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The Crown, *Ministériat*, and Nobility at the Court of Louis XIII

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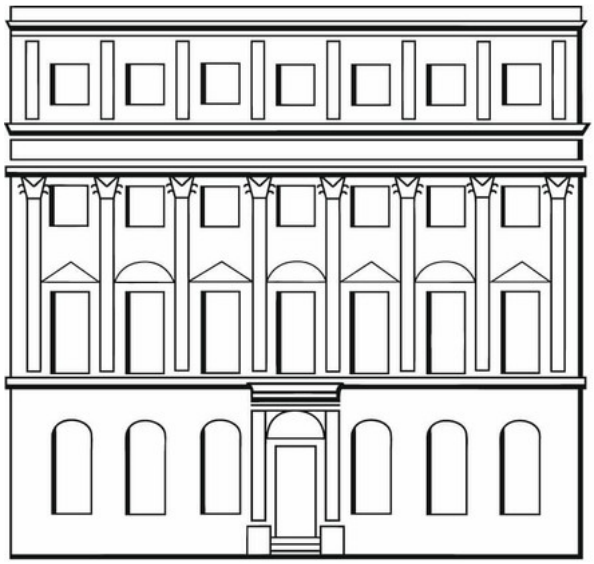

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'LE temps de rois est fini, celui des princes et des grands commence.'[1] With these words Henry II of Bourbon, prince de Condé, not only described the political situation he found in France on his return to Paris on 18 July 1610, but also predicted fundamental changes in the structure of French government. Some two months after the murder of Henry IV (14 May 1610), Condé obviously thought that the time had come for the princes of the blood and the higher nobility to return to the *conseil du roi* and key positions of the monarchy, and to establish themselves permanently there.[2] Although Condé's hopes proved illusory, for a time it appeared as if they might be realized, albeit temporarily. During the reign of Henry IV, the crown had for the most part regained the capacity to make and enforce its decisions, and had also restored and secured its authority inside and outside the kingdom. But the monarch had not yet succeeded in establishing his authority firmly. The repeated attempts on his life and the grave differences of opinion among those interested in central questions of foreign and ecclesiastical policy were symptomatic of the enduring instability.[3] After the murder of the king, the latent danger to royal authority inevitably increased because of the minority of Louis XIII. In France, a regency always led to limitations on the regent's

The text was translated by my assistant Miss Ute Müller, whom I would like to thank once again.

[1] Quoted by M. Carmona, *La France de Richelieu* (Paris, 1984), p. 83.

[2] Henry II of Bourbon, prince de Condé, together with his young wife Charlotte had fled to the Spanish Netherlands, in order to save his wife from persecution by Henry IV. As he did not feel safe in Brussels, Condé went to Milan in March.

[3] Cf. D. Richet, *La France moderne: l'esprit des institutions* (Paris, 1973), p. 72.

authority and freedom of action, not *de jure* but *de facto*. This applied to an even greater degree to the new regent, Marie de' Medici, whose position was—for a number of reasons beyond the compass of this chapter—continually being challenged. All these factors were bound to have an effect on the relationship between the crown and the nobility, and on the functioning of government, particularly the process of decision-making, and the royal patronage system. The issues touched upon here—with a few exceptions—are rarely discussed in the literature on the reign of Louis XIII and Richelieu's *ministériat*.[4] Comprehensive research is still needed here; a chapter such as this can only make a brief contribution to what is a very intricate topic.

The years up to the beginning of Richelieu's *ministériat* (29 April 1624) are characterized by an 'instabilité ministérielle notoire', as Jean Bérenger rightly states.[5] This instability did not start directly after Marie de' Medici assumed the regency, but it very soon became obvious. To begin with, the queen left the ministers of the deceased Henry IV, Sully, Villeroy, Sillery, and Jeannin, in their positions, as she was primarily interested in having her regency proclaimed as quickly and quietly as possible. Decisive support for her was provided by the chancellor, Brûlart de Sillery; the secretary of state for foreign affairs and war, Neufville de Villeroy; the *président*, Jeannin—all members of the *conseil des affaires*[6]—and the duke of Epernon, colonel-general of the infantry.[7] Until the

[4] See esp. O. A. Ranum, *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII: A Study of the Secretaries of State and Superintendents of Finance in the Ministry of Richelieu* (Oxford, 1963; French edn., *Les Créatures de Richelieu*, Paris, 1966). Cf. now also S. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York and Oxford, 1986), pp. 15–18, 30–6, 157–61.

[5] J. Bérenger, 'Pour une enquête européenne: le problème du ministériat au XVII^e siècle', *Annales E.S.C.*, 29 (1974), pp. 166–92, p. 170.

[6] Cf. R. Mousnier, 'Le Conseil du roi de la mort de Henri IV au gouvernement personnel de Louis XIV', in idem, *La Plume, la faucille et le marteau: institutions et société en France du moyen âge à la révolution* (Paris, 1970), 141–79, p. 142; cf. also idem, 'Les Règlements du conseil du roi sous Louis XIII', *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France, années 1946–1947* (Paris, 1948), pp. 93–211.

[7] Cf. M. Carmona, *Richelieu* (Paris, 1983), pp. 127–8; V. L. Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII et de Richelieu* (Paris, 1967), p. 13. Nicolas Brûlart, sieur de Sillery, former president at the *parlement* of Paris, former ambassador in Switzerland and in Rome, Dec. 1604, keeper of the seals since Dec. 1604, and chancellor since 10 Sept. 1607. He

beginning of 1612, Marie de Medici was on the whole personally responsible for the regency. Grave differences of opinion between the queen and Sully on basic questions of foreign and domestic policy caused her to make the superintendent of finances (*surintendant des finances*) and most influential minister of Henry IV leave the *conseil du roi*. In this she was supported by Villeroy and members of the higher nobility whom the queen soon admitted to the *conseil du roi* in ever increasing numbers. At the time of Marie de' Medici's regency, this body, therefore, was rightly called a *petit parlement* or a senate where not much efficient work could any longer be done.[8]

Sully resigned on 26 January 1611.[9] In effect, the reason for his resignation was that he wanted to continue the policies of Henry IV's government. Realistically assessing the possibilities and limits of political action in the time of a regency, however, Marie de' Medici did not want to take the risk of a war against Spain that might have resulted from Sully's policies. Rather, she favoured a *rapprochement* with Spain that was to be consolidated by the marriage of Louis XIII to the

fell from favour in May 1616 and had to give the seals to Guillaume du Vair, *premier président* of the *parlement* of Provence. In April 1617 he returned to the *conseil du roi*, in which he resumed his former offices. He died in Oct. 1624, after having had the office of the keeper of the seals from Jan. 1623 to Feb. 1624. Pierre Jeannin, former president at the *parlement* of Burgundy, member of the Catholic League, and counsellor of Mayenne. He became one of the most important counsellors of Henry IV and Marie de' Medici. From 1611 to 1616 he was *contrôleur général des finances* and from May 1616 to Sept. 1619 *surintendant des finances*. Mousnier, 'Le Conseil du roi' (above, n. 6), pp. 198, 202; H. Ballande, *Rebelle et conseiller de trois souverains: le président Jeannin 1542–1623* (Paris, 1981). On Nicolas III de Neufville de Villeroy (1543–1617) cf. N. M. Sutherland, *The French Secretaries of State in the Age of Catherine of Medici* (University of London Historical Studies, 10; London, 1962), pp. 150–7. Jean-Louis de Nogaret de la Valette, duc d'Epernon (1554–1642).

[8] Cf. E. Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France illustrée depuis les origines jusqu'à la révolution*, vi/2: J.-H. Mariéjol, *Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris, 1911), p. 147; M. Carmona, *Marie de Médicis* (Paris, 1981), p. 223; Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII*, p. 57; Mousnier, 'Le Conseil du roi', p. 147. All princes of the blood were admitted to the *conseil*: the prince of Conti, the count of Soissons, the cardinal of Joyeuse, the duke of Guise, the duke of Mayenne, the duke of Nevers. In addition there were the constable of Montmorency, the duke of Epernon, and the marshals of France de Brissac, de la Châtre, and de Boisdauphin. Besides the duke of Bouillon, the cardinal of Perron, the prince of Condé, the duke of Nemours, and the marshal de Lesdiguières belonged to the *conseil*. Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 222–3; Carmona, *Richelieu*, pp. 137–8.

[9] Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, p. 225; Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France*, vi/2. 147.

Spanish infanta. This policy gave encouragement to the numerous supporters of a pro-Spanish and ultramontane course who had also been in Paris at the time of Henry IV. At the same time, however, such a policy was bound to alarm the Huguenots.[10] The potential for political conflict is clear, and was undoubtedly favourable to the higher nobility in their pursuit of more or less selfish political and material ambitions. To a large degree also the dismissal of Sully served to foster their demands, for Sully was probably the only minister capable of opposing the ambitions of the members of the higher nobility, as well as the rise of the royal favourite, Concino Concini. Villeroy, who initially assumed the leading role in the *conseil du roi* after Sully's retirement,[11] was ultimately not equal to the task. The regent made generous payments of money and pensions. Additionally, leading men were given *gouvernements* and other lucrative positions in the provinces—a policy recommended to the regent by Villeroy. Even so the higher nobility's loyalty to the government and support of government policy could, at best, be bought for a short period of time only.[12] It was concessions like these, mostly extorted by open threats or rebellion, that made obvious the growing deterioration of the authority of the regent and her government. The treaties of Sainte-Menehould (15 May 1614) and Loudun (3 May 1616) entered into with the *grands* of the country are symptomatic of the decline in the authority and the powers of the crown. Frequently changing and short-lived alliances between the regent and one or another group of the higher nobility—the Party of the Princes (Condé, Bouillon, Nevers, Mayenne) or the Guise and Epernon—as well as differences of opinion between the chancellor, Sillery, and the secretary of state, Villeroy, led not only to a split in the court, but also to conflicts within the *conseil du roi*.[13]

Condé published a manifesto on 21 February 1614 in his

[10] Cf. Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII*, pp. 70–2; Carmona, *Richelieu*, pp. 75–6; P. Chevallier, *Louis XIII* (Paris, 1979), p. 66.

[11] Cf. Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, p. 66.

[12] Cf. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, pp. 152–3; Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII*, p. 73.

[13] Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France*, vi/2. 154–7; Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII*, pp. 73–4.

name and that of the *grands* who, along with Nevers, Bouillon, and Longueville, had left court and taken up the standard of rebellion with him. The manifesto was sharply critical of the government which was accused of overburdening the people with taxes, of being responsible for the high selling prices of law offices, of hindering the *parlements* in the exercise of their functions as well as pursuing a pro-Spanish foreign policy. Condé therefore demanded the dismissal of the ministers and the summoning of the estates-general in order to remedy the grievances of the realm. Confronted with this and fearing that the conflict might easily have escalated into civil war, the regent tried to win time and avoid an open confrontation. The concessions she made were clearly intended to defuse the crisis until the proclamation of Louis XIII's majority on 27 September 1614. In this strategy, Marie de' Medici was supported mainly by Villeroy, who belonged to the close-knit *noblesse du conseil*,[14] and enjoyed the regent's confidence from the beginning of 1612 until October 1614. As in the preceding months, he urged the queen to try to split up the *grands* by making concessions in order to preserve internal peace until the king should attain his majority.[15]

Madame, votre but est de conserver l'autorité du roi et le royaume en sa réputation et en son entier. Votre régence et le titre de mère du roi vous y obligent . . . Cependant Votre Majesté gagnera la fin de sa régence, pourra achever plus commodément les mariages d'Espagne et résoudre ceux d'Angleterre au temps et en la forme que vous jugerez plus à propos pour le bien du royaume et le contentement du roi qui sera alors en sa majorité.[16]

In the negotiations of Soissons and the treaty of Sainte-Menehould (15 May 1614) the rebellious higher nobility was

[14] On the *noblesse du conseil* see M. Antoine, *Le Conseil du roi sous le règne de Louis XV* (Geneva, 1970); W. Reinhard, *Freunde und Kreaturen: 'Verflechtung' als Konzept zur Erforschung historischer Führungsgruppen. Römische Oligarchie* (Schriften der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Augsburg, 14; Munich, 1979), pp. 42–5; Sutherland, *The French Secretaries of State* (above, n. 7), pp. 150–7.

[15] Cf. Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France*, vi/2. 157; Tapié, *La France sous Louis XIII*, p. 74; Chevallier, *Louis XIII* (above, n. 10), pp. 66–7; Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 262–6.

[16] Memorandum of Villeroy, 10 Mar. 1614, in Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Fonds Conrart, vol. 18, fol. 565; cf. also G. de Hanotaux, *Histoire du cardinal de Richelieu*, ii/1. *Le Chemin du pouvoir* (Paris, 1893), pp. 67–8.

able to enforce, if not all, then at least some very important demands. The regent agreed to postpone the marriage of Louis XIII and the Spanish infanta and to summon the estates-general that very year. Added to these political concessions were substantial cash payments and the allocation of lucrative functions to the *grands*.[17] If we judge the events already outlined and future political developments against the background of the regent's main objectives, that is, to preserve peace within the monarchy until the end of the regency and to bring about a union with Spain, we can say that she ultimately achieved these aims. However, the political and financial price was high. The state coffers, so carefully tended by Sully, were depleted, and the finances of the state were ruined. In international terms France's importance gradually diminished.[18]

As far as domestic and foreign policy were concerned, however, the results gained by the regent *after* the treaty of Sainte-Menehould in the long run strengthened the opposition of the Party of the Princes, and this in turn had effects at the ministerial level. The main reason for the increased opposition of the Party of the Princes was that the estates-general did not take the course they had hoped for. The assembly of the estates-general was opened on 27 October 1614, that is, after the declaration of Louis XIII's majority during a ceremony in the *parlement* of Paris on 2 October 1614. The king, now of age, left the running of the government entirely to Marie de' Medici by making her *chef du conseil*. Thanks to her ministers' carefully influencing the procedure of designating the deputies,[19] and thanks also to the prudent preparation and conduct of the estates-general, the essential

[17] Condé received 400,000 livres and the government of Amboise; the duke of Bouillon was given a pension amounting to 100,000 livres. The duke of Bouillon was allowed to double the number of his *gendarmes*. Cf. Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France*, vi/2. 158; Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII* (above, n. 7), p. 74; Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 265–6.

[18] Cf. Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, p. 268.

[19] Cf. J. M. Hayden, *France and the Estates General of 1614* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 72; Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 67–8; Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 272–3. See also R. Chartier, 'La Noblesse et les états de 1614: une réaction aristocratique?', in R. Chartier and D. Richet (edd.), *Représentation et vouloir politique: autour des états généraux de 1614* (Paris, 1982), pp. 113–25; Richet, *La France moderne* (above, n. 3), p. 72.

aims of the government were finally achieved. The result of the elections for the estates-general itself already meant defeat for the Party of the Princes.[20] At the end of the assembly, the monarchy was not under the tutelage of the estates-general as the opposing *grands* had hoped. The crown secured consent for the Spanish marriage project and emerged from the whole business considerably strengthened.[21] This is still true even if one accepts that the estates-general did cause the government problems in other areas, promoting policies that, taken together, had the nature of a reform programme.[22]

The Party of the Princes, led by Condé, reacted to this unfavourable development as in the past by intensifying its activities against the government. There is no need to go into their machinations here. What is important is their impact on the rebellious higher nobility and the government. An escalation of the open conflict between the government and the Party of the Princes into a dangerous civil war was averted by the repeated willingness to negotiate shown by Marie de' Medici and Condé. After the queen had accomplished her main aim with regards to foreign policy—the dynastic alliance with Spain—despite resistance from the *grands*,[23] she offered to negotiate with Condé. The results of these negotiations were expressed in the treaty of Loudun (3 May 1616). The political and material demands of the rebels from the higher nobility were largely met. Just as in the earlier treaty of Sainte-Menehould, these nobles received enormous amounts of money, *gouvernements*,[24] and other high royal offices. Thus they were able, if not to extend, then at least to keep their

[20] Cf. Hayden, *France and the Estates General*, p. 97; Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, p. 67; Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 272–3.

[21] Cf. Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII*, p. 77; Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, p. 285; Richet, *La France moderne*, p. 72; Hayden, *France and the Estates General*, pp. 171–3.

[22] Cf. Hayden, *France and the Estates General*, *passim*; Chartier, 'La Noblesse et les états de 1614', pp. 113–25; Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 272–85.

[23] On 9 Nov. 1615 Elisabeth de Bourbon, sister of Louis XIII, and Anne of Austria, daughter of the Spanish king, Philip III, crossed the Bidassao, the river marking the border between France and Spain. The marriage between Louis XIII and the Spanish infanta took place on 25 Nov. 1615 in Bordeaux.

[24] On the power and position of the governors, cf. R. R. Harding, *Anatomy of a Power Elite: The Provincial Governors of Early Modern France* (New Haven and London, 1978).

power bases in the provinces as well as their client and patron relationships, upon which their power largely rested.[25] Their desire for greater influence on government policy was partly met by giving Condé a prominent position in the *conseil du roi*, and the unprecedented right to sign the *arrêts* of the *conseil du roi*.[26] Not without reason has it been said that the peace of Loudun paved the way to Condé's 'entrée en force . . . dans le gouvernement du pays'.[27]

Further developments after the peace of Loudun, however, show that Condé had not won the long struggle for the highest position in the government of the monarchy. Thanks to the support of Villeroy, he brought about changes in the staff at ministerial level; but he was unable to satisfy the demand made by the *grands* in their peace negotiations with the representatives of the government, to eliminate the royal favourite, Concini, who had gained great wealth and power. Even so, those among the queen mother's advisers who had formerly supported a determined course of action against Condé, that is, the chevalier de Sillery and his brother, the chancellor, Brûlart de Sillery, had to give up their positions. Villeroy, who had gone over to Condé's side during the peace negotiations, seems to have been able to extend his influence over the inner council of Marie de' Medici. However, appointments to the vacant ministerial positions showed that Condé as well as Villeroy had underestimated Concini's power. In the ministerial reshuffle that followed the treaty of Loudun, Concini was eventually able to place members of his clientele in high state positions. Claude Barbin replaced the *contrôleur des finances*, Jeannin, Mangot took over the functions of Puisieux, and Villeroy became head of foreign affairs. Finally, Richelieu was appointed to the secretariat of state instead of Mangot, who became keeper of the seals (*garde des sceaux*) as successor to Guillaume du Vair, who had fallen into disgrace. Not surprisingly, the ministry of Barbin–Mangot–

[25] Cf. Harding, *Anatomy of a Power Elite*, pp. 21–37; Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, pp. 85–97.

[26] Cf. Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, p. 299; E. Esmonin, 'Les Arrêts du conseil sous l'ancien régime', in idem, *Études sur la France des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Université de Grenoble. Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, 32; Paris, 1964), pp. 183–99.

[27] Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, p. 299.

Richelieu very soon rightly came to be called the *ministère Concini*.[28]

As is generally known, Concino Concini, of aristocratic Italian origin, had gradually gained wealth and power, especially since the beginning of the regency in 1610, thanks to the influence his wife Léonora had on Marie de' Medici. After he acquired the *marquisat d'Ancre* at the end of August 1610, he received the *gouvernements* of Péronne, Roye, and Montdidier. In the following years, Concini, who became marshal of France in November, systematically extended his power base and his clientele in the provinces, as well as his position in the *conseil du roi*. He skilfully utilized the tensions between the parties competing for influence and power. After the peace of Loudun he received the position of a *lieutenant général* of Normandy and the citadel of Caen in exchange for the citadel of Amiens and the *lieutenance générale* of Picardy.[29] His influence and his role in the government of Marie de' Medici grew and became apparent in the ministerial reshuffle after the peace of Loudun already mentioned above.

Prior to and during the peace negotiations of Loudun, the rebel *grands* had already demanded that the foreign favourite be relieved of his power. They took particular offence at his control of court patronage.[30] After Loudun the opposition of the nobles stiffened because of Concini's consolidation of power. Their hatred of Concini brought together higher nobles who were divided on many other questions, for

[28] Cf. Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France*, vi/2. 185–6; Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 69–70; Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 300–8; Carmona, *Richelieu*, pp. 237–9, 257–8. Claude Barbin was former *courtier de banque* and *surintendant de la maison de la reine-mère*. He was one of Concini's *créatures*. The same is true of Mangot, who had become *premier président* of the *parlement* of Bordeaux shortly before, thanks to the support he got from Concini. Guillaume du Vair was *premier président* at the *parlement* of Aix. After the fall of Chancellor Brûlart in May 1616 he became keeper of the seals on Villeroy's initiative. When du Vair himself fell out of favour in Nov. 1616, Mangot took over this office. Armand de Plessis de Richelieu, bishop of Luçon (1585–1642) became *secrétaire d'état aux affaires étrangères et à la guerre* on 24 Nov. 1616.

[29] Cf. Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 225–8, 261, 325–8; Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France*, vi/2. 177–8, 184–5; Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, pp. 156, 177, 181; G. Delamare, *Le Maréchal d'Ancre* (Paris, 1961), *passim*; F. Hayem, *Le Maréchal d'Ancre et Léonora Galigaï* (Paris, 1910); G. Mongrédien, *Léonora Galigaï: un procès de sorcellerie sous Louis XIII* (Paris, 1968).

[30] R. Bonney, *The King's Debts: Finance and Politics in France 1589–1661* (Oxford, 1981), p. 78.

example Condé and Charles de Lorraine, duke of Guise. Together they conspired and planned the removal of Concini, going so far as to discuss the kidnapping of Marie de' Medici. However, mutual distrust and indecision eventually led Condé to disclose the project to the queen mother. He proved so inept in his machinations, that he was finally arrested on 1 September 1616. In response to this, and the further consolidation of Concini's power, the *grands* once again reacted with open rebellion. They demanded the end of the *ministère Concini* and the return of the dismissed ministers. In a manifesto dated 5 March 1617 they declared: 'Les étrangers et leurs fauteurs se sont impatronisés et mis en possession de la personne du Roi et de l'administration et absolu gouvernement qu'ils occupent injustement et exercent avec une extrême tyrannie et oppression.'[31] The rebellion of the *grands* and the danger of its escalation into a long civil war was ended by the *coup d'état* of 24 April 1617 in which Concini was killed and Marie de' Medici lost her former position in the monarchy.[32]

Against the background of the events of the years between the death of Henry IV and the fall of Concini briefly outlined above, Denis Richet has rightly described the regency of Marie de' Medici as a time when the monarchy and its central institutions—but not the provinces—suffered serious setbacks 'dans ses profondeurs'.[33] These years were marked by the struggle of the higher nobility and their followers against the representatives of the crown, in which the latter undoubtedly suffered a great loss of authority. In spite of all the successes of the *grands*, however, the impact of this *réaction aristocratique* should not be overestimated, as neither the *grands*, nor the estates-general of 1614, nor the protestants could shake fundamentally what had been accomplished under Henry IV.[34]

[31] 'Déclaration et protestation des princes, ducs et pairs, 5 mars 1617', p. 20; cf. also Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, p. 328, and cf. Bonney, *The King's Debts*, pp. 88–9.

[32] Cf. Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 300–36; Carmona, *Richelieu* (above, n. 7), pp. 238–64, 285–95; Chevallier, *Louis XIII* (above, n. 10), pp. 69–70, 141–4; E. W. Marwick, *Louis XIII: The Making of a King* (New Haven and London, 1986), pp. 175–200.

[33] '. . . c'est au sommet de l'État (révolutions de palais, intrigues des Grands, agitation des notables protestants) et non dans ses profondeurs que se produisent les retournements apparents', Richet, *La France moderne*, p. 72.

[34] Cf. ibid.

The time of the kings was not yet over and the reign of the princes and *grands* had not begun, as Condé had said in 1610. Still, the *grands* had not been tamed by the crown, and the court had not yet become the sole, uncontested social and political centre of France.[35] The court élite had not yet acquired a monopoly of power under Marie de' Medici.[36]

'La taverne est la même, il n'y a que le bouchon de changé.' Everything had in fact remained the same—that is how the duke of Bouillon assessed the situation in the monarchy some time *after* Concini's fall.[37] The judgements of numerous historians on Louis XIII's rule in the years 1617 to 1624 are all basically the same. Similarities between these years and the regency of Marie de' Medici are evident, particularly the weakness of the government.[38] Denis Richet is as critical as Louis Tapié when he states that after the murder of Concini another favourite, the duke of Luynes, exercised *de facto* power in the state and was just as ineffective when dealing with the princes and *grands* as his predecessor.[39] While similarities with the period 1610 to 1617 cannot be overlooked, a more precise analysis cannot fail to show the differences and the progress achieved after 1617, which, although not spectacular, was undoubtedly real.

An immediate consequence of the act of violence at the ministerial level was that the members of the *ministère Concini*, that is, Barbin, Mangot, and Richelieu, were removed from office and either put on trial or, in the case of Richelieu, sent into exile.[40] It was probably under the influence of Charles

[35] N. Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie* (5th edn., Frankfurt-on-Main, 1983; 1st edn. 1969), p. 291.

[36] Cf. ibid. 400–4. Elias employs the term *Monopolelite*.

[37] Quoted by Chevallier, *Louis XIII* (above, n. 10), p. 209; cf. also Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII* (above, n. 7), p. 96: Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, duc de Bouillon.

[38] 'D'abord, à l'intérieur du royaume. La faiblesse du gouvernement de Louis XIII éclate à nos yeux justement par sa ressemblance avec la régence de sa mère. Malgré un avantage de prestige pour la personne au pouvoir, le jeune Roi étant plus populaire que la Reine, le régime présentait les mêmes caractères que le précédent', Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII*, p. 96.

[39] 'Quand, en 1617, Louis XIII secoua la tutelle de sa mère, fit assassiner Concini, ce fut un autre favori, Luynes, qui exerça en fait le pouvoir, sans plus d'efficacité ni à l'égard des princes ni à l'égard des protestants', Richet, *La France moderne*, p. 72.

[40] Cf. Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 173–7; Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 369–78; Carmona, *Richelieu*, pp. 321–6; Bonney, *The King's Debts*, pp. 93–4.

d'Albert de Luynes, close confidant of the king and main initiator of the violent actions against Concini, that most of the king's former ministers were reinstated. The aged Brûlart de Sillery once again became chancellor, and Guillaume du Vair became keeper of the seals (*garde des sceaux*). Both had already served under Henry IV. The same was true of the secretary of state, Neufville de Villeroy, and of the superintendent of finances, Pierre Jeannin.[41] However, Puisieux, son of the chancellor Brûlart de Sillery, was also employed again as secretary of state. Sully, on the other hand, was not recalled. Until his death on 12 November 1617, Villeroy was the most important man in the ministry; he was succeeded in this position by Brûlart de Sillery.[42] All in all, the political position of these ministers was much stronger than that of their immediate predecessors under Concini.

In the years between 1617 and 1624, that is, the beginning of Richelieu's ministry, the *conseil du roi* once again became the centre of political decision-making. The young king, who had hardly been prepared to rule, did not want to leave the running of the government to a favourite once again. On the whole, Louis XIII took part regularly in the meetings of the royal councils, especially in those of the *conseil des affaires*, in which all essential political affairs were discussed and decided. Nearly all the evidence of the time shows that the king wanted to be informed on everything concerning the monarchy. And so he had every issue brought before the *conseil* to be discussed and decided there, even if it was of minor political relevance. 'Le roi ne fait rien sans son Conseil'[43]— this is how Sully rightly characterized the king's government at that time.

His decisions mainly followed the votes of the majority of the council. That does not mean that he had no opinions of his own or that he did not depart from the majority vote at times, but the members of the *conseil* certainly played a major role in the decision-making process. Their influence was all the more important as there were fewer council members than there

[41] Ballande, *Rebelle et conseiller*, pp. 233–5.

[42] Cf. Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 177–9; Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 349–51; Bonney, *The King's Debts*, pp. 93–5; Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France*, vi/2. 196.

[43] Quoted by Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, p. 182.

had been during the regency of Marie de' Medici. Moreover, as far as we know, higher nobles no longer played the all-important role that they had played in the council at the time of Marie de' Medici. The young Louis XIII was already aware of the fact that he personified royal authority. And he required that it be respected.

Louis XIII's contemporaries were fully aware of his basic viewpoint. Even the critics of the king took this fact into account, and they did not dare to attack him directly—except on rare occasions. Rather, they used the fiction that the king was a prisoner of a *camarilla*. Louis XIII firmly rejected such accusations. When Marie de' Medici spread similar reports from the castle of Blois at the time of her flight he answered: 'On ne peut accuser le gouvernement de mon État que le blâme n'en tombe principalement sur moi; c'est pourquoi je ne dois point croire que vous voulussiez m'ôter la gloire de mon règne en me donnant la réputation de n'agir que par les mouvements d'autrui.' Some days earlier the king had already tried hard to make clear to his mother that 'Je ferai connaître . . . que c'est moi qui gouverne mon royaume et qui agis en tous mes conseils.'[44] There can be no doubt that Louis XIII had a strong will and was aware of his *plenitudo potestatis*.[45]

The general view, presented in the older literature on the subject as well as in some recent works,[46] that Albert de Luynes dominated the king and the monarchy seems to contradict these facts. Such an interpretation of the political role of Louis XIII's favourite is supported by the fact that he, like Concini, became not only a very rich but also an influential man, receiving high offices and considerable property within a short period of time thanks to royal favour. His family and relatives profited from this as well as his clientele. Luynes received not only the largest part of the executed Léonora Galigaï's fortune but also the *lieutenance générale* of Normandy, the governorships of Amboise, Pont-de-l'Arche, and the Île de France, as well as the marquisat d'Ancre, to mention just a few of his acquisitions. He held the highest court offices (*premier gentilhomme de la chambre*), married into a family of the high nobility, the Rohan-Montbazon,

[44] Ibid. 186. [45] Ibid. 177–86.

[46] Cf. Tapié, *La France de Louis XIII*, p. 96; Marwick, *Louis XIII*, p. 219.

became *connétable*, and in 1619 *duc et pair de France*.[47] Moreover, he was a member of the *conseil du roi*, but he did not have an official function in the council nor was he officially *principal ministre*. More often than not, to be sure, ministers were subjected to his influence and often came to an agreement with him. The apparatus of government, however, worked more or less independently of him under the control of the ministers responsible for the different areas. *De jure*, Luynes had neither leading functions nor the power to give orders in the council. He could take part in the debates along with the chancellor and the official ministers—just like any other non-official member. And very often the *conseil*, the ministers, voted against him. He had to accept this, because he had no legal right to oppose them.[48]

Luynes also played only a minor role in the most important foreign and domestic affairs of those years, that is, the question of the Valtelline and the Huguenot problem. Even though the king's favourite made belligerent declarations on the Valtelline issue in front of foreign diplomats, the ministers were quite firm in opposing him. And indeed at that time the king's government was anxious to find a diplomatic solution. France was not able to pursue an aggressive policy as the king was occupied with domestic problems in these years: the conflict with Marie de' Medici and the problem of the Huguenots. Luynes was opposed to war against the Huguenots. Even so, the king waged war against them between 1620 and 1622 in the south and south-east of the monarchy.[49]

Taking into consideration the facts outlined only briefly here, one must agree with Pierre Chevallier's balanced assessment of the role of Albert de Luynes: 'S'il [Luynes] n'a pas eu sur les affaires de l'État la haute main qu'une historiographie trop complaisante lui a longtemps attribuée, il n'en reste cependant pas moins celui qui avait l'oreille du prince, de la volonté—sinon du caprice—duquel dépendait le

[47] J.-P. Labatut, *Les Ducs et pairs de France au XVII^e siècle* (Publications de la Sorbonne. NS recherches, 1; Paris, 1972), p. 129.

[48] Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 186–94.

[49] Ibid. 194–7. On the debate on the role of de Luynes in French foreign policy at that time, cf. B. Zeller, *Le Connétable de Luynes: Montauban et la Valteline* (Paris, 1879); L. Batiffol, *Le Roi Louis XIII à vingt ans* (Paris, 1910).

sort des ministres.'[50] We can be sure that under Louis XIII Luynes could not interfere in political decisions in the same way as Concini had done towards the end of Marie de' Medici's reign. To this extent, the monarchy had made notable, but not spectacular progress in strengthening its authority.

We can observe a similar development in the relationship between the king and the higher nobility. Even though members of the higher nobility openly rebelled between 1617 and 1624, there are differences compared with similar actions of the *grands* between 1610 and 1617. The focus of the higher nobility's opposition was the quarrel between Louis XIII and his mother, Marie de' Medici. After Concini's fall she had been removed not only from her official functions but also from Paris, and she had been more or less imprisoned in Blois. Marie de' Medici, however, was not prepared to accept this situation. Moreover, she was determined to win back her power—at least in part. Dissatisfied higher nobles who either felt that their legitimate claims had been neglected or were increasingly angry at Luynes's rapid rise to power, were able to exploit the tensions between mother and son.

The year 1618–19 saw the first open conflict between Marie de' Medici and the duke of Epernon on the one side, and the king on the other. Epernon was *colonel-général de l'infanterie française* and thus had great influence and prestige in the royal army. As governor of Metz he was in command of an important gateway to France. In addition, he was in charge of the *gouvernements* of Aunis and Saintonge, which had a comparatively large population of Huguenots.[51] Thus the ground was prepared for the formation of a large party of nobles around the queen mother, that was potentially dangerous for the crown.

Marie de' Medici was anxious to find allies among the country's *grands*. However, her campaign was largely unsuccessful. This may be explained to a large extent by the increased authority of the king. This suggestion is supported

[50] Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, p. 194.

[51] On Epernon see N. B. Fessenden, 'Epernon and Guyenne: Provincial Politics under Louis XIII' (Ph.D. thesis; Columbia, 1972; University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1973).

by the fact that most of the *grands* wanted to maintain close connections with Louis XIII. The incipient changes in the relationship between king and higher nobility can also be seen in the treaty of Angoulême of 30 April 1619. This treaty brought the open conflict to an end, at least for the time being. In contrast to former practice under Marie de' Medici, this time the peace was not bought with enormous amounts of money and the allocation of sinecures. Epernon was merely granted a general pardon and given back his *gouvernements* and offices. Only Marie de' Medici was able to improve her position substantially. But this was mainly due to the fact that the king was anxious for a reconciliation with his mother.[52]

The crown acted in the same way in the treaty of Angers in August 1620, which put an end to the second open conflict between Marie de' Medici and rebellious *grands* on the one hand, and the king on the other. In this treaty, too, the rebellious higher nobles merely received a general pardon and were restored to their offices and titles. The crown was prepared only to restore the status quo ante.[53] If we compare the events of 1617–24 with corresponding developments in the period from 1610 to 1617, we can see the progress achieved in restoring the authority of the crown. The crown's behaviour towards the higher nobility was more determined and the king was unwilling to make concessions to the *grands*. Even so, the members of the leading noble families were far from being deprived of their power. However, in those years it became obvious that a king who was aware of the power he wielded was willing to confront their political ambitions.

When Richelieu was appointed to the royal council on 29 April 1624 and thus became a minister, France was governed by a rather mediocre government. At that time Louis XIII ruled with the help of his *conseil secret*. The queen mother, cardinal de la Rochefaucould, the *connétable* de Lesdiguières, and the new superintendent of finances, Vieuville, were members of this council. Vieuville worked as *de facto principal ministre* after he had ousted the last of Henry IV's servants, the

[52] Cf. Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 209–19; Carmona, *Richelieu*, pp. 332–46; Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France*, vi/2. 200–1.

[53] Cf. Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 219–23; Carmona, *Richelieu*, pp. 358–65; Lavisse (ed.), *Histoire de France*, vi/2. 202–3.

chancellor, Brûlart de Sillery, and his son, Secretary of State Puisieux, from the council. Richelieu did not become leading minister until August 1624, after Vieuville had fallen from favour. At first, however, Richelieu simply exercised the function of a principal minister. He only acquired the official titles *principal ministre* and *chef du conseil* later. As is well known, Richelieu remained principal minister until his death on 4 December 1642.[54]

After the death of Albert de Luynes (15 December 1621), Louis XIII had declared that there would be neither a *connétable* nor a royal favourite in future. At all events, he did not want to tolerate a favourite or anybody else who tried to dominate the running of the government.[55] He realized at least the last part of his declaration: Richelieu was not a favourite; there was a strong contrast between Richelieu's ministry and that of his counterparts since the death of Henry IV. The cardinal was always aware of the fact that not only his political position in the monarchy, but his entire existence depended on the king's favour. He always respected the king's authority and his sole decision-making powers.

It was one of Louis XIII's concerns to preserve his authority in every regard. Therefore he was not prepared to delegate the decision-making power that, as an absolute monarch, rested solely with him. Richelieu always respected this and not only for the selfish reason of keeping his position as principal minister. The cardinal and the king agreed on the basic need to preserve the authority of the crown and defend it against attacks. In spite of all the differences that arose between the king and the minister at times, in important situations they were unanimous in supporting a decision once it had been taken.

[54] Cf. Bérenger, 'Le Problème du ministériat au XVII[e] siècle' (above, n. 5), p. 170; Bonney, *The King's Debts*, pp. 109–10. The *conseil des affaires* continued in existence under Louis XIII under the following names: *conseil des dépêches, conseil étroit, conseil secret, conseil de cabinet, conseil des ministres*, and from 1643 *conseil d'en haut*. Cf. Mousnier, 'Le Conseil du roi' (above, n. 6), p. 7.

[55] Cf. F. Hildesheimer, *Richelieu: une certaine idée de l'état*, preface by R. Mousnier (Condé-sur-Noireau, 1985), p. 52; A. L. Moote, 'Louis XIII, Richelieu and Two-Headed Monarchy', in *Proceedings of the 10th Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, Winnipeg, 1982 (1982), p. 203; Bonney, *The King's Debts*, p. 116; Bérenger, 'Le Problème du ministériat au XVII[e] siècle', pp. 171–2.

Richelieu's ministry was also, as has recently been correctly pointed out, an 'association politique d'un roi absolu désireux de bien gouverner et d'être un grand roi, conscient de sa pleine puissance, mais se sentant faible et d'un ministre d'une intelligence supérieure associé étroitement à ses pensées et à ses intentions, éventuellement les inspirant, et tenant de lui sa puissance'.[56] Mutual trust between the cardinal and the king and agreement on the basic questions of French policy were necessary to maintain such a system. Both conditions were to a large extent fulfilled.[57] At its core, Richelieu's ministry was, as A. Lloyd Moote rightly claims, a 'two-headed monarchy'.[58]

This two-headed monarchy, that is, government by the king and Richelieu, was the result of a series of political clashes and conflicts culminating in the well-known *Journée des Dupes* (10, 11, and 12 November 1630). These conflicts were not only about controversial questions of domestic and foreign policy; they were primarily conflicts concerning Richelieu. An analysis of Richelieu's correspondence of May and June 1624, edited by Pierre Grillon in the first volume of the *Papiers de Richelieu*, shows that Richelieu had to face strong opposition from the start. The king and Richelieu tried to neutralize possible centres of resistance to Richelieu's political rise. Condé and the leading representatives of the families Luynes, Montmorency, and others were informed by royal letter of the appointment of the cardinal to the *conseil*. Their reaction was favourable. That was true, also, for a large number of the monarchy's high officials, the *officiers* and the *corps de ville*.

[56] Hildesheimer, *Richelieu*, p. 53.

[57] Louis XIII expressed his confidence in Richelieu as early as 9 June 1627: 'Tout, grâce à Dieu, y a bien succédé depuis que vous y êtes: j'ai toute confiance en vous, et il est vrai que je n'ai jamais trouvé personne qui me servît à mon gré comme vous. C'est ce qui me fait désirer et vous prier de ne point vous retirer car mes affaires iraient mal.' Quoted by Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, p. 286.

[58] Moote, 'Louis XIII, Richelieu and Two-Headed Monarchy' (above, n. 55), pp. 198–207. Chevallier is thinking of the same when he speaks of the *duumvirat* for the years between the *Journée des Dupes* (10, 11, and 12 Nov. 1630) and the death of Richelieu (4 Dec. 1642): Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 407–9. For a description of Richelieu's ministry cf. Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 282–8; Bérenger, 'Le Problème du ministériat au XVII^e siècle', pp. 166–77; Hildesheimer, *Richelieu*, pp. 53–4; J. Bergin, *Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth* (New Haven and London, 1985), pp. 69–80.

Among the well-wishers, however, there were comparatively few members of the higher nobility.[59]

In the *conseil secret* Richelieu was able to extend and consolidate his position only gradually. He had increasingly to take into account the opposition of Marie de' Medici, who since 31 January 1622, after her reconciliation with Louis XIII,[60] had been allowed to take part in the sessions of the council. The growing tensions between the queen mother and the cardinal resulted from their differences of opinion on questions of foreign and domestic policy, but particularly from the fact that Richelieu had by now shaken off the queen mother's influence which had been largely responsible for his rise to power. She had intended to use him as her instrument in the council, but her hopes were not fulfilled. Richelieu, follower of Marie de' Medici in the past, had become a *créature* of the king.[61] Richelieu skilfully utilized the then common means of informal domination, that is patronage, fidelity, and clientele relationships, in his attempt to consolidate and strengthen his position in the royal council.[62] Orest A. Ranum has examined by way of an example the cardinal's determined and successful method of placing his *créatures* in the council between 1635 and 1642.[63] From 1624, Richelieu was already able to rely on the councillor of state (*conseiller d'état*), Claude de Bullion, who supported him against Claude Marillac, devoted servant of Marie de' Medici and influential head of the *parti dévot*. In the following years Richelieu made Bullion *chancelier de la reine-mère*. Thanks to Richelieu's support Bullion became superintendent of finances on 4 August 1632, together with Claude de Bouthillier, another of the cardinal's *créatures*. The family Bouthillier had belonged to the clientele

[59] Cf. documents nos. 1–37, in P. Grillon (ed.), *Les Papiers de Richelieu. Section politique intérieure: correspondance et papiers d'état* (Monumenta Europae Historica, 1 (1624–6); Paris, 1975), pp. 65–94.

[60] Carmona, *Marie de Médicis*, p. 394.

[61] 'La relation protecteur-créature est très proche de la relation maître-fidèle: la créature se "donne" à son protecteur avec les nuances d'affection totale et service sans limite, de l'autre protection et avancement et de la fonction que nous appelons aujourd'hui "publique" '. Hildesheimer, *Richelieu*, p. 54. Cf. also Reinhard, *Freunde und Kreaturen* (above, n. 14).

[62] Cf. R. Mousnier, *Les Institutions de la France sous la monarchie absolue 1598–1789*, i: *Société et état* (Paris, 1974), pp. 85–93; Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients* (above, n. 4).

[63] Ranum, *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII* (above, n. 4).

of Richelieu's family since the time of Richelieu's grandfather.[64]

In the year 1625, a distinct group of the cardinal's men emerged. Richelieu used these men to surround Marie de' Medici. Four years later he gained the support of the clan of the Phélypeaux by ensuring, against the resistance of Marillac and despite the king's reluctance, that Louis Phélypeaux received the office of secretary of state as successor to his father,[65] Raymond Phélypeaux. One of the intendants of finances (*intendant des finances*), François Sublet de Noyers, and the cardinal's *éminence grise*, Père Joseph, who was entrusted with important diplomatic missions to Germany, can also be regarded as Richelieu's creatures. By the decisive point in his career, the *Journée des Dupes*, Richelieu already had a considerable network of *créatures* at his disposal.[66] He used it to strengthen his position and his influence in the council. In this way he increasingly succeeded in leading the council's and the king's decision-making processes in a political direction he considered in the interests of the state.[67] Until November 1630, however, the cardinal neither dominated the *conseil*, nor controlled the departments of the secretaries of state.[68] He himself admitted later that it had been easier to gain success on the battlefields in Europe than to conquer the 'quatre pieds carrés du Cabinet du roi'.[69]

This he achieved only after the *Journée des Dupes*, after which opponents and critics of his anti-Spanish foreign policy and his domestic policy—Marie de' Medici and the keeper of the seals, Marillac, the leader of the *parti dévot*—were exiled. In 1632 he provided Claude Bouthillier with the superintendency of finances (*surintendance des finances*). At the same time,

[64] Cf. Bérenger, 'Le Problème du ministériat au XVII[e] siècle', p. 174; Ranum, *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII*, pp. 143–80; Bonney, *The King's Debts*, p. 158.

[65] Cf. Bérenger, 'Le Problème du ministériat au XVII[e] siècle', p. 174; Ranum, *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII*, pp. 35–6, 68–71, 89.

[66] Cf. Bérenger, 'Le Problème du ministériat au XVII[e] siècle', p. 174; Hildesheimer, *Richelieu*, p. 56; Bonney, *The King's Debts*, p. 5. On François Sublet de Noyers cf. Ranum, *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII*, pp. 41–2, 88, 100–19; on Père Joseph see Abbé L. Dedouvres, *Le Père Joseph de Paris, capucin: l'éminence grise* (2 vols.; Paris, 1932).

[67] E. Thuau, *Raison d'état et pensée politique à l'époque de Richelieu* (Paris, 1966).

[68] Cf. Bérenger, 'Le Problème du ministériat au XVII[e] siècle', p. 174; Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp. 279–407.

Richelieu succeeded in filling three out of the four offices of secretary of state with his *créatures*. Léon Bouthillier, son of Claude Bouthillier, became secretary of state for foreign affairs and François Sublet de Noyers became secretary of state for war. Louis Phélypeaux, also one of Richelieu's clients, had already become secretary of state in 1629. Richelieu instructed Léon Bouthillier, count of Chavigny, always to stay in the king's immediate vicinity. He had the task of reporting on the king's different moods and of keeping unpleasant influences away from him.[70] In this way, Richelieu was able to influence the king's decisions after 1630 through his *créatures*. In addition, Richelieu regulated all contacts between the king and his ministers. Thanks to a dense network of patronage, fidelity, and clientele relations that was not limited to the court, the government, and Paris, but also extended to the provinces,[71] the cardinal was able to dominate the central and provincial administration to a large degree without having to change traditional institutions.[72] Richelieu achieved control of the centres of political decision-making by controlling the decision-makers in those offices. This was clearly expressed by Cardinal Barberini, secretary of state of the Holy See as early as 1639: 'Le gouvernement est réduit au seul cardinal de Richelieu qui sert des ministres nommés par ses soins, en particulier le Garde des Sceaux, les généraux des Finances et des Secrétaires [d'État] Boutiglier [!], Chavigny et Noyers.'[73]

Richelieu recruited his creatures mainly from the upper levels of the higher and highest courts (*cours souveraines*) as well as from the officers in the committees of the *conseil*, that is, among the so-called *robe du conseil*. However, he also had

[69] Chevallier, *Louis III*, p. 407.

[70] Cf. Bérenger, 'Le Problème du ministériat au XVII[e] siècle', pp. 171, 174–5; Ranum, *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII*, pp. 68–71, 77–119; Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, pp. 17–18.

[71] Hildesheimer, *Richelieu*, p. 55.

[72] Cf. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients*, pp. 157–61; K. M. Dunkley, 'Patronage and Power in Seventeenth-Century France: Richelieu's Clients and the Estates of Britanny', in *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, I (1981), pp. 1–12.

[73] 'Instruction donnée au nonce extraordinaire Scotti par le cardinal secrétaire d'État', 21 May 1639, in P. Blet (ed.), *Correspondance du nonce en France Ranuccio Scotti (1639–1641)* (Rome and Paris, 1965), p. 96.

numerous clients within the clergy and among the representatives of the crown in the provinces as well as in the towns.[74] The more or less distant members of the cardinal's family of course belonged to his large clientele, too, and they profited to a large degree from his political, social, and material rise.[75] Richelieu used his large clientele not only to influence the processes of political decision-making at court and in the government in order to carry out those political decisions in the provinces, but also to supervise declared or potential opponents of his policy and his person within the higher and the provincial nobility.[76]

In general, Richelieu rejected Marie de' Medici's former policy of appeasement with regard to the rebellious members of the higher nobility. The basis of his own policy towards the nobles was his conviction that the nobility must serve the king peacefully and courageously. In ancient times, so he believed, this had been the case. In the recent past, however, members of the higher nobility in particular—a group which he does not define, but in which he includes about twenty-five *grands*[77]—had challenged the authority of the crown by means of riots and plots. Right from the start of his work in the royal council, therefore, Richelieu was determined to face resolutely any illegal behaviour and especially rebellions of higher nobles and to punish the offenders severely.[78] Richelieu was convinced that the king's authority and the welfare of the monarchy as well as the king's unrestricted ability to act within and outside the country was incompatible with the

[74] Cf. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, pp. 157–61.

[75] Cf. Bergin, *Cardinal Richelieu* (above, n. 58); Bérenger, 'Le Problème du ministériat au XVII^e siècle', p. 175; Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, pp. 24–5, 179–81.

[76] Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, p. 159.

[77] Richelieu listed the *grands*, while counting their enormous pensions, in a letter to Schomberg, 29 Dec. 1616, in *Lettres, instructions diplomatiques et papiers d'état du cardinal de Richelieu*, ed. L. Avenel (Collection des documents inédits de l'histoire de France, 1; Paris, 1853), no. 176, p. 232.

[78] Orest A. Ranum has rightly pointed out that: 'Any thought of breaking the nobility as a privileged class was foreign to Richelieu. His whole framework of motive on social questions was bent on restoration rather than revolution or renovation. The Cardinal did believe he had restored social equilibrium to France, while his contemporaries and historians until fairly recent times concluded that he was an innovator and destroyer of the very social structure he worked to restore to its original grandeur.' O. A. Ranum, 'Richelieu and the Great Nobility: Some Aspects of Early Modern Political Motives', *French Historical Studies*, 3 (1963), 184–204, p. 186.

independent power of the *grands* within the state. Even though he opposed such ambitions, however, Richelieu did not question the privileged social status of the nobility.

> The prestige, provincial power, wealth, military valor, and passion of the *grands* were not objects of his attack. He wished them to obey the king . . . The princes and the great nobles remained the highest and most respected subjects of the realm, but if for any reason they rebelled, the Cardinal considered them traitors.[79]

For the *grands*, however, their privileges and their demands for political influence were closely linked. They saw them as two sides of the same coin and considered their exclusion from the committees of the *conseil du roi* a frontal attack on their traditional rights and privileges. The more Richelieu was able to consolidate and strengthen his position as principal minister, and the more often members of the higher nobility, frequently together with members of the royal family, were directly or indirectly involved in plots, the more decisively did the cardinal pursue his policy of depriving the *grands* of their political power. 'Perhaps his most dramatic political act for the *grands* was to separate them physically from the king, for though they were councillors, they were rarely invited to attend the king.'[80]

The higher nobles were affected not only by their exclusion from the council, but also directly or indirectly by the measures Richelieu took both for fiscal reasons and to mobilize the forces within the country in order to be able to support the struggle against the house of Habsburg that he thought necessary. However, the fact that under Richelieu their part in the royal patronage system seemed to be diminishing perhaps irritated the *grands* even more than this 'political change'—as has been examined by Richard Bonney.[81] Thus it is easy to understand that Richelieu's far-reaching control over patronage was one of the factors that

[79] Ranum, 'Richelieu and the Great Nobility', p. 191; cf. ibid. 184 ff.

[80] Ibid. 201.

[81] R. Bonney, *Political Change in France under Richelieu and Mazarin 1624–1661* (Oxford, 1978). A. L. Moote uses the rather problematic term 'governmental "revolution" ': A. L. Moote, *The Revolt of the Judges: The Parlement of Paris and the Fronde 1643–1652* (Princeton, NJ, 1971), pp. 36–63.

triggered off some conspiracies and revolts among the nobles.[82]

The Cardinal's patronage policies were so unpopular with the great nobles that after his death the regency government reversed them: Louis XIII on his deathbed pardoned all the governors dismissed by Richelieu except one, and a number of the politically proscribed under Richelieu regained their positions during the first years of Mazarin's ministry.[83]

In the relationship between the king and Richelieu on the one hand and the *grands* on the other, no fundamental differences between the years before and after the *Journée des Dupes* can be noticed. Both *before* and *after* 1630 Richelieu reacted to open rebellions with the same determination—and the king sometimes even surpassed him. Before 1630 Richelieu perhaps tried harder to win the confidence of members of the higher nobility in order to neutralize them and their clients as possible opponents. The cardinal's pragmatism is obvious in his attitude towards Condé, the 'uncontested leader of the *grands*', who was given a military command in the war against the rebellious Huguenots. On the whole, it can be observed that 'Richelieu did not withhold great powers from the *grands* when situations arose demanding their employment'.[84]

In 1634 Richelieu felt sure that he had finally got his way with the higher nobility thanks to his firm policy and particularly the exemplary punishment of rebels. He believed 'that the *grands* would be cleansed of that spirit which made them act as though they were not royal subjects'.[85] The conspiracy of the royal favourite, Henri d'Effiat, marquis de Cinq-Mars, in 1642, however, shows that Richelieu had been wrong in 1634. Still, it cannot be denied that Richelieu had succeeded in establishing the king's authority over the higher nobility too. An important step had been made on the long road to depriving the *grands* of their political power. Compared to the regency of Marie de' Medici the authority of the crown and the court as the centre of the government had been not only restored but considerably strengthened. Nearly all the higher nobles had been eliminated from the *conseil du roi.*

[82] Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients*, pp. 180–1.
[83] Ibid. 181.
[84] Ranum, 'Richelieu and the Great Nobility', p. 194.
[85] Ibid. 197.

Under Richelieu, the *robe du conseil* had gained importance instead. The mighty rise of the leading and most important families of the *noblesse de robe* into sections of the *conseil* was one of the main reasons for the renewed vigour of the opposition of the higher nobles during the Fronde—that first, albeit short, crisis of French absolutism.