

THE EARLY MODERN STATE: A HISTORICALLY ENSNARED ENTITY

The drama at the heart of our study is one of an anxious quest, as violent in its repertoire of actions as it is ambitious in its goals, for the establishment of a royal government of peace, truth, and justice, ensuring concord and harmony under the sacred leadership of the King of France¹.

It unfolds in France of the 1560s, beset by a fierce civil war, which, by the century's end, evolved into a European conflict. The conflagration involving the three great monarchies of France, England, and Spain exacerbated the internal strife, giving it vigor, subsidies, and fresh stakes². The Kingdom of France in the early modern period, specifically from the 1560s to the 1620s, was plagued by cyclical religious confrontations. The intensity and duration of these conflicts, which engaged powerful social and territorial interests, endowed the confessional question with political stakes of the highest order. Massacres, deaths, and destruction, marauding bands, and financial ruin, the taking up of arms by the nobility, thus formed the persistent fabric of the French chronicle. Yet, if one shifts the gaze to the 1680s, the kingdom is indeed at war on its fringes, but it is the effective and joint mobilization of the State and the martial glory of the King that propels it³. The State is restored; the King is glorified. The halcyon days of the cardinal's ministerial leadership would be the harbinger, continued by the epoch of the great civil servants under the hand of Louis XIV. This interpretation is a cultural legacy, ancient and born from practices of the Ancien Régime for purposes other than scientific. It was crafted almost contemporaneously with the reign of Louis XIV, continued under Louis XV, notably by Voltaire in 'The Age of Louis XIV' published in 1751, and further adopted and expanded in the 19th and 20th centuries⁴. In this narrative of the political sequence of civil war, which certainly does not conclude with the signing of the Edict of Nantes, the latter half of the sixteenth century in general, and the last Valois in particular, are cursed⁵. Catherine de Médicis, Charles IX, and Henri III are doubly guilty of having destroyed the State and diminished royal power, at times too weak to maintain the socio-political compromise of the late Middle Ages, and at times too fervent in their blind defense of Catholic orthodoxy⁶. The painting by François Dubois, *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew (circa 1572-1584)*, offers a striking contemporary illustration. The vilified queen, leaning over the naked and tortured bodies of the witnesses of the Reformed faith, emerges from the royal palace accompanied by a hellish soldiery. The Valois State has its seat in Hell, while the Bourbon's restores the divine vocation of the kingdom of the lilies. The first historians of institutions subscribed to this reading, following in the wake of the revival of the monarchical ideal in the nineteenth century. Even today, certain scientific approaches are affected by the blinders imposed by such a framework of thought, forged for

¹ These few pages are the working translation of the introduction to our monograph published by Champ Vallon in October 2022: <http://www.champ-vallon.com/letat-a-la-lettre-ecrit-politique-et-societe-administrative-en-france-au-temps-des-guerres-de-religion-vers-1560-vers-1620/>

² Laurent Bourquin, « Les défis des guerres de Religion, 1559-1610 », in Joël Cornette (dir.), *La Monarchie entre Renaissance et Révolution, 1515-1792*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2000, p. 63-136.

³ Joël Cornette, *Le Roi de guerre. Essai sur la souveraineté dans la France du Grand Siècle*, Paris, Payot, 2010.

⁴ Stanis Perez, « Les brouillons de l'absolutisme : les "mémoires" de Louis XIV en question », *Dix-septième siècle*, 2004, 1, n° 222, p. 25-50 ; John Campbell, « Entre le "siècle de Louis XIV" et le siècle des Lumières : la rhétorique voltairienne à l'oeuvre », *Littératures classiques*, 2011, 3, n° 76, p. 85-97 ; Jean Dagen, Anne-Sophie Barrovecchio (éd.), *Voltaire et le Grand Siècle*, Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 2006.

⁵ Pierre-Gilles Girault, Nicolas Le Roux (dir.), *Fêtes et crimes à la Renaissance : la cour d'Henri III, catalogue d'exposition (Blois, château royal, 8 mai-24 août 2010)*, Paris-Blois, Somogy-Château royal de Blois, 2010 ; Nicolas Le Roux, *Un régicide au nom de Dieu. L'assassinat d'Henri III (1^{er} août 1589)*, Paris, Gallimard, 2006.

⁶ Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu. La violence au temps des troubles de religion, v. 1525-v. 1610*, 2 vol., Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 1990, t. II, p. 483-520.

political purposes. The social demand that weighs on the history of the early modern period is now structured under different laws. It has evolved the historical objects that researchers set for themselves as the discipline has established itself as a social science, equipped with new tools that were once foreign to it: network analysis, prosopographical surveys, contributions from lexicography, and, more generally, a greater openness to other social sciences have allowed for significant advances and the exploration of new fields of inquiry⁷. These tools, backed by massive collations and formidable ventures of systematic sampling in archival funds and heritage deposits, have developed anew a framework of analysis and work which, if scientifically more accurate, was no less constraining for historians specializing in the sixteenth century. Between a luminous Renaissance and a conquering classicism, the latter sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries struggled to find their place in the historiography of recent decades. Yet this chronological pivot was more extensively documented and cultivated by English, Spanish, Italian, and German historians for reasons specific to their historical traditions and related to the structure of social demand in each of these countries⁸. At the same time, certain essential aspects of the early seventeenth century have only been studied recently⁹. The current thematic grasp of the political fact during the Wars of Religion was undertaken through the works of Denis Richet, continued in their aspect of the social history of politics by Robert Descimon¹⁰. These studies were based on an understanding of the political fact as it was encapsulated within a complex bundle of political, religious, and social structures and imaginaries, solidly interlocked with one another. The exploration of the religious and philosophical imaginary of the warriors of God was conducted by Denis Crouzet, who analyzed it in detail by unraveling and reweaving the fabric of the monstrous event that was the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre¹¹. Arlette Jouanna and Jean-Marie Constant demonstrated how religious conflicts shattered the socio-political compromises between the French monarchy and nobility and explored the levers of mobilization such as honor, rank, and the duty of obedience¹². Olivier Christin documented the conduct of peace and the way in which each cycle of wars was concluded, the times of negotiations and contacts, all occasions for politicization which, by their frequency, contributed to structuring the theory of government that prevailed in the early years of the seventeenth century¹³. Finally, social history and its urban rooting constituted a fertile field of analysis, unfolding over the long term the mechanisms of war mobilizations, as demonstrated by Michel Cassan in Limoges and Wolfgang Kaiser in

⁷ Claire Lemerrier, « Analyse de réseaux et histoire », *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine [RHMC]*, 2, 2005, n° 52-2, p. 88-112 ; Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995.

⁸ Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press [CUP], 2005 ; Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Les Vieux Habits de l'Empereur. Une histoire culturelle des institutions du Saint-Empire à l'époque moderne*, trad. Christophe Duhamel, Paris, Éditions de la MSH, 2013 ; Pablo Fernández Albaladejo, *Fragmentos de monarquía*, Madrid, Alianza Universidad, 1993.

⁹ Nicolas Le Roux, *Le Roi, la cour, l'État. De la Renaissance à l'absolutisme*, Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 2014 ; Delphine Amstutz, Bernard Teyssandier, « 1617, Louis XIII prend le pouvoir. Naissance d'un mythe ? », *Dix-septième siècle*, 2017, 3, n° 276, p. 395-398 ; Hélène Duccini, *Faire voir et faire croire. L'opinion publique sous Louis XIII*, Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 2003 ; Fanny Cosandey, *Le Rang. Préséances et hiérarchies dans la France d'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Gallimard, 2016.

¹⁰ Denis Richet, *De la Réforme à la Révolution. Études sur la France moderne*, Paris, Aubier, 1991 ; Robert Descimon, « La vénalité des offices et la construction de l'État dans la France moderne. Des problèmes de la représentation symbolique aux problèmes du coût social du pouvoir », in *Id.*, Jean-Frédéric Schaub et Bernard Vincent (dir.), *Les Figures de l'administrateur. Institutions, réseaux, pouvoirs en Espagne, en France et au Portugal, xvie-xixe siècle*, Paris, EHESS, 1997, p. 77-93.

¹¹ Denis Crouzet, *La Nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy. Un rêve perdu de la Renaissance*, Paris, Fayard, 1994.

¹² Arlette Jouanna, *Le Devoir de révolte. La noblesse française et la gestation de l'État moderne, 1559-1661*, Paris, Fayard, 1989 ; Jean-Marie Constant, *La Noblesse en liberté XVI^e-XVII^e siècles*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes [désormais PUR], 2004.

¹³ Olivier Christin, *La Paix de religion. L'autonomisation de la raison politique au XVI^e siècle*, Paris, Seuil, 1997.

Marseille¹⁴. These few points of anchorage and stage became the stable and assured deposit of current historiography, now entered into a new cycle of mutations¹⁵.

A major historical object continues to raise sharp problems of method and analysis: the State¹⁶. If the question of the State generates so much inquiry, debate, and methodological issues for historians of the early modern period, it is due to the combined effect of two causes. The first, in our view, lies in the immensity of the undertakings related to the analysis of the genesis of the modern State that was conducted in the 1980s-1990¹⁷; the second is linked to the rapid transformations that the State has undergone in the last thirty years, not as an object, but as an overarching structure within which researchers situate themselves to materially conduct their research and teaching¹⁸. These profound transformations have had consequences on the very definition of their scientific objects and the context in which their research is received, the methods of work, and the geographic areas studied¹⁹. The conjunction of these two factors has enduringly ensnared the history of the State and, consequently, the administration and governance of the Kingdom of France. The question of the genesis of the modern State was posed as one of the structuring axes of many research programs, and while European and Anglo-Saxon historiographies posed new questions to power arrangements, notably using political sociology and anthropology, the analysis of the internal forces within the State's structures, the contours and horizons of the political society, and its reconfiguration was less explored²⁰. Thus, much more was done for the prosopographical capture of administrators than for restoring the interplay of scales and actors, the imaginaries and the competitive horizons of expectation between structures and institutions, in an approach dear to processual sociology²¹.

The question of genesis was undoubtedly one that allowed the greatest number to agree on a minimal definition of the object, but it raised more problems than it provided solutions²². This least common denominator among researchers from different areas and periods indeed

¹⁴ Michel Cassan, *Le Temps des guerres de Religion. Le cas du Limousin (vers 1530-vers 1630)*, Paris, Publisud, 1996 ; Wolfgang Kaiser, *Marseille au temps des troubles, 1559-1596 : morphologie sociale et luttes de factions*, Paris, EHESS, 1992.

¹⁵ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, « Par-delà l'incommensurabilité : pour une histoire connectée des empires aux temps modernes », *RHMC*, 2007, 5, n° 54-4 bis, p. 34-53 ; Roger Chartier, « La conscience de la globalité (commentaire) », *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* [Annales. HSS], 56^e année, n° 1, 2001, p. 119-123 ; Quentin Deluermoz et Pierre Singarvelou, *Pour une histoire des possibles. Analyses contrefactuelles et futurs non advenus*, Seuil, 2016.

¹⁶ Jean-Frédéric Schaub, « L'Histoire politique sans l'État : mutations et reformulations », *Historia a debate*, t. III, *Otros Enfoques*, Saint-Jacques de Compostelle, Carlos Barros, 1995, p. 217-234.

¹⁷ Jean-Philippe Genet (éd.), *L'État moderne. Genèse, Bilans et perspectives*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1990 ; Noël Coulet et Jean-Philippe Genet (dir.), *L'État moderne : le droit, l'espace et les formes de l'État*, Paris, CNRS, 1990 ; Michel Le Méné et Jean-Philippe Genet (éd.), *Genèse de l'État moderne. Prélèvement et redistribution*, Paris, CNRS, 1987.

¹⁸ Christophe Charle, « Élités politiques et enseignement supérieur, sociologie historique d'un divorce et d'un échec (1968-2011) », in Laurent Colantonio, Caroline Fayolle (dir.), *Genre et utopie, avec Michèle Riot-Sarcey*, Saint-Denis, Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 2014, p. 349-376.

¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, « Esprits d'État. Genèse et structure du champ bureaucratique », in *Id.*, *Raisons pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*, Paris, Seuil, 1994, p. 99-146.

²⁰ Brian D. Taylor et Roxana Botea, « Tilly Tally : War-Making and State-Making in the Contemporary Third World », *International Studies Review*, vol. 10, n° 1, 2008, p. 2756 ; Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan : building states and regimes in medieval and early modern Europe*, Cambridge, CUP, 1997 ; Jean-François Bayart, « Hors de la "vallée malheureuse" de l'africanisme », *Revue française de science politique*, 44^e année, n° 1, 1994, p. 136-139 ; Séverine Awenengo Dalberto, Richard Banégas (éd.), *Identification and Citizenship in Africa Biometrics, the Documentary State and Bureaucratic Writings of the Self*, Londres-New York, Routledge, 2021.

²¹ Andrew Abbott, « La description face à la temporalité », in Giorgio Blundo et Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan (dir.), *Pratiques de la description*, Paris, EHESS, 2003, p. 41-53 ; Jean-Louis Fabiani, « Pour en finir avec la réalité unilinéaire. Le parcours méthodologique de Andrew Abbott », *Annales HSS*, 58-3, 2003, p. 549-565.

²² Jean-François Bayard, « Chapitre 1 : L'historicité de l'État importé », in *Id.*, *La Greffe de l'État*, Paris, Karthala, 1996, p. 11-39.

paved the way for strong academic competition, obscuring that the issue of genesis was not at stake, for three main reasons. First, the question of genesis carried within it the corollary of discrimination by periodization, and therefore an excessive focus on the time of the birth and emergence of the object. This was the cause of a debate that unfolded within the very strict frameworks of long-inherited periods and breaks, doubling down on an academic conflict in a context of progressively scarce university funding²³. This conception of the State thus became captive to its powerful object, to the point of turning into a state of thought, trapped by the struggles induced by the very field it proposed to analyze. For a second reason: this tension towards the genesis of the State conceived the evolutions of the object in terms of archaism and modernity, technological and cognitive delay, expertise, and weak and strong territorial grasp. These issues are certainly of interest, but focusing on these conceptual pairs evacuated far too many, which had yet been introduced by new, lively, and efficient historical methods²⁴. For example, the complementarity between the last centuries of the Middle Ages and the early Modern period, the contributions of the history of science and techniques, the long time of cultural history, sensibilities, and imaginaries entered only with difficulty into the general framework of the debate. Finally, this massive state of thought attempting to define its object subsumed what was fundamental in the analysis, that is, the thought of structures and actors within the field. Thus, the object of the State, due to the severity of the conflicts within the academic world, covered all the questions and objects that had been worked on and popularized in the previous decade. A notable divorce occurred between, on the one hand, the proponents of social and cultural history and, on the other hand, historians of politics²⁵. This divorce was enduring, and its effects consequential. When other social sciences incorporated, sometimes to discuss them harshly, the fundamental contributions of philosophy, sociology, and political science, often critically integrating the thought of Max Weber, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, or Pierre Bourdieu, history and especially the political history of the early Modern period remained the mined terrain, difficult to access, which historians, as social science researchers, had largely deserted²⁶. Significant work was required to reconstruct the academic subfield of historians of the early modern period to reopen the file on the State from distinct analytical angles, more serene in both their inquiries and their publication and communication endeavors. The renewal of these approaches placed the question of consent, negotiation, and the resolution of judicial and sub-judicial conflicts at the heart of their inquiries²⁷. With the return of the

²³ Jacques Le Goff, *Faut-il vraiment découper l'histoire en tranches ?*, Paris, Seuil, 2014.

²⁴ Filippo De Vivo, « Coeur de l'État, lieu de tension. Le tournant archivistique vu de Venise (XV^e-XVII^e siècle) », *Annales. HSS*, 2013, 3, 68^e année, p. 699-728 ; James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England : Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012 ; Randolph Head, « Knowing Like a State : The Transformation of Political Knowledge in Swiss Archives, 1450-1770 », *Journal of Modern History*, 2003, 75, p. 745-782 ; Anthony Grafton, Ann Blair, *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, Philadelphie, Penn Press, 1990.

²⁵ Jean-Frédéric Schaub, « Une histoire culturelle comme histoire politique (note critique) », *Annales. HSS*, 2001, 4, 56^e année, p. 981-997

²⁶ Michel Foucault, « La gouvernementalité », [1978], in *Id. Dits et Écrits*, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, vol. 3, p. 635-657 ; Pierre Bourdieu, *Sur l'État. Cours au Collège de France 1989-1992*, Paris, Seuil-Raisons d'agir, 2012 ; Rémi Lenoir, « L'État selon Pierre Bourdieu », *Sociétés contemporaines*, 2012, 3, n° 87, p. 123-154 ; Arnault Skornicki, *La Grande Soif de l'État : Michel Foucault avec les sciences sociales*, Paris, Les Prairies Ordinaires, 2015 ; Romain Descendre, « “Raison et gouvernement d'État” – Gabriel Chappuys traducteur de Giovanni Botero », in Elisa Gregori (dir.), « *Fedeli, diligenti, chiari e dotti* » : *traduttori e traduzione nel rinascimento*, Padoue, CLEUP, 2016, p. 335-353.

²⁷ Héloïse Hermant (dir.), *Contourner, infléchir, subvertir les cadres de la domination dans les Sociétés d'Ancien Régime. Europe (xve-xviii^e siècles)*, Paris, Garnier, 2016 ; Jérémie Foa, *Le Tombeau de la paix. Une histoire des édits de pacification (1560-1572)*, PULIM, Limoges, 2015 ; Rachel Renault, *La Permanence de l'extraordinaire. Fiscalité, pouvoirs et monde social en Allemagne aux XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles*, Paris, PUPS, 2017 ; Xavier Rousseaux, « Entre accommodement local et contrôle étatique : pratiques judiciaires et non judiciaires dans le règlement des

question of the State in the specific context of escalating tensions within the European ensemble and the world-system, objects have been formed and are now regularly questioned by historians: the exploration of internal negotiation connected to the rise of resident diplomacy, the acculturation of technical and political knowledge by diplomats using it on the domestic front in other roles, of court and chancellery, the ceremonial, visual, and literary manifestation of the glory of kings, bodies, and communities. More global and connected transversal questions interrogate the concepts of empires, violence, race, and governance from a distance²⁸. It is largely thanks to these works that the present study exists today in this form and with the questions inherent to the historical discipline, which undertakes to be as rigorous in the interrogation of sources as in the mobilization of concepts.

STATE, ADMINISTRATIVE SOCIETY, INSTITUTIONS OF WRITING

Logically, this study does not take the modern State itself as its object, nor its genesis, nor the teleological exploration of its growth²⁹. Instead, we are interested in the techniques and knowledge that underpin and arm the relations of force and power within the field that is the State in the specific context of the Wars of Religion and their progressive settlement. The central question of our study lies in the analysis of the specific governmentality of the Wars of Religion, the gray languages of administration, and the gradual disjunction between the governance of the king and the administration of the State³⁰. From this perspective, which owes much to the concepts forged by Max Weber and his commentators as well as to the tools provided by Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu in their analysis of structures and power relations, we are interested in a precise and specific point in the structuration of the state field which, in our opinion, arms the governmentality of the early modern period: the institutions of political writing³¹. Thus, we revisit and freshly examine the languages of politics by questioning the sedimentation of concepts and the social construction of reality by government actors³². Our

conflits en Europe médiévale et moderne », in Benoît Garnot (dir.), *L'Infrajudiciaire du Moyen Âge à l'histoire contemporaine*, Dijon, Éditions universitaires de Dijon, 1996, p. 87-108.

²⁸ Guillaume Gaudin, *El imperio de papel de Juan Díez de la Calle pensar y gobernar el Nuevo Mundo en el siglo XVII*, Madrid, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2017 ; Erica Charters, Marie Houllémare et Peter H. Wilson (éd.), *A Global History of Early Modern Violence*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2020 ; Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *Pour une histoire politique de la race*, Paris, Seuil, 2015 ; Pedro Cardim et al. (éd.), *Polycentric Monarchies: How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony ?*, Brighton, Sussex Academy Press, 2012.

²⁹ Robert Descimon et Alain Guéry, « Un État des Temps modernes ? », in Jacques Le Goff (dir.), *Histoire de la France*, t. II, A. Burguière et J. Revel (dir.), *L'État et les pouvoirs*, Paris, 1989, p. 181-356.

³⁰ Ernst Kantorowicz, *Les Deux Corps du roi : essai sur la théologie politique au Moyen Âge*, tr. fr. de Jean-Philippe Genet et Nicole Genet, Paris, Gallimard, 1989.

³¹ The inquiry into the institutions of political discourse is directly intertwined with the recent history of France concerning the Wars of Religion, the administration of cities and provinces, and the proliferation of state personnel, such as financial and judicial officials. It is connected to this history through the frameworks articulated by Filippo De Vivo and Randolph C. Head, regarding the dissemination of written material that transforms both the state and the political society. Johann Petitjan, « L'information : concept et phénomène », in *Id.*, *L'Intelligence des choses. Une histoire de l'information entre Italie et Méditerranée (xvie-xviiie siècles)*, Paris-Rome, BEFAR, 2013, p. 5 et suivantes ; *Id.*, « Mots et pratiques de l'information : ce que aviser veut dire », *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Italie-Méditerranée*, 122, 1, 2010, p. 107-121 ; Yves Renouard, « Information et transmission des nouvelles », in Charles Samaran (dir.), *L'Histoire et ses méthodes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1961, p. 95-142 ; Filippo De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice. Rethinking Early Modern Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press [OUP], 2009.

³² Quentin Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (1978), trad. fr. J. Grossman et J.-Y. Pouilloux, Paris, Albin Michel, 2001 ; Marie-Madeleine Fontaine et Jean-Louis Fournel (dir.), *Les Mots de la guerre dans l'Europe de la Renaissance*, Genève, Droz, 2015 ; Romain Descendre et Jean-Louis Fournel (dir.), *Langages, politique, histoire : avec Jean-Claude Zancarini*, Lyon, ENS Éditions, 2015 ; Peter Berger et Thomas Luckmann, *La Construction sociale de la réalité*, Armand Colin, 2018.

study has been nourished by the decisive contribution of the social history of politics as well as by the analysis of the diplomatic activity of writing institutions. We freshly open this fertile ground to focus on the specific nature of the power operated. The intuition guiding our questions is that the institutions of political writing are both the lever and the theater of sociopolitical struggles waged by the actors of the early modern period. Hence, we analyze these structures as points of observation of the radical reconfigurations of the political society at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The initial impetus of our study lies in a significant contradiction: while the Kingdom of France experiences a first cycle of eight Wars of Religion and a very problematic dynastic shift when it engages in a conflict of low and then high intensity on a European scale, we observe technical and political innovations, growth in the theoretical discourse of good policing and governance, administrative and ceremonial ordering of traditional instances of counsel and deliberation. The coalescence of traditional and warrior institutions and new institutions handling political writing is evident and carries a primary consequence in the analysis³³. The political moment of the Wars of Religion and their internationalization is not the tomb of politics, bearing the durable destructuring of the kingdom's governing instances; it is the crucible within which a new type of personnel, the secretaries of state, will contribute to reinforcing the degree of politicization in the Kingdom of France, which is turned on its head during the wars at the end of the sixteenth century³⁴. This politicization occurs through the cultural incorporation of new levers of action, at the forefront of which we place state papers, correspondence, and the working tools of offices, lists, and forms as well as discursive and polemical writings, all of which contribute to the formidable documentary inflation of the early modern period³⁵. Under the category of state papers, we subsume distinct diplomatic categories to, on the one hand, account for the tension of politicization they induce and, on the other hand, to restore the tremble of the framework whose contours are solidified at the end of the sixteenth century and in which the actors are inscribed³⁶. By "political society", we mean the broad assembly constituted by government actors arranged and instituted in the central, territorial, and provincial, urban and local components of the Kingdom of France, under the head of the king, but also the members of the bodies and communities who are the recipients of the effects of the royal logos, effects that are conceptually delineated in the legal, political, social, fiscal, financial as well as cultural order³⁷. "One of the keys to understanding the shift from the late sixteenth to

³³ Bernard Fonck, Nathalie Genet-Rouffiac (dir.), *Combattre et gouverner : Dynamiques de l'histoire militaire de l'époque moderne (xviie-xviii siècles)*, Rennes, PUR, 2015.

³⁴ Nicola Mary Sutherland, *The French Secretaries of State in the Age of Catherine de Medici*, Londres, Université de Londres, Athlone Press, 1962 ; Michel Cassan, « De l'État "moderne" à ses administrateurs "moyens" », *Histoire, économie et société*, 4, 2004, p. 467-472 ; Jacques Lagroye (dir.), *La Politisation*, Paris, Belin, 2003 ; Sylvie Daubresse, *Le Parlement de Paris ou la voix de la raison (1559-1589)*, Genève, Droz, 2005 ; Hugues Daussy, Frédérique Pithou (dir.), *Hommes de loi et politique (xvie-xviii siècles)*, Rennes, PUR, 2007 ; Philippe Hamon, Laurent Bourquin (éd.), *La Politisation : Conflits et construction du politique depuis le Moyen Âge*, Rennes, PUR, 2010 ; Laurent Bourquin et al., (éd.), *S'exprimer en temps de troubles : Conflits, opinion(s) et politisation du Moyen Âge au début du xxe siècle*, Rennes, PUR, 2012.

³⁵ Arnaud Fossier, Johann Petitjean et Clémence Revest (éd.), *Écritures grises : les instruments de travail des administrations, xiie-xviiie siècle*, Paris-Rome, École des chartes-École française de Rome, 2019 ; Paul M. Dover (dir.), *Secretaries and Statecraft in the Early Modern World*, Édimbourg, Presses de l'université d'Édimbourg, 2016.

³⁶ Hélène Michaud, « Les registres de Claude Pinart, secrétaire d'État (1570-1588) », *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, t. 120, 1962, p. 142.

³⁷ Nicolas Le Roux, « Élités locales et service de la Couronne au xvie siècle : l'exemple de la noblesse de Touraine », in Chantal Grell, Arnaud Ramière de Fortanier (dir.), *Le Second Ordre : l'idéal nobiliaire. Hommage à Ellery Schalk*, Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999, p. 153-167 ; Laurent Bourquin, *Noblesse seconde et pouvoir en Champagne aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1994 ; Jean-Philippe Genet, « II. La société politique anglaise », in *Id.*, *La Genèse de l'État moderne. Culture et société politique en Angleterre*,

the early seventeenth century rests on the expansion of this political society. This expansion, in the sense that an increasing number of actors and territories compose it and engage in a struggle for power and its preservation, is one of the many causes of the outbreak of civil unrest, its exceptional duration, and the radicalization of factional oppositions. Moreover, this competitive growth of oppositions occurs in the context of the State's progressive financial ruin, a scarcity of royal grants, and an increasingly significant pressure from the royal State on the base of economic resources³⁸. Our working hypothesis is as follows: during the expansion of the political society between the Renaissance and the Baroque age, a fraction of this same society, stemming from the world of commerce and the Parisian bourgeoisie, will programmatically link its fate to the political interests of the monarchy of the last Valois and the first Bourbon³⁹. This group then makes its entry into the institutions of the monarchy, particularly into the administration of the royal finances, during the cycle of the Italian wars. Competent administrators, skilled in the handling of financial instruments and accounting records, these treasurers and secretaries of the king and finances derive considerable wealth from international conflicts, notably those of the Italian wars, which conclude in 1559 with the signing of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis⁴⁰. They form the vanguard of the political society and are entirely indebted to the Valois monarchy for their rapid ascent in the courts and councils⁴¹. Engaged in the management of the king's monies and the accounting and financial writings that are the corollary, they become indispensable conduits of the monarchy's first bureaucratic growth⁴². In our study, we propose to designate this relatively homogeneous group as the "administrative society". These few families will provide their children to the institutions of writing, which then gradually form into offices, set apart and sequestered from the traditional instances, to enter into the direct dependency of the kings and regents Catherine and Marie de Médicis, the sons of France, and the great territorial princes⁴³. The terminology adopted in our study for the work environment of the administrators of writing is that of "office". It seems to us the only one capable of accounting for the collective and institutional dimension of the concrete and daily work of the secretaries of state, as well as the tensions and political reconfigurations that occur with other institutions, traditional or contemporary in inspiration. We do not go so far as to postulate, as Michel Antoine, Roland Mounier, and Hélène Michaud also refrain from doing, that "ministerial departments" are established at the end of the sixteenth century nor that government actors exhibit bureaucratic-type behaviors. However, the terminology of the office allows us to ask new questions about bureaucratic tension during the forging of a new governmentality, to restore to writing activities their full character of situations by locating

Paris, PUF, 2003, p. 33-60 ; Juan Carlos Garavaglia, Jean-Frédéric Schaub (dir.), *Lois, justice, coutume. Amérique et Europe latines (16^e-19^e siècle)*, Paris, EHESS, 2005.

³⁸ Claude Michaud, « Finances et guerres de Religion en France », *RHMC*, 28, 1981, p. 572-596.

³⁹ Robert Descimon, « Les élites du pouvoir et le prince : l'État comme entreprise », in Wolfgang Reinhard (éd.), *Les Élités du pouvoir et la construction de l'État en Europe*, Paris, PUF, 1996, p. 133-162.

⁴⁰ Cédric Michon (dir.), *Les Conseillers de François Ier*, Rennes, PUR, 2011 ; « Les conseillers du Prince dans la France et l'Europe de la Renaissance, théorie et pratique », in Antoine Follain (éd.), *Contrôler et punir. Les agents du pouvoir xve-xviii siècles*, Dijon, Éditions universitaires de Dijon, 2015, p. 23-34 ; *Id.*, « Conseils et conseillers en France de Louis XI à François Ier (1461-1547) », in *Id.* (dir.), *Conseils et conseillers dans l'Europe de la Renaissance v. 1450-v. 1550*, Tours, Presses de l'université François Rabelais, 2012, p. 67-108.

⁴¹ Philippe Hamon, « Messieurs des finances ». *Les grands officiers de finance dans la France de la Renaissance*, Paris, Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 1999 ; Olivier Poncet, Roseline Claerr (éd.), *La Prise de décision en France (1525-1559). Recherches sur la réalité du pouvoir royal ou princier à la Renaissance*, Paris, École nationale des chartes, 2008.

⁴² Philippe Hamon, « Nicolas II de Neufville (?-1554) », in Cédric Michon (dir.), *Les Conseillers de François Ier*, Rennes, PUR, 2011, p. 343-346.

⁴³ Alain Morgat, « Les conseils princiers au XVI^e siècle », in *Études sur l'ancienne France offertes en hommage à Michel Antoine*, textes réunis par Bernard Barbiche et Yves-Marie Bercé, Paris, École des chartes, 2003, p. 253-274.

them, and hence, on the incorporation of technical and administrative knowledge by the royal government, on the autonomy of actors and their progressive insertion into government structures⁴⁴.

TO FATHOM VILLEROY

This book begins in 1567, with the assumption of office by Nicolas de Neufville, lord of Villeroy, as Secretary of State to Charles IX⁴⁵. It concludes with his death in 1617. These fifty years form the continuous thread of the growth of the political influence of administrators of the written word within the offices of the monarchy, offices they would help structure in their practices, thus shaping a new governance for the kingdom of France⁴⁶. These extended years constitute our chronological framework because it is Villeroy whom we have followed closely in his ascent and the deployment of his quasi-ministerial power. We have chosen Villeroy as the central axis of our study for a set of four reasons, the perimeter of which we outline here.

Villeroy's career, a memorial and patrimonial legacy, is situated in the pivotal moment between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. He is one of the few prominent government figures to have spanned such a broad period. Born in 1542 into a family of financial secretaries and wealthy Parisian merchants, the alliance of the Neufville with the Le Gendre secured the family's material fortune, while the slender ties with the Bochetel-L'Aubespine guaranteed its insertion into the political and diplomatic affairs of the monarchy⁴⁷. He became Secretary of State of the second generation of this new office in 1567, succeeding Claude de L'Aubespine whose daughter, Madeleine, he married⁴⁸. He was one of the administrators most favored by Henry III from the end of the 1570s and held de facto precedence over his two other colleagues from 1579⁴⁹. Charged with missions of prime diplomatic importance, he forged close contacts with English and Spanish administrators whom he encountered in Paris and on missions. The favor he enjoyed allowed him to steer the destinies of the Villeroy-L'Aubespine clan, which he programmatically inscribed into the secretarial offices, diplomatic representations, and the royal army⁵⁰. The territorial roots of the Villeroy lay in Île-de-France, where Nicolas IV de Villeroy had inherited numerous residences: he was landed and exercised increased vigilance over his seigneurial rights⁵¹. His son, Charles d'Alincourt (1566-1642),

⁴⁴ Andreas Anter, « L'histoire de l'État comme histoire de la bureaucratie », *Trivium*, 7, 2010, en ligne : <http://trivium.revues.org/3794>.

⁴⁵ Joseph Nouaillac, *Villeroy, secrétaire d'État et ministre sous Charles IX, Henri III et Henri IV*, Paris, Champion, 1908 ; Edmund Dickerman, *Bellievre and Villeroy. Power in France under Henry III and Henry IV*, Providence, Presses universitaires de Brown, 1971.

⁴⁶ Jérémie Foa, « Les acteurs des guerres de Religion furent-ils des protagonistes ? », *Politix*, vol. 112, n° 4, 2015, p. 111-130.

⁴⁷ Damien Fontvieille, *Le clan Bochetel : servir la couronne de France au xvie siècle*. Thèse pour le diplôme d'archiviste-paléographe. Sous la direction d'Olivier Poncet, École nationale des chartes, 2016 ; *Id.*, *La galaxie Bochetel. Un clan de pouvoir au service de la Couronne de France Louis XII à Louis XIII*, thèse inédite pour le grade de docteur, sous la direction d'Olivier Poncet et d'Alain Tallon, Sorbonne Université, 2020.

⁴⁸ Madeleine de L'Aubespine (1546-1596), fille de Claude II de L'Aubespine (1510-1567), secrétaire d'État d'Henri II, de François II et de Charles IX.

⁴⁹ In 1579, Simon de Fizes, Baron of Sauve (?-1579), passed away and was not replaced until 1589. Remaining were Villeroy, Claude Pinart (circa 1525-1605), and Nicolas Brulart de Sillery (1544-1624) until their dismissal in September 1588. Refer to the Supporting Documents, No. 10 [the documents attached to the doctoral thesis from which this book is derived are published online on the HAL open archives portal; the thesis manuscript can be consulted at the Library of the École nationale des chartes under the reference 2017ENCP0002].

⁵⁰ Marie-Cécile Pineau, *L'ambassade romaine de Charles de Neufville, seigneur d'Halincourt (1605-1608) : un ambassadeur, acteur et courtisan au service de la représentation d'Henri IV*, thèse de doctorat dir. Yann Lignereux, Nantes Université, 2022.

⁵¹ Villeroy's Parisian residence is located on Rue des Bourdonnais, near the Louvre, and is known as the Hôtel de la Chasse. Numerous other residences and possessions place them among the elite society of the time: the two

continued the clan's aims in the aristocratic exercise of war and the governance of Pontoise for the king. Married to the daughter of François de Mandelot, governor of Lyonnais, in 1588, Alincourt represented Villeroy's new aspirations through his integration into the service aristocracy and the military governance of strategic locations⁵². With his roots in the Lyonnais, he would enable the Villeroy to acquire a prominent place in the royal State of the late seventeenth century⁵³. Villeroy's socio-political ascent experienced a brief setback in 1588 when he was dismissed at the end of the summer along with the other Secretaries of State and the main advisors of Henry III. However, he was recalled by Henry IV in 1594, later than other major administrators, to take charge of Foreign Affairs and the War. During the episode of his disgrace, Villeroy advised the Duke of Mayenne, lieutenant-general of a divided kingdom where he carried the ambitions of the State of the League against the royal camp of Henry III of Navarre, who had become Henry IV. In 1594, he was one of the king's principal advisors, engaged in the military and political reconquest of his kingdom as well as in a high-intensity war against Philip II's Spain; in this war, he maintained alliances and friendships with the counselors of the allied English, Elizabeth I, and the agents of the princes of the Empire and the Low Countries. This period of Villeroy's return to favor, the gradual cessation of unrest, and the peace with Spain constitutes a politically rich time when the Secretary of State's office for Foreign Affairs and War was active on all fronts. Holding the technical management of troops, the conduct of diplomatic relations, and the structuring of a secret diplomacy for surveillance and espionage, both internal and external, Villeroy is a notable observation point of the growth and transformation of technical agents from the 1560s into first-order political advisors at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The difficult arrangement of monarchical governance under Henry IV between the men of the previous administration and the service aristocracy, as well as the distinct geopolitical options that clashed at the council, the preservation of the English alliance, the gradual resolution of tensions with Spain, the death of Henry IV, and the recurring troubles of the regency form the backdrop for the end of the Secretary of State's life of service. This last sequence is marked by the restructuring of the royal State and its administration. It is one of the most arduous tasks that Henry IV faced, relying both on structures inherited from the State of the Valois and on his companions-in-arms, gentlemen and diplomats from the Protestant party, administrators and advisors from the kingdom of Navarre, and "Politiques" who had early joined the royal camp⁵⁴. Henry IV benefits from the sacral recharge of the royal function carried out under the last Valois, especially under Henry III⁵⁵. He is doubly haloed with undisputed military glory and the peace of arms that he managed to impose on France and Europe⁵⁶. His administration, more technical and specialized, sees a growth in its personnel; the political and legal thought presiding over socio-political

main ones are Conflans, near Charenton, and Villeroy, south of Paris. Isabelle de Conihout, « La "Belle librairie" de Nicolas de Villeroy à Conflans », in Jean-François Maillard, Guy Poirier (dir.), *Henri III mécène : des arts, des sciences et des lettres*, Presses Paris Sorbonne, 2006, p. 317-330.

⁵² Marguerite de Mandelot (1570-1593). Second marriage to Jacqueline de Harlay in 1596, daughter of Nicolas de Harlay, Lord of Sancy.

⁵³ Yann Lignereux, *Lyons et le roi. De la « bonne ville » à l'absolutisme municipal, 1594-1654*, Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 2003.

⁵⁴ Michel de Waele, « Clémence royale et fidélités françaises à la fin des guerres de Religion », in *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, 24, 2, 1998, p. 231-252 ; Alison Forrestal, Eric Nelson (éd.), *Politics and religion in Early Bourbon France*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009 ; Christopher Bettinson, « The Politiques and the Politique Party : A Reappraisal », in Keith Cameron (éd.), *From Valois to Bourbon : Dynasty, State and Society in Early Modern France*, Exeter, Exeter Studies in History Studies, 1989, p. 33-50.

⁵⁵ Grégory Champeaud, « "Concilier tant d'esprits et de fantaisies diverses" : le laboratoire politique d'Henri de Navarre à Nérac (1577-1579) », in *La Cour de Nérac au temps de Henri de Navarre et de Marguerite de Valois, Albineana, Cahiers d'Aubigné*, 24, 2012, p. 79-90.

⁵⁶ Jean-François Labourdette, Jean-Pierre Poussou et Marie-Catherine Vignal (éd.), *Le Traité de Vervins*, (Actes du colloque de Vervins, mai 1998) Paris, Presses Universitaires de la Sorbonne, 2001.

reconfigurations is built on the axis of a State of justice and finances where the king's officers hold a fragment of public power⁵⁷. This axis of a sovereign power enhanced and magnified while being legally delegated to a more significant fringe of the political society guarantees for a time the new socio-political balance after the sixteenth-century wars of Religion. Henry IV undertakes to preserve the peace won after many years of civil wars turned European while remaining vigilant in the pursuit of his power strategy. The great territorial princes suffer partly from this reduction to obedience and the dismantling of noble conspiracies at the beginning of the 1600s. These substantial disturbances resume under the leadership of the princes upon the death of Henry IV in 1610, and until the Spanish marriages of 1615, the kingdom is prey to significant centrifugal forces⁵⁸. The noble factions employ the same repertoire of actions, that of taking up arms, as during the previous religious disturbances, seeking to weigh in on the policy of the royal State during the minority of King Louis XIII and the regency of his mother, Marie de Medici. The circulation of polemical writings intensifies. The use of writing has transformed from one war cycle to another, a cycle of the same civil war that only concludes in 1629 with the peace of Alès. These internal troubles are mixed with geopolitical fears, those of a resumption of the cycle of European wars⁵⁹. In this last sequence, political writing becomes the main lever to avert troubles – the long memory of the administration that sedimented in the volumes of work attests to this – and a stake of power, so much so that the Prince of Condé obtains in 1615 the right to sign the acts of the finance council with his hand⁶⁰. The role of the administrators of writing, who are also involved in all the peace negotiations with the princes, shows how their political influence has undeniably expanded to include missions of counsel and assistance in sovereign decision-making within and beyond the kingdom's borders. This large repository of administrative and political knowledge that the secretarial offices have become during this long sequence of civil and European war constitutes the recruitment pool for the new political era that opens after 1617, under the influence of the two cardinal-ministers, Richelieu and Mazarin, in the decades 1630-1660.

The institutions of writing therefore cover, in the field of our study, the offices of the secretaries of State of the French monarchy and, secondarily, all the operators with whom these main institutions are in relation. In the first part, we develop a typology of these actors to measure the degree of incorporation of writing practices and to provide a first geography within the composite and problematic assembly that constitutes the institutional arrangement of early modernity. We prefer the term institutional arrangement to that of monarchical government, even though we use both, to account for the plasticity of the offices, which mobilize and activate for the necessities of the king's service professionals of writing outside the institutional networks within which they are inscribed⁶¹. The practice that underlies these offices is twofold. Originally, the four secretaries of State sign expeditions in the king's name and thus materially

⁵⁷ Fanny Cosandey, Robert Descimon, *L'Absolutisme en France. Histoire et historiographie*, Paris, Seuil, 2002.

⁵⁸ Nicolas Le Roux, « Des bourgeois et des princes. Paris, 1614-1617 », *Dix-septième siècle*, 2017, 3, n° 276, p. 463-476.

⁵⁹ Michel Cassan, *La Grande Peur de 1610. Les Français et l'assassinat d'Henri IV*, Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 2010.

⁶⁰ Jean-François Dubost, *Marie de Médicis. La reine dévoilée*, Paris, Payot, 2009, p. 499-501 ; Marie-Thérèse Jones Davies (dir.), *Mémoire et oubli au temps de la Renaissance*, (Actes du colloque de Paris 8-9 décembre 2000 et 9-10 mars 2001), Paris, Champion, 2002.

⁶¹ Christopher Stocker, « Office as Maintenance in Renaissance France », *Canadian journal of history*, 6, 1971, p. 21-43 ; Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross : Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century*, Oxford, OUP, 1991 ; Antonio Manuel Hespanha, *La gracia del derecho. Economía de la cultura en la época moderna*, Madrid, Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1993 ; *Id.*, *As Vésperas do Leviathan. Instituições e poder político (Portugal, séc. xviii)*, Coimbra, Almedina, 1994 ; *Id.*, « Pré-compréhension et savoir historique. La crise du modèle étatiste et les nouveaux contours de l'histoire du pouvoir », in Claus Peterson (éd.), *Juristische Theoriebildung und Rechtliche Einheit, Rattshistorika Studier*, série II, Lund, Bloms Boktryckeri, 1993, p. 49-67 ; Penny Roberts, *Peace and Authority during the French Religious Wars, c. 1560-1600*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

participate in the distribution of favor. From the 1570s, in the disorder of the wars, they instrument a considerable volume of state papers. The techniques of conservation, of keeping registers, of establishing lists of relays and routes for couriers are deposited in their working instruments. The place occupied by their first role as co-signatory enrolls them at the heart of the system of distribution of favor and honors, which then undergoes profound changes. These high-level technical agents of state writing are instituted at the heart of the governmental arrangement and participate in the council, where they have entry and session⁶². Gradually, they are detached from the chancellery, the supreme instance that holds the king's justice and royal writings. The moment we study is that of a shift of the secretaries of State into the royal fold, which confers on them an increase in favors and honors even as the sovereign begins to regulate and discipline their daily practices and their field of intervention⁶³. Gradually, these high-level technical agents will transform, through their permanent access to the king and the council as well as their roles as receivers and transmitters of diplomatic and military information, into first-order political advisors, eventually competing with other instances of counsel and government. The fortune of their office rests on the growth and extension of the sphere of sovereign intervention due to civil wars, the permanence of the posts of agents dispatched in European capitals, and the inflation of the use of writing, discursive, polemical, and regulatory.

STATE OF POLITICAL CRISIS AND THE RECOURSE TO WRITING

The main question our study poses is as follows: how has the use of writing and the institutions that prepare, handle, project, and receive it profoundly changed the governance of the early modern period⁶⁴? Consequently, were these institutions the spur, then the foundation, of the administrative monarchy of the following political sequence? If the institution of secretaries at the heart of the State responded to a technical and operational necessity, we wish to demonstrate that it was also the concrete materialization of a specific political culture, centered on the sovereign at the top of the institutional architecture. This monarchical centrality of the first absolutism led Henry III to ruin and death by regicide in 1589⁶⁵. Yet, it was consecrated by Henry IV at the beginning of the 17th century, who amended it with notable political and legal innovations to ensure the exercise of a stable and powerful sovereign power, enhanced by military glory, protected and financed by the State of officers, holders and guarantors of a piece of public power. At the beginning of the minority of Louis XIII, the institutions of political writing retain a documented memory of the disturbances, the means to bring the princes to obedience, and to work tirelessly to establish ceremonial and matrimonial ties with the powers that were once adversaries. This expert memory of statecraft has sedimented into political writing and the thick volumes that the secretaries of State manipulated and composed in their office. All had been trained in the crucible of the wars and yielded precedence to Villeroy, to whom they were related and by whom some of them were employed. The professional incorporation of the state's servant into writing, celebrated in the long memory of Villeroy's career, as well as the reflexes and practices within the institutions of writing were decisive in resolving the first disturbances of the 1610s decade. It is upon this deposit, where, between November 1616 and April 1617, the future Cardinal de Richelieu made his first

⁶² Noël Valois, *Le Conseil du roi aux xive, xve et xvie siècles, nouvelles recherches, suivies d'arrêts et de procès-verbaux du Conseil*, Paris, Picard, 1888 ; Roland Mousnier, *Le Conseil du Roi de Louis XII à la Révolution*, Paris, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences humaines de Paris-Sorbonne, 1970.

⁶³ Hélène Michaud, *La Grande Chancellerie et les Écritures royales au xvie siècle*, Paris, PUF, 1967.

⁶⁴ Michel Dobry, *Sociologie des crises politiques. La dynamique des mobilisations multisectorielles*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2009.

⁶⁵ Nicolas Le Roux, *Un régicide au nom de Dieu. L'assassinat d'Henri III*, Paris, Gallimard, 2006.

bureaucratic forays as co-secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the great ministerial departments of Louis XIV were built⁶⁶.

The question of recourse to writing in times of political crisis thus seems to us the privileged observation point for scrutinizing the reconfigurations of the kingdom's mode of government and the relations that the last Valois and the first Bourbon establish with their enemies and allies in Spain and England. It is on this issue of the use of writing and the circulation of state papers that we wish to establish our main demonstrations of the establishment of a pre-bureaucratic structure within the broader institutional arrangement of the monarchical state. This evolution encounters strong resistance, from other institutions as well as from political society. It is these moments of tension, of tipping from one reign to another or from one dynasty to another that we have primarily studied to determine if, from one configuration of powers to another, the institutions of writing were the stable repository of an administrative memory of the State or if the office personnel was regularly swept away by renewals of alliance. We have also chosen to observe the regulatory ordering exerted over these specific institutions to understand what specific political culture was thus incorporated and manifested by the sovereigns. Finally, we have embarked on an exploration of the links between writing professionals within a European republic of offices. This European republic of offices is structured by the points of redistribution of political and diplomatic information and is worked by the intense transfers of knowledge from one public authority to another, transfers that occur in the context of ceremonial contacts, diplomatic as well as betrayals, defectors, and material leaks of state papers.

⁶⁶ Thierry Sarmant, Mathieu Stoll, *Régner et gouverner : Louis XIV et ses ministres*, Paris, Perrin, 2010.