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Introduction

Alison Forrestal and Eric Nelson

Just over a decade after King Henri IV issued the Edict of Nantes (1598), the political and social complexion of France appeared radiant. The events surrounding Henri's inauguration as king in July 1594 and his death in 1610 demonstrate the shift in public mood and political climate that had occurred in these years. Vilified from pulpits in the early 1590s as the epitome of duplicity and heresy, the assassinated king was in 1610 the focus of adulation and his death was lamented as the eldest son of the Catholic church, the father and saviour of the French realm. The late king appeared to have accomplished what seemed near impossible when the last Valois king, Henri III, died by the thrust of an assassin's dagger in 1589; in his short reign, he had halted the turbulence and carnage wrought by over three decades of civil war and passed a stable government to his successors.

However, the mythology of Henri's reign, its roots planted so effusively and unanimously in his funeral tributes, obscures the complex interplay of authority and reconciliation that were required to secure the realm that 'emerged as the most powerful state in Europe in the century following the accession of Henri IV.'[1] Furthermore, the legend of Henri's easy assertion of power rapidly passed into the historical tradition, so that its distorted view of events generally assumed that his reign formed the only significant period of Bourbon rule before the ministry of Richelieu and that this relatively short period offered the complete story of post-war recovery.[2] In fact, it should be regarded as just one segment of a lengthy process of transition that began in 1589 with Henri's accession and concluded with the successful royal campaigns to dismantle Huguenot strongholds in the provinces during the 1620s. From this perspective, the Wars of Religion also concluded only at the point when the crown succeeded in crushing Huguenot military power and drew the semi-autonomous Huguenot population under its immediate authority.[3] Stretching the wars of religion beyond 1598 and even 1610 does not devalue the achievements of the first Bourbon monarch, for the reign of Henri IV brought a significant promise of stability to the

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[1] Keith Cameron, 'Introduction', *From Valois to Bourbon. Dynasty, State & Society in Early Modern France*, Keith Cameron (ed) (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1989), 1–3, at 2.

[2] Jacques Hennequin, *Henri IV dans ses oraisons funèbres ou la naissance d'une légende* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977); Marcel Reinhard, *La Légende de Henri IV* (Paris: Hachette, 1936).

[3] With the exception of the important survey by Mack Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562–1629* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), most studies depict the Edict of Nantes as the terminus of the Wars: Georges Livet, *Les Guerres de religion, 1559–1598* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France,

political and religious environments of France. He dramatically defeated the political opposition of the Catholic League through a blend of force and appeasement, and established a denominational co-existence in the kingdom that lasted until 1685. Annette Finley-Croswhite's study, for example, of the king's relations with League, royalist and Huguenot towns demonstrates convincingly that he managed to legitimise his accession to the throne using a policy of collaboration through clientage, which became an integral facet of his art of rule. He created a base of loyalty that was politically expedient but also a powerful recognition of the authority of the ruler over the ruled in part through frequent interventions in municipal elections and the renewal of charter privileges in towns such as Amiens and Nantes.[4]

Yet, the reality of Henri's rule could not possibly match the supposed facts of the legend. He based so much of his reign on a cultivated consensus, which sought to avoid contentious issues, that Mark Greengrass concludes that it was characterised by 'an air of relativism', prudent but necessary.[5] Indeed, the consensus was fragile. While many of Henri's aristocratic Leaguer opponents such as the duc de Mayenne, leader of the Guise faction, never openly rebelled against him, the potential for further factional strife remained throughout his reign. In 1602, the king dealt harshly with the rebellion of his former comrade in arms the duc de Biron, and in 1606 marched on the stronghold of Sedan to chasten the duc de Bouillon. In practice, therefore, stability was not an ideal that could be quickly and painlessly achieved and, after 1610, the regent Marie de Medici and the young Louis XIII encountered considerable domestic reverberations originating in the civil wars. The revolt in 1614 of Condé, supported by Huguenot nobles; the Gallican article of the third estate at the 1614 Estates General; and the royal campaign to conquer the Huguenot province of Béarn in 1617–20, for instance, owed much to the political fissures created during the wars and threatened to undo the crown's efforts to contain opposition and solidify its authority. Henri IV's unwillingness to adopt a root and branch approach to reform and reorder meant that during the 1620s the government of Louis XIII had to deal with similar difficulties of noble faction, criticism from the emerging *Dévot* wing of the Catholic Reformation, and Huguenot autonomy. The

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1962); J. H. M. Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Benn, 1975); Robert Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion, 1559–1598* (London: Longman, 1989).

[4] S. Annette Finley-Croswhite, *Henri IV and the Towns. The Pursuit of Legitimacy in French Urban Society, 1589–1610* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also Michael Wolfe, *The Conversion of Henri IV: Politics, Power and Religious Belief in Early Modern France* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1993).

[5] Mark Greengrass, *France in the Age of Henri IV*, 2nd edition (London: Longman, 1995), p. 256.

potential for civil unrest and religious disputes remained very high after 1610, with the result that the stability of the realm regularly looked to be in jeopardy.

Undoubtedly, therefore, a search for political stability and maturity characterised the Bourbon regime before and after the death of its first king. It was a period of transition from civil war to redefined ambitions of absolutist authority, undertaken by Henri and continued apace by his successors. A key element of this redefinition of royal power lay in the relationships that the monarchy pursued with the zealous proponents of Catholic reform, itself part of a broader phenomenon of international Catholic recovery and expansion. The links between crown and church grew closer in the 1600s as Henri IV sought to confirm the loyalty of his former opponents, but simultaneously to seize his role as the eldest and devoted son of the Catholic church. As Eric Nelson illustrates, this was flamboyantly evident in the king's patronage of the Society of Jesus, which was reintegrated into French public life in 1603 after its humiliating ban from northern and eastern France by the Gallican *parlements* of Paris, Rouen, Dijon and Rennes in 1594. The Jesuits' rehabilitation was a direct consequence of Henri IV's successful pursuit of *arcana imperii*, a potent blend of inscrutable royal authority, reason and clemency that proved mutually beneficial to the new monarch and returning Society.[6] Despite Marie de Medici's reissue and subsequent reconfirmations of the Edict of Nantes and her refusal to press for the enshrinement of the decrees of the Council of Trent at the Estates General in 1614, she and her son continued to display considerable favour to the *Dévots* of the Catholic cause. It was never likely that either would fully endorse the *Dévot*s' political theology, given the equally persuasive force of Gallican sentiment within the political establishment, but they seized opportunities to associate the monarchy closely with the new religious orders, charitable foundations and missions that formed the pillars of reform.

Scholars of the Bourbon regime recognised from the early 1990s that the opening decades of Bourbon rule formed a crucible in which two of the most significant developments in *ancien régime* France took shape: the absolutist ambitions of the Bourbon monarchy and the establishment of the French Catholic Reformation. In terms of political authority, this does not suggest that the Bourbons completely broke with the reform efforts of the late Valois rulers, especially those of Henri III. The recent work of Mark Greengrass on the opening decade of

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[6] Eric Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy. Catholic Reform and Political Authority in France (1590–1615)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

Henri III's rule and that of Xavier Le Person on the closing years of his reign have demonstrated how Henri III leveraged the consultative, persuasive and performative features of the monarchy first in efforts to reform his kingdom from the late 1570s and then to control aristocratic rebellion from the mid-1580s.[7] However, as Greengrass concludes, while the early Bourbon rulers pursued many of the goals of Henri III's reform agenda and continued his emphasis on a 'harmonious and ordered polity', they had reshaped the monarchy's approach to reform in important ways by the 1620s. By then, a distinctly Bourbon belief had emerged that, far from destroying France, 'a selective application of strong medicine was perhaps the best way of remedying the patient'. This contrasted sharply with the late Valois view that such remedies were potentially lethal to the kingdom. Meanwhile, the moralizing elements of reformist ideology that had been evident in the 1570s and 1580s waned 'in the face of arguments that sought to create a public morality that was separate from private morality, a "reason of state" in which obedience was a virtue over and above others.'[8] The emergence of this more authoritarian emphasis from the 1590s has led scholars to acknowledge readily that this was a period of redefinition and consolidation of royal authority.

Scholars like Joseph Bergin have also shown that the aspirations of religious reformers in France emerged around the same time as the monarchy's revival and frequently developed a mutually dependent relationship with it. Bergin's research shows that Henri IV placed considerable emphasis on episcopal patronage as a key element of establishing control in the provinces, winning over suspicious opponents, and rewarding royal service. In doing so, he displays the close connection between the reestablishment of the monarchy's authority and the revival of the French Catholic church, a link that provided the impetus for substantial reforms to the episcopate during the ministries of Richelieu and Mazarin.[9] Yet, in these achievements, the monarchy actually channeled reform tendencies that had originally emerged independently of it. Barbara Diefendorf's study of female piety in *Dévot* Paris builds on the work of an earlier generation of scholars such as Louis Cognet and Jean Dagens, who argued that one goal of the *Dévots was* the return of the Gallican church to a position of cultural eminence that was unrivalled

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[7] Mark Greengrass, *Governing Passions: Peace and Reform in the French Kingdom (1576-1585)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Xavier le Person, *"Practiques et Practiquers": La vie politique à la fin du règne de Henri III (1584–1589)* (Geneva: Droz, 2002).
[8] Greengrass, *Governing Passions*, pp. 370-1.
[9] Joseph Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate, 1589–1661* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

by the Protestant presence in the kingdom.[10] She argues strongly for the central contribution of women to this development; the surge in female vocations and public religiosity from the Catholic League onwards offered the Catholic reformation a topography of monasteries, convents and initiatives in charitable welfare, underpinned by the substantial spiritual reflections of influential and charismatic figures such as Barbe Acarie and Louise de Marillac. Diefendorf also notes intriguingly that the roots of female *Dévot* piety lay firmly in the trauma endured during the League years, and were at least partially a response to it. Her conclusion that the League period's harsh physical ascetic practices and emphasis on Christ's passion gave way to inner mortification, moderate asceticism and emphasis on the Christ of the poor, plainly indicates the rewards that lie in examining progression within *Dévot* piety over the *longue durée*, from the later Wars through the first three decades of Bourbon rule, and beyond.

In general, however, despite their ready admission of the transformative nature of the period 1589–1629, scholars have tended to concentrate either on the years that immediately preceded or succeeded it. This is in part a structural problem, for the period falls between two distinct and easily identifiable eras: the Religious Wars and the era of Absolutism spanning the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. With few exceptions, consequently, it falls victim to their dominance in the historiography. Analyses of the Wars present the first decades of Bourbon rule as a happy epilogue of returning political and social order. Examinations of the evolution of Bourbon rule during the seventeenth century give in to the temptation to hurry past these 'introductory' years, with just a perfunctory nod to them in chapter one. Few publications concentrate entirely on the period, although a notable exception is Michael Hayden's investigation of the Estates General of 1614, in which the regent's problems of noble unrest, Gallican doctrine amongst members of the third estate, and the bishops' desire to enshrine the decrees of the Council of Trent in law, coalesced.[11]

In 1990, Denis Crouzet's *Les Guerriers de Dieu* challenged historians to abandon the stock interpretations of the Religious Wars as explicable by economic, social and institutional causations, in favour of a reprioritisation of religion as a belief system that offered legitimacy to

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[10] Louis Cognet, *La Spiritualité française au xviiᵉ siècle* (Paris: La Colombe, 1949); Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la resstauration catholique (1575–1611)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952); Barbara Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[11] J. Michael Hayden, *France and the Estates General of 1614* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

violence even before the violence of the 1560s began. Herein lay the ideological underpinnings of the Catholic League and the explanation for its popular appeal. He rejected the contention that the Saint Bartholomew Massacres should be labelled a Guisard plot or popular uprising, arguing that they were simply the bloody but explicable climax of ten years of apocalyptic tension and bloody violence. Crouzet went on to argue that sacral violence waned after 1572, as violent impulses became internalised and expressed in the corporate repentance of ritual processions.[12] He takes clear aim at the tendency to explain the League *sans Dieu* (without God), perhaps most famously attempted by Robert Descimon's forensic dissection of the *Seize*, which interpreted the League in Paris as an attempt to revert to the political balance of the medieval city commune where civic honours were thought to be shared harmoniously across a spectrum of urban notables.[13]

In Descimon's assessment of the League's configuration, religious motivations tend to be depicted as minor and superficial, the afterthoughts of the profound social forces that dictated events. Although he admits that the utopian myth perpetuated by Leaguers was borne of a theological conception of the world, he contends that the reform of social and political disparities within the Parisian magistracy drove the Leaguers.[14] Furthermore, Jean-Marie Constant's analysis of the social and geographical dimensions of the League in the provinces provides crucial insights into the local issues and ambitions that determined its levels of support nationally, suggesting that its defeat owed much to its inability to overcome local conflicts of interest amongst and between urban elites and nobles, and to win sustained support in more than a few urban centres.[15]

Crouzet's conclusions, however, have set the scene for other major studies of the Wars through the 1990s and 2000s, so that religion has been reinserted firmly into the Wars of Religion.[16] Barbara Diefendorf expertly exposes the dynamics of religious sensibilities in her study of the escalation of religious tensions in Paris from 1562 to the Saint Bartholomew's Massacre in August 1572. She demonstrates the causal force of religion in the emergence of

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[12] Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu: la violence au temps des troubles de religion*, 2 vols (Paris: Champ Vallon, 1990).

[13] Robert Descimon, *Qui étaient les Seize? Mythes et réalités de la ligue parisienne (1585–94)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1983).

[14] Robert Descimon and Elie Barnavi, *La Sainte Ligue, le iuge, et la potence: L'assassinat du président Brisson (15 novembre 1591)* (Paris: Hachette, 1985).

[15] Jean-Marie Constant, *La Ligue* (Paris: Fayard, 1996). See also Stuart Carroll, *Noble Power during the French Wars of Religion : The Guise Affinity and the Catholic Cause in Normandy* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[16] Mack Holt, 'Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion', *French Historical Studies*, 18 (1993), 524–51.

Huguenot cells in the city, the subsequent rise of confessional confrontation, exacerbated by socioeconomic tensions, and the breakdown of order as Catholics confronted those that they believed threatened to destroy the social body of the municipality, the political body of the monarchical realm, and the dogmatic body of Christ.[17]

Research on the Catholic League continues to offer its best results when situated in the larger context of the Wars. Philip Benedict highlights the interconnection between the religious and socio-political content of the Wars in Rouen in his contention that devotional activities in the city were genuine expressions of the League's meaning and purpose as a crusade against heresy.[18] Benedict suggests that the classical expressions of League piety, penitential processions, confraternities and eucharistic adoration, in Rouen were early expressions of the Catholic Reformation that matured in the seventeenth century. He, Diefendorf and other specialists, confirm Denis Richet's suggestion that the League gave birth to the *Dévot* movement that molded the Catholic Reformation in France. Indeed, Richet claims that the League of the *Dévots*, though politically vanquished, emerged victorious in the seventeenth century, as its social asceticism, advocacy of the Tridentine decrees and emphasis on eucharistic devotion were transformed into a mass of vocations, missions to catechise the faithful, and moral campaigns to purify the streets.[19] However, with the exception of Diefendorf's study of Parisian women in the early seventeenth century, most examinations of the evolution of reform after the Wars concentrate on the period of maturity from the 1630s. Philip Hoffmann, Jim Farr and Keith Luria have led the way in pioneering regional studies that trace the complex relationship between traditional, local, devotion and the agenda of Tridentine diocesan reform.[20] This cultural approach has tended to dominate historiography, although understanding of the episcopate's social background, corporate identity and diocesan activities, in particular, has developed exponentially by virtue of new biographical

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[17] Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross. Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[18] Philip Benedict, *Rouen during the Wars of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). See also Robert Harding, 'Revolution and Reform in the Holy League: Angers, Rennes, Nantes', *Journal of Modern History*, 53 (1981), pp. 379–416.

[19] Much of Richet's work remains untranslated. A key article, 'Sociocultural Aspects of Religious Conflicts in Paris during the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century' is printed in translation in Robert Forster and Orest Ranum (eds), *Ritual, Religion and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1982), pp. 182–212. For a larger selection of his writings, see Denis Richet, *De la Réforme à la Révolution* (Paris: Aubier,1991).

[20] James Farr, *Authority and Sexuality in Early Modern Burgundy (1550–1730)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Philip Hoffmann, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon 1500–1789*

and prosopographic studies.[21] In turn, these highlight the vulnerability of the convention that the absolutist aims of the Bourbon kings were met, and that the French state remorselessly and purposely employed bureaucratic mechanisms to strengthen its authority in religious affairs, whether through episcopal appointments or opposition to Jansenism. For instance, Joseph Bergin points out that Richelieu, through desire and necessity, made creative use of patronage to install bishops who were ideological allies of the crown and committed to ecclesiastical reform. Furthermore, his penetrating analysis of the Cardinal's personal wealth portrays him as a minister who served crown, family and himself; this evaluation of the minister as a shrewd survivor greatly weakens the traditional interpretation of his reforming statesmanship and state building.[22]

Over the past thirty years scholars have effectively dismantled the notion that a coherent and effective centralized absolutist government emerged under the Bourbons, while continuing to recognize the absolutist ambitions of the crown. Regional studies have emphasised the distinction between aspiration and practice, particularly in outlying provinces where the reach of royal rule was defined through compromises forged with local elites.[23] David Parrott, in his exhaustive study of a key French institution, the army, lends further credence to the claim that the crown, and its ministerial representatives, could not rely on bureaucratic apparatus to implement their will, but bought obedience and co-operation of individuals and groups through patronage and kinship. Parrott depicts pervasive networks of clientage that connected ministers, administrators and officers, but concludes that these could not be sustained once France entered a multi-theatre war in 1635. By the 1640s, the crown's military objectives and bloated army outgrew the number of candidates eligible for military posts, and its control over military commanders and their units diminished dangerously during the early ministry of Mazarin.[24]

(New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984); Keith Luria, *Territories of Grace: Cultural Change in the Seventeenth-Century Diocese of Grenoble* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[21] Bergin, *French Episcopate*; Isabelle Bonnot, *Hérétique ou saint? Henri Arnauld, évêque janséniste d'Angers au xviie siècle* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditiones Latines, 1984); Alison Forrestal, *Fathers, Pastors and Kings: Visions of Episcopacy in Seventeenth-Century France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004)

[22] Bergin, *French Episcopate*; Joseph Bergin, *Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

[23] William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); James Collins, *Classes, Estates and Order in Early Modern Brittany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[24] David Parrott, *Richelieu's Army: War, Government and Society in France, 1624–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

In prioritising the years 1594–1624, this volume seeks to return scholarly attention to their importance as a period of transition between the Wars of the late Valois regime and the Bourbon France of Henri IV and Louis XIII. Its essays offer the fruits of new research in primary areas of political and religious relations, notably the restoration of equanamity between crown and its most virulent Catholic opponents, attempts to quell political faction, and the campaigns, often royally sponsored, to promote Catholic reform. As such, not only do these essays precisely expose the decisive patterns of political and religious behaviour to 1624, they explicitly set the scene for their evolution thereafter.

Amongst the crown's fundamental priorities once the League disintegrated was the restoration of relations with two key clerical opponents to the change of dynasty. Throughout the Wars, the papacy and the religious orders had not hidden their distaste either for a policy of toleration or for the prospect of a Protestant or convert king. In print and from pulpit, religious roused the Parisian crowds against both, and groups of Capuchins, Observant Franciscans and other religious assumed prominent roles as political actors in the penitential processions of the Catholic League from 1585.[25] Demonstrably and seemingly resolutely ultramontane, these clerics took their lead from the papacy that excommunicated Henri de Navarre and declared him ineligible to succeed to the French throne in 1585.

Within ten years, however, the papacy performed an about turn. Several authors have traced the chronology of these events and, in particular, French efforts to ensure that Henri IV's succession received the Roman seal of approval.[26] Generally, these tend to pair the papacy and Spain in opposition to the campaign to recognise Henri IV but, as Alain Tallon argues in his contribution to this collection, Roman hostility to this was due to a determined reluctance on the part of the cardinal inquisitors of the Holy Office to reconcile a relapsed heretic, rather than to Spanish favouritism. Clement's VIII's reconciliation with Henri IV constituted his firm imposition of papal authority over the Holy Office, and checked its growing influence on the theological and political orientation of the Tridentine church. As a political gesture of the plenitude of papal power the reconciliation paved the way for the pope's careful engagement with the new regime; although the pope proved unwilling to promote clerics with suspect *politique* or even heretical

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[25] Megan Armstrong, *The Politics of Piety: Franciscan Preachers during the Wars of Religion, 1560–1600* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004); Luc Racaut, *Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity during the French Wars of Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

pasts, such episodes did not erupt into open conflict. Megan Armstrong agrees that this new found *détente* contributed much to Henri's ability to court his clerical opponents in France; amongst the Observants of Paris, a remarkable shift in political perspective took place in the aftermath of his conversion, crowning and papal absolution. In turning from outright condemnation of the heretic pretender, they borrowed from a Franciscan tradition of turmoil, purification and reconciliation, which enabled them to embrace the clement aspects of royal authority that identified Henri IV as the divinely chosen instrument of peace and order.

Michael Wolfe takes the public disputation at Fontainebleau in 1600 between the Huguenot Philippe Plessis Du Mornay and the Catholic Jacques Davy Duperron as the king's clearest signal to his subjects that he had sacrificed his old life for the new life of a Catholic monarch and defender of the true faith. Prominent members of the political establishment, Huguenot and Catholic, attended the conference but, crucially, once it concluded, the debate moved into the wider sphere of public opinion. This marks, according to Wolfe, a transition in the organisation and dissemination of intellectual capital but, more broadly, in the religious politics of the new regime; Bourbon political culture focused on the art of perception, and systematically used the skills of theologians, lawyers and rhetoricans to fight the cause of monarchical authority on paper and vocally. As Robert Descimon's dissection of the construction of the 'Chastel affair' reveals, this was a vital component of the crown's struggle to appropriate a watertight vindication of its Catholic loyalties and royal succession. Discrediting of opponents, whether Leaguer or Huguenot, formed part of this larger narrative, but Henri IV proved conspicuously reluctant to allow Chastel's attempt to assassinate him or the parliamentary expulsion of the Jesuits in 1594 to be turned into 'affairs' that would scupper his efforts to complete his reconciliation with the Catholic church. Yet later conflicts enabled Voltaire and his Enlightenment colleagues to resurrect Chastel and to construct a rhetorical narrative of the affair that supported their attacks on the Jesuits. As historical memory moved beyond the control of the monarchy, Henri IV's careful crafting of the Bourbon image of royal power was unable to maintain its stabilising effect on the reigns of his successors. Nevertheless, his initial success speaks to early Bourbon efforts to shape public perceptions.

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[26] *Bulla, legatus, nuntius. Études de diplomatique et de diplomatie pontificales (XIIIe-XVIIe siècle)* (Paris: École des Chartes, 2007); Wolfe, *The Conversion of Henri IV*.

Like the conference of Fontainebleau, Henri's congruent encounter with the *parlementaires* of Paris provides a crucial perspective on the steps that the first Bourbon took to pacify the kingdom and rebuild relationships with key institutions and individuals. Eric Nelson's analysis of Henri's redefinition of kingship concentrates on the theatrical encounter between the king and the *parlementaires* of Paris in January 1599, when Henri adopted a political style that characterised his reign to justify his effort to secure religious co-existence in the Edict of Nantes. Although the episode is familiar to historians, this is the first effort to dissect the conceptual layers of Henri's assertion of royal power over the *parlement*, and Nelson places particular emphasis on Henri's construction of the theory and practice of kingship through emphasis on royal clemency and the realities of political power.[27] The monarch's speech blended command and request to induce obedience, and acted as the climax of his earlier attempts to redefine French kingly rule as a product of inscrutable royal authority, reason and clemency.

Challenging a historiography that radically distinguishes between the merciful justice of Henri IV and the rigorous severity of Marie de Medici and Louis XIII, Michel de Waele demonstrates that the principle of clemency continued to shape the Bourbon approach to peacemaking and its assertions of authority, lending some coherence to the priorities of early Bourbon rule. As it did for his father, therefore, this fundamental royal virtue influenced Louis XIII's efforts to resolve conflicts during his reign, even though the nature of conflicts changed from civil war to revolts and conspiracies. In fact, de Waele illustrates that, from the mutiny of Condé in 1615 to the conspiracy of Cinq-Mars in 1642, revolts were normal phenomena in France, and that their specific contexts determined the variations in the crown's responses to them. He concludes that the crown's resort to clemency as its primary gesture of negotiation certainly did not alter from Henri IV to Louis XIII. The treatments meted out to Huguenot rebels in 1629 and to conspiring nobles Chalais, Ornano, Soissons, de Thou and Cinq-Mars, signal that only the intransigent and secretive who did not dance to the tune of informal political rules that permitted open expression of grievances, and negotiations ending in rapid submission and a royal pardon, bore the brunt of the king's ire.

The contrived encounter at Fontainebleau in 1600 ushered in a new era of co-operation between Henri IV and the devout Catholics who sought to initiate religious renewal in France. A small but highly influential group known as the *Dévots* benefited handsomely from the king's

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[27] Michel de Waele, *Les Relations entre le Parlement de Paris et Henri IV* (Paris: Publisud, 2000).

displays of partisanship during the 1600s. Barbara Diefendorf's contribution to this volume illustrates Henri's deliberate targeting of reformed religious orders and her findings complement Eric Nelson's study of Henri's collaboration with the restored Jesuit order.[28] The king lavished his patronage on notoriously recalcitrant orders such as the Capuchins, as well as others such as the Feuillants and Recollects that formed the vanguard of the Catholic Reformation in Paris. In symmetry with Armstrong's assessment of the timing and manner of the Observant friars' capitulation to the new king, the results of Diefendorf's research testify to the emerging alliance between French Catholic reform and the Bourbon monarchy.

Alison Forrestal's exploration of the early network of Vincent de Paul, who emerged as a highly regarded and influential *Dévot* activist under Louis XIII, presents a further aspect of *Dévot* growth. The pattern of relationships, material and intellectual, within the *Dévot* community proved highly productive in initiating ideas and foundations. Its range and vitality, however, remain beyond the scope of most studies, which concentrate instead on the thesis that a religious renaissance emanated from the spiritual insights of a select group of individuals, especially Benet of Canfield and Pierre de Bérulle.[29] Forrestal's essay extends this limited perspective in tracking de Paul's early exposure to three crucial influences, that of Bérulle, a leading spiritualist, the *Frères de la Charité*, a Spanish religious order, and the generous patronage of the noble Gondi family. In the long term, she suggests that they had a decisive impact on the missionary ethos and activities of de Paul and the Congregation of the Mission, providing the organisational, intellectual and material resources that enabled him to create a confraternity of charity that proved extremely adaptable to the missionary locales that his priests targeted from 1625.

De Paul established the first confraternity of charity in 1617, by which time Elizabeth Tingle suggests that piety in the former League city of Nantes was progressing rapidly towards Tridentine norms. Tingle argues strongly that the roots of the Catholic Reformation lay in the years of League dominance, when features that became classic manifestations of Tridentine religiosity first emerged. Indeed, the Catholic League marked a transition between older customs and new, from largescale communitarian processions to parochial organisation, frequent

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[28] Nelson, *Jesuits and the Monarchy*.
[29] Dagens, *Bérulle*; Yves Krumenacker, *L'École française de spiritualité* (Paris: Cerf, 1998); René Taveneaux, *Le Catholicisme dans la France classique*, 2 vols (Paris: Société d'Éditiones d'Enseignements Supérieur, 1980). Barbara Diefendorf's *From Penitence to Charity* remains the only recent effort to trace *Dévot* relationships, with an emphasis on females networks of activism.

communion and confession and, in that regard, follows a pattern identifiable in other cities.[30] Thierry Amalou's study of Senlis, whose royalist loyalty differenciated it clearly from Leaguer Nantes, further illustrates the plasticity of local religious traditions. The members of the municipal oligarchy of Senlis were affected by the same pious zeal of their counterparts in Nantes and Paris during the early seventeenth century; profiting from sensitive respect for local religious conditions that two reforming bishops displayed, they succeeded in melding customary pious traditions with recent Tridentine devotions, so that former Leaguers and royalist Catholics were simultaneously satisfied. Both urban studies indicate that the reestablishment of social and political consensus amongst Catholics in the provinces was successful precisely because it harnessed an already emerging and widespread predilection for Tridentine reform and devotions that could be customised for local settings.

The essays assembled in this volume are representative of the most recent and progressive research in the politics and religion of early Bourbon France. The volume does not claim, however, to be a composite history of the first decades of the new regime. Indeed, the gathering of ten essays that represent current directions and conclusions in research gives rise to a further, ideal, opportunity to assess the current state of scholarly knowledge and to reflect on the potential for its expansion in the future. Clearly, *After the League's* essays shed welcome light on the solidifying alliance between the Catholic church and the monarchy after 1598, on the regeneration of Catholic loyalties through the articulation of reform relationships and objectives, on the evolution of a Bourbon style of kingship, and on its implications for the monarchy's ability to respond to political opposition Even so, to some extent, they still reflect the harsh reality of historiographical convention, for none focus specifically upon one significant period of the early Bourbon regime, the regency of Marie de Medici between 1610 and 1614. Scholars and students must still resort to the late nineteenth-century studies of Perrens, supplemented by Zeller, in order to access information on the events and policies of the regency government, and only one biography of the queen regent has been published recently.[31] Michael Hayden's study of the 1614

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[30] P. Benedict, 'The Catholic Response to Protestantism. Church Activity and Popular Piety in Rouen 1560–1600', in J. Obelkevitch (ed.), *Religion and the People 800–1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), p. 178; M. Cassan, 'Laïcs, Ligue et Réforme Catholique à Limoges', *Histoire Économie et Société*, 10 (1991), pp. 159–60.

[31] M. Carmona's *Marie de Médicis* (Paris: Fayard, 1981) is an unreconstructed condemnation of Marie; François-Tommy Perrens, *L'Église et l'État en France sous le règne d'Henry IV et la régence de Marie de*

Estates General offers significant insights into Marie's efforts to quell the open opposition of the great nobility, but far more of this type of detailed analysis of regency policies is essential if we are to understand the role that these years played in the formation of the Bourbon monarchy.[32] What do the limits to the expression of the female regent's authority reveal about the progress made in the refashioning of royal authority to 1610, and did the hiatus between adult kings influence the development of the theory and practice of Bourbon kingship?

Equally neglected is the period that immediately followed Marie's regency, the personal rule of the young Louis XIII. It is rarely considered on its own terms as a period of attempted readjustment to the pattern of rule established by the new monarch's father, and the generalisations made about political and religious developments during these early years tend to smooth out the intrigues and strategies that shaped crown actions. For example, while Richelieu's rise to prominence after Louis's majority has come under close scrutiny, his mother's favourite, Carlo Concini, and his successor chosen by Louis XIII, Charles Albert de Luynes, have remained enigmatic and underestimated in their abilities. In particular, their efforts to reassert royal authority remain relatively unexplored in regard to both planning and attempted execution.[33] Marie has also certainly received very bad press, despite the fact that she inherited a set of difficulties from her husband that he had failed to smother completely during his reign – the potential for noble disaffection, dissatisfaction with the religious settlement, and grave structural weaknesses within the fiscal system. Finally, her political activities from her first exile to Blois in 1617 have been explored only as they relate to Richelieu's rise to and consolidation of power.

Marie's regency signalled the return to dominance in central government of former Leaguers such as Sillery and Villeroy, once the duc de Sully resigned in 1611. In effect, this mirrored the growing strength of the *Dévot* wing of French Catholic reform, but contributed to deteriorating relations between the monarchy and the Huguenot community. While the Parisian network and activities of these *Dévots* have now been quite closely examined, we still remain starved of knowledge about the *Dévot* presence and influence in the provinces. In this volume, the essays of Thierry Amalou and Elizabeth Tingle hint at the potential for archival study in formerly

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Médicis (Paris: Durand et Pedone-Lauriel, 1872); G. Zeller, *Aspects de la politique française sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964).

[32] Hayden, *France and the Estates General*.

[33] Joseph Bergin, *The Rise of Richelieu* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991). The standard biography of Concini is Hélène Duccini, *Concini: Grandeur et misère du favori de Marie de Médicis* (Paris: A. Michel, 1991).

royalist and Leaguer towns. Alison Forrestal's study of the connection between Vincent de Paul's sojourn in Paris and his pastoral work in south-east France highlights one manner in which the fundamental ideas and structures of reform were transmitted. Elsewhere, Alain Tallon has tackled the *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement* in Paris, one of the confraternal organisations that played a crucial role in the dissemination of the ideas and practices of moral and religious reform, but it was formed only in 1629 and Tallon's study is limited to the Parisian branch.[34] The roots of the *Compagnie's* pursuits in the provinces surely lie in the circles of *Dévot* activity that evolved during the first three decades of the seventeenth century. Only further sustained study of public and private piety in provincial towns will enable us to recognise such a link securely, and to gauge fully the mechanisms used for the transmission of reform agendas across France.

Although the Huguenot community of the sixteenth century has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention, it remains, with the exception of its military engagements, a relatively unknown quantity in the seventeenth century. Philip Benedict's surveys have led the way in opening up this subject area, while Gregory Hanlon and Keith Luria's important accounts of denominational co-existence in Aquitaine and Poitou respectively indicate the potential value of further local examinations of the cultural and social contexts of co-existence, as evidenced in, for example, records of commerce, kinship and religious affiliation.[35] But other lines of inquiry still remain to be explored. For instance, a study of the relationship between Huguenot and noble identity in a period when both were being shaped by an emerging Bourbon regime and the system of official religious co-existence would advance the field, as would a study of the international links of French Protestantism in the decades before open conflict with the Crown in the 1620s. Finally, the missionary campaigns amongst the Huguenots undertaken by crown-sponsored groups such as the Capuchins and Congregation of the Mission, are almost entirely unexplored.

A further area of exciting research potential is the widening horizon of French missionary, commercial and political engagement in the Mediterranean and the Americas during this period of intense exploration and colonisation. The religious character of French imperialism requires particular attention. The Crown's interest in and its support for French missionaries such as the

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[34] Alain Tallon, *La Compagnie du Saint- Sacrement* (Paris: Cerf, 1990).
[35] Philip Benedict, *The Huguenot Population of France, 1600–1685* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1991); Philip Benedict, *The Faith and Fortune of France's Huguenots, 1600–85* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2001); G. Hanlon, *Confession and Community in Seventeenth-Century France: Catholic and Protestant Co-Existence in Aquitaine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1993); Keith Luria,

Congregation of the Mission in Fort Dauphin and the Jesuits in Canada and other strategic locations has largely been overlooked.[36] Even more neglected is the Mediterranean, where Fernand Braudel's identification of the region as a critical French space never really expanded to engage with the study of the French state, particularly during the period of Bourbon rule. Richelieu and *Père* Joseph's plan for a French led crusade of Catholic and Protestant princes against the Turks is quite well known,[37] but diplomatic sources as well as contemporary travel accounts point more significantly to the routine engagement of the Bourbon monarchy in the religious affairs of the Mediterranean on behalf of the Latin Christian faith. By the time of Louis XIV this engagement stretched well beyond the dispatch of a few missionaries, and it raises important questions about the role of religion in the construction of Bourbon absolutism.

Finally, much of the economic history of the opening decades of Bourbon rule has yet to be written. Most studies to date have either slotted the early Bourbon regime into large scale surveys of the *longue durée* or have focused on particular aspects such as urban growth, with the exception of a few studies of Maximilien de Béthune, duc de Sully and Henri IV's *surintendent des finances*.[38] Very little has been produced regarding the crown's interventions in regional and international commerce and in revenue collection before Richelieu's tax initiatives from the mid-1620s. Nevertheless, the revival of both trade and Crown revenue were critical to the early Bourbon political revival and the reestablishment of peace in the localities. A further avenue of inquiry might look at the early Bourbon economy in the context of the growth of the European economy and the increasing importance, and wider trading networks, especially in the Atlantic

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Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press , 2005).

[36] The Congregation of the Mission inaugurated its mission to Fort Dauphin in 1648: Pierre Coste, *Le Grand Saint du grand siècle*, 3 vols (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1931), ii, p. 227. Henri IV offered the Jesuits a pension to establish a house in Canada in 1607, although the mission only sailed after his death. See Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: les missions française au xviie siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), for a valuable survey of French missions in the seventeenth century.

[37] B. Pierre, Le Père Joseph. L'Éminence grise de Richelieu (Paris: Perrin, 2007), pp. 129–59, 189–215.

[38] See, for example, the important work on urban economies and social change by Philip Benedict: Philip Benedict, 'More than Market and Manufactory: The Cities of Early Modern France', *French Historical Studies*, 20 (1997), pp. 511–38; Philip Benedict, 'Faith, Fortune and Social Structure in Seventeenth-Century Montpellier', *Past and Present*, 152 (1996), pp. 46–78, reprinted in Philip Benedict, *Fatih and Fortune*, pp. 121–49. On agrarian economic history, see P. Hoffmann, *Growth in a Traditional Society: The French Countryside, 1450–1815* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). On Sully, see David Buisseret, *Sully and the Growth of Centralised Government in France, 1598–1610* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968), Bernard Barbiche, *Sully* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1978), and Bernard Barbiche and Ségolène Barbiche, *Sully: L'homme et ses fidèles* (Paris: Fayard, 1997). Richard Bonney, *The King's Debts: Finance and Politics in France, 1589–1661* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) is a useful general survey.

World, to the French economy. The opening decades of Bourbon rule saw France engage as never before in long-distance trade, an initiative that helped to underpin and shape later mercantilist policies of the Crown.

The writing of the history of the early Bourbon regime is a work in progress, and this volume is both a record of recent advances and a reminder of what remains to be investigated. These essays confirm the pivotal role that the early decades of the seventeenth century played in inventing and consolidating the classic features of the Bourbon polity and Catholic revival, while simultaneously ushering these years towards a position of historiographical parity with the hitherto dominant eras of the Wars of Religion and Bourbon Absolutism. Without doubt, a new political and religious world developed in France over the course of the thirty years between 1594 and 1624. Its defining characteristic lay in the appeals to and search for social, religious and political consensus. The responses to this pressing need for stable accord produced the distinctive forms of kingly authority, the rules of political negotiation, and *Dévot* piety that continued to shape the Bourbon realm through the remainder of the century.