically at least, a tempting target for conversion, were the wealthy Protestant merchants. However, even after the loss of Colbert and his general concern for economic matters, one sees Louvois cautioning intendants to treat members of the Protestant commercial classes with care. In Rouen, for example, Marillac was told to be considerate of the Protestant merchants and foreigners living in that city, whose work "is useful for the province."[174] Similarly, Basville was cautioned to convert only some of the Protestants, "it being important not to make the powerful families which handle the commerce of the province think it would be advantageous to leave."[175] In writing to the Archbishop of Rheims, Louvois also recommended that he handle the Protestant bankers and chiefs of manufacturing with care.[176]

Finally, were the most tempting targets: the Protestant ministers. News of the conversion of these key figures was met with great joy

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[172] BN MF 7044, f. 145, Louvois to Boufflers (8 September 1685). This represents an interesting exception to the "top down" theory of conversions. The "top down" approach assumed that if the leaders and notables converted the people would follow. The "bottom up" approach assumed that if the people converted the leaders and notables would be rendered impotent.

[173] BN MF 7044, f. 145, Louvois to Boufflers (8 September 1685). These last remarks reveal the strategy behind the *dragonnades*: to destroy Protestant temples and isolate Protestant communities as a first step in the process of containment and eventual elimination.

[174] SHAT A1 756, f. 277, Louvois to Marillac (21 October 1685).

[175] BN MF 7044, f. 153, Louvois to Basville (8 September 1685).

[176] Cited in Leonard, II, 371.

and enthusiasm by the king and his agents. These pillars of Protestant society were offered a number of incentives to convert. As early as 1680, one sees Colbert writing to one of the *intendants*:

> It is necessary that, in great secrecy and with great precautions, you learn the names of all the ministers of the region, their talents, their possessions, and the profit they pull from their functions and that you subsequently determine those whom it will be easiest to convert by giving them some money and assuring them of an income proportional to that which they receive from their [current] employment.[177]

Of even greater interest is a letter written by Louvois to Basville on the very eve of the Revocation:

> In the declaration that will be published at dawn to abolish the exercise of the *religion prétendue réformé* throughout the kingdom, to raze all the temples, and to chase all the ministers from the kingdom [let it be known] that those who want to convert will enjoy for the rest of their lives, and after their death, their widows … exemption from the *tailles* and from the lodgment of soldiers, that they will have pensions one-third greater than that which they received from the *consistoires*, and that those ministers who want to receive their doctorates and law [degrees] will be exempt from the three year licensing requirement and will be able to receive their degrees by paying one-half of the taxes that each university customarily receives."[178]

In addition to the social and economic factors that influenced the king's conversion strategy, there were also demographic and geographic ones. One is particularly struck by the prevalence of what, for lack of a better term, can be called the "body count" approach to conversions. Prior to and during the *dragonnades*, the king's agents prepared lists detailing the numbers of Protestant, *nouveaux convertis*, and *anciens catholiques* in various regions. Progress in conversions was measured by the changing demographic ratio of these various categories. It should again be noted that there was no expectation that the *dragonnades* would result in a complete, one-hundred percent conversion of Protestant communities. The main goal, mentioned repeatedly in the correspondence, and particularly in the weeks and months preceding the Revocation, was simply to reach the point where the number of Catholics outnumbered the Protestants.[179] This was a product of several things, including the acknowledgment that to convince the most obstinate Protestants

[177] Colbert, VI, 126, Colbert to Demuin (18 February 1680).
[178] BN MF 7044, f. 167, Louvois to Basville (15 October 1685).
[179] Ibid., f. 142.

to convert would require extreme measures that "would only confirm the *religionnaires* in their stubbornness and make the conversion more difficult."[180] There was also the belief that obtaining a Catholic majority in a region, even through as unreliable a practice as forced conversions, would act as a sufficient safeguard against any potential rebellion. Finally, there was the probable desire of the king and his ministers for the process to move as expeditiously as possible in preparation for the grand October announcement. The agents of conversion were working on a tight timetable and should not let their conversion *chévauchées* be slowed by the resistance of a few obstinate individuals.

This obsession with the demographic ratios of conversion, which at first would appear to represent a somewhat superficial and naïve faith in the "body count" approach to conversions, becomes more understandable when placed in the larger context of the Crown's conversion strategy. Changing the religious demographics of Protestant communities was only the initial step of the campaign. For once the number of *religionnaires* was significantly reduced in an area, even if only on paper, the Crown could then eliminate the exercise of the Protestant religion entirely in that area by claiming that the paltry number of remaining Protestants did not justify the continued observance of Protestant privileges. In this respect, one can even speculate (and it is only speculation at this point) that Louvois and the king, far from demonstrating a naïve faith in the statistics of conversion, saw them as an important cornerstone upon which to base their justification for subsequent measures. Perhaps the king demanded his agents provide him with the detailed statistics of conversions because such statistics provided him with the legal justification necessary to eliminate Protestant enclaves without compromising his stature as a monarch who ruled within the bounds of law and respected the legal precedents and privileges established by his predecessors.

Within the context of this demographic strategy, there remained the operational details of determining which communities to target in order to produce the greatest number of conversions with the least amount of coercive effort. It is here that one sees the true extent of the military-style planning and military characteristics of the operation.

One of the difficulties encountered in the Crown's efforts at conversion was the constant and unimpeded communication among the

[180] Ibid.

Protestant communities. This was particularly the case in Languedoc and the Vivarais. Consequently, Louis XIV and his advisors sought to identify those Protestant communities located in the center of this dense network of Protestant enclaves, for these central communities often served either as a transit point or point of assembly for Protestants in the region. Such strategically located communities were among the first targeted for conversion. The theory, it seems, was that the reduction or elimination of these Protestant "hubs" would disrupt travel and communication among the outlying Protestant communities and these isolated communities, deprived of their temples and ministers, would then be more susceptible to conversion. To reinforce this isolation one sees numerous decrees forbidding Protestants to travel beyond a certain distance from their own home regions. Even if Protestants, or insincere *nouveaux convertis*, remained in these isolated communities, it was expected that given such conditions their children, and future generations, would be less likely to embrace the *religion prétendue réformé*. In this respect, far from being an ill-considered and rash decision, it can be argued that the operational plan for Protestant conversion reveals a monarchical mindset focused on the *longue durée*.

Conclusion

Louis XIV deployed a vast repertoire of coercive measures against the Protestants within his kingdom. These measures took the form of various *arrêts* limiting the exercise of their faith and their choice of professions, increasing their burden of taxation, and the deployment of coercive armed force. This chapter makes no attempt to investigate every aspect of this grand and longstanding plan to achieve religious uniformity in France, but limits itself only to those aspects of the operation involving the deployment of armed force to achieve the king's will.

On this subject, a number of observations can be made. First, and foremost, it is clear that there was no single, immutable policy regarding the use of armed coercion against the king's Protestant subjects. The scale and intensity of the deployment of armed force varied according to the history of the region, the state of international affairs, shifting influences at court most evident in the Colbert-Louvois rivalry and, perhaps most notably, the pressures created by the Revocation itself, both before and after the announcement of 17 October 1685. Concern for international perceptions, for example, most likely

prompted Louis XIV to retreat from the initial experiment of 1681. On the other hand, the Truce of Ratisbon and the sudden availability of a large armed force on the Spanish frontier situated conveniently close to the traditional Protestant redoubts within France, prompted Louis XIV to repeat the experiment of 1681 on a much grander scale. Similarly, the unique history of Languedoc, the dangerous and extreme form of Protestantism that flourished in its mountains and forests, and the royal outrage at the attempted revolt of 1683, prompted a much more vigorous and sustained coercive effort in that province.

It also seems clear that in the weeks and months before 17 October 1685, royal officials were under intense pressure to obtain as many conversions as possible, presumably to buttress the king's claims that Protestantism in France was no more. One finds numerous examples, particularly in August and September 1685, of *intendants* and other officials detailing their achieved and expected conversions, providing statistical "body counts" with specific and telling references to how many they hoped to achieve by "the end of the month" or by the "next month." On 15 September, for example, Louvois informed the chancellor that the conversions were continuing across France and that "by the end of the month, one can expect that the few *religionnaires* who remain will be widely dispersed in the provinces."[181] Is it too great a leap to suggest that this comment reflects a desire by Louvois and the chancellor to see the Protestants dispersed and weakened before the grand announcement, and therefore presumably unable to mount any effective resistance or organize any embarrassing demonstrations against the upcoming royal decree? Similarly, the increasingly violent nature of the *dragonnades* in the weeks and months after the Revocation, such as those that occurred in Dieppe, likely stem from a growing frustration at continued Protestant resistance, a resistance that threatened to undermine the justification for the Revocation.

Another important point is that although the royal army clearly played the most important role in implementing the coercive aspects of Louis XIV's religious policies, the militias of the 1680s and 1690s also made significant contributions, particularly in the troubled province of Languedoc and the Vivarais. This is a theme brought out much more clearly in the next chapter, but it is apparent that the Crown expected the petite militias and the "second militia" of Languedoc and the

[181] BN MF 7044, f. 158, Louvois to the chancellor (17 September 1685).

Vivarais to play a significant role in the work of religious surveillance and armed coercion.

Finally, it is argued throughout this work that Louis XIV presided over a France that was more troubled than is commonly realized. The first decades of his reign were marred by a series of tax revolts, while the last decades were disturbed by religious violence and revolt. The experiences of the 1680s and the 1690s demonstrate that the dangerous potential for the situation in Languedoc to degenerate into a religious civil war was a very real concern for Louis XIV. The king took a series of steps to prevent such a development, including the use of targeted coercion to avoid widespread popular discontent, enticements and indirect threats to win over notable personages within the Protestant community, and avoiding, when possible, subjecting members of the nobility, and particularly those serving in his armies or who had children serving in his armies, to the hardships of troop lodgments.

It is hardly worth noting that Louis XIV's great attempt at religious conversion failed. Years after the Revocation one still finds Catholic militias patrolling the rugged Vivarais, regular army units in garrison among the towns and villages of Languedoc, and clandestine Protestant assemblies gathering at night in the hills and valleys of the Cévennes. In 1698, Louis XIV found it necessary to reiterate some of the clauses of the Revocation, instructing his intendants to repress any illegal assemblies, to remind the *nouveaux convertis* of their duty, and to disabuse them of any hope that the *religion prétendue réformé* would be reestablished. All of this did not bode well for the relationship between Louis XIV and his Protestant or *nouveaux convertis* subjects, and it was clear that religious tensions, particularly in the southern provinces, remained high. As a result, fifteen years after the Revocation, Louis XIV found himself embroiled in a bloody and brutal religious conflict in Languedoc that would develop into one of the greatest domestic challenges of his long reign.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE REVOLT OF THE CAMISARDS, 1702–1704

Introduction

The revolt of the Camisards (1702–1704)[1] represents a unique chapter in the long chronicle of revolts and rebellions that troubled early modern France.[2] The religious foundation of the conflict in Languedoc sets it apart from the numerous tax revolts that had troubled Guyenne, Normandy and Brittany earlier in the seventeenth century. Yet the rural character of the revolt and the conspicuous absence of Protestant nobility and middle-classes among the rebels also distinguishes the revolt from the series of religious conflicts that plagued France for much of the previous century. The revolt is also unique in that the Camisards

[1] The chronology refers only to the period of intense, large-scale military operations. Smaller incidents and disturbances continued to flare up in the province until 1710.

[2] French scholars have produced countless works examining the revolt. Until quite recently, however, most of these works were marred by biases of numerous sorts, ranging from the religious bias of Protestant and Catholic authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the pro-*maquisard* or pro-Marxist biases evident in works of the mid-twentieth century. The best introduction to the complicated yet fascinating historiography of this revolt can be found in Philippe Joutard, *La légende des camisards, une sensibilité au passé* (Paris, 1977). For a contemporary account that relies on interviews with many of the participants, see Antoine Court's *Histoire des troubles des Cévenne*, 3 vols. (Villefranche, 1760). A valuable collection of primary source documents can be found in Devic and Vaissette, *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, XIV (Toulouse, 1876). For an extraordinarily detailed, day-to-day narrative of the conflict, one should consult the indispensable *magnum opus* of Henri Bosc, *La Guerre des Cévennes, 25 Juillet 1702–1710*, 6 vols (Montpellier, 1985–1993). Several contemporary memoirs provide insight into events, including Elie Salvaire, *sieur* de Cissalières, *Relations sommaire des désordres commis par les camisards des Cévennes* (Montpellier, 1997); Grégoire Vidal, *prieur* of Mialet, *Lettres et rapports sur la guerre des camisards (1702–1704)* (Montpellier, 1988); Jean Cavalier, *Memoirs of the Wars of the Cévennes*, 2nd edition (London, 1727); Claude Louis Hector, duke de Villars, *Mémoires du maréchal de Villars* (t. 69 of the *Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*, 2nd ser., Paris, 1828). Archival research for this chapter was conducted in a variety of locations. The material found in series A[1] of SHAT is of fundamental importance, particularly cartons 1614, 1701–1702, 1707–1709, 1792, 1796–1799 and 1906.

operated with a degree of organization absent in previous popular revolts. Operating in small units, taking advantage of difficult terrain, and enjoying overwhelming support among the rural population, the Camisards conducted what amounted to a large-scale guerrilla-style insurgency. Presented with a style of warfare largely unfamiliar to many of the officers, soldiers, and royal officials serving in the province, the royal authorities experimented with a variety of strategies. Although the royal authorities eventually triumphed, the period of intense military operations lasted for more than two years and required the diversion of more than 25,000 soldiers at a time when France was involved in a serious foreign war.

This chapter does not attempt to provide a full narrative of the revolt from its origins to its conclusion. Nor does it examine in any detail the composition, organization, and tactics of the principal rebel bands. Both have already been investigated in able fashion by a number of French scholars. Instead, this chapter focuses on the actions of royal authorities as they scrambled to find and deploy the instruments of coercion necessary to restore order. This chapter will examine the strategies adopted by successive military commanders in the province, highlighting the degree to which authorities were forced to rely upon a variety of coercive institutions, including royal troops, local militias, and foreign fighters brought from distant lands, in their efforts to extinguish the flames of a dangerous rebellion that ravaged a strategically vital province in the midst of a desperate international conflict.

Preparations

When intendant Basville arrived in Languedoc in 1685, he already possessed significant experience with recalcitrant Protestant populations. His experience in Poitou, a province with a population of approximately 90,000 Protestants, left him with a clear understanding of the tensions within Languedoc, and the precarious nature of royal authority in a province with almost 200,000 Protestants. Immediately upon arrival, he took steps to prepare for a popular, Protestant revolt. As described in the previous chapter, one of his first initiatives was a road construction project to facilitate the movement of troops and artillery throughout the mountainous and forested terrain of the Cévennes. Basville also procured funds to construct fortified posts at Nîmes, Alès, and Saint-Hippolyte, all three located in areas with significant Protes-

tant populations and identified as likely trouble spots.[3] The intendant also established an intelligence collection network within the province, relying on local officials, and particularly the local clergy, to provide him with information on the activities of *nouveaux convertis* in their parishes. The intendant gathered information on members of the local nobility, evaluating the strength of their religious convictions (e.g. "*anciens catholiques*", "*nouveaux convertis*" or "*mal convertis*"), estimating the number of men and arms at their disposal, and analyzing the strength of their fortified chateaus. As further preparation, Broglie, who remained the military commander in the province, ordered that powder and shot be stockpiled in the forts at Alès, Nîmes, and Saint-Hippolyte, as well as in the citadels of Montpellier, Sommières, and Aiguesmortes.[4]

On the eve of the revolt, the greatest difficulty facing royal authorities was the lack of experienced soldiers to handle the work of surveillance and repression. The looming War of Spanish Succession made heavy demands on the resources of the province with recruits being drawn into the ranks of both the regular army and the provincial militia that occasionally marched in support of the king's armies.[5] The *archers* at the disposal of the *prévoté général*, a force sometimes used to suppress civil disturbances, was pitifully inadequate and amounted to a mere 100 men for the entire province. The *prévoté général* himself had but thirteen men under his personal command, while the responsibility for the entire Vivarais region lay with a mere fifteen *archers*.[6]

As a result, Broglie and Basville relied on local town militias to act against the illegal Protestant assemblies. These militias assembled only when needed, however, and were typically unpaid. As the situation became more unsettled and as the required policing and surveillance operations became more extensive, these unpaid town militias became increasingly unreliable.

In early November 1701, Broglie warned Michel Chamillart, *contrôleur général* of finances and secretary of state for war, that the militias were starting to rebel because their duties took them away from their

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[3] For a good discussion of Basville's road system and program of fortification see Robert Poujol, *Basville: roi solitaire du Languedoc, intendant à Montpellier de 1685 à 1718* (Montpellier, 1992), 79–87.

[4] Bosc, I, 261. Royal officials continued requesting more powder and shot in the months immediately preceding the revolt. See, for example, SHAT A^1 1614, f. 3 (26 February 1702).

[5] Lynn, *Wars of Louis XIV*, 271.

[6] Devic and Vaissette, XIII, 696.

normal work. Since they were unpaid for their service, this left them without the means to support their families. It was imperative that a paid, standing force be assembled, one that could be dispatched at a moment's notice to go where needed. Specifically, Broglie suggested the creation of a force comprising eight, 30-man companies, four of which would be stationed in the Vivarais, and the remainder in the Cévennes.[7] The companies would be paid by taxes levied on the *nouveaux convertis* and thus would represent no burden on the king's coffers.[8] The intendant agreed with Broglie, believing that such a standing militia could serve as a quick reaction force in the critical early stages of any revolt, providing valuable time for the town militia companies to assemble. A battalion of regular troops would serve just as well as these eight companies, observed the intendant, but they would then have to remain in the province during the upcoming campaigning season, for the intendant expected the greatest trouble in the spring.[9]

In March 1702, Basville and Broglie received permission to raise the militia companies. France was at war, however, and Languedoc was also ordered to raise an additional regiment of infantry to protect the coasts against a feared foreign landing, diverting precious manpower. Basville and Broglie were also informed that they should not expect the king to send them any additional troops to help maintain order within the province.[10]

Faced with an increasingly dangerous situation and still struggling with a serious lack of manpower, those responsible for maintaining order continued to look for ways to obtain more troops. The marquis de Castries, commander of the citadel of Montpellier, made the unfortunate decision to use soldiers drawn from the citadel's garrison to conduct patrols and to disrupt Protestant assemblies. This drew a stern rebuke from Chamillart who reminded Castries that governors and commanders were forbidden to make use of royal garrisons without the express permission of the king.[11] Broglie himself was criticized for tak-

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[7] This initiative seems to be modeled on that relating to the militia companies of 1689.

[8] SHAT A[1] 1525, f. 115, Broglie to Chamillart (4 November 1701).

[9] SHAT A[1] 1525, f. 115 *bis*, Basville to Chamillart (4 November 1701).

[10] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 168, Chamillart to Basville (26 March 1702). See also SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 5.

[11] To reinforce the point, Chamillart sent Castries a copy of the relevant *ordinance*, dated 19 March 1663. The commander at the citadel of Nîmes also exchanged letters with Chamillart seeking guidance on this subject. See SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 21 (30 May 1702). This was a particularly sensitive subject in the spring and early summer of 1702,

ing similar liberties with the king's garrisons, prompting an explanatory letter from Broglie:

> No one is as religious an observer of the *ordinances* as myself. I make them the rule and foundation of my conduct. But a long experience makes me observe that the king has never made a law so general that he is unwilling to make an exception for the good of his service … I have never pulled companies from the chateaus and citadels of this province, nor changed garrisons without a precise order of His Majesty [and] when I have made some small detachments it was to prevent or to stop some disturbances [that otherwise] could have had serious consequences."[12]

In his letter, Broglie pointed out that Languedoc was not like other provinces, where "the chateaus are only seen as places to lodge troops so they will not be a charge to the inhabitants of the towns."[13] In a troubled province like Languedoc, such garrisons must play a much more active role by engaging in continual patrols to contain the troublemakers and to stop illegal assemblies. Broglie concluded by again emphasizing the inadequacy of the coercive means at his disposal: the town militias are useful in an emergency but were not suitable for the daily patrols that were required, while the eight standing companies of *fusiliers*[14] were dispersed throughout the Cévennes and the Vivarais and not sufficient to control such a great expanse of territory.[15] Eventually, the king relented and, in June, informed Broglie and all of the citadel governors and fortress commanders in the province that they could henceforth make small detachments from the royal garrisons to assist with anti-Protestant operations.[16]

In the summer of 1702, Basville also requested and received permission to raise ten additional militia companies and two companies of dragoons.[17] The dragoons promised to be particularly useful in the

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when this exchange of letters took place because, on 15 May, England, the United Provinces, and Habsburg Austria declared war on France.

[12] SHAT A^1 1614, f. 20 (18 June 1702).

[13] Ibid.

[14] The eight *fusilier* companies are the same as the eight militia companies requested by Basville and Broglie in November 1701. It is not clear when the change in nomenclature came about, but it perhaps results from an attempt to distinguish this standing force from the town militias. Subsequent references identify these same units at various times as militia, *fusiliers*, or *fusiliers de la province*.

[15] SHAT A^1 1614, f. 20 (18 June 1702).

[16] Ibid., f. 22–35. See also Basville's letter to Chamillart on the same subject, SHAT A^1 1614, f. 184.

[17] See SHAT A^1 1614, f. 48–51, 198.

vast province because of their mobility and quick reaction time, but acquiring horses for these two companies proved difficult. In September, one finds Basville writing to the French ambassador to Geneva asking if he could locate 70 horses for purchase in Switzerland. In the end, the intendant elected to purchase horses from Catalonia, as they were cheaper and better suited to the mountains of the Vivarais and the Cévennes than those available in Switzerland.[18] By the time these horses arrived, however, the revolt of the Camisards was already well underway.

The Revolt Begins

On the night of 24 July 1702, a group of about thirty Protestants assembled on a hill outside the town of Pont-de-Montvert and discussed the fate of François de Langlade, *abbé* du Chaila. It was Chaila's responsibility to seek the conversion of those among his parishioners who had not yet renounced their "so-called reformed religion" and Chaila enforced the various royal *ordinances* on the subject with severity. Chaila was also *inspecteur des chemins* in the Cévennes, a post he had held since 1693. As inspector, he was responsible for the upkeep of Basville's new road system that penetrated deep into the mountainous country, making it easier for royal authority (and tax collectors) to reach into the remote Protestant enclaves of the Cévennes. In carrying out both his religious and road-related responsibilities, Chaila inspired great resentment among the local Protestants.[19]

The immediate cause for the angry assembly outside Pont-de-Montvert that July night was the arrest of two sisters caught trying to escape to Switzerland. Chaila had imprisoned the sisters and their guide in the cellar of his own residence where, according to local rumors, he had set up a torture chamber for his personal use. Among the group gathered on the hillside were many relatives of those who had been either condemned to death or sent to the galleys by the zealous abbot. In response to a vision experienced by one of their prophets,[20] the group

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[18] AAE MD France 1640, f. 52–63.

[19] For a biographical account of Chaila's life, see Robert Pojoul, *Bourreau ou martyr? L'abbé du Chaila (1648–1702) du Siam aux Cévennes* (Montpellier, 1986).

[20] *Prophètisme* was a curious phenomenon, first appearing in Dauphiné around 1688, eventually spreading to the Vivarais and the Cévennes regions of Languedoc. The typical prophets were young and experienced convulsive fits during which they would

descended upon the abbot's house intent on rescuing the prisoners. Chaila tried to escape by leaping out of a second floor window but broke his leg in the fall. The crowd set upon him and stabbed him fifty-two times.[21]

In the days after Chaila's murder, the small Protestant band grew in size and embarked upon a rampage of sorts, murdering two other members of the local clergy along with a local nobleman and his entire family. Upon hearing of these events, Broglie rather dryly observed to Chamillart that, "one can judge by this action the bad disposition of the *religionnaires* … I have always said that one should never be fooled by [their] feigned hypocrisy … it is necessary to contain them by force and fear."[22]

To search for Chaila's murderers, Broglie gathered up a "great portion" of the nobility of Montpellier and the Cévennes, as well as the local town militias, and descended upon Pont-de-Montvert.[23] After three days of fruitless searching, Broglie dismissed the nobles and their retinues, and instead placed garrisons in Pont-de-Montvert and in the neighboring villages of Colet-des-Ayres, Barre, and Pompidou. These garrisons were placed under the command of Captain Poul, an experienced soldier that had fought against the Vaudois and thus had some experience with fighting an irregular war in difficult terrain.[24]

Upon arriving at Barre, Poul was informed that the guilty Protestants were gathered nearby on a little plain near Fontmort. On 28 July, Poul surprised the group and, after a small skirmish, captured Esprit Séguier, one of the group's key leaders. Séguier was sent back to Pont-de-Montvert and executed. After this small victory, Poul continued his operations with an increasing severity. This prompted a series of

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recite scripture, utter prophetic statements, or sometimes speak in tongues. The exact nature of these fits perplexed contemporaries and has been problematic for modern historians as well. Whatever its origins and inspiration, the movement spread with astonishing rapidity. Henri Bosc has isolated the two primary routes of the spread of *prophètisme*. The first of these linked Anduze and the upper Cévennes through Saint-Jean-du-Gard and Le Pompidou. The second connected Alès and Mont Lozère by two roads, one through Pont-de-Montvert and the second through Saint-Germain-de-Calbrel. By the beginning of 1702, the entire plain between Nîmes, the Rhône, and the Mediterranean Sea was "infected" by the phenomenon. Basville must have received little joy from the fact that the movement appeared to spread along his new road network. See Bosc, I, 70–77.

[21] Broglie's account of the abbot's murder can be found in SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 36.

[22] Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1567.

[23] Court, I, 62.

[24] Ibid., 66.

bloody reprisals by the Camisards, however, and the insurgency quickly became more organized and grew in intensity.

At this point, Basville did not yet recognize the seriousness of the revolt. He told Chamillart that the assassination of Chaila would have no serious consequences. After the capture and execution of Séguier, the intendant assured Chamillart that "this affair appears to be finished … all the rest of the country seems tranquil."[25] Two weeks later, however, on the other side of the province near the town of Vauvert, Gaspard de Calvière, baron de Saint-Cosme was murdered. This local nobleman and militia colonel was a converted Protestant known for his harshness in dealing with illegal Protestant assemblies. As with the abbot Chaila, baron Saint-Cosme had a long history of persecuting Protestants and had been a target of Protestant resentment for some time. His assassination was precipitated by an order to disarm all Protestants living in the area between Aymarques and Saint Gilles.[26] Just as Chaila's murder was the spark that set the Cévennes aflame, the death of Saint-Cosme marked the beginning of the uprising in the plain.

The first real set-piece confrontation between rebels and royal forces took place in early September. A group of rebels had been attacking Catholics, pillaging churches, and seizing weapons and gunpowder in the diocese of Mende. A sizeable number of them gathered on the heights of Champ-Domergue. The royal authorities were alerted and a force of 70 militia and a contingent of soldiers detached from the garrison of the fort of Alès, marched through the night to engage them. The force was led by captain Poul. One observer noted that the rebels appeared resolute in the face of the approaching soldiers, singing psalms and advancing bravely. However, after firing an initial volley "in good order," the rebels fled. The soldiers pursued them "as best they could, having marched all night and having eaten nothing."[27] Approximately 25 rebels were killed in this first engagement at the cost of several soldiers wounded.[28]

The results of this initial combat were far from decisive. After the capture and execution of Séguier, Gédeon Laporte assumed command of the rebel band in the Cévennes. Like Séguier, he had participated

[25] Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1568.
[26] Court, I, 75.
[27] AN TT3 240, dossier II, ff. 81–83.
[28] Ibid.

in the murder of Chaila but unlike his predecessor, he was a sober military man and in no way a Protestant *inspiré*. Laporte brought some military experience to his task, having served in the king's armies as a *maréchal des logis* during the Nine Years' War. His career as a Camisard commander, however, was short-lived. On 22 October, Laporte was killed in a combat near Barre and leadership passed to the band's prophet, Abraham Mazel.

Other rebel bands soon formed as well. Pierre Laporte, a twenty-two year old worker in wool, formed a group of his own in the middle Cévennes. Taking the *nom de guerre* "Roland", he would later become one of the central figures of the rebellion. Another soon-to-be legendary figure, Jean Cavalier, returned to his home province of Languedoc to take part in the rebellion after working for several years in a Genevan bakery. Cavalier, just twenty years old in 1702, formed a band that operated primarily in the plains between the Cévennes and the Mediterranean coast.[29]

In the weeks following the assassination of Chaila, both the rebels and the royal forces could claim some successes. The royal forces successfully tracked down and killed a number of key leaders, and had defeated a sizeable rebel force at Champ-Domergue. The rebels, however, quickly replaced both their fallen leaders and their battlefield losses. More importantly, the number of rebel bands operating in the province grew at an alarming rate. In addition to the bands of Cavalier, Laporte, and Mazel mentioned above, another group emerged in the Cévennes under the command of André Castanet. In November, two more rebel groups formed in the upper Cévennes under the command of Nicolas Jouanay and Salomon Couderc. From one small band operating near Pont-de-Montvert, the rebellion had quickly spread to encompass all of the mountainous Cévennes and significant portions of the plain around Nîmes.[30]

Faced with an expanding rebellion and an acute lack of military resources, the optimism displayed by the royal authorities after the death of Séguier soon disappeared. The eight *fusilier* companies raised in the spring remained too inexperienced and too dispersed. "It was

[29] One of Cavalier's first actions was to lead a raid on the village where Étienne Jourdan lived. Jourdan was the militia sergeant who had killed the influential *prédicant* François Vivent ten years earlier. The rebels shot Jourdan three times. They spared his wife but carried off some pewter dishes "to replace the balls left in the body of the apostate." See Ducasse, 90.

[30] Court, I, 98–102.

impossible," wrote Broglie, "in a country so extensive and with a situation so advantageous [for the rebels] to control them with eight companies of *fusiliers* that, altogether, amount to just 240 men divided between the Vivarais and the Cévennes."[31] The town militias remained unpaid and therefore remained unreliable. The *fusilier* companies of the new levy approved in the summer were in such poor shape as to be nearly useless and "more dreadful than [the figures] of Callot."[32] By November, Basville had also assumed a more cautious air. "I am pleased that you have seen M. de Chamillart," the intendant wrote to his brother, Chrétien, *avocat général* with the Parlement of Paris, "it is necessary [that he] pay attention [to what is happening] here. It is not [a question of] 300 scoundrels that one must fight; it is an entire region … that one must contain."[33]

To contain such a region, however, would require large numbers of experienced troops and in the summer and fall of 1702 these were sorely lacking. In August, Broglie requested permission to raise several additional companies of *fusiliers* in the province, as well as two additional companies of dragoons.[34] He and the intendant also requested permission to transfer two companies from neighboring Avignon to Nîmes.[35] All of these new, locally raised troops were to be paid, equipped, and supported by the province, either through loans or through a tax levied on the *nouveaux convertis*, and would therefore cost the king nothing.[36]

The meeting of the provincial Estates was scheduled for November and Basville used the opportunity to request these additional troops and prepare for the troubles he anticipated in the coming spring. The intendant used his long experience in Languedoc to his advantage and asked the Estates to remember that during the less dangerous Protestant dis-

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[31] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 35 (28 July 1702).

[32] Ibid. A reference to the engravings of Jacques Callot, notable for their horrific depictions of war and the brutality of soldiers during the Thirty Years War.

[33] Ch. Tocq. 171, *pièce* 162 (3 November 1702), cited in Jean-Robert Armogathe and Philippe Joutard, "Basville et la guerre des Camisards", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, XIX (January–March 1972), 51. Armogathe and Joutard discovered a fascinating collection of intendant Basville's private letters to his brother and other close acquaintances. These personal letters (part of the private archives of the Tocqueville family and available on microfilm in the Archives Privées series at the Archives National) provide a perspective on events that cannot be gained through Basville's official correspondence (stored at Vincennes). In their article, Armogathe and Joutard present an analysis of these letters.

[34] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 48, 51, 200.

[35] Ibid., f. 171.

[36] Ibid., f. 202.

turbances that troubled Vivarais in 1688, the king had ordered the province to raise eight regiments to maintain order within the province. In the present crisis, Basville asked the Estates to raise another regiment of *fusiliers* and to raise the size of each *fusilier* company to 45 men. "This assistance," wrote the intendant, "is absolutely necessary, and still quite inadequate, when one considers a population of 200,000 *religionnaires* and the extent and difficulty of the area that is necessary to guard."[37]

The intendant enjoyed the king's support, and the provincial Estates agreed to Basville's requests.[38] The Estates decided, however, that it was better to raise the infantry as 15 unattached, or "free" companies rather than consolidate them into a regiment, arguing that such independent companies would be "better for the security of the province and for duty in the posts that it is necessary to establish."[39] They also decided to raise four companies of dragoons, doubling the number of companies requested by the intendant.

In return, however, the Estates requested that the province be relieved of an obligation to raise 1,000 men to serve with the Army of Italy. The Estates noted that Languedoc was already obligated to support a force of 1,045 dragoons and *fusiliers* to maintain order in the province. With the new levies requested by the intendant, this total would rise to 1,685 men (4 companies of dragoons and 33 *fusilier* companies). The six main dioceses of Languedoc (Viviers, Mende, Le Puy, Nîmes, Uzès, and Alès) could not contribute to any of these levies because of the current revolt. It was therefore unreasonable to expect the rest of the province to bear the burden of both the levy necessary for the internal security of the province and the 1,000-man levy for the Army of Italy. If the 1,000-man levy went forward, there would not be enough men left in the province to cultivate the land while such a diversion of able-bodied men would surely undermine the security of the province by leaving it more vulnerable to those with "bad intentions." Worse still, deserters from such a levy could perhaps even swell the ranks of the rebels.[40] Despite these dire predictions, the king refused the request for exemption and ordered the Estates to carry out both levies.[41]

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[37] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 226 (20 October 1702).

[38] On 13 November 1702, Chamillart wrote to the Archbishop of Toulouse, who presided over the Estates, and informed him that the king wished the Estates to grant Basville's request. See SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 85.

[39] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 110, 116–117.

[40] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 116–118.

[41] Ibid., f. 274, Chamillart to the Archbishop of Toulouse (7 December 1702).

Although the results from the Estates had been positive, it would still be several months before these additional forces could be raised and equipped. This left the province unprepared for the coming winter months. As the Estates pointed out in a memoir to Chamillart:

> "The troops that one has, and all those that have been authorized by the Estates, will not be ready for a very long time [and even then, they] will not be a great help because they are not disciplined … If His Majesty does not … send some experienced troops immediately to reestablish order and tranquility in this country, it is to be feared that the number of these criminals will grow."[42]

The concerns of the Estates were echoed by both Basville and Broglie. The levy of the *fusilier* companies was not proceeding as quickly as hoped and the dragoon regiment was still forming up in a neighboring province.[43] The quality of the new levies was extremely poor and they were having problems properly outfitting the new troops. Many soldiers possessed neither arms nor clothes, while the "old" soldiers belonging to the original eight companies raised in the spring were also in bad shape. Eyeing the approaching winter, the intendant warned Chamillart that the soldiers being almost nude, it was "impossible that [they could] remain in the Cévennes very long without perishing."[44] One observer, witnessing the arrival of a new company in Mialet, commented that they were "in such bad order and so badly composed that they inspire compassion. Most of them are mere children, almost nude, and without arms. [O]ne can judge by this if they are in a state to do the least thing for the service of the king."[45]

To help ease some of the intendant's difficulties, Chamillart informed Basville that 500 men from the militia of Agde and Béziers could be paid out of the *Extraordinaire des guerres*. Being paid for their service would allow these militia to be used more regularly and for more extensive operations until the intendant could raise and equip sufficient additional forces.[46] Basville had a better idea, however, and suggested that troops destined to take winter quarters in Dauphiné or Franche Comté should instead be directed to Languedoc. Basville argued that it was imperative to contain the rebellion during the winter months and

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[42] Ibid., f. 118.

[43] The intendant had authorized the levy to begin before receiving the approval of the Estates.

[44] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 228 (21 October 1702).

[45] Vidal, 69.

[46] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 220, Chamillart to Basville (16 October 1702).

to not allow "the fire" to spread. The presence of regular troops during the winter would buy the time necessary to get the new companies trained and equipped before the regular troops had to leave for the spring campaign. In addition, Basville pointed out that if the regular troops took their winter quarters in Languedoc, it would spare the king the cost of the 500 militia that he had so generously offered to support from the *Extraordinaire des guerres*.[47]

Broglie also wrote to Chamillart, admitting that he was having difficulty finding and engaging the rebels, arguing that he could not bring them to battle in "a country that is full of mountains and covered in forests … where the inhabitants [supply the rebels] and never betray them despite my threats and promises of payment."[48] His troops were making constant patrols in the hopes of encountering the rebels "by chance," but thus far, had met with little success. Like Basville, however, Broglie viewed the end of the campaigning season as a window of opportunity, and advised Chamillart that "there is no means more sure to cut short this disorder then to fill this region with troops during the winter."[49] Broglie warned that the rebels knew the king's troops were engaged elsewhere, and hoped to take advantage of his preoccupation with the international war "to make one last effort to reestablish the exercise of the Protestant religion."[50] The king should prove them wrong by sending troops to the province during the winter. Other individuals in the province also wrote to Versailles, emphasizing the need for experienced troops. The count de Calvisson, for example, advised Chamillart that "it is certain that one *vieux* regiment would have more effect than all the newly raised troops that one deploys against these wretches."[51]

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[47] Ibid., f. 242 (11 November 1702).
[48] Ibid., f. 67 (9 October 1702).
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., f. 136 (21 December 1702).
[51] Ibid., f. 128 (16 December 1702). The *vieux* regiments were those with the longest tradition of service in the French armies. First among these were the regiments of Picardy, Champagne, Navarre, and Piedmont. In the second tier of *vieux* regiments were those of Normandy and La Marine. These were followed in precedence by five *petits vieux* regiments: Rambure (late Richelieu), Bourbonnois, Auvergne, Sault (Tallard), and Boufflers Remiancourt (Espagne). The régiment de La Marine had its origins under Louis XIII and Richelieu, who, in the 1620s, established several companies destined for military service at sea. When many of these companies were lost in a shipwreck, the remaining companies were transferred to service on land, formed into a regiment, and given the name of the regiment de La Marine. See Daniel, II, 388–406.

One of these *vieux* regiments was the régiment de La Marine, then in winter quarters in Toulon. Basville requested the use of one battalion of this reigment for use during the winter.[52] The intendant also wanted to detach a regiment of Catholic Irish troops from the Army of Italy, promising to use them for three or four months only, and to return them to the Army of Italy in time for the campaigning season.[53] He also requested a force of 200 Spanish *miquelets* from Roussillon, arguing that these notorious mountain fighters from the Pyrénées would be much more useful in the mountainous Cévennes, would cost roughly the same amount as the militia, and perhaps most importantly, would be "naturally motivated against the *religionnaires*."[54]

In early December 1702, Basville prepared an accounting of the military forces available or being raised in the province. The list included: 4 companies of dragoons "raised or being raised"; 33 detached companies of *fusiliers de la province*, "raised or being raised" (including the eight companies already stationed in the Vivarais and the Cévennes); four newly raised infantry regiments; and a regiment of dragoons (Saint Cernin) currently forming in neighboring Rouergue and due to arrive shortly in Languedoc.[55]

After this flurry of requests and the scramble for troops that characterized the fall and winter of 1702, Basville prepared his first *précis* on the state of affairs in Languedoc. Writing to Chamillart on 22 December, the intendant noted that the revolt had persisted for four months now and it was disappointing to see that the disturbances seemed to grow worse every day. The revolt was unprecedented and difficult to repress. The killing of several key leaders and many of the rebels had not diminished or stopped the rebellion. On the contrary, it only seemed to inspire them to carry out vicious reprisals. The rebels enjoyed widespread popular support and it was no longer a matter of tracking down isolated bands of rebels. The entire countryside was in revolt, although "without [having] the overt appearance of it," and the intendant feared that the revolt would spread into neighboring

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[52] The king denied the request at the time, but would later change his mind. See SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 251.

[53] Ibid., f. 258 (26 November 1702).

[54] Ibid., f. 245, 258, 277. A company of *miquelets* was estimated to cost 498 livres per month, while a company of town militia would cost 840 livres.

[55] Ibid., f. 126, "État des troupes qui sont dans la province de Languedoc" (2 December 1702). The new regiments were those of Menou, Dugast (or Dugau), Marsilly, and Tournon. Basville does not state the strength or readiness of these regiments.

provinces. Even worse, it was possible that the *anciens catholiques* would use the pretense of the revolt to avoid paying their taxes. Once again, Basville requested regular troops:

> One recognizes that all the troops are far away and that it is difficult to make them come here, but the problem is so pressing that it merits an effort. Nothing is more dangerous at the beginning of a revolt than to deploy bad troops against whom the rebels can assume an air of superiority.[56]

The intendant again requested the use of several regular battalions for three or four months, arguing the presence of experienced troops would make both the soldiers of the new levies and the militia more audacious. It was also better to send the troops now, during winter quarters, rather than to be forced to send them during the campaigning season. The intendant complained that his previous suggestions with regard to certain measures (the *miquelets*, the Irish, and a battalion from the régiment de la Marine) had been rejected because it was thought that the new regiments would suffice. The new levies would indeed have been sufficient if they were any good, wrote the intendant, but they were in terrible shape. The new levy was more disdained than feared by the *fanatiques* and it was no surprise, wrote the intendant, that such troops did not intimidate rebels motivated by a strange "fury" that possessed them.[57]

In response to this flood of requests from Basville and Broglie, as well as the observations of others in the province charged with keeping him informed of events, Chamillart ordered two battalions of the veteran Hainault regiment to march from Alsace to Languedoc, while the commander of the Army of Italy, Louis-Joseph, duke de Vendôme, was ordered to send a regiment of dragoons. A force of *miquelets* was also ordered to the province. In January, Basville received the additional good news that three battalions from the regiment de La Marine had been ordered to march from Toulon.[58] "With all this assistance," wrote Chamillart, with perhaps just a hint of warning, "His Majesty has no doubt that you will succeed in your enterprise."[59]

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[56] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 294 (December 1702).
[57] Ibid.
[58] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 6, 20.
[59] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 133 (18 December 1702).

The Strategy of the Count de Broglie

Now that their repeated requests for reinforcements had been met with a positive response, Basville and Broglie needed to develop a plan that would make effective use of this mixed force of newly arrived regular units, newly raised provincial formations, *miquelets*, and militia. They informed Chamillart they intended to use a portion of this force to establish 45 posts in the four most difficult dioceses of the province: Mende, Alès, Uzès, and Nîmes. Each of these posts would be garrisoned by 50 men, and would engage in constant patrols and other actions aimed at depriving the rebels of their support in the countryside. They also wanted to establish four large bodies of troops in the towns of Montpellier, Nîmes, Uzès, Alès, Anduze, and Saint Hippolyte to be called upon as needed to undertake larger operations or to fall on any large Protestant assemblies.[60]

In addition to these military dispositions, Broglie argued that the dangerous situation in the province required additional severe measures and "violent remedies." To this end, he issued a variety of *ordinances* aimed at depriving the Camisards of their support in the countryside. In October, for example, he announced he would hold entire villages responsible for the security of their catholic churches, clergy, and inhabitants.[61] Another ordinance of the same month ordered the mayors and consuls to prepare lists of the inhabitants of the towns, noting those who were absent and why.[62] In December, Broglie requested that he be authorized to hang without trial anyone captured bearing arms in one of the rebel bands. He also suggested billeting troops on any area where a priest was killed and taking hostages, executing two Protestant hostages for every Catholic killed by the Camisards. Chamillart initially rejected both of these ideas.[63]

As a further measure, Broglie intensified the existing practice of imposing hefty fines on culpable and suspect villages. In September 1702, for example, he levied a fine on several suspect parishes to cover the costs associated with the pursuit and arrest of those responsible for the death of abbot Chaila.[64] Similarly, after breaking up an illegal assembly

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[60] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 126 ("État de quarante-cinq postes qu'il faut occuper par des détachements … dans les diocèses de Mende, Alès, Uzès & Nîmes).

[61] Court, I, 104.

[62] Bosc, I, 254.

[63] Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1614.

[64] Court, I, 102.

near Auyargues, west of Nîmes, Broglie fined the area 1,000 livres to cover the costs of the ensuing trials and executions.[65]

In addition to issuing *ordinances* and fines, Broglie initiated a series of large-scale *enlévements* that amounted to the forcible removal of suspect populations. As shall be seen, this practice is normally associated with Broglie's successor, Marshal de Montrevel, who arrived in the province in the spring of 1703. As early as 21 October 1702, however, one finds Broglie writing to Chamillart on the difficulties he is encountering and mentioning in passing one such *enlévement*:

> We march day and night to find them but the country is so strongly declared for them that we are unable to encounter them or to know who gives them food. Yesterday, I removed the inhabitants of one hamlet where I knew [the rebels] had stayed for two nights … It is absolutely necessary to make rude examples of the communities that shelter them.[66]

These, and other harsh measures, had their disadvantages. The *prieur* of Mialet, Grégoire Vidal, complained that the actions of the king's soldiers were driving the peasants to join the rebels and noted that many inhabitants blamed Broglie personally for the deteriorating situation. A particularly grievous *faux pas*, according to Vidal, was "the honor that he does to the scoundrels who were killed [in the battle in which Gédeon Laporte was killed] by having taken the trouble to expose … their heads on a scaffold and then sending them on to Montpellier, as if they were persons of great merit and grand distinction."[67]

Prieur Vidal's criticism reflected a growing sentiment that Broglie had mishandled the situation and was incapable of stopping the revolt. An anonymous letter written on 24 December 1702 suggested that Broglie be replaced:

> "The low esteem and lack of confidence that one has for [Broglie] in this province could bring things to an extreme [point]. I know that this disturbance, or this war, in the heart of the kingdom could be ended by sending a man with more firmness and ability than him … I know that if the king sends another *lieutenant général* of merit and ability to Languedoc that all the troubles will end [However] if *monsieur* de Broglie remains here, things will become worse and worse."[68]

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[65] Ibid., 121. Court suggests that these heavy fines enraged the count of Calvisson who owned most of the land in the area. This was dangerous for Broglie, since Calvisson was in frequent correspondence with influential personages at Versailles.

[66] Cited in Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1599.

[67] *Lettres et rapports sur la guerre des Camisards (1702–1704)*, 82.

[68] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 137 (24 December 1702).

Vidal informed the count de Peyre, that "Everyone … is murmuring and talking openly [about the fact] that all the troops arriving in the region have not been able to stop the disorders that occur everyday in the midst of [officers] who do not do what is necessary to succeed."[69]

Chamillart himself also appears to have made great efforts to maintain contact with some of Broglie's military subordinates in the province and they frequently wrote him directly to provide their assessment of Broglie's leadership. *Colonel* Tarnaut, for example, commanding the dragoon regiment raised in Dauphiné to assist Broglie, wrote to Chamillart criticizing Broglie's decision to divide his regiment into three detachments, sending two 50-man detachments into the mountains while one detachment remained in garrison at Uzès.[70] Chamillart intervened, advising Broglie that "you do not consider that this regiment is not yet trained in the service that you want it to do … It seems to me that it is necessary to [keep the regiment] together in an area to provide support, when needed, to the separated companies of the other units that you have dispersed in posts."[71] This exchange is interesting for a number of reasons: first, it demonstrates that Chamillart had no reservations about bypassing the customary military hierarchy and corresponding directly with Broglie's subordinates to get their impressions of the situation; second, it demonstrates the degree to which Chamillart, like Louvois before him, intervened in the minutest details of tactics and strategy, to include the disposition of 50-man companies. In any event, criticism arriving on Chamillart's desk from both anonymous sources and from serving military officers, combined with the fact that Chamillart thought it necessary to instruct the count on the proper deployment of his troops, did not bode well for the Broglie's future in Languedoc.

Broglie's precarious standing was not helped by events on the ground. In early December, the Camisards defeated three companies of town militia at Vaquières. That same month, a company of *fusiliers* was defeated after it attempted to break up an illegal assembly of Protestants. On 24 December, at the battle of Mas de Cauvi, Cavalier's band of Camisards routed a force of 350 men that included the militia and soldiers from the garrison of Alès. This was a huge victory for the Camisards, and the first major defeat suffered by royal forces at the

[69] Vidal, 70.
[70] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 121 (30 December 1702).
[71] Ibid.

hands of the rebels.[72] On 27 December, rebels dressed as soldiers gained entry to the Chateau de Servas and massacred the entire garrison. This same ruse was used to gain entry to the walled town of Sauve with similar results. An even more stunning defeat soon followed. On 12 January 1703, a small force of dragoons, commanded by Broglie himself, encountered a band of about two hundred Camisards near Nîmes. Excited by the prospects of finally being able to engage an enemy that had proven so elusive for so long, and ignoring the advice of his officers who suggested waiting for reinforcements, Broglie attacked the rebel band and was routed. Broglie fled the battlefield and captain Poul, the man responsible for the capture of insurgent leaders Ésprit Séguier and Gédeon Laporte, was killed. The death of Poul in this ill-conceived engagement was of particular significance, a development fully recognized by the intendant. Poul was one of the few soldiers experienced with irregular warfare, having fought the Vaudois in the previous conflict. He knew the countryside well and had recently enjoyed some signal successes against the rebels. More importantly, the rebels feared him and his death was sure to embolden them.[73] To add insult to injury, the rebels followed up their victory over Broglie by entering a village about a league from Nîmes, burning the church along with most of the town, and killing anyone who resisted.[74]

The events of late December and early January were disastrous enough for Broglie, but they also appear to have dispirited the normally confident Basville. In a letter recounting the recent action, Basville lamented the death of Poul and reported that, even though he expected the reinforcements sent by the king to arrive in two weeks, he now doubted they would be sufficient to quell an insurrection that was growing every day, particularly in a province that contained 200,000 Protestants, 40,000 of whom were capable of bearing arms.[75] He also worried that the Vivarais would rise in rebellion, and had similar fears about Haut-Languedoc. If this happened, the coming reinforcements would be of little use, for in their current quantity they were "barely sufficient" to contain the Cévennes alone. Furthermore, the dragoons and the infantry battalions due to arrive were under strength and one of the arriving units had even been raised in Languedoc the previous

[72] Court, I, 136–146.
[73] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 13.
[74] Vidal, 126. By ironic coincidence, the town thus pillaged was called Poulx.
[75] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 13.

year, causing the intendant to fear that the battalion could be filled with *nouveaux convertis* from the Cévennes who might desert and join the rebels. The *miquelets* were "mere peasants" and "do not appear to be experienced," crushing Basville's hopes that a body of experienced mountain fighters could defeat the rebels in the mountainous Cévennes. Even more worrisome, the intendant reported:

> There has appeared in the principal band of *fanatiques*, a group of 300 hardy brigands who receive attacks with firmness and who no longer fight like a mob of fearful men. All of this merits great reflection. This revolt is always growing, and is spreading to all sides … [It] could soon become a very … dangerous affair. It is absolutely necessary to send enough troops that can act everywhere [at once] and to [control] the areas that one thinks will revolt … one sees bands of fifty and one hundred peasants going to join the *fanatiques*, bringing them all sorts of supplies …Every day well-trained men from Geneva and Switzerland arrive …One can be assured that the movement of the Cévennes comes from outside, and that it is the result of the projects that the Prince of Orange has always wanted to execute but that he could not do in the last war.[76]

The intendant's dismal report, and particularly his account of growing foreign involvement, surely did nothing to reassure the king and his council with regard to Broglie's handling of operations. Perhaps daunted by the rapidly deteriorating situation and the equally rapidly expanding area of operations, in November Broglie asked Chamillart to send a general officer to assist him with operations in the province.[77] On Christmas Day, Broglie was informed that a *maréchal de camp* was on his way to Languedoc to assist him.[78] The arrival of this officer, however, did nothing to improve Broglie's standing and, on the contrary, likely accelerated his fall from grace.

Maréchal de camp Jacques de Julien arrived in Languedoc in January. This former Protestant, known as "the Apostate" by the Protestants of Languedoc, had served in the king's armies during the campaign against the Vaudois in 1690 and thus, like captain Poul, possessed some experience with the irregular kind of war that faced him in Languedoc. When he arrived, Broglie allowed him to select the area of his command. Julien chose the area from Génolhac in the north to Uzès in the south, with his headquarters located at Alès. Broglie

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[76] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 13 (14 January 1703).
[77] Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1604–1605.
[78] SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 144.

placed the two newly arrived battalions of the Hainault regiment and the newly raised infantry regiments of Marsilly, La Fare, Tournon, and Tarnaut under Julien's command.

From the moment of his arrival, Julien made it clear that he strongly disagreed with Broglie's strategy of dispersing his forces in little posts throughout the mountainous region. He ridiculed Broglie's deployments, claiming that the count's idea of a good post was little more than a house in the middle of a village without any defensive works "and one that a man could set fire to without any danger."[79] Julien believed that Broglie's strategy was bound to fail since all of the *menu peuple*, and particularly those in the Cévennes, were "absolutely guilty." The only way to pacify the countryside was to abandon the useless little posts, concentrate the king's forces, and undertake a war of extermination. If a village aids the rebels, Julien argued, a detachment of the king's troops should go there immediately and surround it. Only the *anciens catholiques* and those of the *nouveaux convertis* who were not peasants should be permitted to leave. The rest of the inhabitants, young and old, male and female, should be slaughtered without mercy. By doing this, argued Julien, although they may not kill those who are the most guilty, the rebel who returns home "will find … his wife with her throat cut, another will find his children, another will find his sister, another his father, weak with old age, another his brother, another his uncle."[80] Julien concluded that such measures would "make a terrible impression on their spirits" and claimed that Basville was "delighted" at this new plan.[81]

Although there is no evidence to support Julien's claim that the intendant was delighted at the idea of a war of extermination, it is clear that after the disastrous events of December and January the authorities were considering a dramatic change in course.

Broglie tried to defend his strategy, arguing that Julien's plan to consolidate the scattered garrisons would only make the situation worse. In a letter written after he was relieved of command, Broglie admitted that the countryside belonged to the rebels, but argued that if he pulled out all of the small garrisons established throughout the region, he would soon control only the towns of Montpellier, Nîmes, Uzès, Alès and Saint Hippolyte, and that "all the people of the mountains would

[79] Cited in Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1666–1670.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.

assemble in such great numbers and [be able to] defend so well the points of entry [into the Cévennes] that cannon would be necessary in order to set foot there."[82] Furthermore, when garrisons pulled out, the vacated areas began supplying the rebels with food and supplies and serving as the site for illegal Protestant assemblies. Several villages currently occupied by garrisons had already informed Broglie that if the garrisons left they would be forced to join the rebels or risk having their houses burned or being killed. Broglie also pointed out that only the presence of the garrisons maintained the exercise of the Catholic faith in the countryside. Experience demonstrated once the garrisons left, Catholic worship stopped entirely for fear of reprisals.

Finally, to pull soldiers out of the small posts in order to concentrate them into larger units would be pointless, for such large, cumbersome, and slow-moving formations would never be able to engage the small, fast-moving, rebel bands.[83] The important thing, Broglie argued, was not to form large bodies of troops to execute grand military operations on the scale suggested by Julien, but simply to maintain a strong and intimidating military presence throughout the disaffected areas.

The problem with Broglie's strategy, however, was that he simply did not have enough troops to establish a strong and effective military presence throughout the entire region. From August 1702 to February 1703, the rebels burned churches and murdered priests with relative impunity.[84] Broglie's forces scored some minor successes but these were overshadowed by the disastrous defeats of late December. Members of the local clergy like *prieur* Vidal complained of Broglie's inability to protect their churches and their parishioners. Julien was only one of several officers who wrote letters to Chamillart denouncing Broglie and his strategy, and the intendant of neighboring Guyenne warned Chamillart that the troubles in the Cévennes were growing and could soon spread to his province.[85] When Broglie's name did not appear on a January list of newly appointed Marshals, it was clear that he

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[82] SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 39 (2 February 1702). Broglie rather boldly pointed out that he had not thought it necessary to defend his dispositions because he had sent numerous *états* of his posts to Chamillart who never suggested there was a problem.

[83] Ibid.

[84] The aforementioned letters of Elie Salvaire (*Relations sommaire des désordres commis par les Camisards des Cévennes*) and Grégoire Vidal (*Lettres et rapports sur la guerre des Camisards*) testify to the level of rebel activity during this period.

[85] SHAT A[1] 1701, f. 122 (27 January 1703).

had fallen out of royal favor.[86] A name that did appear on the January list, however, was Nicolas Auguste de la Baume, marquis de Montrevel and, in February, Marshal Montrevel arrived in the province to replace Broglie.[87]

Montrevel Arrives

Montrevel's arrival in Languedoc signified not only a change in command, but also a significant change in the royal attitude towards the revolt. As spring approached, it was clear that Louis XIV was becoming increasingly impatient with the persistence of rebellion in such a strategically vital province, a rebellion that threatened to derail plans for the upcoming campaigning season.[88] When Montrevel immediately began firing off multiple letters to Chamillart requesting additional troops, officers, and supplies, Chamillart wrote back to Basville, remarking that the Marshal seemed to require a considerable army to destroy the rebels. "He asks for an artillery train, artillery commanders, general officers, a captain of guides, [and] a captain of posts," Chamillart complained, in short "everything that seems more appropriate for the preparation of a true war."[89] Although the king had resolved to provide the Marshal with considerable additional forces, Chamillart made it clear that it was "irritating to have to deal with this at a time when His Majesty has all Europe [arrayed] against him."[90]

The new troops promised by the king numbered some 10,000 men detached from the armies of Germany and Italy. They included two

[86] Broglie tried to make a case for his own promotion but worried that fighting rebels in Languedoc would not be considered as distinguished a service as fighting in other theaters. "I would be unhappy if, having served in Languedoc … I was regarded as a man who did not aspire to the honors and dignities with which His Majesty showers those with whom he is content … [I]f the services that I render do not have the [same] glamour and brilliance [as those provided by others] who are in his armies, I believe they are no less solid and important." See SHAT A[1] 1614, f. 125 (8 December 1702). When he was passed over for promotion, but before receiving word of his removal from command, Broglie wrote to Chamillart complaining about being overlooked. See SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 10.

[87] SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 35.

[88] SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 119.

[89] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 51 (26 February 1703).

[90] Ibid. It is likely that Montrevel was also seeking to acquire the trappings of a true campaign in order to counter some of the disdain with which such internal operations were usually viewed and to inflate his own importance.

battalions of the Royal Comtois regiment, one battalion from the Blaisois regiment, one from the Dauphin regiment, two battalions from the Rouergue regiment, two battalions of the Hainault regiment, the regiment of Fimarcon's provincial dragoons, and a force of *miquelets*. To these must be added the forces already in the province, the *fusilier* companies, several infantry regiments formed in the province,[91] and various town militias.[92] The king had also decided to leave several dragoon regiments in the province instead of having them leave on campaign.[93] Three battalions of the *vieux* régiment de la Marine had also finally arrived in the province.[94]

Although this represented a significant increase in military force, not all of the arriving troops were of the highest quality. In a letter to Chamillart, Julien complained that the six new battalions sent to the province (the two battalions from the Hainault regiment having already arrived) were under strength and three of them were "so new they are like militia." The *fusilier* companies were so poorly trained and equipped that "one can scarcely put them to any use other than to guard the posts and passes of the Cévennes and the Vivarais." The regiment of dragoons being raised within the province currently comprised just four companies, the other eight not being ready.[95]

The arriving commander was met with a deteriorating situation. "[T]he disposition of the people could not be worse," wrote Basville to Chamillart, soon after Montrevel's arrival. The local nobility were of no help and did nothing to stop the disorders. The wealthy classes remained uninvolved and many, according to the intendant, "view the spectacle with pleasure, thinking that it will result in the reestablishment of their temples."[96] With such a lack of support from the local elements usually charged with maintaining order, the intendant feared that even more troops would be necessary. He also ominously, and accurately,

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[91] The regiments of Tarnau, Menou, Tournon, Marcilly, Dugast, Bellefare, and Cordes.

[92] SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 84.

[93] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 58. The dragoon regiments were those of Fimarcon, La Fare, and Saint Cernin.

[94] This influx of new troops prompted Broglie to write a letter complaining that he had been dismissed at the very moment the king resolved to send the forces necessary to crush the rebellion, a rebellion that he had "resisted for eight months, without troops and without officers." (SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 60).

[95] Letter of 5 March 1703, cited in Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1697–1698.

[96] SHAT A[1] 1709 f. 48 (22 February 1703).

forecast that if the disorders continued, they might be forced to resort to "the sad necessity of entirely ruining one part of the Cévennes in order to save the other."[97]

Montrevel's Strategy

In early March, the intendant prepared a report on the state of the province, detailing where he thought the arriving troops should be stationed.[98] Large garrisons should be placed at Alès, Uzès, Saint-Hippolyte, Anduze, Vigan, Vans, Saint-Jean-de-Gardonneque, while a number of additional battalions should actively patrol the region and operate against the rebel bands. Two battalions should be posted in the Vivarais and six battalions in the Cévennes. "This assumes," wrote the intendant "that no disorders occur in the Vivarais or in Haut-Languedoc … if it is necessary to divide the troops, perhaps even sending them to the coasts [to counter an Allied landing] as could happen, we will find ourselves in great difficulty."[99] Basville also noted that funds would be necessary to pay for guides, couriers, and mule-drivers but most importantly, for spies. Spies are indispensable, wrote the intendant, "to send among the rebels … it is the only means to find the bandits and [to] fall on them."[100] It is revealing, and perhaps testimony to the closed nature of Protestant society in Languedoc, that nine months after the outbreak of rebellion, the royal authorities had not managed to place a sufficient number of agents and informers among the rebel bands.

The degree of cooperation that existed between Basville and Montrevel did not approach the close collaboration that characterized the relationship between the intendant and Broglie. It is clear, however, that from the beginning the newly minted Marshal planned to take a different approach to the conflict than his predecessor. In a move that must have met with Julien's approval, Montrevel pulled the scattered garrisons back into the main fortified towns, concentrating his forces but effectively abandoning the countryside to the rebels. In the first weeks after his arrival, Montrevel tried to track down and engage the rebel

97 Ibid.
98 SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 61 (4 March 1703).
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.

bands but found all of his efforts frustrated by sympathizers among the general population who informed the rebels of his movements.[101] Every time he sent his troops to an area, the rebels seemed to slip away. In short, Montrevel faced the same difficulties as Broglie and was having as little success as his predecessor. However, Montrevel suggested that the arrival of additional troops could solve the problem. "Perhaps when we have troops to occupy several areas at once," he wrote in a letter to Chamillart in early March, "we can trap the rebels between two fires."[102]

As a result of this early inability to come to grips with the elusive enemy, Montrevel sought to defeat the rebels through *ordinances* rather than military operations. Less than a month after his arrival, for example, Montrevel issued a decree ordering the destruction of all wind and water mills in certain suspect areas, and forbade "the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and other relatives of the … rebels to give them shelter, food, provisions, munitions, or other assistance of any kind … directly or indirectly, under penalty of being declared accomplices to the rebellion."[103] Montrevel also declared that any rebels captured bearing arms would be executed without trial, their houses would be razed and their property confiscated.[104]

Montrevel also sought to limit freedom of movement and to reduce the number of foreigners traveling through the region. On 23 February 1703, for example, he ordered all inhabitants of certain suspect parishes to return to their homes within a week. If this was not possible, and if they had a legitimate excuse, they must communicate this to the mayors or consuls of their villages or else be charged as accomplices to the rebellion. No foreigners or inhabitants of neighboring provinces were allowed to enter the region without first obtaining a passport signed by Montrevel, Basville, or the royal judges of their province of origin. Those captured without such certificates would be considered rebels and would be arrested, tried, and executed.[105] This order was later supplemented by another limiting movement among and between the parishes of the Cévennes. In October 1703, for example, all *nouveaux convertis* between the ages of 15 and 52 were forbidden to leave their parishes without obtaining a passport signed by Montrevel or Basville.

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[101] SHAT A[1] 1707. f. 110, 114.
[102] Ibid., f. 114 (3 March 1703).
[103] *Ordinance* of 23 February 1703, in Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1677.
[104] Ibid.
[105] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 28.

This had a severe impact on the commerce of the province, and threatened to ruin many of the merchants and traders that might have otherwise been a useful source of support for royal authority. As one observer noted,

> "[S]ince the publication [of the *ordinance*], no one dares to travel. Commerce is completely interrupted because no *muletier* from the plain or from the mountain transports any grain and [my community] is facing famine. M[onsieur] the marquis and governor of Anduze has written me several letters [to the effect that] … he will arrest all our *muletiers*, merchants and others of this area that come to Anduze without permission and who are below 52 years of age.[106]

Montrevel also recognized the need to enlist support from members of the local nobility, a group that had thus far provided little assistance to either the rebels or the royal authorities. It was very important for the nobles to control the populations that live on their lands. "If they act as they should," commented Montrevel "they will render a very useful service, and if they [do not] they will reveal their bad intent and we will treat them as they deserve."[107] The king should order the nobles to disarm the inhabitants of their lands, including the *anciens catholiques* to stop the rebels from seizing the weapons for themselves.[108] The nobles should also gather up all the grain produced on their lands and store it in their chateaus, distributing only the minimum amount required for sustenance each day, thus ensuring that a sympathetic populace could not give it to the rebels.[109]

Montrevel also targeted the *nouveaux convertis*, convinced that many among them were aiding the rebellion. The *nouveaux convertis* were once again declared responsible for protecting all Catholic priests, churches, and *anciens catholiques* in their communities. If something should happen, the communities would be "burned and entirely destroyed" the day after any incident. If a soldier of the king was killed in any of these communities or villages, the community would face similar punishment.[110]

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[106] Salvaire, 185.

[107] SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 127.

[108] Ibid., f. 128 (in this letter, written by Montrevel to the king, someone has written "bon" in the margin next to the ideas of engaging the nobility and disarming the *anciens catholiques*).

[109] Devic and Vaissette, XIV col. 1703, 1709. See also SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 89.

[110] *Ordinance* of 24 February 1703 in Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1684. See also Court, I, 252. The *archers* of the Dauphiné *maréchaussée* were ordered to patrol the

In addition to these *ordinances*, some of which repeated those of his predecessor and thus suggest a lack of compliance and difficulties in enforcement, Montrevel also intensified the practice of *enlévements*. In March the village of Mialet, birthplace of Camisard leader Roland, was subjected to the largest *enlévement* to date. 210 men, 280 women, and 180 children were forcibly removed from Mialet and taken to Anduze.[111] A similar event occurred in Saumane, where Julien burned all of the houses in the village and rounded up all of the inhabitants.[112] On 20 April, Basville informed Chamillart of the *enlévement* of 300 individuals that were sent to Rousillon.[113] Montrevel, wrote the intendant, "forced six of the principal inhabitants to identify the most guilty [in the community] … it is on their testimony, and on information we have obtained elsewhere" that the individuals were chosen for transfer to Roussillon. Montrevel had also "removed several entire families whose children are with the rebels" and has tried to disarm the population, "forcing them, under pain of death, to declare where their arms were hidden." Basville informed Chamillart that Montrevel was going to undertake similar actions in the diocese of Uzès and would then go to the Cévennes "where the rumor of these actions could not help but have a very good effect."[114]

All of these actions clearly failed in their goal of intimidating the rebels and the increasing severity of some of Montrevel's actions seemed only to increase the boldness and ferocity of the rebels. On 2 February the rebel leader known as Jouanay attacked the fortified town of Génolhac. This attack represents the first assault by the rebels on a place protected with defensive works. The town was guarded by a single company of militia and they were quickly driven off. Jouanay contented himself with burning the church and then left.

Several days later, another garrison was placed there. Jouanay, still in the area, was informed of this and attacked again. The new garrison was slaughtered, with only a lieutenant and five soldiers surviving the attack. Hearing of these events, a body of approximately 5–600 Catholics armed themselves and, joined by a force of about 400 militia,

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frontier of the province and to monitor all roads leading to the Cévennes. See SHAT A[1] 1702, f. 241.

[111] SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 190.

[112] Ibid., f. 183.

[113] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 109.

[114] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 109 (20 April 1703).

marched on the town. On 13 February, Jouanay was driven out with the loss of about 100 of his men. Four days later the persistent Jouanay returned to the area and massacred the Catholics living on the outskirts of the town. Finally, on 23 February, Julien himself arrived on the scene. Upon entering Génolhac, he ordered the execution of all Protestants found in the town and "delivered the village to the fury and greed of the soldiers."[115] Perhaps in reprisal for Julien's massacre of the Protestants at Génolhac, three days later the rebel leader Castanet entered the Catholic village of Frassinet-de-Fourques on 26 February and massacred approximately forty Catholics.[116]

While this bloody sequence of events was taking place, Cavalier tried to slip into the Vivarais in the hopes of expanding the revolt. He was stopped at the battle of Vagnas (10 February). This defeat cost Cavalier nearly half of his seven hundred-man force and severely damaged any future prospects of expanding the revolt to the volatile Vivarais region. On 6 March, the rebels suffered another major defeat at Pompignan, losing another 400 men.[117]

On 1 April, approximately 150 *réformés* of Nîmes assembled at a mill to conduct their services. Montrevel, who was in Nîmes at the time, likely saw this illegal assembly as a grave affront. Arriving at the scene in person, he stationed soldiers at the doors and the one window of the mill and gave orders to kill anyone who emerged. He then set fire to the mill and nearly all of the worshippers perished in the flames.[118]

Despite having inflicted serious military defeats on the rebels and engaging in such extreme and violent measures like those described above, the royal authorities once again proved unable to stop the rebels who continued raiding villages, burning churches and killing priests.

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[115] Court, I, 231–233.

[116] Ibid., 236. It has been suggested that the real motivation behind this massacre was the long-standing rivalry between Frassinet-de-Fourques and a neighboring town, Rousse, whose inhabitants apparently played a part in the massacre. See Robert Poujol, *Vébron: Histoire d'un village Cévenol* (1981), 155–167.

[117] It should be noted that all casualty figures are very rough estimates. In most cases, the figures used are those suggested by Louis Blachère in his *La Guerre des Cévennes, 25 juillet 1702–1716 août 1704: son origine, ses grande batailles, se dénouement* (Alès, 1970). The difficulties involved in arriving at such estimates are discussed in Joutard, *La légende*, 67–70.

[118] Court, I, 307. If Montrevel experienced any qualms of conscience about his actions they were likely soothed by a papal bull of 1 May 1703 in which Clement XI compared the Camisards to the Albigensians and offered a full papal pardon to any who aided in the extermination of "this malicious and execrable race."

Ésprit Fléchier, bishop of Nîmes, complained of the inability of the royal forces to stop the depredations, noting that "the churches are closed, the priests are fugitives, the exercise of the Catholic religion [is] abolished in the countryside, and fear is spreading everywhere."[119]

Julien shared some of this pessimism, telling Chamillart in March that the revolt had become "a very serious and most important affair … It is a problem that has become violent, and nearly desperate, because of the failure to apply, from the beginning, remedies that could have stopped the spread of the venom."[120] Later that same month Julien wrote, "With time we could, with God's help, reduce [the rebels] but this will not [happen] without exterminating a good part of these scoundrels. If one wants to cut the evil at its roots it is necessary to leave none alive because [the spirit of revolt] is deeply ingrained in [their blood] … the authority of the king is almost no longer acknowledged in the upper Cévennes."[121] In a subsequent letter, Julien observed, "I do not think that the devil with all his malice could produce a revolt more bizarre, more frustrating, and more difficult to extinguish [than the present one] … I defy … all of Europe combined to end this revolt unless the most violent … measures are employed."[122]

By mid-April, all of the troops sent by the king had arrived but Montrevel continued to complain that he was unable to come to grips with the enemy.[123] The loyalty of the population towards the rebels was such that he could learn nothing about their movements. Locally recruited guides proved unreliable, often leading his forces off in the wrong direction while the Cévenol shepherds tending their flocks high in the mountains served as lookouts, warning rebels of any approaching troops.[124] An increasingly frustrated Montrevel informed the court that even more extreme and violent measures would be necessary to end the revolt.

Following the example of his predecessor, Montrevel suggested he be permitted to take Protestant hostages and hang two of them for every Catholic murdered. Basville, distanced himself from this measure, arguing in a letter to Chamillart that "it is so contrary to all of the

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[119] Fléchier, *Oeuvres complets*, 2 vols. (1856), II, col. 1139.
[120] Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1695 (5 March 1703).
[121] SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 154 (25 March 1703), cited in Bosc, II, 131.
[122] Ibid., f. 272 (12 May 1703).
[123] Ibid., f. 205 (16 April 1703).
[124] Ibid., f. 321 (9 June 1703).

rules that I would be pained to be of this mind."[125] When Basville's advice prevailed, as it always did, Montrevel was prompted to question whether some in the king's council understood the true nature of the revolt.[126] Although the king had refused some of Montrevel's more extreme requests, the king did understand the nature of the problem and as the revolt approached the one-year mark, the Sun King's patience was nearing its end.

The Grand Design

In June 1703, Montrevel had approximately twenty battalions at his disposal in Languedoc.[127] Nevertheless, all during the summer of 1703, large bands of Camisards continued to burn churches and murder Catholics. Many villages ignored the numerous *ordinances* issued by Basville and Montrevel and discontent among the Catholic population was growing. As was the case during Broglie's tenure, Chamillart began to receive numerous anonymous letters, warning that the revolt was growing, the nobility was doing nothing, Montrevel was ineffective, and the royal troops were resting entirely on the defensive.[128]

Montrevel and Basville started to consider dramatically expanding the scope of the *enlévements* with the aim of systematically depopulating the parishes of the upper Cévennes that were at the core of the revolt. The plan envisioned forcing the inhabitants of suspect parishes into certain designated walled cities and then to destroy the bulk of their abandoned dwellings. Any remaining buildings would be garrisoned by soldiers. It was hoped that this would force the rebels to either descend from the mountains into the plain where they could in theory be more easily tracked down and destroyed, or force them to remain in the mountains during the coming winter where they would die of cold and hunger.

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[125] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 234 (17 July 1703).

[126] SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 37 (2 August 1703).

[127] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 210. "Estat des Battaillons qui servent en Languedoc". These are as follows: Rouergue (2); Royal Comtois (2); Haynault (2); the regiments of Tournon, Menou, Marcilly, Dugast Bellafaire, Tarnau, LaFare, and Cordes; and the second battalions of Bourbon, LaSarre, Beaujollois, Dauphiné, Soissonnois, Blaisois, and Laonnois.

[128] SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 77. Bosc (II, 64–68) has reproduced this letter in its entirety. See also Bosc, II, 75, note 63 for a summary of similar letters.

After the disastrous summer of 1703, Basville's plan was met with some interest by Chamillart. In the margins of a letter from Basville, detailing this plan, Chamillart wrote,

> "[I]t is irritating to see the disorders augment every day instead of diminish. I am more convinced than ever that extreme measures are necessary. I do not see insurmountable obstacles to that which you propose with the exception of finding a region to put the men that you want to remove."[129]

The king was also disposed to accept this dramatic option but wanted more details about the population of the upper Cévennes. The intendant was ordered to prepare a report that contained the number of inhabitants of the condemned areas, their sex, and their social and professional conditions. It was also necessary to know where they were going to be sent. Chamillart confirmed the king's approval to Montrevel:

> I think it will be very difficult, not to say impossible, to end this affair [in Languedoc] without taking extreme measures like those you propose. There is no question of letting survive within the kingdom a spirit of revolt among the *religionnaires*, [one that is] already too widespread [and] that could make infinite progress in the circumstances of the present war … I do not doubt that you will employ all of your ability to cut it down to its roots."[130]

As directed, the intendant prepared a memoir that detailed 31 parishes targeted for destruction. The memoir listed the number of villages and hamlets in each village, the total number of inhabitants, the number of young boys and girls, and, to demonstrate the potential impact on the royal coffers, the amount of the *taille* and *capitation* levied against the parish.[131] The 13,212 men, women, and children living in these areas would be transported to various fortified towns such as Montpellier, Lunel, Nîmes, Béziers, Mèze, Carcassonne, and Lyon. The plan would be carried out in the most humane fashion possible, with Basville promising that the displaced villagers would only be subjected to short marches and would not lack food. The girls would be taken to convents, and particular care would be taken with pregnant women. The sick would be taken to the hospital at Montpellier.[132] Basville also thought

[129] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 234, cited in Bosc, II, 137.
[130] SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 21 (17 July 1703).
[131] Basville's statistical summary has been reproduced in Bosc, II, 139.
[132] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 264, 265. See also Bosc, II, 140; Ducasse, 137.

that the houses should not be burned or destroyed entirely. Instead, he suggested that the roofs be removed to make the dwellings uninhabitable but the walls should be left standing. This would ease the reconstruction once the revolt was over. To maintain commerce and provide secure places for travelers, a certain number of villages would be spared and garrisoned.

The king wrestled with his decision to take such severe measures within his own kingdom and against his own subjects.[133] In September, Montrevel wrote impatiently that he was still awaiting approval to begin his plan, reminding Chamillart that "one can no longer regard this revolt as a war in which one could win any advantage by the courage of the troops nor by any experience in the placement of troops on the battlefield."[134] Other non-traditional measures were necessary to win this conflict. In the end, Montrevel's arguments combined with the increasing inconvenience of a revolt that was now nearly eighteen months old and growing, and more importantly, a pressing need to free the soldiers for service on other fronts before the next campaigning season, prompted Louis XIV to agree to the drastic plan.[135]

An express rider delivered the royal order to begin the destruction of the parishes to Montrevel on 18 September and the Marshal and the intendant immediately set to work. The region targeted for destruction was divided into three sectors: Marshal de Montrevel, commanding five battalions, would be responsible for the destruction of eighteen communities located in the region surrounding Barre; Julien traveled to Pont-de-Montvert with three battalions of infantry and fifteen companies of *miquelets* and would be responsible for the destruction of 10 communities and four villages; a third commander, the *sieur* de Canillac, traveled to Vebron with three battalions and was charged with destroying four communities and three villages near mount Aigoual.[136] This "Saint Barthélemy des maisons" began on 1 October 1703 and continued until 14 December.[137]

Things did not work out quite so ideally, however, for either the displaced villagers or for the soldiers. From the beginning, the project

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[133] This is made clear by numerous marginal notes made by Chamillart on several of the letters arriving from Montrevel. See, for example, SHAT A^1 1708, f. 111 and SHAT A^1 1633, f. 162, cited in Bosc, II, 143.

[134] SHAT A^1 1708, f. 109 (14 September 1703).

[135] Ibid., f. 116 (18 September 1703).

[136] SHAT A^1 1708, f. 128, cited in Bosc, II, 199–200.

[137] Michelet, 201.

was plagued by numerous problems: the houses were more solidly built than anticipated;[138] the houses were often widely dispersed and located in areas so inaccessible that the soldiers spent much of their time simply looking for the structures they were supposed to destroy;[139] it proved very difficult to transport sufficient food and supplies into the remote areas of the Cévennes for the soldiers and militia, and progress was slowed by the frequent breaking of the tools being used for the work of destruction.[140] In October, Montrevel heard rumors of an impending Allied descent on the coasts of Languedoc. The Marshal hurried south, leaving Julien in command, but also taking a substantial detachment of soldiers with him as an escort, and consequently further slowing the work.[141]

The "grand work", as the devastation of the Cévennes was referred to, created a number of additional problems and tensions in the region. The loss of revenue from the destroyed areas threatened to ruin numerous members of the local nobility, many of them officers in the king's army or members of the clergy.[142] More ominously if predictably, the destruction of their homes and farms tended to make those *nouveaux convertis* not already working with the rebels more sympathetic to their cause. The ever-pessimistic Julien acknowledged this in an anxious letter to Chamillart: "I must tell you," wrote Julien, "that I think this example comes too late and that this revolt will not end by the actions we are going to take … [T]o the contrary, it will become stronger [and] I predict more great massacres of *anciens catholiques* and burnings of houses."[143]

A further difficulty arose when Louis XIV began a campaign against Savoy. In mid-September, Chamillart had warned Montrevel that the king expected an imminent declaration of war by the duke of Savoy. When that occurred Montrevel would be required to send troops to support Vendôme and the Army of Italy. Montrevel promised to send

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138 SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 133.

139 Bosc, II, 353.

140 SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 312, Julien to Basville (4 October 1703); See also Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1820, Julien to Chamillart (5 October 1703).

141 SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 154 (2 October 1703).

142 It should be pointed out that in September the king promised to allow Protestant nobles displaced by these measures to choose the place they would like to live in and, if necessary, support would be provided from the confiscated goods of his less loyal subjects (Court, II, 44).

143 SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 119. Chamillart revealed identical concerns to Montrevel, see SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 198.

eight battalions and a regiment of cavalry. In October, operations against Savoy began and the promised troops were dispatched. This detachment not only slowed the progress of Montrevel's great design in the Cévennes, but it also deprived Montrevel of a significant portion of the coercive force at his disposal in the province.[144] When, in late October, Chamillart expressed his displeasure at the sluggish pace of the work of destruction, Basville observed, "if this project has not been executed precisely as it was conceived, it is because all the measures have been interrupted by the removal of the troops … at the moment the project was going to commence." The intendant joined to this what was perhaps a veiled criticism of Montrevel's leadership of the effort, pointing out that "if Marshal de Montrevel chooses to worry about the fear of a descent [on the coasts] instead of the prompt success of this plan, than nothing can be done except to execute the plan more slowly."[145]

Julien was also frustrated by the pace of the work and requested that he be authorized to use fire to hasten the work of destruction. Since the king's intention "is to destroy an entire region and render it uninhabitable, fire is perfect for this since it consumes everything and will not leave a plank or a piece of wood for this rabble to carry to another area."[146] The king had resisted similar requests on previous occasions, for he had in fact hoped, as did Basville, that once the revolt ended the displaced villagers could return and repair their houses.[147] The approaching winter, however, and alarming reports of desertion among the militia contingents engaged in the work, argued for a more expeditious process. On 14 October, the king gave his permission and the burning began.[148]

Montrevel's grand design certainly had a devastating effect on the countryside but had little impact on the support and the military capabilities of the rebels. With the upper Cévennes rendered uninhabitable, the rebels of that region scattered and joined other bands operating in the dioceses of Alès, Uzès, and Nîmes. With their mountainous redoubts under siege, the rebels redoubled their attacks in the plains. The farmers of the plain were very vulnerable to the rebel attacks and a

144 SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 135–136, 161, 168.
145 SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 344 (30 October 1703).
146 Ibid., f. 312 (October 1703).
147 Pojoul suggests that the king was uncomfortable with the idea because it brought back memories of the destruction of the Palatinate in 1693. See Poujol, *Basville*, 124.
148 SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 311, 325, 334.

frustrated Montrevel informed Chamillart that one should not pretend that troops could stop "six bandits from slitting the throats [of] some poor men in isolated houses, far from the military posts and beyond the range of protection."[149] For their own security, Montrevel recommended that *anciens catholiques* everywhere leave their farms and retreat into the towns.[150] The irony of this, of course, is that one of the primary rationales of the plan to destroy the 31 parishes in the upper Cévennes was to force the rebels down into the plain where they could be more easily tracked down and engaged. In any event, the decision to detach eight battalions and a regiment of cavalry to the Army of Italy at the very moment the plan was to be executed ensured that it would meet with limited success.

In November 1703, as the situation continued to deteriorate, Chamillart received several *memoirs* describing the situation in the province and proposing new strategies. An influential military advisor to the king, Jules-Louis Bolé, marquis de Chamlay, argued that it was necessary to "change batteries" in this "strange war" and to adopt an entirely different approach. He suggested that the governors of each of the neighboring provinces (Poitou, Béarn, Guyenne, Angoumois, Saintonge, Limousin, Auvergne, Provence, and Lyonnais) assemble a mixed force of nobles and militia and march to the frontiers of Rouergue and the Cévennes. The forces would take their positions across the frontier and then cross the frontier "everywhere and at the same time," with each provincial troop responsible for suppressing the region that lay immediately before them. The king would support this advance by bringing companies of the régiment de La Marine, companies of galley marines from Marseille, and *miquelets* from Roussillon and Catalonia.[151]

A second suggestion came from a commander with considerably more experience in fighting the rebels on the ground than Chamlay, who was writing his *memoir* from the comfortable confines of Marly. *Colonel* Marsilly, who commanded a regiment of infantry and had served in the region since December 1702, argued that many mistakes had been made in the campaign against the Camisards, beginning with a failure to recognize the seriousness of the situation and to take the necessary steps to stop the revolt at its early and most vulnerable stages. This was compounded by an over reliance on ill-trained militia compa-

149 SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 139, cited in Bosc, II, 208.
150 Ibid.
151 SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 233. See also Bosc, II, 537.

nies that were easily beaten by the Camisards and whose defeats provided the rebels with weapons and supplies. As a result of these early missteps, the four dioceses of Mende, Alès, Uzès, and Nîmes were now entirely in revolt and the principal towns were providing the rebels with financing, intelligence, and promises of foreign support.

The situation was critical, but not hopeless, wrote Marsilly. A change was urgently needed, one that acknowledged and rectified the mistakes made in the past. A full twenty battalions and two regiments of dragoons would be required for this plan. The main towns of Saint-Hippolyte, Anduze, Génolhac, Alès, Sommières, Lunel, Uzès, Nîmes, and Saint-Jean-du-Gard should each receive a battalion in garrison and the Marshal should establish his headquarters closer to the troubled areas. Thirty-three posts should be occupied by the 33 companies of provincial *fusiliers* and, wherever possible, these posts should be placed at equal intervals and not far from the main battalion-sized garrisons. This initial disposition and establishment of garrisons, both large and small, would require 11 battalions, 33 companies of *fusiliers* and 1 regiment of dragoons. As more troops arrived, the large garrisons and smaller posts could be reinforced.[152]

The key point for Marsilly, however, was to avoid the continued spread of general hostilities between the *anciens catholiques* and the *nouveaux convertis* of the province, for he feared the situation could soon develop into a general civil war. His concerns were amplified by the recent appearance of armed Catholic bands that had taken to roaming the countryside, murdering and pillaging Protestants and *nouveaux convertis* alike. These groups, known variously as the Florentines,[153] the Cadets of the Cross, and the White Camisards, developed in response to the clear inability of the royal troops to provide Catholics with adequate security in the countryside.[154] They first appeared in February 1703 and the intendant and the Marshal, desperate for military resources to deploy against the rebels, originally encouraged them and even gave some of their leaders commissions. However, Montrevel grew alarmed as these Catholic bands increased in size and began to engage in more wanton acts of destruction, thievery, and murder, sometimes

[152] SHAT A^1 1708, f. 239, cited in Bosc, II, 540–542.

[153] The name derived from the village of Saint-Florent, north of Alès, one of the main areas of recruitment for these bands.

[154] The best account of these Catholic militias is W. Gregory Monahan, "Heroes or Thieves: Catholic Vigilantes in the War of the Camisards", *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, 24 (1991), 365–376.

targeting those with no connection to the rebels. He feared that the situation was slipping out of his control and that he would soon be faced with two revolts, one waged by the *anciens catholiques* and the other by the Camisards.[155] One observer, recounting the destruction wrought by the Catholic bands, worried, "I don't know what will happen … this already seems like civil war."[156] The depredations of the White Camisards eventually became so egregious that, in March 1704, Montrevel published an *ordinance* against them. Montrevel's replacement, Marshal Villars identified the Catholic militias as "our most dangerous enemy" and used his forces to disarm, arrest, and imprison them in large numbers until, by the end of 1704, very few Catholic partisans remained.[157]

Strategic suggestions and disagreements were not limited to memoirs prepared by individuals such as Chamlay and Marsilly. As the revolt continued and as pressure mounted to achieve some decisive success, the personal tensions between the intendant and the Marshal began to increase. The first significant disagreement occurred in the period immediately following the depopulation of the upper Cévennes. Without first consulting the intendant, Montrevel proposed to Chamillart that he be authorized to fortify all the main towns and villages located in the central foyers of the revolt and force the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside to relocate within their walls. Basville, cognizant of the logistical difficulties encountered during the recent attempt at similar population transfers, argued that while this might be appropriate in some areas, there were a great number of parishes whose main town was quite small. Such towns would not have sufficient space to accommodate all of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages and hamlets. He also suggested that it could be dangerous to fortify the large towns in the very region that was in revolt. "Ordinarily in a revolt," the intendant pointed out, "one begins by destroying the walls of the suspect areas so as to be able to better punish the inhabitants." As a further disadvantage, fortifying the towns would necessitate either guarding them with troops or arming the inhabitants. There were clearly not enough troops to garrison all the places Montrevel wished to fortify, and it would be madness to place arms in the

155 Cited in Bosc, II, 466.

156 Sister de Merez, *Journal des camisards*, 46, cited in Bosc, II, 466.

157 *Ordinance* of 11 March 1704 in Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1878–1880; Court, II, 117; Monahan, "Heroes or Thieves," *passim.*

hands of a rebellious populace. It would ruin the agriculture of the region by taking the people away from their farms, while the livestock brought within the walls by the inhabitants would require the building of new, and costly, structures. General commerce would also suffer terribly in the four most productive dioceses of the province (Nîmes, Alès, Uzès, and Montpellier). "The king wanted to make a great example by destroying 31 parishes in [the diocese] of Mende," wrote the intendant, "it is necessary to try and preserve the rest." More importantly, if this plan were to be carried out, the affected areas would be tempted to use it as an excuse not to pay the *taille* and the *capitation*.[158]

Montrevel tried to defend his plan by pointing out that the entire countryside, whether from fear or sympathy, was for the rebels and was providing them with all the support they needed. Montrevel critiqued the complete destruction of the 31 parishes of the upper Cévennes that had taken place the previous month, pointing out that it had largely been the intendant's idea and had had "much less effect than one had expected".[159] To the contrary, his idea of walling up the towns would be more "effective, easy to execute and have the advantage of immediately revealing who was guilty because [those who] resist the idea demonstrate their complicity with the rebels and their desire to provide them with supplies."[160] Montrevel claimed that no less than 50 towns and villages had already requested permission to build their own fortifications.[161] In the end, however, Chamillart chided the Marshal for not consulting the intendant on this matter first, and reminded him that the king's service demanded he continue to work closely with Basville on all matters concerning the province.[162]

Such a dispute between the two main representatives of royal authority in the province, representatives that typically worked closely together, did not bode well for the success of the Crown's efforts against the rebels. The two men never enjoyed a relationship as close as the one that had existed between Basville and Broglie. During the winter of 1703–1704, however, with no end in sight to the rebellion, the relationship became increasingly strained. On 11 November 1703, Basville wrote a stinging criticism of Montrevel to his brother Chrètien in Paris:

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158 SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 367 (10 November 1703). See also Bosc, II, 543–544.
159 SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 264. See also Bosc, II, 546–549.
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
162 SHAT A[1] 1708, f. 278 (29 November 1703).

> I do not believe there is a man more incapable of this work … [H]e is, to speak honestly, [like] a weathervane … the first one who captures his attention governs him [for] twenty four hours … [H]e is a supreme liar …What surprises me most about him is his constant fear of being killed … [H]e has all sorts of weaknesses … One must hope that the [the revolt] will end on its own, but one cannot believe that it will be either by the head nor the hand of this man. It is a great misfortune when one selected [such] an incompetent and stupid man."[163]

There can be little doubt that when Basville wrote this letter to his brother he was well aware that Chrètien enjoyed some access to Chamillart. Interestingly, soon after Basville wrote this scathing letter to his brother, Chamillart initiated a secret correspondence with Basville on the subject of Montrevel. Chamillart had been receiving numerous letters, anonymous and otherwise, criticizing Montrevel's leadership style and his conduct of military operations and wanted to learn from the intendant the true state of affairs in the province.[164]

In early December 1703, Chamillart prepared a memoir for the intendant, detailing all the rumors that he had heard about the revolt and Montrevel's performance in the province. The list of complaints was a lengthy one: Was it true that a force of less than 3,000 rebels was prevailing over a force of twenty battalions and three regiments of dragoons? Had the Marshal stationed troops in such a way that they could not be used effectively? Had he kept a disproportionate amount of troops for his own personal escort and thus hampered military operations? Did the rebels frequently pillage the areas around Alès, despite the physical presence of the Marshal in the town? Had the Marshal spent the entire summer at Alès, without moving against the rebels except when he was pushed to it by the repeated urgings of his officers? Were most of the troops dispersed in small groups across various regions, and instead of using these battalions to track down and trap the rebels, had the Marshal expressly ordered his officers not to risk his men under any circumstances? Did the Marshal gamble

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[163] Ch. Tocq., pièce 169, cited in Armogathe and Joutard, 58.

[164] A representative sample of such complaints comes from an anonymous author who wrote to the secretary in September of 1703: "The Marshal is in Alès where he entertains himself with the ladies … He is ruining the people and everyone cries out because he is doing nothing [and] is letting the poor Catholics be killed … If he had shown a little energy everything would have been calmed down because there are 14,000 of the king's soldiers [in the province] who do nothing but eat and make love." Anonymous letter of 17 September 1703, BSHPF, ms. 885/1.

and enjoy the ladies too much? Chamillart concluded his letter by noting, "One concludes by all the letters [I have received] that the province will be lost if His Majesty does not send someone capable of commanding" and that this should be done while there was still time to stop the revolt from spreading to other provinces. "The wisdom and the justice of His Majesty are too well known to believe that he would make any decisions based on these simple assertions" but the king "would like to have the principle articles of these letters clarified."[165]

Basville responded to Chamillart's request at length, scrawling notes in the margin of Chamillart's memoir. Unfortunately for Montrevel, Basville confirmed most of the rumors. The force of rebels numbered less than 3,000 and quite probably less than 2,000. However, Basville qualified, the number of people who sympathized with the rebels was much greater. "The revolt [is to be measured] not so much in the number of armed bands as it is in the hearts of the inhabitants who protect them and provide them with all sorts of assistance. It is arms they lack, and not men. If they had arms, they would assemble in much larger numbers."[166] Nevertheless, wrote the intendant, "[i]t is painful to see that twenty battalions and three regiments of dragoons have not been able to destroy this rabble." On Montrevel's lack of vim and vigor, he wrote, "One must admit that during this summer there was a great slowness to act. One saw no orders to hunt the rebels nor to prepare any ambush [for them], nor any war plan to find them, surround them, and defeat them." On the proximity of rebel activity to the Marshal's residence in Alès, the intendant confirmed that the rebels "have made many disorders within a half-league of Alès while [Montrevel] was there." "The problem," continued the intendant,

> stems primarily from the fact that [Montrevel] is persuaded that it is impossible to find [the rebels], that it is a useless hardship for the troops, and that this is not a type of revolt that can be finished by combats. One has heard him often say 'It is a war … where the sword is useless.' This idea has made him reluctant to put troops in the field [and] he does not pursue the rebels when they are defeated … because of this, he inspires no enthusiasm in the troops. I have always fought this principal as much as I can by telling him that the best way [to defeat the rebels] would be to strike them so often that they cannot breathe, to pursue them continually with troops and to give them no respite … that the affair will never end

[165] SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 388.
[166] Ibid., f. 387.

> as long as one leaves them masters of the countryside, and that all of the small combats that occur … will only give the rebels experience and make them more insolent.[167]

Basville ended his condemnation of Montrevel by suggesting an all out winter offensive against the rebels:

> It is certain that if one wants to use all the troops that are in the province this winter to press the rebels, who can no longer take refuge in the difficult country of the upper Cévennes, one can hope to end the problem. But there is not a moment to lose. If the forces of the *anciens catholiques* are organized in the [lower Cévennes] how can the rebels resist them? If one pursues them, in an area that is not too large, with twenty battalions and two regiments of dragoons, how can they escape? But to succeed it is necessary to stop dividing up the battalions into small detachments, which renders them useless, [and to ensure] that each commander have a certain number of parishes under his [direct] responsibility.[168]

Basville concluded by noting that he had given a plan to Montrevel that he had promised to examine.[169]

With such an explicit condemnation by the intendant, Montrevel's days as military commander in the province were numbered. In January, rumors began to circulate that Montrevel would be relieved. The main contender to take over operations in the province was Vendôme, than serving with the army of Italy. Montrevel became aware of these rumors and wrote to Chamillart asking if they were true.[170] Chamillart responded that the king had been inclined to remove him after reading numerous letters received from "all parts" of the province suggesting that the revolt would never end if things continued the way they were going under his leadership. The king was aware of the extreme gravity of the situation and wanted it resolved quickly, partly because it was tying up troops needed elsewhere, and partly because the "spirit of revolt" in the province could spread. The king was also well aware that the Duke of Savoy was supporting the revolt, lending additional urgency to the situation. Finally, Chamillart informed the Marshal that the king believed Montrevel would find it difficult to prepare a new plan after the failure of all his preceding strategies and that a new com-

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[167] Ibid., f. 388.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 6.

mander, "informed of [the king's] intentions" would be better able to execute a new plan more easily.[171]

Faced with his imminent dismissal, Montrevel wrote a lengthy letter to the king defending himself, arguing, "If I have not ended the revolt as quickly as one might have hoped, it is [because] it is unlike any previous revolt, and very different from what one might perceive from afar."[172] In a letter of 21 January, Chamillart informed Montrevel that the king had decided to leave Montrevel in his command and allow him to gain the honor of ending the revolt. However, Montrevel was ordered to write regularly to Chamillart to keep him up to date on events in the province, to use his general officers to the maximum, and to provide detailed information about the units these officers would lead and the areas where he planned to put them. If one pressed the rebels from all sides at once, Chamillart told Montrevel, they could finally succeed in crushing the revolt.[173] Chamillart urged Montrevel to prepare another plan and submit it to the king. Upon obtaining the king's approval, Montrevel was to execute the plan immediately. The winter season was approaching and the Marshal should try to bring the matter to a close before the Duke of Savoy, whose troops would soon be joined by those of the Emperor, attacked Dauphiné in the hopes of encouraging the rebels and bringing about revolts in neighboring provinces.[174] Finally, on 31 January, the king himself wrote to Montrevel:

> My cousin, I received the letter that you wrote to me on the 22nd of this month, in which you recounted all that you have done for my service in the province of Languedoc since you took command there. I want to believe that you have done everything in your power to end a war as unique as that which you have been obliged to wage in that region. The importance of ending it had given me some ideas that I thought [would be] more suitable to terminate it, but upon reflection … I have judged it more appropriate to change nothing and to let you conduct this affair … I have no doubt that you will employ all of the most appropriate measures to quickly reestablish the tranquility that is so necessary to this province, and to put me in a position to maintain it with much less troops than those I have employed there up to now, [troops] that could serve me very usefully elsewhere."[175]

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171 Ibid., f. 7.
172 SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 15 (22 January 1704).
173 Ibid., f. 12 (21 January 1704). See also Bosc, III, 65.
174 Ibid., f. 16 (27 January 1704), cited in Bosc, III, 65.
175 Ibid., f. 21 (31 January 1704), cited in Bosc, III, 67.

Montrevel responded to the king's demands and developed a plan, or more accurately adopted the plan of Basville. This plan focused on gathering detailed information and taking precise actions at the parish level: Each battalion commander was to be given direct responsibility over a limited geographical area. In each community they were to identify one informant that would keep them up to date on the events within the parish; each commander was charged with preparing for each parish in his area a list of all declared Camisards and all those who were absent from their homes; these individuals were to be arrested and imprisoned; if the individuals were absent from their homes, the relatives were to be told that their houses would be destroyed if the individual had not returned within a week; the commanders needed to know the exact layout of all the dangerous hamlets and farms and all of the areas that the rebels use to hide; they were to make a strict inventory of all the ovens in the area, destroying all that were not necessary to prepare three to four days worth of bread for the inhabitants; the bakers were to be chosen with care, to ensure they would only bake bread in quantities proportional to the population so that the rebels would not benefit; the same instructions were given for the windmills; they were to make sure that all taxes were paid and to keep a record of all the crimes and damages inflicted by the rebels; they were to inform the consuls and the inhabitants that if they received the rebels and did not inform the royal authorities, their towns would be pillaged and burned without mercy; a signal system was to be set up by each command so that they could communicate with the nearest royal troops by means of fire or other signals, they were to organize constant patrols that will "impress the populations"; they will constantly visit the stables and caves in the area to make sure the horses of the Camisards are not there; they were to inspect the rivers and bridges in their area and force traffic to cross only at key points; since the Camisards had their shoes made by the shoemakers of the countryside, these were all ordered to take up residence within one of the walled towns where a person would be charged with watching their work; the same thing was to be done with regard to blacksmiths.[176]

As for military operations, Montrevel, well aware of the criticisms concerning his lethargy and pessimism, laid out a vigorous plan that had all of the troops acting simultaneously on several concentric fronts,

[176] SHAT A[1] 1799, f. 2. See also Bosc, III, 19–23.

always pushing the rebels before them into an increasingly smaller area. The rebels would be pressured from three sides, with forces converging from Saint-Hippolyte, Alès, and from the Gardon River. If the rebels remain within the cordon they will be engaged and destroyed; if they try to pass to the diocese of Alès, they would be met by Julien, if they try to cross the Gardon, and enter the Vaunage and the diocese of Nîmes, they would be met by Montrevel who would defeat them easily on the open plain.[177]

The plan appeared attractive and comprehensive on paper but Montrevel did not get formal approval for all aspects of his plan from the king until the end of February.[178] Weather further delayed the operation and the whole project soon broke down. The initial detachments sent out to undertake their respective missions inflicted great hardship on the populations in their areas of responsibility but failed to achieve any decisive results.[179] It also seems clear from his actions that Cavalier had learned of the preparations and was able to take steps to frustrate the Marshal's plan.[180] Montrevel was again bedeviled by criticism from his own officers, Julien in particular, who proclaimed that the plan was destined for failure.[181] Once again, he argued for more severe measures and now saw only one way to end the revolt: to remove all the peasants (meaning the *nouveaux convertis* peasants) from Nîmes, Alès, Uzès, and Mende. Any other approach would simply aggravate the rebellion.[182] One of the officers sent to execute the initial part of Montrevel's plan also wrote back from the Cévennes with some unsettling news: "The letters I receive every day from the upper Cévennes make it clear that the inhabitants of the 31 parishes that the king ordered destroyed and burned have sent [those] in a state to carry arms to join the rebels, while most of the families have returned to the rubble of their homes."[183]

Montrevel's plan was clearly not working and February 1704 stands out as a particularly brutal month of massacres, burnings, and pillaging conducted by the rebels. Observing the destruction in the countryside around Nîmes, sister de Mérez, an Ursuline nun, wrote:

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177 Ibid.
178 SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 35. See Bosc, III, 167.
179 Details of these actions can be found in Bosc, III, 23–40.
180 Bosc, III, 23.
181 SHAT A[1] 1798, f. 26, Julien to Chamillart (13 February 1704).
182 Ibid., f. 9. See also, SHAT A[1] 1798, f. 26.
183 SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 9 (15 January 1704), cited in Bosc, III, 23.

> I continue [with] the litany of tragedies. Far from being finished, they are more frequent … these *furieux* are even more eager for the blood of Catholics. Nothing is as sad as [the situation] we are [in] today. The streets are full of all these poor, fugitive, peasants [and their] woeful cries … We are constantly learning of the death of some Catholic that we knew or the desolation of some family."[184]

At Versailles, it was clear that patience was running out with Montrevel. "It is frustrating," wrote Chamillart on 10 March 1704, "to learn every day that these wretches make new disorders without being able to find a sure remedy to stop them except by the general destruction of the province."[185] On 14 March 1704, the rebels led by Cavalier inflicted a devastating defeat on a detachment of soldiers at Martignargues, killing 350 soldiers of the *vieux* regiment of La Marine, including twenty-two officers. The rebel victory essentially destroyed an entire battalion of supposedly elite troops. From this victory, the Camisards gained a veritable windfall of supplies, including *fusils*, sabres, ammunition, and uniforms. This was a stunning victory over some of the Crown's most respected soldiers and the defeat was met with astonishment throughout the province and at the Court. It was incomprehensible that a battalion with such a reputation, led by experienced officers, and drawn from a regiment considered to be among the best in the army, could have been destroyed by such a rabble. The victory at Martignargues was the high-water mark of the revolt and portended the end of Montrevel's tenure in the province.[186]

On 16 April, however, in a sudden reversal of fortune, Montrevel destroyed Cavalier's band at the battle of Nagés, killing four hundred of Cavalier's band of approximately one thousand men. Three days later, two hundred rebels were killed near Euzet where a huge rebel cache of weapons and supplies was discovered. These victories, however, did not come soon enough to save Montrevel. On 29 March, the king had penned a letter relieving Montrevel of his command in Languedoc.[187] He was replaced by Marshal Claude Louis Hector, duke de Villars.

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[184] Cited in Bosc, III, 145.

[185] SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 48.

[186] A good account of the battle is provided by Bosc, III, 230–248.

[187] SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 60. Montrevel subsequently wrote a letter complaining that he was being blamed for the defeat at Martignargues. See SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 70.

The Arrival of Marshal Villars

The appointment of Villars demonstrates the seriousness with which the Crown, after nearly three frustrating years, had come to view the revolt in Languedoc. Villars had enjoyed great success on numerous battlefields of the War of Spanish Succession, such as Friedlingen (1702), Kehl (1703), and Hochstaedt (1703). Someone with Villars' impressive battlefield credentials earned while contending against the mightiest armies of the age might have been less than pleased to be assigned to the suppression of a popular revolt. However, when Villars was appointed to command in Languedoc, the king took pains to reassure the Marshal about the importance of the task at hand:

> Commanding in more considerable wars would be more appropriate for you, but you will render me an important service if you can stop a revolt that could become very dangerous, particularly [since] it is embarrassing to have a revolt in the heart of the kingdom when [we are] making war in all of Europe.[188]

Chamillart echoed these sentiments when he told Villars, "[i]f you appease the revolt you will render to the king a service greater than winning three battles on the frontier, and you will be rewarded."[189]

From the beginning, Villars resolved to take a very different approach to the revolt. He understood the revolt was sustained primarily by the mass of peasant *nouveaux convertis* who had converted to Catholicism only under duress and who, particularly in the Cévennes, remained staunchly Protestant at heart. He also believed that no amount of force could get them to convert. To blindly intensify coercive operations against them would only serve to inflame the situation and make a final resolution of the conflict impossible. It was important to "calm their spirits," restore their confidence and, at all costs, avoid pushing the population further into despair. His plan was to offer pardons to those who repented of their past actions while promising severe punishment for those who persisted in raising arms against the king. "I will try all manner of approaches," he wrote in a letter shortly after his arrival, "short of ruining one of the best provinces of the kingdom … and if I manage to bring in the guilty without punishing them, I will

[188] Cited in Villars, *Mémoires*, 136.
[189] Cited in Bosc, III, 372.

have preserved the best men of war that exist in the kingdom. They are French, very brave, and very strong, three qualities to consider."[190]

Villars was aware, however, of the need to complement this approach by maintaining constant pressure on the Camisards through military operations. On 12 April, Villars received the king's orders on the general conduct of operations. The king judged it best to attack in force, on all fronts simultaneously, while using militias to cut off the avenues of their retreat. The garrisons along the Rhône should be manned by militia, freeing up the regular troops stationed there for offensive action. At the same time, the king was raising two additional battalions of *miquelets* at Roussillon. Given the nature of the conflict, the king was also sending the *sieur* de La Croix to the province, a commander skilled in irregular warfare. La Croix would be accompanied by 250 *fusiliers* and a company of cavalry. The king also ordered the recruitment of another Irish battalion as well as a company of 100 *fusiliers* to be recruited from Bordeaux. Using these forces, and those already within the province, Villars was to attack the rebels from all sides, to press them constantly and give them no time to recover and "to the extent that the nature of the terrain permits," to surround and destroy them. Villars was also told to try to enlist some "qualified gentlemen" or "other persons of consideration" to try to persuade the rebels to lay down their arms and to recruit spies that could infiltrate their ranks. Villars was to "reign in the ardor" of the *anciens catholiques* to avoid a general civil war, although he was permitted to make some use of their formations, but always "with moderation."[191]

Villars sensed that the *nouveaux convertis* expected his arrival to bring a dramatic change in the conduct of the war and he wanted to do everything he could to encourage this opinion. One of his first actions when he arrived at Nîmes was to take down the platforms used for public executions and to release a large number of *nouveaux convertis* imprisoned in that city's fort.[192] He also decided to tour the most troubled regions of the province, telling Chamillart that his intention was "to do everything I can to calm the spirits … I will assemble the people on my route [and] talk to the most fanatical and seditious communities."[193] In addition to Nîmes, Villars planned to visit Sommières, Soine, Saint

[190] Letter to Cardinal Janson, cited in Bosc, III, 368.
[191] SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 77 (12 April 1704). See also Bosc, III, 370.
[192] Bosc, III, 400.
[193] SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 89.

Hippolyte, Anduze, Alès, and Uzès.[194] The speeches delivered by Villars on this circuit are of particular significance because they represent the first serious attempt by any figure of royal authority to speak directly to the rebels and *nouveaux convertis*, publicly exploring their reasons for revolt, explaining the position of the king, and presenting them with the choice that lay before them. "It is necessary," said the Marshal to the assembled population at Sommières,

> to protect one of the most powerful provinces of the kingdom, [one] that is … blessed because of the bounty of its land, the industry of its inhabitants, and the disposition of its government; I do not say because it is sheltered from war, since the strength and the wisdom of the king has so provided for the security of his frontiers that the provinces most near the war enjoy a full repose, knowing only the wealth that well-disciplined troops carry there… How, messieurs, can you allow the furor of some people of low position to destroy a happiness that so many reasons should render solid? What do they want, these *malheureux*, what is their object? If it is only to serve God, then in what way is their pious design troubled? God, messieurs, orders you to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, that is to say, obedience to those whom divine providence has given you as master. It is to his blessing that we have a king who, in the first days after his birth, was named *Dieudonné* … This name, messieurs, is legitimately bestowed on him, because of all the glory that has showered the nation under his august reign. Since [France] has fought under his orders, we have only seen victories …When I recall those happy combats in which those who come from this valorous province have always played such a part, I cannot help but weep at the blood that is being so cruelly shed in [Languedoc]; I learned with horror that over nearly the last two years more than 8,000 Frenchmen have died [here]. Eight thousand Frenchmen! … From whence comes your fury? I talk to all who support this unhappy revolt. Do not clothe yourself in religious motives. Adore God according to the opinions that you have if you believe you must. Adore Him in your heart. God, good and just, will not ask more of you. And as to the external [practices] that you might desire, how dare you presume that the greatest and most powerful king who has ever worn the crown should not have within his state the same [right to determine the religious faith of his subjects] that the smallest prince of the Empire enjoys without difficulty … How can a mutinous band dare to presume to impose on the greatest king in the world a law that the smallest states of Europe … dispense with? We are not misguided and we only regard these *malheureux* … as blind men who will thank on bended knee any who can open their eyes. I wish to contribute to this all the more ardently as the blind are Frenchmen, in whom one finds the valor natural to your province and, at this moment, [a valor] so unhappily em-

[194] SHAT A[1] 1798, f. 118.

> ployed … [The rebels] have eluded us thus far because the people of thirty or forty villages hide them. How long do you think you can abuse the kindness of the king? It is to you, those who are here now, that I talk. I must [make special mention] of the *nouveaux convertis* of the towns: they do everything to demonstrate their loyalty and zeal and they will help me to punish you if you continue to give the least aid to these *sclérats* who, like me, they abhor. It is thus to the other men of the villages that I have assembled that I talk now. I want no one to reproach me before I [apply] the last rigors that one has justly exercised on a great number of communities. Let the example of Brenoux, Saint Paul and Soustelles correct you. One was forced, not only to destroy them, but also to exterminate all of the inhabitants. Recall that I have come to this province only to pardon and not to punish … but if you do not attract the clemency of His Majesty, if your obstinacy forces him to [deliver] justice, I will exercise this justice with all the more severity because I will have done everything to save you from the punishment that is already too well deserved.[195]

This really is a remarkable speech, embodying at once a call to remember the privileged position of Languedoc in the kingdom and the valor its sons had shown fighting for the king and not against him, an appeal to the urban *nouveaux convertis* to cease their support of the rebels, a reminder to current and future Camisards that the king was well within his rights to demand religious uniformity within his kingdom, and a promise of ruthless action against those who persisted in resisting the king's will. Most remarkable is Villars' statement that the Protestants could retain their faith and worship God as they chose provided they renounced all external manifestations of their faith, such as their assemblies and their temples.[196]

With this speech, Villars was attempting to "build a bridge of gold" for the rebels and his words did have an immediate effect on some. Soon after this speech, Villars learned that a group of thirty rebels had surrendered at Sommières. This marked the first time since the beginning of the revolt that such a large group of rebels had surrendered. Villars was quite pleased by this and promptly wrote a letter informing Chamillart that the surrender was the result of his address.[197]

In addition to such public exhortations, Villars and Basville began the first tentative steps towards initiating negotiations with Cavalier. At first, Basville was firmly opposed to such a *demarche* but he was

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[195] SHAT A[1] 1796 f. 94, cited in Bosc, III, 406.
[196] Villars would later distance himself from his 'promise' and its implications.
[197] SHAT A[1] 1792, f. 28, cited in Bosc, III, 408.

eventually convinced that negotiations would be the most effective way to end a bloody conflict that was paralyzing one of the richest provinces at a time of war.

The negotiations that ensued were a complicated affair. The first initiative occurred in April, when the intendant dispatched an intermediary by the name of Lacombe to contact Cavalier in secret and sound him out about his demands. After three days of negotiations, Lacombe arranged a meeting between the rebel leader and one of the principal military officers in the province, La Lande. The two adversaries met in the middle of the plain near Alès and engaged in a discussion that lasted for three hours. Two versions of these initial negotiations emerged. In one version, recounted by *père* Girard, a member of the local Catholic clergy, Cavalier expressed his regret for having appeared as a rebel in the eyes of the king and claimed that, although he was one of the rebel leaders, he had played no part in the murders and other barbaric acts that had ravaged the province for so many months. He claimed never to have attacked the king's troops, but only to have defended himself to the best of his ability when he was attacked. After then discussing the possibility of a "general accommodation," it was decided that Cavalier would take no further actions and would await the orders of the king. For his part, La Lande promised to arrange a meeting between Marshal Villars and the rebel leader. When the meeting ended, La Lande watched the rebel cavalry conduct exercises and later commented that the king's own troops could do no better.[198] Cavalier, on the other hand, presents a different picture in his memoirs. "La Lande asked me [to tell him] my grievances and my requests," wrote the rebel leader.

> I told him that my first request was freedom of conscience; the second, the release of everyone imprisoned or sent to the galleys for reasons of conscience; the third, that if freedom of conscience was refused, that we be given permission to leave the kingdom. [As] this last proposition appeared to him to be easier to grant, he asked me how many people I wanted to take out of the kingdom with me. Ten thousand, of all ages and [both] sexes, was my response. He did not expect such a large number … [H]e told me that he could grant me two thousand, but that the number I had given would never be accepted. I told him that I desired to [take out of the kingdom] ten thousand, with a delay of three months to [permit us] to sell our property, and that if the king did not wish to let us leave the kingdom, he would [reinstate] our edicts and our

[198] AN TT 464, pièce 77, f. 2, cited in Joutard, *Les Camisards*, 197–198.

> privileges as in the past. The general told me that he would recount our interview to [the] Marshal and that he truly regretted that we had not been able to reach any final resolution.[199]

During this meeting, however, and in the presence of La Lande, the rebel leader had signed a letter that conforms much more closely to the account provided by *père* Girard:

> In the presence of M[onsieur] the marquis de La Lande, Jean Cavalier very humbly begs His Majesty to grant him, and all those who have been with him, a pardon and amnesty [and] to allow him to leave the kingdom with four hundred [followers] … and to allow [others] who want to follow him to leave with him, [traveling] at their expense and with passports that we beg His Majesty to provide … We call on the clemency, the kindness, and the charity of His Majesty and very humbly ask his pardon for having displeased him … [We] promise from this moment on to do nothing more that might displease him.[200]

Following this meeting with La Lande, the rebel leader did indeed have a meeting with Villars. Meeting in Nîmes, the two men, *boulanger* and Marshal, talked for two hours. Assuring Villars that he spoke for all the rebels, Cavalier told the Marshal that since he realized it did not seem likely that the king would grant them freedom of conscience, he expressed his desire to leave the province with his 400 men. He would happily submit to whatever the king ordered and even offered to serve the king with 1,500 of his best soldiers.[201]

When Villars informed the king of the details of La Lande's meeting with the rebel leader that had defied his authority for nearly three years, the king responded:

> I see nothing in the letter of Cavalier that cannot be given [to] him … You can give them real assurances in my name, in writing if they desire, of a guarantee of security for those who wish to remain in my kingdom … If they demand an amnesty or a formal pardon I will send one … but you cannot take too much care to avoid promulgating or publishing

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199 Cavalier, *Mémoires*, 188–189, cited in Joutard, *Les Camisards*, 198–199.

200 Cited in Joutard, *Les Camisards*, 199.

201 AN TT 464, pièce 77, f. 2, cited in Joutard, *Les Camisards*, 204–205. In a surprising, if eminently practical development, Villars also suggested the formation of a Camisard regiment to serve in the king's armies. After all, the Camisards were now experienced soldiers and inured to the hardships of a military life. Not only would such a regiment strengthen the king's army, but it would also be convenient method of getting these potentially dangerous men out of the country and into harm's way. Chamillart, however, feared that their spirits were "still too full of rebellion to be useful" (SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 115).

> an act that could be distributed [to our enemies] and from which they might gain [some] advantage.[202]

For Villars and Basville, it seemed as if this should have ended the messy business of the revolt. Unfortunately, although Cavalier claimed to speak for all of the rebel leaders and their bands, he had, in fact, left them uninformed about the details of his discussions with both La Lande and the Marshal. In fact, while he was undertaking negotiations in the plain, the Camisard leader Roland continued to attack royal detachments in the upper Cévennes.

During the negotiations, Villars had turned over the town of Calvisson to Cavalier and his followers. Approximately 3,000 rebels and *nouveaux convertis* gathered there, supplied at the expense of the king, to await the outcome of the negotiations.[203] When Cavalier returned to Calvisson from his meeting with Villars and informed the rebel leaders who had gathered there that he had successfully negotiated the right for them to leave the kingdom, his officers and men were outraged. They had been expecting Cavalier to win their religious freedom and the reestablishment of their temples. Most of the assembled Camisards turned their backs on the young *boulanger* and took the road back to the Cévennes.[204] Abandoned by his former friends, Cavalier left the province at the end of June, accompanied by just 100 followers. On his way to Germany, he stopped at Versailles, and met with Chamillart for three-quarters of an hour.[205] Realizing the distrust with which he was regarded by the royal authorities, however, Cavalier subsequently turned off the road to Germany and fled across the border to Switzerland.

Villars had arrived in the province at the end of April. By the end of June, the most prominent Camisard leader had left the kingdom, discredited among his followers and destined for a life of exile. It seems incredible that Villars was able to bring an end to three years of fighting in the short span of three months. Although Villars' more sensitive approach to the issues surrounding the rebellion and to the rebels themselves no doubt played a significant role in this remark-

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[202] SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 125 (18 May 1704). See also SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 134 (24 May 1704).

[203] Much to the consternation of the town's Catholic clergy who were forced to listen to the daily Protestant religious services.

[204] See the account of this meeting provided by Bonbonnoux, one of Cavalier's officers in *Journaux Camisards* (p. 142–144), cited in Joutard, *Les Camisards*, 208–210.

[205] SHAT A[1] 1797, f. 26. Cavalier was subsequently awarded a 1,500 livres pension.

able turn of events, it should not be forgotten that the Marshal also conducted vigorous military operations concurrently with the negotiations.

To this end, Villars took some of his best men and divided them into five, 300-man detachments that operated in the countryside as mobile columns, searching villages and hamlets in the most remote areas. Before his arrival, Villars had heard that officers did not wish to risk their reputations by commanding such small detachments in the face of such a lowly, yet deadly enemy. To overcome this reluctance, Villars himself took command of one of these flying columns to show his officers that "if a Marshal of France marches [at the head of] of 300 men, they could do the same."[206] Basville accompanied Villars on several of these patrols as well. This was very much appreciated by the Marshal and suggests the close working relationship enjoyed by the experienced intendant and the distinguished military commander, one far removed from the disagreements that had come to characterize Basville's relationship with Montrevel. Villars also placed garrisons in villages and towns along the rivers, spreading them out "like a net" to guard the bridges and the passes and to watch the roads, effectively compartmentalizing the theater of operations. Along the rivers, he used small, *vedettes de correspondence*, as swift patrol boats to maintain these posts in constant communication with one another.[207]

Villars enjoyed some significant early successes with his military operations and, on 7 May 1704, one finds Chamillart writing to Villars to inform him that the king was pleased with how events were progressing in the province and to compliment the Marshal on the success of his strategy to maintain a constant pressure on the rebels. More importantly, the king was greatly relieved to see calm restored to Languedoc, as this "would now allow him to remove troops from a province where, just recently, it had seemed more troops would be required.[208]

Successful as he was, Villars cannot claim all the credit for reversing the situation in the province. Perhaps more important than the success of Villars' military operations in bringing Cavalier to the negotiating table was the defeat inflicted on Cavalier's band by Montrevel at Nagés. As mentioned earlier, this defeat occurred in April, just prior to Montrevel's dismissal, and was quickly followed by the discovery of one of

[206] SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 110.
[207] Ibid.
[208] SHAT A[1] 1799, f. 150.

the rebel's main supply caches at Euzet. Cavalier himself admits that these twin blows were disastrous for his band:

> The loss that I suffered at Nagés was so considerable that it was irreparable … I lost, all at once, a great quantity of arms, all my ammunition, all my silver, but above all a body of soldiers inured to combat and fatigue and with which I would have been able to undertake anything … My last loss [that of the supplies at Euzet] was the most noticeable. Before, I always had some resource to fall back on, but afterwards, I had nothing. The country was desolated, the amity of our friends grown cold, their purses exhausted, one hundred towns or villages sacked and burned; all the prisons full of Protestants [and] the country deserted. Add to this [the fact] that help from England, promised for such a long time, never came."[209]

Cavalier's lament suggests that Montrevel's operations long-delayed burst of activity, inspired by the knowledge that he faced dismissal, was having a definite impact on the rebels' ability to sustain the conflict. It was Villars, however, who would benefit from the results of Montrevel's newfound energy.

With things going so well in Languedoc, Chamillart suggested in May that no less than ten battalions of soldiers could be withdrawn for use in a coming offensive against Savoy. Both Basville and Villars viewed this decision as premature. Basville wrote several letters to Chamillart warning him that the province was not yet entirely subdued and that the withdrawal, set to begin in mid-June, should be delayed at least until the end of July or perhaps even as late as September. Basville warned Chamillart that the rebel leader Roland, who continued to operate in the upper Cévennes, remained an unknown variable and that his attitude was "not very good."[210] Villars wrote a similar letter of concern to Chamillart on 27 May.[211] In June, however, the Allies landed at Barcelona and Villars was ordered to send some troops to that front immediately.[212]

The activities of Roland continued to plague the royal authorities throughout the summer of 1704. Villars was furious at the continued revolt and intensified his military operations. It was time, he wrote, "to show [the rebels] that I know how to be severe."[213] He targeted the

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[209] Cavalier, 259.
[210] Letter of 22 May in Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1954–1955, 1960.
[211] Ibid., col. 1955.
[212] SHAT A[1] 1796, f. 152.
[213] Ibid., f. 167. This was possible a response to LaVrilliere's criticism.

mothers and fathers of the remaining rebels, giving them four days to return to their homes or their families would be relocated.[214] A conference was arranged with Roland in June, but this fell through. The fighting continued for several more months, and Villars was chagrined to see the continuation of a revolt he had thought finished. The rebels tended to stay up in the mountains, however, and now seldom descended to the plain, making them difficult to find and destroy.[215] In August 1704, however, Roland was killed in battle against royal troops. With his death, the period of intense military operations in Languedoc came to an end.

Conclusion

The military response to the revolt of the Camisards provides fertile ground for investigation, for although the Camisards have generated a great deal of scholarly interest (at least among French scholars), the military response to the revolt has remained largely uninvestigated.[216] This chapter has focused on this subject with a number of objectives in mind. First and foremost, it is hoped that this chapter has demonstrated the complex nature of the military response to the revolt and delineated the main contours of an evolving royal strategy. Second, it is hoped that this chapter has demonstrated the variety of military units used in the repression of the revolt and the difficulties inherent in relying on units of the regular army to execute repressive operations. Third, it is hoped that this chapter has highlighted some of the universal difficulties of waging a counterinsurgency campaign, difficulties in no way unique to seventeenth century Languedoc.

The successive strategies adopted by the military commanders in Languedoc represent their efforts to develop an effective approach to a war unlike any they had ever experienced. The count de Broglie, in his attempt to establish and maintain royal authority throughout the entire region, adopted a strategy based on scattered garrisons and posts but lacked the necessary resources to make it effective. The newly-promoted Marshal de Montrevel had a much more impressive military

[214] Ibid., f. 167, 171.
[215] SHAT A[1] 1799, f. 272.
[216] The great exception being Henri Bosc's *magnum opus*, *La Guerre des Cévennes, 25 Juillet 1702–1710*, 5 vols. (Montpellier, 1985).

force at his disposal but found himself frustrated by the rebels' mobility and the widespread support they enjoyed among the general population. Montrevel generally preferred to consolidate his forces in several large garrisons, and for the most part avoided aggressive military operations, choosing instead to concentrate on the enforcement of a series of ordinances aimed at depriving the Camisards of their base of support in the countryside. When this failed, the Marshal took more dramatic and direct action against those who supported the rebels, best exemplified by the depopulation of the 31 parishes in the Cévennes. Marshal Villars benefited from the unhappy experience of his predecessors and adopted a "carrot and stick" approach to the rebellion. He combined generous offers of amnesty, disingenuous promises of religious liberty,[217] and negotiations that split the rebel ranks, with severe punishments carried out against inhabitants who continued to support the rebels and relentless military operations against the rebel bands.

The origins of these various royal strategies deserves close attention, for in no case did they come entirely from the military commander in charge. In most cases, it appears that the main wellspring of strategic planning was Basville. Basville clearly enjoyed a close relationship with the secretary of state for war and in almost all instances of disagreement between the intendant and one of the Marshals, Chamillart supported the intendant.

It is also important to understand the intendant's relationship with the military commanders. Basville and the count de Broglie worked closely together and frequently sent nearly identical, mutually reinforcing letters on strategic subjects to Versailles. Basville and Villars also appear to have enjoyed a close working relationship. Villars was well aware of Basville's privileged position with those at Versailles and consequently conflicts between the two men were rare. With Montrevel, however, the case was notably different. Basville never seems to have developed any kind of close relationship with Montrevel, and the new Marshal, recently promoted and likely sensitive of his new prerogatives, seems to have resented the intendant's influence in the domain of military operations and strategy.

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[217] Villars subsequently came under criticism from the secretary of state for Protestant Affairs, Louis Phelypeaux, marquis de La Vrillière, for appearing to offer freedom of conscience to the Protestants. When Chamillart met with Cavalier, the latter repeated his belief that the rebels had obtained some kind of concession with regard to their religious freedoms. Villars denied the charge. See SHAT A^1 1796, f. 164; SHAT A^1 1797, f. 26.

In addition to the influence of the intendant, the military situation in the province was further complicated by Chamillart's desire to gather as much information about events in the province from as many sources as possible. He encouraged royal and provincial officials to voice their opinions on the affairs of the provinces, including their opinions on the military leadership. The flood of letters from *colonels*, *brigadiers*, bishops, town notables, and anonymous critics provided Chamillart with a wide array of information that he could weigh against the reports he was receiving from the military commaders on the ground. However useful such a system might be, it certainly undermined the authority of the military commanders in the province and in that sense perhaps impaired military operations.[218]

One can speculate that this situation may also explain Montrevel's apparent lack of initiative in the first months of his tenure. The Marshal knew that his subordinate officers and other provincial authorities, including the intendant, were engaged in frequent and direct correspondence with the secretary of state for war about his handling of affairs. This knowledge could have made Montrevel, a new Marshal with a reputation to secure, less than enthusiastic to undertake aggressive or risky actions that, if unsuccessful, would quickly be reported back to Chamillart.

To implement these various strategies, all of the military commanders employed a variety of coercive institutions, including experienced regiments from the regular army transferred from other fronts, new regiments and free-standing companies of *fusiliers* raised in the province in response to the immediate threat, naval companies temporarily detached from their service with the galley fleets based in Toulon and Marseille, urban militias, Catholic militias, Spanish mountain fighters, and contingents of Irish officers and soldiers.

Experienced units from the regular army played an important role in the suppression of the uprising. The sheer variety of units deployed by

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[218] The conflict between Montrevel and Julien was particularly intense and Chamillart had to intervene personally on numerous occasions to resolve disputes between the two men. In one instance, when Julien had overreached his authority by executing two soldiers without first informing Montrevel, the brigadier general was reprimanded by Chamillart and ordered to write a letter of apology to the Marshal. Julien agreed, but told Chamillart, "I dare say, that if all the Marshals of France were of the humor of M[onsieur] de Montrevel, I would prefer to be a farmer than to serve under such a general." (SHAT A^1 1798, f. 90). See also SHAT A^1 1707, f. 168, and SHAT A^1 1707, f. 195, 228.

the authorities, however, testify to the difficulty in finding regular troops for use in the province during a larger, international war. Louis XIV and Chamillart proved reluctant to divert regular troops from the front to serve in the province during the regular campaigning season, and when such troops were detached from service it was usually for a limited time, typically during winter quarters.[219] Consequently, for much of the work of repression, authorities relied upon whatever military forces could be assembled or raised within the province. It should also be remembered that for the first year and a half of the conflict, most of the so-called "regular" infantry and dragoon regiments employed against the rebels were, in fact, raised in Languedoc or in neighboring provinces, at the time of the revolt itself.[220] Some of these new regiments were primarily intended for service with the king's armies on campaign, while others were slated to remain in the province to fight the rebels before transferring to other fronts.[221]

Whatever their final destination, with so many "regular" regiments in the province composed of new units and raw recruits, it seems somewhat inaccurate to portray their use as a triumph of Louis XIV's professional, standing army and as proof of its effectiveness as an instrument of domestic coercion. In fact, the levy and deployment of these new regiments testify more to the *ad hoc* and expedient nature of the Crown's military response to the revolt, rather than to the effectiveness of a regular army supposedly poised and ready to intervene at the first hint of rebellion.

The royal authorities undertook a number of initiatives aimed at shaping the strategic environment in which they were operating. They were particularly concerned about blocking the any potential expansion of the revolt into the neighboring provinces. The intendant of Rouergue, for example, under orders from Chamillart, worked closely with

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[219] In the spring of 1703, for example, the secretary complained to Basville that "It was very annoying to see within the kingdom a diversion capable of disrupting a campaign that seems to have started out so well and that promises great advantage." (SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 119).

[220] In 1702, besides the detached companies of *fusiliers* raised in the province, there were three companies of dragoons and three infantry regiments raised within the province. In 1703, new regiments were raised in Valence and another in Montpellier.

[221] When *colonel* Tarnault's detachment was defeated by the Camisards in March 1703, the king was disappointed not only because of the encouragement it gave to the rebels but because it delayed the preparation of Tarnault's regiment for service in the upcoming campaigning season. SHAT A[1] 1707, f. 162, 170.

the royal authorities in Languedoc and distributed his militia companies to guard the frontier along the two provinces.[222]

The royal authorities also paid particular attention to gathering intelligence about the behavior and attitudes of the *nouveaux convertis* in Languedoc. To aid them in monitoring the activities of the *nouveaux convertis*, the authorities compiled detailed statistics on the religious attitudes of the province's regions, villages, hamlets, families, and individuals. This process of information gathering had already begun prior to the revolt but intensified dramatically as the revolt progressed.[223] The authorities also tried to disarm *the nouveaux convertis*, to destroy their ability to provide food and support to the rebels, and to limit their movements both within Languedoc and between Languedoc and the neighboring provinces.[224]

Despite possessing such an impressive amount of information about the Protestant population of the province, the royal authorities had a frustrating time gleaning any information about the Camisards themselves.[225] The rebels, on the other hand, succeeded on multiple occa-

[222] On the activities of intendant Legendre in Rouergue, see SHAT A[1] 1701, ff. 122, 128, 132, 137, 141, 147–148, 163; SHAT A[1] 1707, ff. 194, 290; SHAT A[1] 1709, f. 11; SHAT A[1] 1798, f. 343; Boislisle, II, 466.

[223] AAE MD France 1640 is particularly rich in such lists. Some examples include an "État des Cévennes du Mende pour la religion" listing the number of villages and hamlets in the region, the number of families (each family marked with a "B" for *bon* or an "M" for *mal*) and the number of inhabitants (AAE MD France 1640, f. 81); "État de tous les habitans de la paroisse de Gabrine … qui se font bien ou mal comportées" (AAE MD France 1640, f. 81); Estat des personnes les plus infectés du phanatisme dans les paroisses du Lozère … de 5 Aout en 1704" (AAE MD France 1640, f. 124); as well as lists identifying supporters of royal authority such as "Estat des habitans de lieu de St. Germain et de la paroisse qui meritent qu'on ait quelque égard pour eux a cause de leur zèle pour la religion ou pour la service de roy" (AAE MD France 1640, f. 121). For precise lists of suspected rebels see AAE MD France 1640 f. 124–136.

[224] An *ordinance* of October 1702 forbade *nouveaux convertis*, defined as those who had converted since 1683, to carry any offensive weapons for a period of two years. Villars renewed this in October 1704. Violators would be sentenced to the galleys without a trial. Nobles were permitted to keep two swords, two *fusils*, and two pairs of pistols. If they exceeded this quota they would be fined 3,000 livres. See SHAT A[1] 1906, f. 168.

[225] In February 1704, however, Montrevel succeeded in planting a spy among the Camisards. The spy, a former captain in the regiment of Montmorency named d'Aste, had a nephew fighting with the rebels. D'Aste remained with the rebels for three weeks. He reported they were beginning to suffer from a lack of food although the inhabitants continued to provide them with a great amount of supplies. Despite the difficulties they faced, the rebels believed they could succeed and had been told to make the revolt last as long as possible. The Allied powers, the Duke of Savoy in particular, had promised to support the rebels and assured them that if they continued to fight their grievances would be included in any European peace treaty. D'Aste claimed the rebels would stop

sions in intercepting orders and messages sent by military officers and officials in the province. The problem grew so severe that Chamillart ordered that messengers who allowed their messages to be taken by the rebels would be considered guilty of collusion with the rebels. If they returned without having delivered their messages, they would be executed.[226] In addition to intercepting orders and co-opting messengers, the Camisards also succeeded, on at least one occasion, in planting an agent among the royal regiments and battalions.[227]

The effort to create detailed lists of the religious dispositions of the inhabitants reflects a deep anxiety among the royal officials about both the loyalties of the population and the potential for this largely peasant revolt to expand to other strata of society. The *nouveaux convertis* among the nobility and middle classes were never entirely trusted by the royal authorities. Montrevel cautioned the king that the nobility in Languedoc witnessed "all these horrible tragedies with entire disinterest."[228] The intendant, in the spring of 1703, warned the secretary of state for war that, "the nobles do not appear to have declared. But there is not one gentleman *nouveaux convertis* who gives the least bit of advice. They are retired in the cities, only communicating among themselves and apparently [are] awaiting some grand event."[229] Luckily for the royal authorities, however, with only a few exceptions the members of the *nouveaux convertis* nobility remained uninvolved in the conflict.[230]

The *nouveaux convertis* middle classes were equally mistrusted by the royal authorities, and the belief was widespread that cabals of notables in the cities and towns were secretly supplying the rebels with money

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fighting only if they were permitted to reestablish their temples. D'Aste also reported there were no foreign representatives or foreign fighters among the Camisards, but the towns of Languedoc and Geneva were providing the rebels with money (SHAT A[1] 1799, 64).

[226] See Salvaire, 112, 153.

[227] In March 1703, Montrevel caught and executed one such agent. See Salvaire, 136.

[228] Devic and Vaissette, XIII, 781.

[229] Cited in Devic and Vaissette, XIV, col. 1701–1703. The king took great pains to guarantee the neutrality of the Protestant nobility and to seperate them from their followers. For example, he issued repeated *ordinances* calling for them to be compensated in the event of losses suffered as a result of either rebel or royal operations. This compensation was obtained from taxes levied on non-noble *nouveaux convertis* and no doubt created a degree of class resentment.

[230] One explanation for the ultimate lack of aristocratic involvement in the revolt lay with the general poverty of the Languedoc nobility. According to Basville's 1698 report, there were only 15 noble families in Languedoc who collected *rents* with a total value exceeding 5,000 livres. Most possessed incomes valued below 3,000 livres.

and serving as liaisons with the foreign powers. Basville, writing of the *nouveaux convertis* middle classes in December of 1702, warned, "their disposition appears too bad to not think that the enemy hopes to profit from them. It is already certain that the *révoltés* have all the silver they want."[231] However, it is also likely that the *nouveaux convertis* notables resented the rebels because it was the town notables, more than any other element of Languedoc society, who bore the brunt of the taxes, fines, and costs of troop lodgments levied on the *nouveaux convertis* communities in response to the actions of the rebels.[232]

Finally, although it is quite tempting to venture an assessment of the influence of such a unique revolt on subsequent French military thought, the lack of professional military writings on the subject renders any such effort profoundly speculative. However, there is no doubt that for the France of Louis XIV, the revolt of the Camisards represented a unique challenge and one that required a far more complex and nuanced approach than is commonly recognized. For although a chronological neighbor to the popular revolts that plagued France during much of the seventeenth century, the revolt of the Camisards more closely resembles some of the low-intensity conflicts of later centuries. Although little-studied outside of France, the Camisard revolt and the tortuous efforts to develop an effective counterinsurgency strategy would seem to hold valuable lessons for modern military commanders.[233]

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[231] Cited in Joutard, *Les Camisards*, 124.

[232] Jean Paul Chabrol, *La Cévenne au Village* (1983) 201.

[233] It is interesting to compare modern counterinsurgency doctrine(s) with the various approaches used by the military authorities in Languedoc. Anthony James Joes, in a timely and important work (*Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*, University Press of Kentucky, 2004) presents a prescription for a successful counterinsurgency campaign that instructs commanders to commit sufficient resources, display rectitude towards civilians, isolate the conflict area, divide the insurgent leaders from their followers, emphasize intelligence, disarm the disturbed areas, offer amnesty, disrupt insurgent food supplies, employ flying columns, and maintain constant pressure on the insurgents (Joes, 232–244). Each one of these elements is clearly present in the concerns, the plans, and the actions of those charged with fighting the Camisards in Languedoc.

CONCLUSION

This work has examined the role of armed coercion in Louis XIV's response to popular uprisings, in his mission to convert his Protestant subjects, and in his quest to keep the royal coffers filled. After a detailed study of specific types and instances of coercive activity during the reign of Louis XIV, a number of observations can be made: 1) Louis XIV's reign was more troubled by popular disturbances than is commonly acknowledged and the Crown took these disturbances quite seriously; 2) the importance of a variety of local institutions to the maintenance of internal order has been largely ignored; and 3) the use of armed coercion in seventeenth-century France was a complex and many-faceted process, one in which the effectiveness of the French army, while considerable, was circumscribed by a variety of factors.

Several historians have identified a dramatic decline in rebellions after 1660, with one influential historian of seventeenth-century popular revolt going so far as to claim that "The reign of Louis XIV was untroubled by civil unrest."[1] The reasons put forth for this supposed decline range from fatigue following the chaos of the 1650s, a lack of aristocratic leadership willing to place itself at the head of popular rebellions,[2] or a "terroristic repression" waged by royal authorities and made possible by the expanded military establishment under Louis XIV.[3] Such assertions are misleading. When compared to the massive peasant revolts that occurred earlier in the seventeenth century or the hecatomb of the Vendée during the Revolution, the personal reign of Louis XIV appears to be a relatively tranquil period. However, the fact that Louis XIV did not face challenges of such magnitude does not mean that his reign was free from episodes of popular unrest, some

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[1] Bercé, *History of Peasant Revolts* (trans. Whitmore), 315.

[2] René Pillorget, *Les Mouvements insurrectionnels de Provence entre 1596 et 1715* (Paris, 1975). Pillorget goes so far as to speak of a "contagion of obedience." See Pillorget, 863–864, 988, 1007–1008. See also, Beik, Absolutism, 12.

[3] Bercé, 680–682. This assertion will be addressed in more detail below.

of them quite serious. To borrow the phrase of one noted historian of the reign of the *Roi Soleil*, the Sun did indeed have its spots.[4]

Incidents of popular unrest under Louis XIV, however, have remained largely ignored by modern historians of the period. Although the work of a handful of recent scholars suggests a growing recognition of the significance of popular resistance under Louis XIV, such discussions tend to be situated within much larger works on the reign and are consequently limited to a few paragraphs or pages. Unlike the series of well-examined revolts under Louis XIII, and those of the Frondes during Louis XIV's minority, the revolts of the Sun King's personal reign have never been subjected to a systematic and comprehensive examination. This lack of interest is all the more curious when one reflects upon the seriousness with which such revolts were viewed by Louis XIV and his officials. The examination of the correspondence reveals that such revolts were seen not only as unacceptable examples of resistance to the royal will, but also feared because they provided dangerously attractive opportunities for foreign machinations and even direct foreign intervention. The authorities feared that the armed Protestant resistance in the south could bring about a return to religious civil war, while they also worried that the campaign against the Camisards would disrupt military operations on other fronts in the War of Spanish Succession.

Just as popular uprisings under Louis XIV have been neglected by historians, so has the royal response to these revolts, and particularly the royal use of armed coercion against rebellious regions and populations. There has also been no substantive examination of the use of armed coercion in two other important aspects of Louis XIV's reign, the conversion of the Protestants and the collection of taxes. The lack of detailed investigations has led scholars of the period to make easy generalizations about the coercive capabilities of the French Crown under Louis XIV and has produced a general failure to appreciate the complexities inherent in the application of armed coercion within the frontiers of the kingdom.

This work has highlighted the variety of instruments in the Crown's coercive repertoire and emphasized the importance of coercive forces other than those of the regular, standing army. In the revolts of 1663–1665, 1670, 1675 and 1702–1705, militias and forces raised spontaneously

[4] François Bluche, *Louis XIV* (New York, 1990).

from among members of the local nobility played an important role, both by their activity in the early stages of a revolt and as adjuncts to regular army units when and if such units were dispatched to the region. That the Crown had clear expectations with regard to these local forces is evidenced by the post-rebellion punishments visited upon those communities and institutions that failed in their duties to contain the revolt, in the lack of enthusiasm with which the Crown dispatched regular troops to rebellious regions, and in the demonstrated reluctance to permit local military commanders to detach companies from royal garrisons in the affected regions to help restore order.

The use of coercion in the surveillance of the *nouveaux convertis* and the task of tax collection also demonstrate the importance of forces other than those of the regular army. The special militias raised in the 1680s and 1690s made significant contributions to the enforcement of the religious policies of Louis XIV, with the militia companies raised in Languedoc playing a particularly important role. Similarly, the *archers de la gabelle* and the *brigades du sel* were important institutions for the collection of both direct and indirect taxes, while the use of the regular army in this task was viewed by many contemporaries as problematic and possibly counterproductive.

This is not to suggest that the regular army did not have an important coercive role to play under Louis XIV. Louis XIV himself expected his military to play an important role in maintaining order within the frontiers of his kingdom.[5] However, the use of the regular army in such a role was problematic and limited by a number of factors.

First among these is the simple fact that troops were not always available to respond promptly to incidents of popular unrest. In 1663, 1670, 1675 and in 1702, royal troops arrived on the scene of revolt only after significant delays and, in the case of 1675, only after the revolt had largely ended. The use of the regular army in the interior of the kingdom was also affected by the fluctuating demands of Louis XIV's various wars. In August 1684, for example, the Treaty of Ratisbon freed a large body of troops from service on the Spanish frontier. These troops were then used in the Grand Dragonnade of the following year. Similarly, during the revolt of the Camisards, one sees considerable tension between the need for Languedoc to raise troops for service on other fronts and the need for these troops to remain in the province to

[5] *Mémoires*, 69.

maintain order, a problem that became even more acute following the defection in 1703 of former French ally, Victor Amadeus II, the duke of Savoy. The various schemes presented by Basville to raise sufficient forces to contain the revolt of the Camisards, and the variety of troops eventually employed, testify to the difficulty in finding regular troops for use in the province and the necessarily improvised nature of the royal response.

The cyclical nature of the campaigning season also had an effect on the availability of regular troops for the work of repression. Some of the most substantial examples of regular units responding to incidents of popular revolt occur during the months when regular troops took up their winter quarters. In 1675, for example, one sees a large force of 10,000 soldiers assigned winter quarters in Brittany as punishment for that province's revolt. Similarly, during the troubles in Languedoc the intendant Basville repeatedly asked to have troops assigned winter quarters in the province in order to forestall the spread of the revolt and to buy time to permit the training and outfitting of the various newly-raised companies in that province. As has been argued elsewhere, the sending of troops into a rebellious province for winter quarters also had the advantage of punishing the rebellious regions while simultanously providing a convenient means of forcing provinces spared by the hardships of war to bear the costs of supporting the troops.[6]

Most general accounts of the royal response to popular revolts under Louis XIV portray a very straightforward process: when a revolt occurs, military units are dispatched to inflict a harsh and indiscriminate punishment on the rebels and on the region, and then depart. It is hoped that the present work has demonstrated the inadequacy of such accounts and has illustrated the considerable challenges posed by some of these revolts and the complexities involved in the use of coercive measures within the kingdom. These complexities were recognized and debated by the king, his advisors, and his agents in the provinces. Perhaps the most important of these considerations was the need to calibrate carefully the coercion, to avoid alienating segments of the population that had remained neutral in whatever troubles had occurred, be they religious or fiscal in origin. This is particularly evident in the care taken by many (by no means all) military commanders to take measures to protect the innocent in rebellious regions, such as Chaulnes'

[6] This has also been suggested by André Corvisier in *Louvois* (Paris, 1983), 407.

decision to transport arriving soldiers by sea rather than have them march overland through areas in Brittany that had remained loyal during the recent troubles. We see this also in the repeated attempts by D'Aguesseau, Basville, and Villars in Languedoc to discriminate among the loyal *nouveaux convertis* and the disloyal rebels. A similar concern is at play with respect to tax collection, in that the royal authorities were forced to try to discriminate between those who legitimately could not pay their taxes, and those who chose not to pay their taxes. The key point is that royal authorities faced with popular resistance and rebellion did not respond in a reflexive or rash manner by dispatching soldiers and encouraging them to act without restraint towards the rebellious populations. In most cases, the process was intended to be well-regulated and targeted, even if this did not always occur in practice.

Another factor contributing to the complexity involved in the deployment of armed coercion is the closeness with which such actions were watched by the king and his advisors. Colbert, Louvois, and Chamillart all kept a close eye on the various coercive activities examined in this work, demanding to be kept informed of even the smallest details and often soliciting corroboratory information from a variety of independent sources on the ground. It was rare that an intendant or a commander on the ground was given a free hand to act as he wished, and they were particularly constrained when it came to using companies detached from existing royal garrisons for the work of repression. Every military operation, and in some cases even minor changes in a unit's disposition, seems to have required approval from the king or one of his advisors. In cases where an intendant or military commander exceeded his mandate or failed to act in accordance with instructions, a reprimand was sure to be forthcoming and the offending agent might even be removed. This reliance on guidance from afar, and the knowledge that all actions would be scrutinized, certainly complicated the execution of coercive operations on the ground, particularly when one considers the distance from which this micromanagement was taking place and the communication delays this entailed.[7]

[7] Intendant d'Aguesseau, for example, estimated that it would take eight days to travel from Paris to Montpellier. William Beik discusses the communication difficulties in *Absolutism and Society*, 99–100.

The Crown's expectations with regard to local forces and their role in the maintenance of order within the kingdom seems to support the idea of an existing alliance of interests between the Crown and provincial elites. The Crown and the provincial elites had a shared interest in maintaining order and it is only logical that they would cooperate in that task. "Under Louis XIV," writes one historian, "there was no longer any difficulty deciding which side to be on when popular disorder challenged the normal functioning of things."[8] While this rings true for the large majority of instances of popular revolt under Louis XIV, there are certain facts that give one pause before pushing this assertion too far.

First, are those examples where the provincial elites did not perform their duty with regard to the maintenance of public order. It will be remembered that during the troubles at Nantes in 1675, "not one inhabitant would take up arms" to preserve order, much to the consternation of the *commissaire de guerre* who witnessed the event.[9] Similarly, during the revolt of the Camisards in Languedoc, one recalls Montrevel complaining to the king that the nobility of the province view "all these horrible tragedies with entire disinterest."[10] One looks largely in vain for members of the Catholic nobility who tried to assemble their friends and followers to fight alongside the urban militias, the *fusiliers*, the *miquelets*, or the king's troops. Although some Catholic militias did spontaneously assemble and wage war on the Camisards, these of course are not representative of the provincial elite. However, the fact that the Languedoc Estates generally complied with, and sometimes exceeded, the king's demands, and the fact that members of the Protestant nobility demonstrated no desire to support the revolt, does suggest that by 1702 the elites of Languedoc knew that their true interests lay with the Crown.

Another factor that must be accounted for in any discussion of an alliance of interests, is the enduring anxiety on the part of royal authorities about the involvement of local elites in instances of popular rebellion. This subject is present in Pellot's correspondence of 1664–1665, in Chaulnes' correspondence of 1675 and, not surprisingly, it is one that fills the correspondence concerning the *dragonnades* of the 1680s and the revolt of the Camisards. The Crown's continuing suspicion

[8] Beik, *Absolutism*, 327.
[9] SHAT A[1] 439, f. 580, Jonville to Louvois (23 April 1675).
[10] Devic and Vaissette, XIII, 781.

of local elites in times of popular revolt suggests that if an alliance of interests did exist, it was one that the Crown entered into in guarded fashion.

It must also be remembered that in many of the instances of popular unrest examined in this work, Louis XIV appeared to use the pretext of punishing the revolt as an opportunity to humble provincial (and municipal) institutions and to strip them of their privileges, usually because of their failure to perform their duties with regard to the restoration and maintenance of order. An alliance of interests between Crown and province may well have developed over time and in particular provinces, but if one seeks to apply such an argument to the totality of the kingdom, the observations above suggest it would be prudent to include a significant number of qualifications and caveats.

One has to be similarly prudent when discussing the role of the army in the early modern French state. Usually when discussing this role, two possible scenarios come to mind: the first, and that which has prompted most debate among military historians, is the dramatic growth in army size. The larger army required proportionately more resources and therefore forced certain administrative reforms upon the state in its attempt to develop more effective methods of resource extraction. This, in turn, effected a concentration of power in the hands of the state and marks this as a key stage in the development of absolutism. The second scenario linking the army with the process of state formation is of a far less subtle nature: this larger army, maintained in existence throughout the year, performed a coercive function by suppressing internal disturbances and overseeing the establishment of centralizing institutions. In this role, the army is seen as a crude instrument of absolutism, forcefully imposing the monarch's will upon a reluctant, particularist society.

As mentioned in the Introduction to this work, many distinguished historians have long maintained that the standing army of Louis XIV served as an effective instrument of domestic coercion. William McNeill, for example, argued that the "standing army was initially designed to assure [Louis XIV's] superiority over any and every challenge to his authority within France, and only secondarily intended for foreign adventure."[11] Yves-Marie Bercé, the expert on seventeenth-century French popular revolts, suggested that Louis XIV "maintained

[11] William McNeill, *Pursuit of Power*, (Chicago, 1982), 125.

a standing army large enough to allow him to spread his troops throughout every province in the land" and "to break up any rebel gathering by force of arms as soon as it took shape."[12] It is hoped that the present work has demonstrated that such claims concerning the efficacy of the army as an instrument of domestic coercion are greatly exaggerated.

A survey the coercive repertoire available to Louis XIV, one sees the regular army working together with a variety of other institutions and forces that were organized along military lines but that existed outside the traditional military heirarchy. The sheer variety of the instruments of coercion outlined in this study suggests that coercive power within the French state remained decentralized to a surprising degree. Forces such as the *archers* of the *maréchaussée*, the companies of *fusiliers du taille*, the 36,000-strong army of *brigades du gabelle*, the "petite" militia regiments in Languedoc, the town militias and, to an extent, the spontaneous gatherings of local nobility that formed up in times of unrest, formed a paramilitary reservoir of coercion that the Crown relied upon to assist with various tasks required for the successful management of the French state, be it tax collection, the control of a dangerous religious faction within the state, or the repression of a popular revolt. It is important to note, with a nod to Max Weber, that although coercive power under Louis XIV was decentralized in a number of institutions, this decentralization in no way weakened the Crown's claim to a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within its territory. The days of private armies were indeed over. The various coercive institutions described in this work acted in the service of the king and responded to the orders of royal officials.[13] In other words, the Crown maintained a monopoly on the right to use coercive force, but had little compunction about farming this right out to a variety of coercive institutions when necessary.

The question of coercion is central to any discussion of state formation, and it is one that historians and political scientists have been writing about and wrestling with for decades. It is hoped that the present work, through a focused and archivally-based examination of the use of

[12] Bercé, *History of Peasant Revolts* (trans. Whitmore), 314–315.

[13] For an interesting discussion on this subject, see Guy Rowlands, "The Monopolisation of Military Power in France, 1515–1715", in R. Asch, W. Voß, and M. Wrede (eds.), *Frieden und Krieg in der Frühen Neuzeit. Die europäische Staatenordnung und die auß ereuropäische Welt* (Munich, 2001), 216–241.

armed coercion during the reign of the Sun King, will inspire practitioners of both disciplines to revisit the subject. For when applied to Louis XIV's France, general theories and overly broad assumptions about the role of standing armies and armed coercion in the process of state formation founder in the sea of historical detail that emerges from the archives.

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