

10. The Frustrations of Being the Spare: Second Sons in the French Monarchy and their Increasingly Limited Roles in Politics and Society, 1560s–1780s

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Abstract: This chapter examines the changing role of the younger brother of the king in the monarchy of France, from the Wars of Religion to the Revolution. It traces the evolution of the relationship between these princely siblings, from one of competition and a desire for independence to a tighter bond of loyalty and an understanding that the needs of the dynasty must always proceed individual desires. Like other major grandees in this period, they recognised that cooperation with the Crown as an embodiment of the state was usually more beneficial for their personal and dynastic success than competing with it. This was not always a smooth transition, and the first two princes examined here, François, duke of Alençon, and Gaston, duke of Orléans, spent much of their lives in rebellion against royal authority of their elder brothers. The second pair, Philippe, duke of Orléans, and Louis-Stanislas, count of Provence, learned to express independent authority in different, less threatening, ways, notably in the patronization of arts and architecture, the development of private properties, and the cultivation of clients and favourites separate from those of the monarch.

Keywords: Bourbons, siblings, princes, patronization, dynasticism

‘... in this country, the brother of the King has no other will than that of the King himself’.

— Elisabeth-Charlotte, duchess of Orléans (19 May 1699)¹

¹ *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d’Orléans*, vol. I, p. 225: ‘... dans ce pays-ci, le frère du Roi n’a d’autre volonté que celle du Roi même’.

The early modern period is recognised as the crucial period in the political history of Europe in which dynastic states were gradually — or in some cases revolutionarily — transformed into nation states, and the role of monarchical institutions (such as the court) reduced in favour of more representational forms of government. In looking at this transformation, historians have studied the individual histories of monarchs or of the court more generally, but until recently have overlooked the roles played by other members of the ruling dynasty: wives, siblings, children, cousins. With the rise of scholarly interest in gender, for example, the number of focused studies on queenship has risen, and especially studies that focus on its place in the development of the state.² An important step forward in expanding this further was taken by Katia Béguin, whose study of the second family of France, the princes of Condé, cousins of the king, demonstrated how a shift in mentality occurred at this level of the aristocratic hierarchy, whereby the *grandes* of France recognised that cooperation with the Crown as embodiment of the state was more beneficial for their dynastic success than competing with it.³ By 1660, the Condé family were the strongest allies, rather than competitors, of the French monarchy, an alliance solidified through marital and patronage ties — and it was a two-way street: they offered complete loyalty and lent their entire clientele network to the service of the Crown, and in return the Crown ensured they remained at the top of the hierarchy through fiscal privileges, appointment to the most important court offices and provincial governorships.⁴ My own work on the house of Lorraine-Guise in the seventeenth century arrived at mostly similar conclusions: the highest aristocrats saw the benefits of working in partnership with the monarchy, after a century of challenge, conflict and division, from the Wars of Religion to the Fronde.⁵ By the eighteenth century, this family too was completely secure in its position at court and in the provinces⁶ — they had not been ‘tamed’, as the older historiography assured us, but had formed a partnership that was mutually beneficial, to

2 For example, Cosandey, *La Reine de France*; or Mitchell, *Queen, Mother, and Stateswoman*.

3 Béguin, *Les Princes de Condé*.

4 In particular, this was secured through marriages to a niece of Cardinal Richelieu in 1641; a niece of Cardinal Mazarin in 1654; and marriages to illegitimate daughters of Louis XIV in 1680 and 1685. In return, they held the prestigious posts of Grand Maître de France and Governor of Burgundy to the end of the *Ancien Régime*.

5 Spangler, *The Society of Princes*. A similar argument is made in Rowlands's study of the high nobility and the army, *The Dynastic State and the Army*, notably for the Montmorency-Luxembourg family.

6 Spangler, ‘Holders of the Keys’, pp. 155–77.

themselves but also arguably beneficial to the state as it allowed it to grow and evolve in a stable environment, without the continual threat of division and instability that characterised the reign, most notably, of Louis XIII.⁷

Another crucial element of this story of consolidation of government was the position of the monarch's younger brothers. Throughout the history of any monarchy, the younger siblings of kings have posed challenges to authority, as someone raised in the same manner, with the same lineage and princely aspirations, and often as the recognised heir to the throne until the monarch himself produced an heir. Courtiers and other elites were always therefore keen to maintain awareness of the royal brothers' feelings and their aspirations for power as, given the nature of human health and divine providence in the pre-modern world, royal power could shift from one sibling to the next at the shortest notice. Royal brothers were thus often seen as a threat — and this could turn into the threat of an ambitious royal uncle in the next generation, following the succession of a minor king. This chapter will examine the lives of four second sons in the French monarchy, their efforts to maintain their independence and authority as members of the princely society, and the counter efforts employed by the monarchy and its advisors to try to limit this same independence and, as with the Bourbon-Condé or Lorraine-Guise families, to turn them into unquestionably loyal supporters of the monarchy. Early modern France is an ideal historical laboratory for this topic in providing a nearly continual series of case studies — kings with younger brothers — which allows us to see the change in their relationship over time, from the 1560s to the 1780s.⁸

The shift can be best seen in the contrast between a desire for individual glory and a recognition of the importance of a united dynastic front. The first of the four princes in this survey, the duke of Alençon, spent much of his career in defiance of the wishes of his older brother, King Henry III, whether in outright revolt or in pursuing his own independent foreign policy. He argued for example, in July 1578, that he was defying the King's

7 See the now classic studies: Jouanna, *Le devoir de révolte*; and Constant, *Les conjurateurs*.

8 This chapter is based on my monograph, *Monsieur*. It focuses on the careers of four men known as 'Monsieur', omitting Henri, duke of Anjou, who later in life became king as Henry III, and is thus frequently studied on his own. The count of Provence too became king, as Louis XVIII, though not until after the French Revolution, in very different circumstances, and thus there is another 'Monsieur' during the Restoration, his brother the count of Artois, who also became king, as Charles X. Across this period, only Henry IV and Louis XV had no younger brothers. Certainly there are prominent examples of younger brothers of kings in other monarchies — James, duke of York for Charles II of England; Prince Heinrich, for Frederick II of Prussia; the Cardinal-Infante Fernando for Philip IV of Spain; and so on — but there is less of an inter-generational continuity for these monarchies.

orders forbidding him from aiding the Dutch in their revolt against Spain because 'as a prince of France' he could not ignore pleas for assistance, and was pleased to act as their prince, even as a figurehead, in the years that followed, despite the problems it caused for his brother's foreign policy back in France.⁹ Just over two centuries later, during the Assembly of the Notables called in 1788 to address the crisis of government in France, the count of Provence, younger brother of Louis XVI, presided over the only segment of the bureau that voted in favour of changing the composition of the Estates General (doubling the third), but also called for moderation in any reforms and especially continued respect for the King¹⁰ — this despite his support in private for, in some instances, radical change and criticism of the monarchy and even the monarch, as seen in pamphlets printed with Provence's tacit support.¹¹

The four men, known at court as 'Monsieur' or 'Monsieur, frère unique du roi', are François, duke of Alençon (1555–84); Gaston, duke of Orléans (1608–60); Philippe, duke of Orléans (1640–1701); and Louis-Stanislas, count of Provence (1755–1824). In this essay I will focus on the writings, where possible, and the actions of these princes that demonstrate an important shift from their willingness to take up arms against their brothers to a desire instead to maintain harmony within the family and within the realm. Instead of a near persistent life of rebellion and mistrust, which characterised the careers of the first two younger brothers, by the time of the second two we see the emergence of an alternative form of expressing princely power, notably through patronage of the arts, building and collecting. Probably unintentionally — since the main goal of any dynasty was to perpetuate its own power, not to forge new political realities — this shift contributed in the long run to the establishment of the modern state: a state governed not through brute force but through reason.

The History of the Spare

From the earliest days of hereditary kingship, there have always been tensions between having too few heirs and having too many. With too few, there

9 Holt, *The Duke of Anjou*, p. 101, as noted by the Venetian ambassador, Hieronimo Lippomano, 9 July 1578, in *Calendar of State Papers, Venice*, vol. VII, pp. 579–82.

10 Mansel, *Louis XVIII*, p. 44. The deliberations of the Bureau de Monsieur over the doubling of the third are printed in *Procès-Verbal de l'Assemblée des Notables*, pp. 101–8. Lever, *Louis XVIII*, p. 116, points out that the public knew that this was the view of the Prince himself.

11 See below.

is uncertainty about the future of the tribe or kingdom — which clans will struggle for power when the current leader dies? — and with too many, there is inevitable strife between brothers (or sisters) over who will succeed or how power will be divided. Either situation is bad for nascent state building, and pre-modern communities recognised this, so regulations evolved that would determine rights of succession, though this process was slow and developed over many centuries. Eventually, leading warrior families became recognised as royal dynasties, adhered to these regulations, or fought to change them in order to legitimise their continued hold on power.¹² Some communities preferred election, with the most able leader chosen by the aristocracy from amongst a select dynastic pool; others developed a system whereby the most senior dynastic male (in age, not direct lineage) took power when a king died; and still others adopted primogeniture to ensure a smooth succession from father to eldest son in the hopes of avoiding civil war.

In France, once primogeniture was established in the eleventh century, the royal state could build and grow, in contrast to the earlier Carolingian world in which the kingdom continued to be divided and sub-divided in each generation, following ancient Germanic practice. The Capetians went even further and made certain this succession was secure by crowning the eldest son within a king's lifetime ('association').¹³ This was good for the dynasty, and arguably good for what we would later call the state — though the idea of dividing the kingdom between siblings did not disappear entirely¹⁴ — but it was not so good for those younger sons who previously might have been given a subsidiary kingdom to rule and now found themselves excluded from power. At first the problem was solved by marrying second sons to wealthy heiresses, and founding lineages based on these inherited properties (and taking their names as new dynasties: Vermandois, Dreux, Courtenay). From the early thirteenth century, a new system emerged — soon emulated by western monarchies from Portugal to Scotland — by which a portion of the royal domain was set aside to be ruled autonomously by a younger son, an apanage, which nevertheless remained part of the royal estates as a whole,

12 See the introduction and various chapters in Rodrigues, Santos Silva and Spangler (eds), *Dynastic Change*; and Chapter 2 ('Dynasty: Reproduction and Succession') in Duindam, *Dynasties*.

13 Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*. For a succinct recent overview of pre-modern Europe's succession systems, see Bartlett, *Blood Royal*, pp. 3–4; and pp. 89–98, for the emergence of designating an heir within a king's lifetime — which was not original nor unique to the Capetians, but they were the first to normalise the practice.

14 Following the death of Louis X in 1316, his brothers Philippe and Charles debated whether they should divide the kingdom, and some suggested a third part should go to sister Isabella's husband, Edward II. Chaplais, 'Un message de Jean de Fiennes à Edouard II', pp. 145–8.

and would revert back to the Crown in default of an heir. At first, as in the case of Artois and Burgundy, these heirs were not specified as male only, but following the loss of those provinces through female succession, this was soon rectified.¹⁵ A good example of a blend of these two systems is seen in Robert of France, younger son of Louis IX, who was given the rather small county of Clermont as his apanage but later married the heiress of the lordship of Bourbon. This lordship was then erected into a dukedom for their son in 1327, and the house of Bourbon was born.¹⁶ By the fourteenth century, the apanage system was well established, and we see the pattern already of giving the duchies of Orléans, Anjou, Touraine, Berry and others along the Loire Valley to younger sons, and the establishment of cadet branches that sometimes lasted several generations (the two houses of Anjou being the most prominent).

But the history of the dukes of Anjou points to a second mechanism that was employed to relieve tensions between kings and their younger brothers: foreign conquest. Encouraged by their elder brothers to venture abroad, they established an empire that stretched from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, occupying the thrones of Sicily, Hungary, Poland and even Jerusalem.¹⁷ Nevertheless, they too were subject to nature's whim or divine will, and to the regulations of the French apanage system, so when they died out, not only did their sizeable landholdings within the kingdom return to the Crown, so too did their claims to foreign principalities. On the death in 1480 of René, duke of Anjou, king of Sicily, for example, his heir (ultimately) was his cousin King Louis XI. The king of France thus re-incorporated the duchy of Anjou and added the county of Provence to the royal domain; his successor, Charles VIII, went further and used the Angevin succession to launch his own claims to the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily.¹⁸

Another force that became more sharply defined in the later Middle Ages was the idea of dynasty itself, and by extension a shared right to rule, transmitted through the blood, a 'corporate monarchy'. This was exhibited in the fifteenth century in the senior princes of the blood controlling the king when he was weak (Charles VI) or rebelling against him when he was strong (Louis XI). In 1465, several princes led by the duke of Bourbon allied

15 For the history of the apanage see Wood, *The French Apanages*; and more recently Bula, *L'Apanage du comte d'Artois*.

16 Bartlett, *Blood Royal*, p. 199.

17 Tonnerre and Verry (eds), *Les Princes Angevins*.

18 Kekewich, *The Good King*; de Mérindol, *Le Roi René*.

against Louis XI and declared a motivation of restoring proper government and reducing taxes in the name of public good (so the ensuing conflict is labelled the War of the Public Weal, or *Guerre du Bien Public*). They did not wish to depose the King, but to rule alongside him as members of his dynasty, his *conseillers-nés* (counsellors by birth).¹⁹ Over three centuries later, in 1791, the exiled count of Provence and his brother the count of Artois wrote a public letter to Louis XVI admonishing him for having accepted the revolutionary Constitution, and reminding him that he was merely a usufructuary or 'caretaker' of the Bourbon Crown, and that they too had interests in maintaining its power and its prestige. In a later letter, Provence even accused the King that he was 'degrading the throne with your own hands'.²⁰ This idea of the corporate nature of the French crown, belonging to all of its dynastic members, not just the head, was thus a strong one, and outlived the *Ancien Régime* itself. In its own way, this was an expression that the state was more important than the individual who ruled it, an expression of the Kantorowiczian idea of the 'king's two bodies', one physical and temporary, and one spiritual and undying.

Despite the continued clash between the ideologies of corporate and absolute monarchy, overall, the dual dynastic strategy of apanage and overseas conquest was good for the French monarchy and good for younger royal sons. By the mid-sixteenth century, however, European attitudes towards both domestic and international power were changing. At home, monarchs were less keen to share power with over-powerful subjects, even members of their own extended dynasty — a point highlighted by the clash between François I and the duke of Bourbon in the 1520s.²¹ Abroad, with the rise of more regulated and systematic forms of diplomacy, outright conquests of kingdoms by force were looked upon less favourably. As a result, while apanages were still created for younger French princes — the two younger sons of François I, for example, received Orléans and Angoulême — they were increasingly limited in the scope of their authority. Regulations governing apanages were much more strictly codified, particularly in the reigns of

19 Favier, *Louis XI*, pp. 462–4.

20 Archives des Affaires Étrangères (*hereafter* AAE), MD, France 588, no. 12, Provence and Artois to Louis XVI, 10 September 1791; Feuillet de Conches (ed.), *Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette et Madame Élisabeth*, vol. IV, p. 261, Provence to Louis XVI, 3 December 1791.

21 Charles, duke of Bourbon (1490–1527), was Constable of France, the highest position in the French military. He was also heir to the throne after Francis I until the latter began to have sons. He was denied honours he thought were his due, and when the King tried to remove some of his hereditary lands, went into service of Emperor Charles V and was stripped of all lands and titles (1523).

Charles IX in the 1560s and Henry III in the 1580s.²² And while younger sons were still encouraged to be valiant military commanders — see the successful career of the duke of Anjou in the 1560s before he became king as Henry III in 1574 — they were no longer encouraged to go abroad to seek conquest, for fear of disrupting the diplomatic balance of power established by major peace conferences like that of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559.²³

Yet, as actual political power was increasingly denied to younger brothers and to other members of the extended ruling clan,²⁴ ceremonial and honorific power was increasingly centred on them instead. By the 1570s, they became known more formally as ‘princes of the blood’, descendants of Saint Louis, those with potential to inherit the throne.²⁵ Their blood was thus sacred and they needed to be elevated above all other aristocrats in the kingdom. In particular that meant the powerful princely families like the Lorraine-Guise, Savoie-Nemours and Gonzague-Nevers, or aristocratic clans recently raised up by means of ducal titles, previously restricted to royal princes, like Montmorency or La Trémoille. The princes of the blood were given precedence in all things over these ducal families; they were the first ceremonially in coronations and rituals, and the first in line for pre-eminent military commands or provincial governorships. To elevate the brother of the king over even these princes, therefore, but without giving him extensive powers, it became the custom to address him with the simplest and thus the grandest honorific title possible: ‘Monsieur’. The first to use this honorific title, though sporadically, was the younger brother of Charles IX, Henri, duke of Anjou.²⁶ When he himself succeeded to the throne in 1574 as Henry III, his younger brother François, duke of Alençon, thus became the new Monsieur.²⁷ Alençon was not only important as the senior male member of the house of Valois after the King, he also remained

22 Charles IX, ‘Edit sur l’inalienabilité’, printed in *Recueil general*, vol. XIV, Part 1, pp. 185–9; Henri III, ‘Les Règlemens faict par le Roy (1585)’, in Cimber and Danjou (eds), *Archives curieuses de l’histoire de France*, vol. X, pp. 315–31. See the forthcoming chapter by Le Roux, ‘The Establishment of Order’.

23 See Haan, *Une paix pour l’éternité*.

24 By the mid-sixteenth century there were only the Valois princes of the immediate royal family and one remaining cadet branch: the Bourbons.

25 See Jackson, ‘Peers of France’; and Cosandey, ‘Préséances et sang royal’, pp. 19–26.

26 Saint-Simon says the title ‘Monsieur’ was not exclusively used for the king’s brother until the time of Gaston d’Orléans (Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vol. XVII, pp. 278–302); but the contemporary political writer Loyseau pinpoints its use to the earlier Valois princes (Loyseau, *Les Oeuvres de Maître Charles Loyseau*, p. 44).

27 From 1576, he was given his brother’s former apanage of Anjou, so was referred to as duke of Anjou, but for consistency’s sake here I will refer to him as Alençon.

heir to the throne for as long as the King remained childless. The same was true for the younger brother of Louis XIII, Gaston, duke of Orléans, who was heir to the throne longer than any of the others in this sample: twenty-eight years. The younger brother of Louis XIV, Philippe, duke of Orléans, was heir to the throne for eighteen years; while the younger brother of Louis XVI, Louis-Stanislas, count of Provence, was heir for only seven years (though seven critical years). As a potential future sovereign, Monsieur could not therefore be pushed aside or ignored, and was repeatedly the centre or focal point of cabals and opposition to royal policy. The tension between the need for a male heir and the contentment of a junior royal prince would be a continual source of strife (and embarrassment) for Henry III, Louis XIII and Louis XVI.

Four Princes, Four Sources of Authority

The recognition of a need to control or contain the authority and ambitions of a younger son began in fact with Henry III, who, as Monsieur, outshone his older brother Charles IX on the battlefield, for example in his great victory over the Huguenot forces at Moncontour in October 1569. Control was also needed closer to home in the corridors of political power: Henri was the clear favourite of his mother, Catherine de Medici, and in addition to his title as Lieutenant-General of France, the King had augmented Anjou's powers further in December 1569 by naming him Intendant-Général du Roi. This gave him political powers as well, for example the authority to countersign official royal letters.²⁸ Anjou was now virtually a second king. Indeed, the English ambassador noted cynically that Henri would never agree to marry the English queen, Elizabeth I, as was being proposed, because he felt he would lack the ability to manage his own affairs in England, whereas in France he governed the state as suited him.²⁹ The prince proposed military reforms, dictated church appointments and made suggestions on how to achieve peace between the religious factions.³⁰ As a Catholic hero, Frenchmen looked to him, rather than to the King, for leadership in these troubled times. Charles IX's authority was undermined, and he was relieved when Anjou pursued one of the traditional pathways to power by being elected head of a foreign kingdom, Poland-Lithuania, in 1573. Yet

28 Le Roux, *La faveur du roi*, pp. 18, 89.

29 *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign*, vol. X, p. 3, 3 January 1572.

30 Knecht, *Hero or Tyrant?*, pp. 65–6.

there was always a conundrum: a prince like the duke of Anjou (and later the next Monsieur, Alençon) was praised for his valour and strength, but criticised for overshadowing the monarch;³¹ if, in contrast, a prince shied away from power, he was accused of being lazy and irresponsible. Gaston discovered the latter during his period of retreat away from court and away from politics following his failed rebellions in the 1630s or as he tried to remain neutral during the Fronde.³²

In the next generation, some commentators believed Philippe was raised specifically to be effeminate so as not to threaten the virile reign of his older brother. This notion is hard to sustain under scrutiny, as it would be terribly risky given the precariousness of the health of early modern children, even princes.³³ If a prince looked strong, he was perceived as a threat; a weak prince was seen as unworthy of the royal name — a classic catch-22. As expressed by Nancy Nichols Barker in reference to Philippe, but applicable to all the second sons: 'Philippe was in fact caught in a game he could not win. If he strove to excel, he earned not the approval of his mother [the Regent, Anne of Austria] and her minister but their displeasure; stemming from fear lest he outshine the king. If he played along with their program, submitting with docility, and learning little, he invited their disrespect if not their contempt for his childish ways and idle games.'³⁴

To provide a base for limited independence within France and an income sufficient to allow princes to maintain the lifestyle appropriate to their rank, an apanage was given to the second son, usually at the time of his marriage. The apanages given to the four *Monsieurs* analysed here were sizeable, and followed the traditional patterns set out in the fourteenth century and codified in the sixteenth.³⁵ The fourth son of King Henry II, François (or to use his birth name, Hercule, later changed at his christening), was given the

31 See Catherine de Medici's angry letter to her son, reprimanding him for undermining his brother's authority through his independent actions in the Low Countries: Catherine to Monsieur, 23 December 1580, *Lettres de Catherine de Médicis*, vol. III, pp. 304–9.

32 Cardinal de Retz, for example, condemned his hesitancy to commit himself to any one political faction, claiming that fear was 'his dominant passion': *Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz*, vol. I, p. 112.

33 Primi Visconti, a visitor to the French court (though several years later), claimed that one of Mazarin's nephews had been the first to 'corrupt' Monsieur, and suspected that he had been purposefully put in Philippe's path by Mazarin to complete his plan of emasculation of the second son. Primi Visconti, *Mémoires*, p. 13.

34 Barker, *Brother to the Sun King*, p. 43.

35 Apanages and financial analysis are covered in Chapter 3 of my book. I use the word '*Monsieurs*' in the anglicised plural rather than the more correct French *messieurs* as a means of identifying it as a specific title.

duchy of Alençon (in Normandy) in 1566. This was a fairly small apanage, but it was soon augmented with the neighbouring counties of Perche and Dreux, and the Norman seigneuries of Gisors, Mantes, Meulan and Vernon — all forming a fairly contiguous block southwest of Paris — plus a new duchy of Château-Thierry in Champagne. In 1576, as part of a reconciliation deal following a rebellion against the Crown, he was further awarded the duchies of Anjou, Touraine and Berry — a major power bloc — and the county of Evreux, which added to his Norman lands.³⁶ Alençon had no male offspring, so all of these returned to the Crown on his death in 1584. A generation later, Gaston, the second surviving son of King Henry IV, was at first called 'duc d'Anjou', but was not given a formal apanage until his marriage in 1626. This apanage consisted of the duchies of Orléans and Chartres, and the county of Blois, later augmented with the large seigneurie of Montargis (east of the Orléannais) and the duchy of Valois.³⁷ Gaston also held private estates, notably the duchy of Alençon, which had been converted from royal domain into a form of private property known as an *engagement* to use as part of Marie de Medici's *douaire* or widow's portion,³⁸ and which Gaston then inherited from his mother when she died (as he also did the Palais Orléans, now known as the Luxembourg Palace). He also was able to benefit from his management of the vast properties of his wife and underage daughter, Mlle de Montpensier, lands covering much of central France (Auvergne and the Bourbonnais).³⁹

Gaston too had no surviving male heir, and at his death in 1660, the Orléans apanage passed back into the royal domain (and his daughter now controlled her own lands), just in time to be re-allocated to Philippe on his marriage a year later. Philippe, also called 'Anjou' as a child, was given the apanage of the duchies of Orléans, Valois and Chartres (though not Blois), and the seigneurie of Montargis, later augmented by the duchy of Nemours as a 'sweetener' for his remarriage in 1672.⁴⁰ He too was given

36 Holt, *Duke of Anjou*, p. 11; see also Nevers, *Mémoires*, vol. I, pp. 561–7.

37 Dethan, *La vie de Gaston d'Orléans*, p. 77. There was another, second son born to Henry IV, called 'Monsieur' and 'duc d'Orléans' from his birth in 1607, but he was never baptised so was given no formal name before he died in 1611. In genealogical sources he is sometimes called 'N. d'Orléans', which probably refers to 'non-nommé', not 'Nicolas'. See journal entries referring to this child without a name by the royal children's physician: Héroard, *Journal sur l'enfance*, vol. II, pp. 11, 88.

38 The differences between *apanage* and *engagement* are discussed in Cosandey, *La reine de France*, pp. 94–7. Archives Nationales (hereafter AN), AP 300 I, no 115, 'Transaction pour la succession de la reine Marie de Médicis, cédée par le roi au duc d'Orléans', 15 March 1646.

39 The Montpensier fortune has been recently analysed by Allorent, *La fortune de la Grande Mademoiselle*. See also Pitts, *La Grande Mademoiselle*, pp. 263–8.

40 Barker, *Brother to the Sun King*, p. 69, analyses documents made later in the administration of the apanage, AN, 300 AP I, 199, *Apanage de la maison d'Orléans*, 1762, p. 12

a major palace in the centre of Paris in which to hold his court, the Palais Royal, but in his case, it was formally added to his apanage in 1692. A year later, it was Philippe, not Gaston, who benefited in the long term from the Montpensier succession as his cousin's principal heir, augmented by part of the Guise succession (also via Mlle de Montpensier, notably the principality of Joinville in Champagne). As will be explored further below, this was an important step in establishing the financial independence of the Orléans dynasty, through the possession of both the Orléans apanage and the privately owned Montpensier and Guise estates.⁴¹

Finally, Louis-Stanislas, the third, but second surviving, son of the Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand (who predeceased his father, Louis XV, in 1765), was like his predecessors known from birth by one title, 'count of Provence', but was given different estates for his apanage at the time of his marriage in 1771: the duchy of Anjou and the county of Perche.⁴² Unlike them, however, his name did not change. He remained 'Provence' though he held no lands there, a practice which went back to the reign of Louis XIV when the youngest of the King's grandsons was known as the duke of Berry, though his apanage actually consisted of the duchies of Alençon and Angoulême.⁴³ Louis XV's elder grandsons too were given ducal titles, Burgundy and Berry, but neither was given a formal apanage as the elder of the two died young and the other succeeded his father as Dauphin, and thus formally had no separate financial establishment from the King's household.⁴⁴ The youngest of the King's grandsons, Charles-Philippe, count of Artois, was given the last of the formal apanages of the *Ancien Régime* in 1773, consisting of the duchies of Auvergne, Angoulême and Berry.⁴⁵

All of these apanages were given to second sons to enable them to live as princes, to supply their households, pay their domestic staff and display

41 Barker, *Brother to the Sun King*, p. 188; Spangler, *Society of Princes*, pp. 171–2; AN, R3 117; and AP 300 I contain all the various papers of the Guise succession (notably no. 103 and no. 115 for these details pertaining to Orléans). The aggregate of these various successions were studied in detail by Hyslop, *L'Apanage de Philippe-Egalité*.

42 AN, R5 33, Apanage of the Count of Provence.

43 Berry is an interesting anomaly in this overview, as, although he was never a Monsieur of France, for seven years (1700–1707) he was considered heir of the new king of Spain, Philip V (the former duke of Anjou). See <https://www.heraldica.org/topics/france/apanage.htm> (accessed 17 October 2020).

44 Lahaye, *Le Fils de Louis XIV*, pp. 184–7.

45 Artois's sons, born in 1775 and 1778, used his subsidiary ducal titles of Angoulême and Berry only as 'courtesy titles' (as they were not given apanages themselves), in the same fashion as the short-lived son of Gaston (duke of Valois), and the son and heir of Philippe (duke of Chartres), who later succeeded as second duke of Orléans.

themselves in public as befitted their royal rank. But revenues from these apanages became ever smaller (or in fact remained static as other expenses rose), so Philippe and Provence in particular had to rely on royal gifts and on entrepreneurship to achieve independence from the Crown, as will be explored below. Reminding ourselves of the second major strategy for medieval French princes to achieve independence, the notion certainly persisted into the early modern period of princes achieving sovereign status outside the kingdom: we have seen that the younger brother of Charles IX, the duke of Anjou, was elected king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania in 1573, only to return swiftly when he succeeded as king of France himself in 1574; the next brother, Alençon, avidly pursued the goal of becoming king-consort to Elizabeth I in England (1579–81), then came very close to establishing himself as sovereign prince of the Low Countries — proclaimed as such in early 1582, before being chased out following the disastrous pillaging of Antwerp by his soldiers a year later.⁴⁶ Gaston was briefly considered for the throne of Poland-Lithuania in 1626, and did enjoy sovereignty, at least in a miniscule way, over the sovereign principality of Dombes (north of Lyon), in his wife's name and subsequently his daughter's name, with his face on the coinage to prove it.⁴⁷ Philippe (as duke of Anjou in his teens) was proposed in several instances as the prince to reclaim once again the long-contested Angevin succession to the throne of the kingdom of Naples, in 1647 and 1654, and even much later in the 1660s, as part of the on-going French war effort against Spain (whose king actually ruled in Naples). But these plans came to nothing, and were most likely diplomatic smokescreens on the part of the French government.⁴⁸ There were no such proposals for the count of Provence in the 1770s–80s, though it might be interesting to speculate that he was given this provincial title (the first use of it since the Angevin succession of 1480 noted above) as a means of re-asserting French

46 Holt, *Duke of Anjou*, examines in detail the enterprise of the duke of Alençon in England (Chapters 6 and 7); while Duquenne, *L'Entreprise du Duc d'Anjou*, attempts to unravel the motivations and the double or even triple game played by the duke of Alençon between Henry III of France, Elizabeth of England, William of Orange and Philip II of Spain.

47 Secret instructions sent to Prince Radziwill for a project to make Gaston king of Poland in 1626, Bibliothèque municipale de Besançon, Collection Chiflet Ms. 117, fol. 67ff. See for a brief history of the sovereignty of Dombes, with images of its coinage (including a double portrait of Gaston and Marie), the website of the Musée Militaire of Lyon: <https://www.museemilitairelyon.com/spip.php?article222>. Several examples of Gaston alone can be seen at https://en.numista.com/catalogue/dombes_principality-1.html (both websites accessed 17 October 2020).

48 The suggestion in 1647 is noted in Henri de Lorraine, *Mémoires du Duc de Guise*, vol. VII, p. 45. For the later dates see Gregory, 'Parthenope's Call', pp. 147–68 (p. 167); and de Cosnac, *Mémoires*, vol. I, pp. 329–38.

presence in the Mediterranean in the later part of the eighteenth century. Yet the notion of going abroad to obtain a better place at the sovereignty table was not dead in the eighteenth century, as easily demonstrated by the second grandson of Louis XIV, Philippe d'Anjou — a Monsieur who never was since his older brother, Louis, duke of Burgundy, died before ascending the throne — who was established on the throne of Spain as Philip V. This was true in the nineteenth century as well, with the thrones of Greece and Norway being filled by younger brothers of the king of Denmark.

Protest and Rebellion as Princely Duty

Displays of fraternal rebellion are as ancient as the institution of monarchy itself, but in France these reached a dangerous peak in the fifteenth century with the League of the *Bien Public* (or Public Weal), organised in part by the duke of Berry, younger brother of Louis XI, in 1465. As with many similar conflicts, this protest against the centralisation of power by the monarchy was couched in the language of the great princes defending the interests of the general public.⁴⁹ A century later, François, duke of Alençon, used similar language when defending his flight from court in 1575, seen as a rebellion against the authority of his brother Henry III: in his 'remonstrance' of Dreux, he called for a defence of the ancient laws of the kingdom (vaguely defined), a removal of foreigners (Italians and Lorrainers) from government and an Estates General to be called to settle the differences between Catholics and Protestants once and for all.⁵⁰ At the same time he claimed he was answering an appeal for support from many 'nobles, clergy, citizens and bourgeois', and to underline his altruistic intentions, took for himself the title 'The King's Governor-General and Protector of Liberty and the Public Good of France'.⁵¹ Alençon's challenge to the monarchy was ultimately settled through the 'Peace of Monsieur' of May 1576, which granted concessions to the Duke (notably the augmentation of his apanage), his aristocratic allies (the 'malcontents') and to the Protestants whose rights they claimed to be defending.⁵²

49 Small, *Late Medieval France*, p. 212.

50 Bibliothèque nationale de France (*hereafter* BnF), Ms Fr. 3342, fols 5–6, printed in 1576 as *Brieve remonstrance à la noblesse de France*.

51 'Gouverneur General pour le Roy et protecteur de la liberté et bien publique de France', as detailed in a letter by the English ambassador, Valentine Dale, 21 September 1575, *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign*, vol. XI, pp. 137–46.

52 Printed in Nevers, *Mémoires*, vol. I, pp. 117–35.

Half a century later, Gaston, duke of Orléans, also left court to protest his brother Louis XIII's refusal to grant him or his favourites the access to power to which they felt they were entitled. From his exile at the court of the duke of Lorraine, he published a letter to the King, in May 1631, blaming the King's minister Cardinal Richelieu for this lack of respect, and more damningly, for bringing division to the royal family, despotism to royal government and violence and misery to the people of France.⁵³ A year later, he once again railed against Richelieu as the 'disturber of public peace, enemy of the King and the royal family'.⁵⁴ The armed rebellion that followed was soon crushed, but this time there was no general peace treaty, and neither Gaston nor his allies were pacified with gifts and promotions, at least not right away. In fact, rather than being forgiven, the duke of Montmorency, head of one of France's oldest and grandest noble families, was executed in October 1632 — a shocking turn of events and a real symbol of the triumph of absolutism in France.⁵⁵ Gaston spent two years in exile in Brussels and only returned on condition that his chief favourite, Antoine de Puylaurens, would be given a dukedom (though he too died, in mysterious circumstances only a year later).⁵⁶ Neither Alençon nor Gaston could be severely punished for their respective actions, or even ignored, as both remained heir to the throne at the time, and their words about acting in the interests of the French 'public' continued to carry weight, as coming from potential future sovereigns. Indeed, Alençon had used similar language when attempting to forge a position for himself as ruler of the Low Countries in 1578, as 'Protector of the Liberty of the Netherlands'.⁵⁷ Gaston would again employ similar language when he joined the party of princely malcontents in a late phase of the Fronde ('the Fronde of Monsieur') in 1651,⁵⁸ which forced the Regent, Queen Anne, to agree to call an Estates General to be held later that year.⁵⁹

53 Published as *Lettre escrit au Roy par Monsieur*. Printed in *Les papiers de Richelieu*, vol. VI, pp. 395–411.

54 AAE, MD France 802, fol. 225.

55 As noted by Bercé: 'Cette mise à mort d'un duc et pair, issu d'une des plus illustres familles de la noblesse, frappa l'opinion et imposa l'image d'une raison d'État terrible, et implacable': *La naissance dramatique de l'absolutisme*, pp. 137–8.

56 'Traité pour l'accommodement de Monsieur', in AAE, MD France 811, fols 59–61, printed in *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France* vol. I, pp. 123–6.

57 *Traité entre Msr le Duc d'Anjou et les estats generaux des pays bas*, 13 aoust 1578. An original copy is in the BNF, Ms Fr 5138, fols 57–60; and it is printed in Du Mont, (ed.), *Corps universel diplomatique*, vol. V, Part 1, pp. 320–2: *Accord et Alliance faite*.

58 For the 'Fronde of Monsieur' see Dethan, *Vie de Gaston d'Orléans*, pp. 279–85.

59 Agreement with the Queen Regent, BnF, Ms. Baluze 346, fol. 93; available on Gallica, 'Correspondance de Gaston d'Orléans': <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90014608/fig1.item.r=baluze%20346> (accessed 30 October 2020).

But whereas after 1576 Alençon was given somewhat more respect by the administration of Henry III, after the rebellion of 1632 Gaston was pushed from court into a form of internal exile at the château of Blois (partly by choice) for much of the rest of Louis XIII's reign. This happened again after the failure of the Fronde in 1652, and he lived far from court for the rest of his life. This time the young Louis XIV himself used similar language to seal his uncle's disgrace in a 'Déclaration du roi portant pacification pour la securité publique'.⁶⁰

Having witnessed these tumultuous events in Paris as a child, Philippe, duke of Orléans, may have learned that a united royal family is beneficial not just to the kingdom or the dynasty, but also to his own health and happiness, and there are no similar declarations or manifestos from this prince denouncing his elder's brother's tyranny or attempts to defend the 'public weal'. Unlike his predecessors as Monsieur, Philippe was, after 1661, not the heir to the throne, which surely also influenced any willingness for courtiers or political actors in Paris to support him or use him for their own causes. When he did leave the court in protest — for example, in January 1670, on learning that his wife was to be given a prominent role in international diplomacy, and that his requests for benefices located within his apanage of Orléans for his favourite, the chevalier de Lorraine, were to be denied — he communicated with his brother through private correspondence and the intervention of high-level government ministers. In this instance, he wrote from his château of Villers-Cotterêts to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, expressing his anger at his brother's actions, and accusing him of deliberately encouraging his wife to disobey and undermine him: 'I came here due to the extremity of anguish that required me either to leave his presence or to remain at his court in shame.'⁶¹ Louis XIV was swift to appease Philippe with gifts, for him and for his favourites. This method of keeping the peace is underlined by recent historians like Nancy Nichols Barker, who writes that the King recognised that the best way to keep his brother in line was to keep him under the domination of his favourite, the chevalier de Lorraine, someone the King knew he himself could control, as the younger brother of one of his own favourites, and as a courtier completely dependent on the Crown for his financial survival.⁶² But this royal strategy was certainly recognised

60 Published in Paris, 1652.

61 *Documents historiques*, vol. II, 513–15: '... je suis venu icy avec la dernière douleur de me voir obligé de m'esloigner de luy ou de demeurer avec honte dans sa cour'.

62 Barker, *Brother to the Sun King*, pp. 28, 139–40. For a detailed account, see Lurgo, *Philippe d'Orléans*, pp. 111–15. This is explored further in my own article, 'The Chevalier de Lorraine'.

by contemporaries as well: the ambassador from Savoy, the marquis de St-Maurice, reported to his master in Turin that peace was reached thanks to the mediating efforts of high-ranking courtiers, and that the King had promised that the chevalier de Lorraine would be given a large pension.⁶³ The ambassador from Berlin, Baron Spanheim, commented in his memoirs that although Louis XIV disliked the Chevalier personally for his disreputable behaviour, 'purely wishing to keep peace between himself and his brother, he gave appearances of friendship and even a pension'.⁶⁴ Two decades later, in 1694, Monsieur complained to his brother about his son the duke of Chartres not receiving a military command or any prominent provincial governorship (both of which were being showered at the time on the King's own bastard sons). Once again, Louis made promises to promote Chartres (which he did not keep) and gave Philippe more money to embellish Saint-Cloud, and gifts to the chevalier de Lorraine. The duke of Saint-Simon is more direct in saying that Louis XIV 'knew the means of appeasing Monsieur: the Chevalier did his customary job'.⁶⁵

None of these fraternal struggles — the dispute over Philippe's wife's leading role in international diplomacy in 1670, his weakness in distributing ecclesiastical patronage within his own apanage to his favourites, or the disagreement over his son's lack of promotions in 1694 — were accompanied by any public manifestos. In fact, the third Monsieur rarely published anything at all. A more active political voice did emerge once more in the fourth Monsieur, the count of Provence. He did allow his sentiments to be known publicly, though again not in active rebellion, but through tacit approval of his name being attached to political commentary written by his clients and favourites. There was an early attempt at political engagement in the months following the accession of his brother, Louis XVI, in May 1774, by means of a short pamphlet entitled 'Mes Idées' in which he urged his brother to continue the path of their grandfather in asserting royal absolutism over the rebellious *parlements*.⁶⁶ But this was completely ignored, and Monsieur was mostly silent with regard to politics for the next decade, restricting his frustrated feelings at being excluded to his private correspondence with

63 St-Maurice, *Lettres sur la Cour de Louis XIV*, vol. I, p. 402, 26 February 1670.

64 Spanheim, *Relation de la Cour de France*, pp. 112–13.

65 Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vol. II, p. 259.

66 This short pamphlet, though addressed to the King, was published in the *Journal Historique Du Rétablissement De La Magistrature*, vol. VI, pp. 252–69. Whether it was written solely by Monsieur or not is in doubt, Lever (*Louis XVIII*, p. 39) suggesting it was drafted for him by Sieur Gin, a supporter of Maupeou's reforms.

his friend King Gustav III of Sweden,⁶⁷ or his favourite and a member of his household, the comte de Lévis.⁶⁸ In public, he supported the King, right or wrong.

Nevertheless, Monsieur's interest in reform was known, and pamphlets were published that were addressed to him as the kingdom entered its crisis period, using by now familiar terminology about the rights of princes to intervene when the monarchy was in danger and also, as before, urging not reform but 'restoration' of the traditional way of doing things, with the Crown leading but guided and supported by its noble elites: 'Réflexions Patriotiques sur les Entreprises de Quelques Ministres de France, Adressées à Monsieur, Frère du Roi' (1788).⁶⁹ These publications could be conflicting, however: a pamphlet produced in 1788 on Monsieur's own private printing press, and specifically dedicated to him (*Le Citoyen Conciliateur, contenant des idées sommaires, politiques et morales sur le Gouvernement Monarchique de la France*, by the Abbé Charles-François de Lubersac, a well-known political writer) called for a reform of society and a shift in the fundamental idea that the monarch derived his authority not from God but from the people;⁷⁰ whereas a book published in March 1789 by Monsieur's former teacher and now the royal historiographer of France, Jacob-Nicolas Moreau, and also publicly linked to Monsieur (*Exposition et défense de Notre Constitution Monarchique Française*), was a much more conservative defence of royal authority and an attack on the idea of popular sovereignty.⁷¹ Which viewpoint did Monsieur truly support? We can see that Provence was not just a passive dedicatee of the latter work: a later inventory of Provence's library reveals that he owned twenty-three copies.⁷² At the same time, however, as

67 See for example, letters in Geffroy, *Gustave III*, vol. II, pp. 293–4 (29 March 1777), and pp. 395–6 (25 June 1779).

68 Lévis, *Souvenirs et portraits*. Some of these, for example, reveal that by the late 1780s Provence had become quite interested in reform, ending noble financial privileges and limiting the powers of the monarch: pp. 335, 361, letters of February–March 1789 and 21 April 1789.

69 See Newberry Library copy on Archive.org: <https://archive.org/details/rflexionspatriotooloui> (accessed 27 September 2020).

70 Available on Google Books. The dedication to Monsieur notes that he and the count of Artois had been placed on either side of the throne to serve as its supports and ornaments, and to bring the spirit of wisdom and goodness into the heart of the Monarch, a position that allows Provence to demonstrate to the King that he is the true leader and friend of the two premier orders of the Kingdom, and overall the protector of the people.

71 Also on Google Books. While there is no explicit dedication, the author's position as Premier Conseiller et Secrétaire des Commandemens de Monsieur is clearly published on the frontispiece. See Hervouët, *Jacob-Nicolas Moreau*.

72 Mansel, *Louis XVIII*, pp. 43–4.

we have seen, Monsieur's speeches at the Assembly of the Notables called for respect for and obedience to the King.

Even in the midst of revolutionary turmoil, Monsieur attempted to remain publicly loyal, though he was frequently entertaining ideas about displacing his brother and forming a regency government. In late December 1789, he responded to rumours to this effect by appearing before the Commune of Paris, with a speech written for him by Mirabeau, calling himself a 'citizen' and affirming his commitment to the changes sweeping across France. The revolutionary mayor of Paris (Jean Sylvain Bailly) stood by his side and proclaimed that 'Monsieur has shown himself to be the premier citizen of the Kingdom in voting for the Third Estate in the Second Assembly of the Notables. ... He is therefore the premier author of civil equality. He gives a new example of it today'.⁷³ In February 1791, Provence faced down an angry mob that had gathered in front of his residence, the Luxembourg Palace, protesting rumours that he was going to flee the country. He turned the situation onto its head by declaring his open support for both the new Constitution and the King, then proceeded to lead the crowd in procession to the Tuileries to pay his respects to his brother in a broad public gesture.⁷⁴ He did in fact leave the country only a few weeks later. It was only at this point that Monsieur began to express disappointment publicly with his brother's rule, making clear his differences in policy, notably in the King allowing himself to be removed from legislative power by agreeing to the newly adopted French Constitution, and reminding him that he too was a potential heir to the Bourbon Crown.⁷⁵ Monsieur even wrote to his cousin the prince of Condé, leader of the *émigré* troops, saying that they should not worry about what his brother the King wanted, since it was clear that all of the princes of the blood now had shared interests in imposing their will on the King and his government once he would be freed by a successful invasion.⁷⁶

Patronage and Entrepreneurship

The first two Monsieurs, Alençon and Gaston, had tried hard to behave in the 'traditional' manner of junior royal princes — or at least were

73 Bailly's speech is quoted in the *Gazette Nationale ou Le Moniteur Universel*, 29 December 1789; *Collection complete*, vol. XVI, pp. 120–1.

74 *Départ Manqué de Monsieur*, p. 4.

75 Mansel, *Louis XVIII*, pp. 63–4.

76 As quoted by Condé in a letter to his son the duke of Bourbon, 4 July 1792, in Crétineau-Joly, *Histoire des Trois Derniers Princes*, vol. II, p. 54.

encouraged to do so by their friends and advisors. They therefore suffered from frustrations and setbacks, especially Gaston who saw countless of his favourites exiled, imprisoned or executed (since he himself, as heir to the throne, could not be). In contrast, the later two *Monsieurs*, Philippe and Provence, found other means of expressing their princely authority, notably through the development of their estates (both their apanage and privately held lands), building princely residences, collecting art and precious objects, and patronising artists, writers and scholars. They recognised that by the seventeenth century a huge part of a prince's authority lay not in brute strength but in magnificence — the term used in the early modern sense not merely of appearing grand, but as a great distributor of patronage, a *mécène*, a follower of Maecenas.⁷⁷ This is not to say that Gaston did not do these things, or even most royal princes before him, as part of the normal *métier* of being a prince, but he was the first to make this his focus, rather than a persistent scramble for political power. In this aspect Gaston became the model for this change in princely behaviour, emulated by his successors.

What we do see for our last two, or even last three, *Monsieurs* is that, instead of staging a physical rebellion, royal cadets adopted a strategy of cultivating a rivalry in taste. Having witnessed in his youth his uncle Gaston outshining Louis XIII in his construction and decoration of the château of Blois, Philippe may have had a similar strategy at Saint-Cloud — though of course, this task would be nearly impossible given the attentions Louis XIV lavished on Versailles. The historian Philippe Erlanger even goes as far as to say that Monsieur's re-building of Saint-Cloud in the mid-1670s was in its way a form of rebellion, since he pointedly did not consult Colbert (the King's superintendent of royal building projects) or Charles Le Brun (Louis XIV's arbiter of the arts), but the lesser known (at that time) architect Jules Hardouin Mansart and the almost completely unknown Jean Girard. To decorate his interiors, he chose the painter Pierre Mignard, a rival of Le Brun who was then in disgrace with Colbert. Monsieur liked having artists who were 'his'.⁷⁸ Indeed, many of the artistic highlights at Saint-Cloud were created *before* similar features appeared at Versailles, for example his Salon d'Apollon, which was certainly a model for the later celebrated

77 See Bussels, *Rhetoric, Performance and Power*; and Versteegen, Bussels and Melion (eds), *Magnificence in the Seventeenth Century*.

78 Erlanger, *Monsieur, frère de Louis XIV*, pp. 184–5. See Néraudau, *L'Olympe du roi-soleil*, p. 184, who describes the frescos at Saint-Cloud by Pierre Mignard as a 'manifeste artistique et idéologique' of Philippe's baroque tastes, which were out of step with Louis's classicism.

Hall of Mirrors.⁷⁹ It is necessary therefore to take a closer look at princely patronage as a form of expressing authority within the confines of political loyalty to the Crown.

The first of the four *Monsieurs*, the duke of Alençon, did not live as long as the other three princes in this study, so he did not enter the phase of life — middle age — in which the others excelled at creating architectural monuments. Had he lived longer, he may have transformed the chief residences of his apanage, the late Gothic château of Plessis-lès-Tours or the medieval fortress of Château-Thierry, into something spectacular.⁸⁰ But he did build up a network of artists and thinkers, many of whom served as his secretaries and advisors — for example the poet and historian Jean de la Jessée (or La Gessée), who provided an account of the Duke's arrival in the Low Countries as its 'liberator' in 1582, then composed funeral poems for his late master in 1584.⁸¹ Recent art historical research has demonstrated that there was also a significant patronage network being created by the time of his death, and stresses the idea of using art patronage as a form of 'counter-politics' and 'counter-power'.⁸² But there is also a stress on the Duke's interest in harmony and balance as a complement, not an opposition, to his brother, and as a perpetuation of royal patronage, assuming that Alençon would at some point succeed his brother as king.⁸³ Indeed, there was always significant cross-over, and many of 'his' clients were also clients of the King. One such example is his *valet de chambre*, Balthasar de Beaujoyeux (originally the Italian Baldassare de Belgiojoso, who arrived in France in the suite of Catherine de Medici), best known today as the author of the *Ballet comique de la Reine* (1581), commissioned by Queen Louise de Vaudémont, and who also served as a *valet de chambre* of the King.⁸⁴ There was also a fascinating international dimension to Monsieur's patronage network: for example, the well-known English painter and miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard was in the service of the prince from September 1576, also as a *valet de chambre* (though purely honorific); Hilliard's recent biographer argues that

79 Austin-Montenay, *Saint-Cloud*, pp. 21–3, 34–6; Micio, *Les Collections de Monsieur*, pp. 35, 37–8, 99.

80 Recent research shows that Alençon did in fact have great plans for renovating Château-Thierry: Blary, 'Origines et développements d'une cité médiévale', pp. 224, 248.

81 *Discours sur la venue et honorable réception de Monsieur* (1582); *Larmes et regretz sur la maladie et trespas de M^{sr} François de France* (1584). See the latter, for example, on Gallica: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7188gf> (accessed 16 October 2020).

82 Maillard, 'Monsieur, frère du roi, mécène', pp. 263–72.

83 Ibid., p. 271–2; Harrie, 'Guy Le Fèvre de La Boderie's Vision'. La Boderie was also a secretary of the Duke, from 1571.

84 Maillard, 'Monsieur, frère du roi, mécène', p. 268.

although this placement may have been part of a spy network for the earl of Leicester, it seems equally likely that Alençon was eager to make use of a first-rate artist to augment his own display of princely magnificence.⁸⁵

In a similar way, Gaston d'Orléans was a patron of writers and poets from an early stage, and he too was perceived as a future king due to the long period of childlessness of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria. Probably the most well-known recipient of his patronage was the poet and playwright Tristan l'Hermite, who held a post as *gentilhomme de la chambre* and was an important advisor to Gaston in writing his public protest manifestos.⁸⁶ Contemporary commentators noted early on that as a young man Gaston became known as a prince of refined tastes and nobility of spirit, more so than his more severe older brother, so much so that people from all over France clamoured to get positions in his household.⁸⁷ But it was not until he reached middle age and withdrew from politics after the failed rebellions of the early 1630s that he really began to form a significant artistic entourage and set about rebuilding his primary apanage residence, the château of Blois. As with Alençon, this has been an area of fruitful research recently, with inter-disciplinary historians like Pierre Gatlulle examining Gaston's patronage of the arts (literature, architecture, music) as a means of re-assessing our view of him overall, seeing him as a prince forging a new form of princely loyalty to the Crown and to the state.⁸⁸ Other historians have less generous views, seeing Gaston as 'a totally self-preoccupied prince for whom opposition and rebellion became a way of pulling money and lands out of his kingly brother, and an office or two for clients'.⁸⁹ If Gaston's intentions were indeed to become an apolitical *prince-mécène*, events made it difficult for him to achieve this, notably as an older man and the senior adult male of the house of Bourbon during the minority of Louis XIV, when he was continually pulled back into the political arena during the turbulence of the Fronde. Nevertheless, the legacy of the Orléans Wing at Blois remains today as a testament of Gaston's patronage — a bold statement of Classical design out of step with the then favoured Gothic. He also nurtured the budding talents

85 Goldring, *Nicholas Hilliard*, pp. 136–9.

86 Dethan, *Vie de Gaston d'Orléans*, p. 235. See Gatlulle, 'La Grande Cabale de Gaston d'Orléans', pp. 301–26.

87 *Mémoires de messire Robert Arnauld d'Andilly*, vol. IX, p. 448. See Caldicott, 'Gaston d'Orléans', pp. 37–48.

88 Gatlulle, *Gaston d'Orléans*.

89 Orest Ranum, certainly no stranger to mid-seventeenth-century politics and the topic of princes and state-building, in an online review of Gatlulle's work: http://ranumspanat.com/gatlulle_gaston.html (accessed 20 October 2020).

of some of the giants of the later *louisquatorzian* age, notably the architect François Mansart, the garden designer André Lenôtre, the playwright Molière and an Italian musician who initially served as his daughter's ballet teacher, Jean-Baptiste Lully.⁹⁰ Gaston also commissioned individuals to collect for him treasures both from the ancient world (coins, statues, engraved stones), and from the new, such as drawings of rare plants from the Caribbean. Both remain amongst the core collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle.⁹¹

The life of the *prince-mécène* was more fully achieved by Philippe d'Orléans, whose rebellions were few, but whose buildings and collections were truly on a princely level. A key difference, however, lay in the fact that many of those for whom Gaston served as patron were also leading political players (or aspired to be), such as Jacques Le Coigneux or the comte de Montrésor. None of Philippe's favourites or major clients had much political ambition if any. For the most part, like their master, they too were more interested in obtaining funds to pursue their own collections and building projects (for example the chevalier de Lorraine at the château de Frémont). A century later, Provence had no significant favourites, perhaps because he had much less patronage to give. The exception here is his Superintendent of Building Works, Jules-David Cromot du Bourg, who dominated his master's patronage as both financial manager and artistic advisor, and who had aspirations to replace Louis XVI's choice as Minister of Finance.⁹² Both princes therefore devoted much of their energies and financial resources to developing princely residences outside of Paris (and away from the court at Versailles): Saint-Cloud for Philippe and Brunoy for Provence.⁹³ Philippe was moreover a ravenous collector of precious stones and fine metalwork, and also known as a great patron of the theatre and opera.⁹⁴ He hosted the latter within his Paris residence, the Palais Royal, especially after the King had mostly withdrawn

90 Cosperec, 'Le nouveau château de Blois', and 'Le "Grand dessein"', in Claude Mignot (ed.), *François Mansart*, pp. 161–7, 170–3; Caldicott, *La Carrière de Molière*, pp. 32–3; 44–51. Lully was actually brought to France by the duchess of Guise who was in charge of looking after her granddaughter La Grande Mademoiselle in her minority. For the fascinating nexus of patronage between the two houses of Orléans (Gaston and Philippe), the composers Lully and Charpentier, and the playwright Molière, see Ranum, 'Lully Plays Deaf', pp. 15–31.

91 Dethan, *Vie de Gaston d'Orléans*, pp. 233–4.

92 Sciana, 'Le Comte de Provence', pp. 61–76.

93 The classic studies of both of these properties are now quite dated, and though they provide useful details, are in need of modern analysis: Magne, *Le Château de Saint-Cloud*; Dubois-Corneau, *Le Comte de Provence*. For a more recent publication, see the beautiful edition by Montenay, *Saint-Cloud*.

94 See Micio, *Les Collections de Monsieur*, especially Chapter 1, 'Le Goût de Monsieur'; and Fader, 'Music in the Service of the King's Brother'.

his patronage for the arts from the capital.⁹⁵ The duke of Orléans' renown as a collector spread internationally through contemporary reports, such as that of the tourist Martin Lister, with extensive details of his visit to Saint-Cloud, and its Grand Cascade in particular, in 1698.⁹⁶ Monsieur's wife's aunt, Sophia of Hanover, visited in 1679 and wrote that the gardens were the best in the world, both for their setting high above the River Seine and for the extensive waterworks; she even preferred Saint-Cloud to Versailles.⁹⁷ In both collecting and music, Philippe was known as a trend-setter: he showed an avid interest in Chinese art decades before it became the fashion, and favoured the more 'modern' Italian-style music of Marc-Antoine Charpentier over the classicism of Lully. Much more bookish, Provence patronised playwrights and learned societies, such as the Musée de Monsieur, a lecture hall in Paris that ran a regular series of talks by scientists and writers, and was founded in 1781 by Monsieur's 'Intendant des cabinets de physique, de chimie et d'histoire naturelle', Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier. The patrons of this 'museum' were mixed: half were titled, half not, with the prospectus for the group stating clearly that *all* 'citoyens' could acquire 'des lumières' (enlightenment) regardless of rank, and that 'precious equality' would 'mix the classes' ('mêlé les rangs').⁹⁸ Like Gaston and Philippe, Provence wanted to patronise artists and businesses that were different from those officially supported by the Crown; in this regard he was particularly successful in breaking the monopoly of Sèvres porcelain through his support of a factory built at Clignancourt, known as the 'Manufacture de Monsieur'.⁹⁹ Both of the later Monsieurs patronised artists, writers and fabricators who were different, not necessarily better, than those officially patronised by the Crown.

But perhaps the greatest shift in mentalities of these two later princes can be seen in their willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activity. The most innovative chapter of Barker's biography of Philippe deals with his development of his estates, notably his support for the construction of the Canal d'Orléans. Her significant conclusion is that, far from being a useless dependant and a drain on Crown finances, by the time of his death Philippe was financially independent and had established his descendants, the house of Orléans, as an independent power in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁰ The

95 Sauvel, 'Le Palais-Royal', pp. 173–90 (p. 176).

96 Lister, *A Journey to Paris*, pp. 196–201.

97 Sophie of Hanover, *Mémoires et lettres de voyage*, pp. 155, 157.

98 *Statuts et Règlements du Premier Musée*. See Lynn, *Popular Science and Public Opinion*, pp. 82–90.

99 de Plinval de Guillebon, 'La manufacture de porcelaine', pp. 62–9.

100 Barker, *Brother to the Sun King*, Chapter 8, 'Service to Mammon' (pp. 166–98).

importance of this is that, as princes no longer dependant on the monarchy for their livelihood, they could pursue their own political agenda, culminating in the opposition to the monarchy led in the revolutionary era by Philippe's great-great-grandson, Philippe 'Égalité'.¹⁰¹ Perhaps with this in mind, Provence was kept on a tighter financial leash by Louis XVI, though he too set out to make himself financially independent. Ever the most historical-minded of the Bourbon princes of his generation, he studied and learned from Philippe's experience at the end of the seventeenth century and knew he ought to build up a private fortune for himself that would free him from this dependency and that could be enjoyed by his future descendants. This was especially important as they, no longer holding the rank of *Fils de France*, would not benefit from the relevant large pensions from the Royal Treasury — he says this specifically in a letter of March 1772: 'in order to assure a future for my descendants'.¹⁰² He first tried to develop his apanage lands, as Philippe had done, by reviving ancient feudal dues in his apanage domains (on trees cut, on minerals obtained) and was eventually successful, increasing the initial sum of 300,000 *livres* in annual revenue to 1,978,284 by 1788. His biographer Mansel asserts that Provence can be considered the 'most capitalist Bourbon there has yet been'.¹⁰³ In the end, however, Provence had no children, and of course the Revolution swept away even these best laid plans.

Conclusion

All four royal princes known as Monsieur in France between the 1570s and 1790s shared a general frustration with being a spare. They were held to the highest standards of princely behaviour and were expected to show leadership qualities in case of potential succession to the throne. At the same time, if they showed too much leadership or independence of political will, they were considered a potential threat to their elder brother the king. In this period of great change in state formation, increased centralisation and the rise of absolutism challenged medieval concepts of corporate monarchy in which the monarch wore the crown but all of the great princes and magnates of the realm had a stake in governance. The idea of 'Une foi, une

¹⁰¹ Ambrose, *Godfather of the Revolution*; Armstrong Kelly, 'The Machine of the Duc d'Orléans', pp. 667–84.

¹⁰² Mansel, *Louis XVIII*, p. 25, quoting a letter of March 1772 to the Duc de la Vrillière, *Ministre de la Maison du Roi*, Coll. Dr Jean Gautier, Brunoy: 'pour assurer un sort à mes descendants'.

¹⁰³ Mansel, *Louis XVIII*, p. 25

loi, un roi' (one faith, one law, one king) may have taken root by the early seventeenth century, but the older idea lingered, even to the end of the *Ancien Régime*. The count of Provence recalled when he was in exile that his cousin, the prince of Conti (Louis-François de Bourbon), the leader of a princely rebellion against the absolutist projects of Louis XV in the 1770s, had once said: 'The crown belongs to all of us; only the eldest amongst us wears it.'¹⁰⁴ But Conti had then found himself excluded from power, and even physically exiled from court.¹⁰⁵ The person most affected by this move towards absolutism was the monarch's younger brother, who found himself increasingly excluded from political power. This chapter has examined how some of these spares, beginning in particular with Gaston d'Orléans in the 1630s, looked elsewhere to express their princely power, through the patronage of the arts.

Younger brothers like Gaston faced a double challenge: they must demonstrate independence to maintain their reputation as royal princes, as natural leaders of the nobility, but they also needed to be dependent so as not to threaten the pre-eminence of their older brother at court or in the public sphere. They must be educated in the art of princely rule, able to take over sovereignty in case of the sudden death of the king, but they must not display signs of overt ambition or eagerness to take power. At the same time, as the role of the monarchy in general became more public, with the rise of the baroque state and of a popular press, royal brothers emerged as crucial components of a royal family's public representation — disagreements in private were allowed, but the family must stand united in public. There was now more of a need for siblings to uphold the royal 'brand'. This is seen best in the public statements of the count of Provence in the years leading up to the French Revolution.

Can we say that this evolution of fraternal relationships in France's royal family was part of the so-called 'civilising process'? Instead of a transformation from warriors into gentlemen,¹⁰⁶ do we have warriors turning into patrons? We have seen here that all four of the men known as 'Monsieur' were avid patrons of the arts, builders, collectors, defenders of maverick painters and writers, and even challengers of royal monopolies (as with Lully or Sèvres). They were focal points around which alternatives to royal patronage networks could be constructed. This was especially true at Gaston's court at Blois during the ascendancy of Cardinal Richelieu, when those out of

104 Quoted by Louis XVIII (as Provence was now called by royalists) in a letter to his brother Artois in February 1803: Daudet, *Histoire de l'Emigration*, vol. III, p. 297.

105 Swann, *Exile, Imprisonment, or Death*, pp. 220–30.

106 As described by Schalk, 'The Court as "Civilizer" of the Nobility', pp. 245–63.

political favour had to seek support elsewhere, and at Philippe's Parisian residence the Palais Royal, once Louis XIV's primary attentions had turned away from Paris and more towards matters spiritual. The Palais Royal was also thus a safe haven for those courtiers who wished to continue the more hedonistic lifestyle of the earlier years of the reign.¹⁰⁷

This leads to a final point that should be made, and a topic that needs to be explored in greater detail. Second sons were not simply alternative patrons of the arts, they were also patrons of people: from the duke of Alençon to the count of Provence, their households provided the best opportunities for younger sons of the grand court nobility, or members of the more obscure provincial nobility, to get established and find their fortunes on the national stage. Some of them went on to play a larger role in the royal government, and in this way contributed to the processes of state formation, through pulling the provincial nobility and their client networks more closely in towards the centralised state.¹⁰⁸ As investors in businesses — a canal, a porcelain factory — second sons could also assist the monarchy by acting as private individuals in a way that the monarch publicly could not.

In examining the changes and continuities in the behaviours and actions of the four men who lived as second sons in the French monarchy in the last two centuries of the *Ancien Régime* we do see a persistence of this view of the corporate nature of a dynastic state, but we also see a definite change in the willingness of the most senior princes of the realm to defend, at least publicly, the actions and the absolute authority of the head of the family, their elder brother the king.

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¹⁰⁷ For more on this shift in royal interests and Philippe's place in it, see my chapter, 'Pivot to Piety', in Rohr and Spangler (eds), *Significant Others*, pp. 210–33.

¹⁰⁸ This was especially true when a Monsieur succeeded as king, like Henry III, whose key favourites (Joyeuse, Epemon) started out with fairly humble provincial origins. See Le Roux, *La Faveur du Roi*, pp. 244–54. Alternative princely patronage, of both the arts and of people, forms the core of Chapter 5 of my new book, *Monsieur*.

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