

The End of Richelieu

Noble conspiracy and Spanish treason
in Louis XIII's France, 1636-1642

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Abstract

Cardinal Richelieu is traditionally accredited with defeating the power of the *grands*, the upper echelon of the French nobility, as part of his supposedly successful project for monarchical absolutism. Modern historians have recast Richelieu as a nobleman of his time, who advanced himself within the social and political hierarchies through marriage alliances and patronage. He therefore worked hard to forge alliances with the *grands* rather than trying to destroy them.

Yet his ministry was riven by persistent noble conspiracies and rebellions, which have gone largely without systematic investigation. This study examines the nature and causes of that unrest during Richelieu's final six years, offering a radical re-assessment of the opposition and the politics of the period. Noble conspiracy was not just a by-product of government by a first minister, but reflected the factional nature of Richelieu's approach. Factional rivalry was exacerbated by the emergence, after 1638, of a struggle for the anticipated regency. After this, Richelieu took a more hostile approach to his adversaries, forcing them to adopt strong countermeasures in order to preserve their positions.

Richelieu's opponents were surprisingly successful in asserting their independence. As well as enjoying widespread domestic support, they allied with the Habsburg powers to engineer military rebellion, posing a major threat to the Cardinal and undermining the war effort against Spain. The Spanish set their stall out for a long-term war, expecting that Richelieu's opponents would eventually gain power and negotiate peace on more flexible terms. The ability of the *grands* to re-assert themselves was still a dominant characteristic of French politics. Richelieu's legacy, on his death in 1642, was a highly volatile political situation in which success was still a long way off for France. These findings suggest the catalytic impact of Habsburg power on France's internal divisions, which should consequently be seen as integral to the forging of the *ancien régime*.

Abstract

(extended version)

Richelieu stated in his *Testament Politique* that one of his central aims as head of Louis XIII's government had been to reduce the power of the *grands*, the upper echelon of the French nobility, comprising members of the extended royal family and others of similarly high status. It was subsequently accepted by posterity that this self-appointed objective was one of the fundamental guiding principles of his actions and that he was largely successful in achieving it. This assumption slotted neatly into the *étatiste* interpretation of his ministry by centuries of historians. Although it is gradually being eroded and replaced, the *étatiste* view continues to exercise significant influence over present-day perceptions of Richelieu's ministry. In this set of beliefs Richelieu is depicted as the selfless servant of state who dynamically established French political unity and royal power, by deliberately overturning the ability of France's representative institutions and entrenched interests to resist monarchical authority. This then enabled him to confront Habsburg power in Europe through an aggressive foreign policy. He is thereby held to have laid the foundations of monarchical absolutism which achieved its apogee under Louis XIV. Taking on the power of the noble *grands* is therefore seen as an integral part of his largely successful project for national *grandeur*.

Modern historians have produced much evidence that advocates revision of this depiction of the Cardinal as the selfless dynamo driving France towards absolutism. Instead he is now characterised as a nobleman of his times. A social and political conservative, Richelieu respected hierarchy and traditional practices wherever possible. He employed standard methods of self-advancement within the social hierarchy, through marriage alliances, patronage and exploitation of public office for private enrichment. He worked hard to forge alliances with the *grands* rather than trying to destroy them. In some recent studies, his methods of government are found to have been a heightening of dependence upon the influence and co-operation of the senior nobility, as opposed to a reduction thereof.

Yet the fact remains that there was persistent noble unrest during Richelieu's régime which has not been the subject of systematic investigation or explanation. The revisionist interpretation suggests that the discord between Richelieu and his noble adversaries was the result of his personal position as first minister to the King, which was inherently divisive. Simultaneously, some stimulating studies of the rebellious activities of the nobility in seventeenth-century France have offered broadly revisionist interpretations as to the nature of the political culture which underpinned the opposition to Richelieu: be it an exercise in traditional revolt designed to bring about a return to traditional monarchy, or the development of an early set of liberal responses to the nascent modern state. These arguments also remain to be verified through detailed examination of the political struggles during Richelieu's government.

The initial purpose of this study is to address that gap, by testing the revisionist perspectives in an examination of the final six years of Richelieu's government. The political history of these years has been particularly neglected and, unlike the 1620s

and early 1630s, has received little in the way of dedicated research. This study employs substantial archival material, from Paris, Brussels, London and Simancas, as well as a broad range of printed materials, to provide an in-depth appreciation of the period.

The result is a radical re-assessment of the opposition to Richelieu and the politics of the period. Noble opposition was not just a by-product of the experiment with government by a *premier ministre* but reflected the factional nature of the way Richelieu operated. His reliance on the support of the Prince of Condé, as well as his fractious relationship with most of the other *grands*, condemned France to many years of disruption. Richelieu was inevitably enmeshed in the factional struggles of the aristocracy and did not achieve a sufficiently broad set of alliances to avoid having an extremely divisive impact on the *grands*. These rivalries were greatly exacerbated after 1638, when the birth of an heir to the throne was accompanied by new concerns over Louis XIII's health. It therefore became highly probable that a minority would soon arise. Richelieu and Condé began to take a more hostile approach to their enemies and were effectively manoeuvring to secure control of the anticipated regency. They pressurised La Valette, Épernon, Guise, Soissons, Vendôme, and even Anne of Austria, forcing them to take countermeasures to preserve their familial positions and independence by acts of rebellion. The aggression of Richelieu and his factional allies is therefore found to have been instrumental in forcing other *grands* into active opposition. France was therefore increasingly divided, despite the need to focus on the massive war effort against the Habsburgs.

Richelieu's opponents were surprisingly successful in asserting their independence. Although traditional ties of *fidelité* may have eroded over preceding centuries, the *grands* – especially the Princes of the Blood – could still manufacture credit among significant numbers of French noblemen and, at this particular juncture, could count on widespread support and sympathy due to both popular and élite unrest engendered by the exactions of the war against Spain. Popular opinion was much more critical of Richelieu's war effort and methods of government than historians have allowed for, largely because Richelieu's ruthlessly-enforced censorship régime made critical pamphleteering a difficult and dangerous pastime. As well as counting on significant domestic support, the princes could also sanction extended forms of treason by allying with the Spanish. These practices were permissible forms of the traditional *devoir de révolte* – the nobility's right and duty to redress the nation's political ills through rebellion if necessary. By obtaining financial and military support from the Spanish and Imperial Habsburgs, the princes were therefore able to engineer military rebellion against Richelieu.

The outcome of their acts of rebellion was far from the comprehensive series of defeats assumed in most historiography. In 1637 the threat of rebellion was enough to achieve major concessions, while in 1641 threat became reality and a major victory was secured over the royal army at La Marfée, after which major concessions were once more obtained for the victors. Very few noblemen were punished for these acts of defiance and if they were, they often received pardons at a later date anyway. The ability of the *grands* to re-assert themselves in this way was still a dominant characteristic of French politics and their projects for rebellion were highly threatening

to the Cardinal, coming close to toppling him on more than one occasion. Their activities, moreover, had a major impact on the war effort. Popular and noble revolt both diverted precious resources and restricted Richelieu's military options at key points.

By allying with French malcontents, moreover, the Habsburgs obtained major tactical advantages in the war and gained leverage over French affairs. Presented with the vista of French factional infighting, the Spanish were more resilient in their refusal to accept Richelieu's terms for a truce. He sought a long-term truce based on the *status quo* which would help consolidate French war gains ahead of an eventual peace deal. The Spanish set themselves out for the long haul, expecting that Richelieu's opponents would eventually return to power and negotiate peace on more flexible terms. If the objective of war was not winning battles, but reducing one's opponent to satisfactory terms of settlement, then success was still a long way off for France.

This study also demonstrates that Anne of Austria – who became Regent after 1643 – was much more persistently supportive of noble opposition during Richelieu's later years than has previously been realised. She, above all others, was closely interested in the factional rivalry concerning the anticipated regency. The opposition of Soissons, Orléans, Bouillon, Chevreuse, and Cinq-Mars, after 1638, was consistently aligned with the defence of Anne's interests as the prime traditional claimant to the title of regent. Richelieu's factional and aggressive ministry was therefore largely responsible for continued and re-intensified political unrest, which threatened during 1641 and 1642 to descend into civil war on more than one occasion, and also undermined his war effort. Richelieu's ministry should thus be seen as comparable to other periods when the excessive dominance of a single faction over the King's government precipitated civil war, such as the favour of the Guise brothers in the late 1550s and early 1560s, or that of Mazarin in the 1640s and 1650s. Such periods should be contrasted with governments attentive to the balancing of noble faction and an open approach to patronage, which were marked by a relative absence of political rebellion and factional infighting, such as the reigns of Henri IV and Louis XIV.

Richelieu's legacy, upon his death, was a highly volatile political situation. But his own passing was, at least initially, responsible for enabling relative pacification among the nobility. Anne of Austria formed a working partnership with Mazarin who, although similar in political outlook to Richelieu, did not pose the same threat to her authority. Mazarin had, at that time, no powerbase of his own, nor did he have powerful allies within France. The regency was able to incorporate both Condé and Orléans as participants in government, such as could not have been achieved under Richelieu, and this was an important factor in preventing major rebellion. Vendôme remained excluded but was unable to generate support from the Spanish, who themselves now pinned their hopes on negotiating a more satisfactory peace deal with the regency régime rather than on fomenting French unrest. For several years after Richelieu's death there was no major noble revolt – unlike Richelieu's final years, which had been riven by them.

These findings suggest that there was a catalytic relationship between the power of the Habsburgs and France's internal opposition, and that the Spanish factor

should be integrated into our understanding of early modern French political culture and the forging of the *ancien régime*. A more socially-attentive reading of the political struggles of this period is also needed, encompassing a wider set of sources. The emphasis on ideological struggle – between those for-or-against the modern state, or those-for-or against alliances with heretic powers – is anachronistic and often misused. This should largely be substituted by greater attention to the dynastic aspirations and factional rivalries within French politics, within which Richelieu was one of a constellation of figures operating to advance their status aspirations. Opposition to Richelieu should not be seen as opposition to the state itself, but to the experiment with combining strong monarchical rule with government by a single first minister. There were multiple paths to modernity and it is invalid to assume that the mode of government applied under Louis XIII was the only viable option within the bounds of a dynastic monarchy and hierarchical society. Indeed rule by an all-encompassing first minister appears to have been less of a fast-road to modernity, than it was a cul-de-sac.

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Abbreviations for sources

AAE MD	Archives des Affaires étrangères (Paris), Mémoires et Documents
AAE CP	ibid., Correspondance Politique
AGRB	Archives Générales du Royaume (Brussels)
AGS Est.	Archivo General de Simancas, Secretario de Estado
AMB CC	Archives Municipales de Besançon, Collection Chifflet
AN	Archives Nationales (Paris)
Avenel	D.-L.-M. Avenel (ed.), <i>Lettres, instructions diplomatiques et papiers d'état du cardinal de Richelieu</i> (8 vols.; Paris, 1853-76)
BS FP	Bibliothèque du Sénat (Paris), Fonds Précieux
BL Add	British Library (London), Additional Manuscripts
BL Eg	ibid., Egerton Manuscripts
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris)
BN N.a.f.	ibid., Nouvelles acquisitions français
Griffet	Père H. Griffet, <i>Histoire du règne de Louis XIII</i> (3 vols.; Paris, 1758)
Le Vassor	M. Le Vassor, <i>Histoire de Louis XIII, Roi de France et Navarre</i> (7 vols.; Amsterdam, 1757)

- Michaud and Poujoulat J. Michaud and J. Poujoulat (eds.), *Nouvelle collection des mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France depuis le XIIIe siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe*, 3e série (10 vols.; Paris, 1837-9)
- NA SP National Archives (London), State Papers
- Petitot and Monmerqué C. Petitot, A. Petitot and L. Monmerqué (eds.), *Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, depuis l'avènement de Henri IV, jusqu'à la paix de Paris, conclue en 1763*, 2e série (78 vols.; Paris, 1820-9)

Introduction

‘dans ma court, très peu de fidélité sans intérêt, et par là mes sujets en apparence les plus soumis, autant à charge et autant à redouter pour moi que les plus rebelles’¹

The Divisive Ministry

Although it is gradually being eroded and replaced, the *étatiste* line of interpretation continues to exercise significant influence over modern perceptions of Richelieu’s ministry. In this long-standing tradition Richelieu is depicted as the selfless servant of state who dynamically established French political unity, laid the foundations of monarchical absolutism, and thereby fostered the emergence of the modern nation state. He supposedly did this by deliberately overturning the power of France’s representative institutions and entrenched interests to resist monarchical authority. Taking on the power of the *grands* – the top echelon of the French nobility – is seen as a vital part of that project. At the same time, he is also accredited with developing the functional apparatus of a modern state.²

¹ Louis XIV, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Longnon (Paris, 2001), p.33.

² The cornerstones for this interpretation are: H. Griffet, *Histoire du règne de Louis XIII* (3 vols.; Paris, 1758); and G. Hanotaux and duc de La Force, *l’Histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu* (6 vols.; Paris, 1893-1947). Similar views are expounded by myriad others, including: M. Topin, *Louis XIII et Richelieu* (Paris, 1876); P. Chevallier, *Louis XIII: roi cornélien* (Paris, 1979); R. Casin, *Un Prophète de l’unité: le Cardinal de Richelieu* (Paris, 1980); R. Mousnier, *L’Homme Rouge ou la vie du cardinal de Richelieu (1585-1642)* (Paris, 1992); F. Hildesheimer, *Richelieu* (Paris, 2004); M.C. Vignal-Souleyreau, *Richelieu ou la Quête d’Europe* (Paris, 2008); L. Bély, *La France au XVIIe Siècle: Puissance de l’État, contrôle de la société* (Paris, 2009); R. Bonney, *Political change in France under Richelieu and Mazarin, 1624-1661* (Oxford, 1978); J.-V. Blanchard, *Éminence: Cardinal Richelieu and the rise of France* (New York, 2011). The basis for this interpretation goes back to the efforts of Richelieu himself to establish his own immortality: W.F. Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton, 1972), pp.464-501. See also R. Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven, 1994), pp.122-3, 128, 328; J. Bergin, *The Rise of Richelieu* (New Haven, 1991), pp.2-9. Richelieu has even been endowed in some recent works with mystical qualities and martyr status, thus obligingly

This view of Richelieu is partly underpinned by studies examining the political struggles of the 1620s and 1630s, which are given particular significance. During the 1620s Richelieu is accredited with having destroyed the independent power of the Huguenots while adroitly facing a complex set of diplomatic challenges abroad. In tandem with this he faced widespread noble conspiracy and powerful opposition within the King's council itself.³ In this line of interpretation, the Day of Dupes in 1630 is the pivotal moment, as it marks the point where Richelieu wrested full control of the King's council from Marie de Médicis and her adherents, giving him a supposedly unassailable position in government.⁴ There have also been several major studies of the propaganda battles of the period, which have placed great emphasis on a clash of ideologies between Richelieu's pragmatic *raison d'état* and a more traditional mind-set emphasising the need for Catholic religious unity, misleadingly tagged as *dévo*t.⁵ By the early-mid 1630s Richelieu is seen as having won the public arguments concerning the need for confrontation with Spain and the need for obedience to the ministry. Opposition publications declined from the mid-1630s onward, feeding the

transcending rational evaluation: Casin, *Prophète*; Mousnier, *l'Homme Rouge*, p.xi; Hildesheimer, *Richelieu*, p.456.

³ A. Lublinskaya, *French Absolutism: the Crucial phase, 1620-1629* (Cambridge, 1968); D. Parker, *La Rochelle and the French Monarchy* (London, 1980); R. Pithon, 'Les débuts difficiles du ministère de Richelieu et la crise de Valteline (1621-1627)', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 74 (1960), 298-322; M. Houssaye, *Le Cardinal de Bérulle et le Cardinal de Richelieu 1625-1629* (Paris, 1875); G. Fagniez, *Le père Joseph et Richelieu (1577-1638)* (2 vols.; Paris, 1894); L. Batiffol, *Richelieu et le Roi Louis XIII: Les véritables rapports du Souverain et de son Ministre* (Paris, 1934).

⁴ On the Day of Dupes see: L. Batiffol, *La Journée des dupes* (Paris, 1925); P. Chevallier, *Louis XIII: roi cornélien* (Paris, 1979), pp.379-401; J.-F. Dubost, *Marie de Médicis: La reine dévoilée* (Paris, 2009), pp.744-83; G. Pages, 'Autour du "Grand Orage". Richelieu et Marillac: Deux Politiques', *Revue historique*, 179 (1937), 63-97.

⁵ Church, *Richelieu*; E. Thuau, *Raison d'État et pensée politique à l'époque de Richelieu* (Paris, 1966); G. Fagniez, 'L'Opinion publique et la polémique au temps de Richelieu, à propos d'une publication récente', *Revue des questions historiques*, 60 (1896), 442-84; G. Fagniez, 'L'Opinion publique et la presse politique sous Louis XIII, 1624-1626', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 14 (1900), 352-401; H. Duccini, *Faire Voir, Faire Croire: l'opinion publique sous Louis XIII* (Paris, 2003). The assumption of a fundamental dichotomy between the two mind-sets has, however, been over emphasised and is frequently misused. The idea that Marie de Médicis' faction, who Richelieu ousted in 1630, was co-extensive with the *dévo*t movement in French political and religious life, has been conclusively debunked: J. Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate* (New Haven, 1996), Chapter 11.

perception that public opinion had been convinced.⁶ The resulting tendency is to assume that after 1630 the only real threat to Richelieu was the risk that Louis XIII's personal distemper would lead to genuine disgrace.⁷ In some characterisations of the reign, so great is Richelieu's success deemed to have been, that France in 1642 is described as 'paisible et florissant, grace à la politique habile et vigoureuse du Cardinal de Richelieu'.⁸

Having supposedly secured domestic political hegemony, the standard account states that Richelieu was then able to turn his focus to an expansive foreign policy, by declaring war on Spain in 1635. A successful war effort was henceforward constructed upon the continued ability to control the domestic political sphere, and foreign policy was in turn used to justify harsh internal repression. The two assumptions are intrinsically linked and mutually-reinforcing.

The first few years of the war were fairly disastrous for France; she suffered a calamitous invasion in 1636 and the campaigns of 1637 and 1638 were characterised by a series of failures. From the end of 1638 onwards, however, France began to register some significant successes. The traditional view taken by historians of the period has been that, during the period from late 1638 through to 1641, there was a 'tournant militaire'; a decisive shift in the course of the war in France's favour.⁹ By

⁶ Church, *Richelieu*, pp.201-5. Historians of the period have tended to look at public opinion in terms of the publication of pamphlets, for obvious reasons of source availability, but this is not a reliable indicator of opinion, only of production. Hélène Duccini's work is therefore to be welcomed for its introduction of a range of visual sources, though this does not dissolve the problem: Duccini, *Faire Voir, Faire Croire*.

⁷ J.B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.47-65; A. Lloyd Moote, *Louis XIII: The Just* (Berkeley, 1989), pp.250-1

⁸ A. Chéruel, *Histoire de France pendant la minorité de Louis XIV* (4 vols.; Paris, 1879-80), i, 72.

⁹ This view is so widely held that hundreds of publications could be cited. See, in particular: H. Hauser, *La Prépondérance Espagnol (1559-1660)* (Paris, 1940), pp.377-8; Hildesheimer, *Richelieu*, pp.432-4, 451, 465; G. Pages, *The Thirty Years War 1618-1648*, trans. D. Maland (London, 1970),

1642 Richelieu is depicted as steering France on a march to victory, of which the battle of Rocroi in 1643 – despite being 6 months after his death – was the crowning moment.¹⁰

This triumphalist account has, however, been seriously challenged in recent decades, especially with regards to Richelieu's military achievements. France had secured some undeniable military advantages, but nowhere near enough to form the kind of decisive turning point as laid claim to by many historians. Between 1638 and 1642 the French war effort reaped few rewards of major strategic value. Victories such as Breisach (1638) or the Battle of the Downs (1639) did not have the dramatic impact on Spanish military capabilities that has often been assumed.¹¹ Even the heavy defeat inflicted at Rocroi in 1643 – which is not attributable to Richelieu at any rate – did not have anywhere near the terminal impact on the Spanish machine that its status assigned to it by historians and myth-makers implies.¹² Indeed the Spanish war

pp.199-201; Chevalier, *Louis XIII*, pp.547-600; Mousnier, *L'Homme Rouge*, pp.566-606, 684-706; Bély, *La France au XVII siècle*, p.590.

¹⁰ This triumphalist interpretation is reinforced by the persistent association of Richelieu with strong leadership, contrasted with Mazarin and Anne of Austria's supposedly weak, or failed, leadership which is blamed for the near-reversal of Richelieu's achievements: Pages, *Thirty Years War*, pp.199-209; A. Lloyd Moote, *The Revolt of the Judges: The Parlement of Paris and the Fronde 1643-1652* (Princeton, 1971), pp.64-87; Collins, *The State*, pp.65-8.

¹¹ D.A. Parrott, 'France's War against the Habsburgs, 1624-1659: the Politics of Military Failure', in E. García Hernán and D. Maffi (eds.), *Guerra y Sociedad en la Monarquía Hispánica* (2 vols.; Madrid, 2006), i, 31-48; D.A. Parrott, *Richelieu's Army: War, Government and Society in France, 1624-1642* (Cambridge, 2001), pp.110-63; J.H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, 1984); R. A. Stradling, 'Catastrophe and Recovery: The Defeat of Spain, 1639-43', in *Spain's Struggle for Europe, 1598-1668* (London, 1994), 197-212. It is noticeable, by contrast, how many historians have simply failed to mention major French defeats during this period of supposed triumph. Chevallier, for example, completely omits to mention the major loss of Aire in December 1641, while Hildesheimer incorporates all of the French military successes of 1641, but none of the failures: Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, p.582; Hildesheimer, *Richelieu*, p.451. See also Pages, *Thirty Years War*, pp.199-206.

¹² Stradling, 'Catastrophe and Recovery', pp.208-10. The assumption of Rocroi's strategic importance is retained in various recent studies, though Stradling's case remains the more convincing: J. Israel, 'Olivares, the Cardinal-Infante and Spain's strategy in the Low Countries: The Road to Rocroi, 1635-1643', in *Conflicts of Empires: Spain, the Low Countries and the struggle for World supremacy, 1585-1713* (London, 1997), 63-91; F. González de León, *The Road to Rocroi: Class, culture and command in the Spanish Army of Flanders, 1567-1659* (Leiden, 2009).

effort was not dramatically curtailed by these losses and continued to register significant successes of its own. France's war machine, on the other hand was nowhere near as impressive as implied in many existing accounts. The idea that Richelieu had effectively secured victory by the end of 1642 is misplaced. After Richelieu's death in December 1642, the Franco-Spanish conflict raged on for another 17 gruelling years during which the tides of fortune turned more than once.

There are also profound challenges to the traditional assumptions concerning the nature of absolutism and the role of the nobility, which have fostered revisionist interpretations of Richelieu's ministry, though these are far from unanimous in their implications. The myth of his selfless service to the state is dispelled through recent studies characterising him as a man of his times, who worked pragmatically to implement royal policies. He respected and preserved traditional interests and practices wherever possible, while employing standard methods of self-advancement within the social hierarchy, through marriage alliances, patronage and exploitation of public office for private enrichment. He worked hard to forge alliances with the *grands* rather than trying to destroy them.¹³ Although these are much more convincing ways of understanding the Cardinal, they implicitly pose the question as to why his ministry was so riven by discord. Even after the supposed political success of the 1620s and early 1630s, Richelieu's government was beset by noble conspiracy and revolt, which reached a new phase of climax during 1641 and 1642. If this unrest was not a response to the dynamic and aggressive force of Richelieu's drive to absolutism, then alternative explanations are needed.

¹³ Bergin, *Rise of Richelieu*; J. Bergin, *Cardinal Richelieu: power and the pursuit of wealth* (New Haven, 1985); Parrott, *Richelieu's Army*, pp.1-5; J. Bergin and L. Brockliss (eds.), *Richelieu and His Age* (Oxford, 1992).

There are also recent historiographical tendencies to suggest that Richelieu's role in government was particularly divisive. His monopolisation of control over government and patronage is seen by many as a disruptive experiment which disturbed traditional notions of monarchy and served to incite opposition from among the Court nobility. The successes of later French absolutism resided on a rejection of his approach in favour of more collaborative and co-operative government under Louis XIV.¹⁴ There are, however, some modern studies which accept the idea that the political unrest during Richelieu's ministry, as well as that of Mazarin, was a necessary part, or unfortunate by product, of the process of fashioning the more stable monarchical authority to follow.¹⁵ This has been complemented by the gradual accretion of sympathetic treatments of Richelieu's opponents, some of which have suggested, albeit tentatively, that the seeds of a modern liberal political culture were sowed in response to the Cardinal's aggressive uses of power.¹⁶

The present study seeks to address the relative absence of scholarly study of the opposition during the final years of Richelieu's ministry, which results from the

¹⁴ R. Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford, 1988); K. Beguin, 'Louis XIV et l'aristocratie: coup de majesté ou retour à la tradition?', *Histoire, économie et société*, 19:4 (2000), 497-512; W. Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-century France* (New York, 1985), pp.39, 316-8; D. Bohanan, *Crown and Nobility in Early Modern France* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp.27-30.

¹⁵ S. Kettering, *Patrons, brokers and clients in seventeenth-century France* (New York, 1986), Chapter 4; Blanchard, *Éminence*, Conclusion; Mettam, *Power and Faction*.

¹⁶ This line of argument is made in J.M. Constant, *Les Conjurateurs: le premier libéralisme politique sous Richelieu* (Paris, 1987), though he develops few of the implications of his work. It is also complemented by G. Dethan, *Gaston d'Orléans: Conspirator et prince charmant* (Paris, 1959) and A. Jouanna, *Le devoir de révolte: La noblesse française et la gestion de l'État moderne, 1559-1661* (Paris, 1989). It is now possible to make the connection between Constant's understanding of the opposition to Richelieu and the characterisation of the aristocratic critics of Louis XIV's rule as essentially liberal rather than simply reactionary, though there are differences of opinion as to how modern their liberal ideas were: L. Rothkrug, *Opposition to Louis XIV: The political and social origins of the French Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1965), p.257; N.O. Keohane, *Philosophy and the State in France: The Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 332-57; H.A. Ellis, *Boullainvilliers and the French Monarchy* (Ithaca, 1988); D.A. Parker, *Class and state in ancien régime France: The road to modernity?* (London, 1996), pp.149-56.

emphasis placed on the importance of the struggles during its first half.¹⁷ It addresses the questions of the nature and causes of noble unrest during Richelieu's government, in order to test the recent suggestions made by revisionist reappraisals of French absolutism pertaining to Richelieu's relationship with the *grands* and the wider noble opposition.

Closer examination of the period shows that there are certain key causal factors that require assimilation into recent historical understandings. Richelieu pragmatically sought to secure alliances with many of the *grands* as a means to secure his political power, as well as his family's position within the upper echelons of the social hierarchy, but this effort was in itself the source of antagonism between Richelieu and the Princes of the Blood, as well as between the Princes of the Blood and each other. He was enmeshed within a set of dynastic and factional rivalries.

These rivalries were greatly exacerbated by the emergence, after 1638, of concerns over a future minority. The birth of an heir to the throne was accompanied by new concerns over Louis XIII's health. Factional divisions were hardened by this issue, as the possibility of a regency of the Richelieu-Condé faction was unpalatable for the other *grands*. For the likes of Soissons and Vendôme there seemed to be no prospect of a return to a satisfactory working relationship with the Cardinal.

¹⁷ There are various accounts of the conspiracies of Soissons and Cinq-Mars, but they are generally lacking in analysis or appreciation of the political context: P. Érlanger, *Richelieu and the Affair of Cinq-Mars*, trans. Cremonsi (London, 1971); P. de Vaissière, *Conjuration de Cinq-Mars* (Paris, 1928); J.P. Basserie, *La Conjuration de Cinq-Mars* (Paris, 1896); L. d'Haucour, *La Conspiration de Cinq-Mars d'après des Documents inédits (1642)* (Paris, 1902); H. Dacremont, 'Richelieu et le comte de Soissons', *La Nouvelle Revue*, 33-34 (1918); S. LeRoy, 'L'Affaire du Comte de Soissons et la Campagne du Maréchal de Chatillon en 1637', *Études et Documents relatifs à l'Histoire Ardennaise*, 1 (1901), 33-92. The chief exception, although her interpretation is flawed, is M. Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines* (2 vols.; Paris, 1981-97) ii, which includes a lengthy account of the Cinq-Mars affair. Otherwise modern coverage of the period after 1635 is in the hands of the various narratives of the reign and biographical studies of key individuals.

Richelieu, moreover, responded aggressively to the new situation and placed great pressure on those who could contest the regency, including Anne of Austria herself, and placed increasing onus on his alliance with Condé. France was therefore increasingly riven by factional rivalries, despite the need to focus on the massive war effort against the Habsburgs.

These domestic processes were catalysed by the significant role played by the Habsburg powers in providing support and encouragement to Richelieu's opponents. The catalytic impact of the Habsburgs, therefore, also needs to be integrating into our understanding of French politics during this period. The *grands* who fell out with Richelieu were surprisingly successful at sustaining themselves, as well as in building rebellions against him, in large part due to their ability to obtain the support of Philip IV of Spain and Ferdinand III of Austria.

The picture that emerges is that the French opposition, during Richelieu's later years, was surprisingly successful in maintaining its independence from a régime which became increasingly hostile under pressures of war, dynastic and factional rivalries, and Richelieu's manoeuvres to control the anticipated regency. Richelieu's adversaries among the *grands* came close on more than one occasion to overthrowing him, but ultimately prioritised self-preservation with a view to contesting the regency. Their activities, moreover, had a major impact on the war effort. Popular and noble revolt both diverted precious resources and restricted Richelieu's military options. The opposition produced a sophisticated public critique of Richelieu's régime and its disappointing war effort. In addition, the existence of an influential group of princes and senior nobleman, who opposed Richelieu, gave the Spaniards hope that a régime

would emerge after Richelieu's death or dismissal, which would be more flexible at the negotiating table. Madrid consequently demonstrated a perfectly reasonable belief that the tides of war would once more turn in Spain's favour and refused Richelieu's terms for a long-term truce based on the *status quo*. Richelieu was, therefore, responsible for sparking off the widespread opposition which in turn served to thwart his aspirations to an ambitious peace deal. If the objective of war was not winning battles, but reducing one's opponent to satisfactory terms of settlement, then success was still a long way off for France.

Spain and the French opposition prior to 1638

During much of the early modern period there was a catalytic relationship between foreign power – especially that of the Habsburgs – and France's internal discord. Noble revolts were consistently supported by the Spanish, the Imperials, or the English when it came to the Huguenots. From the War of the Public Weal between 1485 and 1488,¹⁸ to the conspiracy of Charles de Bourbon,¹⁹ the Catholic League,²⁰ the Biron conspiracy,²¹ and the opposition to Richelieu and Mazarin,²² the independent power of the nobles relied heavily on Spanish backing, or the threat of it. Money, armies and diplomatic support could regularly be obtained by approaching the

¹⁸ D. Le Page and M. Nassiet, *L'Union de la Bretagne à la France* (Morlaix, 2003), pp. 88, 94.

¹⁹ V.J. Pitts, *The Man Who Sacked Rome: Charles de Bourbon, Constable of France (1490-1527)* (New York, 1993).

²⁰ J. de Croze, *Les Guises, les Valois, et Philippe II* (2 vols., Paris, 1866); S. Brunet, 'Philippe II et la Ligue Parisienne (1588)', *Revue historique*, 656 (2010), pp.795-844.

²¹ J.L. Cano de Gardoqui, *La Conspiracion de Biron (1602)* (Valladolid, 1970).

²² H. Lonchay, *La Rivalité de la France et de l'Espagne aux Pays-Bas (1635-1700)* (Bruxelles, 1896); A. Hugon, *Au Service du Roi Catholique: "Honorables Ambassadeurs" et "Divins Espions". Représentation diplomatique et service secret dans les relations hispano-françaises de 1598 à 1635* (Madrid, 2004); J.-P. Amalric, 'L'Oeil et la Main de l'Espagne dans les Affaires Françaises (1621-1633)', in K.-H. Körner and M. Vitse (eds.), *Las influencias mutuas entre España y Europa a partir del siglo XVI* (Wiesbaden, 1988), 23-35.

Spanish Monarchy. France's domestic struggles thus became international ones, and her external conflicts rekindled domestic ones. One of the essential components of this phenomenon was the Burgundian inheritance of the Habsburgs, through which the Kings of Spain had obtained Flanders, from where it was relatively easy to invade northern France.²³ In the eyes of Spanish policy makers, this was an inherent vulnerability that made France a malleable and lesser power in international affairs.

The power of the Spanish factor in French affairs was given added strength by the Counter-Reformation of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in which Spain became identified as the leading power. This was closely linked to the growing influence of Hispanic culture inside France. These phenomena helped to foster a widespread belief among French Catholics that peace with the Habsburgs was essential, as a means to furthering the struggle against heresy, as well as France's best interests.²⁴ As the Savoyard diplomat Scaglia wrote in 1625: 'Everything in France is easy except going directly and openly against the Spanish'.²⁵ During the 1620s a rift gradually emerged within Louis XIII's council. On the one hand were those who advocated the path of avoiding direct confrontation with Spain in order to turn France's energies towards domestic reform and the suppression of heresy. The most

²³ J.C. Rule, 'The Enduring Rivalry of France and Spain', in W.R. Thompson (ed.), *Great Power Rivalries* (Columbia, 1999), 32-59.

²⁴ The tide of Spanish influence and pro-Spanish opinion was ambivalently bound up with a great degree of mistrust and antipathy towards Spain in French political culture, largely as a response to the military interventions of Philip II in France's domestic affairs: J.-M. Pelorsen, *L'apogée de l'influence espagnole en France à l'époque d'Anne d'Autriche* (Bordeaux, 1990); H. Méchoulan, 'L'Espagne dans le Miroir des Textes Français', in *L'État Baroque: Regards sur la pensée politique de la France du premier XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1985), 421-446; J-F. Schaub, *La France Espagnole: Les Racines Hispanique de l'Absolutisme Français* (Paris, 2003); J.N. Hillgarth, *The Mirror of Spain, 1500-1700* (Michigan, 2000), pp.328-50. For a sense of the conflict and ambivalence engendered by these differing impulses within French Catholicism: A.W. Ramsey, *Liturgy, Politics and Salvation: The Catholic League in Paris and the nature of Catholic Reform, 1540-1630* (Rochester, 1999).

²⁵ Quoted in T. Osborne, *Dynasty and diplomacy in the Court of Savoy: Political culture and the Thirty Years War* (Cambridge, 2002), p.95.

prominent among them was Marie de Médicis. On the other hand were those – primarily Richelieu – who encouraged Louis XIII towards a more confrontational foreign policy, a path which would make open war with Spain much more likely. Marie’s adherents voiced the key concern that confronting Spain would intrinsically lead to chronic domestic instability within France.²⁶

After Richelieu’s victory during the Day of Dupes, there followed the fragmenting of Court and French political life. A series of rebellions followed, headed by Marie and her younger son, Gaston d’Orléans, who both sought exile and military support in Spanish Flanders.²⁷ Spanish diplomats and allies urged Count-Duke Olivares to support the French rebels, as a pre-emptive strike which would remove Richelieu and ensure the return to power of a pro-peace party.²⁸ The Orléans rebellion of 1632 failed due to lacklustre planning and Spanish unwillingness to commit significant resources. While he was in the midst of planning another rebellion, Richelieu and Louis XIII offered Gaston generous conditions for a return to France in October 1634, which richly rewarded his followers for their conspiratorial behaviour.²⁹

²⁶ R. Briggs, ‘Richelieu and Reform: rhetoric and political reality’, in Bergin and Brockliss (eds.), *Richelieu and His Age*, 71-97, p.93, citing statements by Michel de Marillac.

²⁷ On the rebellions in the aftermath of the Day of Dupes: P. Henrard, *Marie de Médicis dans les Pays-Bas, 1631-1638* (Brussels, 1876); Dethan, *Gaston d’Orléans*, pp.83-134; Dubost, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 805-24; M. Gachard, *Histoire diplomatique et politique de Pierre-Paul Rubens* (Brussels, 1877).

²⁸ R.A. Stradling, ‘The Two Great Luminaries of our Planet’: Spain and France in the Policy of Olivares’, in *Spain’s Struggle for Europe 1598-1668*, 121-45, pp.129-133; Gachard, *Histoire diplomatique*, chapter 9; Osborne, *Dynasty and diplomacy*, chapter 7.

²⁹ For the text of the deal, see: C. de Bordeille, comte de Montrésor, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Sambix (2 vols.; Cologne, 1723), ii, 126-31, ‘Articles de l’accommodement’, Oct. 1634. Orléans’ favourite, Antoine de l’Age de Puylaurens, was made a *duc et pair*, given the governorship of the Bourbonnais, and was subsequently given the hand of one of Richelieu’s cousins, Marguerite de Pontchâteau, in marriage: Dethan, *Gaston d’Orléans*, pp.123-34.

The 1634 reconciliation was characteristic of Richelieu's approach to the *grands*. He had worked hard during the 1620s and 1630s to build co-operative relationships with Orléans, Épernon, Condé, Soissons, Rohan, and many others. Periods of conflict with one set of *grands* were also periods of close-co-operation with other *grands*. During the early 1630s, while Marie de Médicis and Orléans were in exile, Condé and Soissons were benefitting from the fruits of co-operation with Richelieu.³⁰ When Orléans' reconciled, Richelieu had achieved a surprising degree of harmony in French affairs; all three of the adult Princes of the Blood were in France and at least publicly reconciled to his régime, even if their degree of support was still questionable. He had also contracted a marriage alliance with the favourite son of the duc d'Épernon,³¹ while senior Huguenot families continued to rally to his cause. The major exception was Marie, who remained in exile, but without Orléans' allegiance she was isolated and unlikely to cause significant difficulties.

It was on this relatively harmonious footing that the decision was taken by Louis XIII to declare open war against the Spanish Monarchy in May 1635. War with Spain, however, began to disrupt the fragile political balance in France. Spanish military campaign plans for 1634-1636 did not emphasise invasion of France *per se*

³⁰ In 1631 Condé was made governor of the Bourgogne, to add to Berry and the Bourbonnais. During 1632 to 1633 agreement was reached that his eldest son, Louis, duc d'Enghien, would marry Richelieu's niece when he came of appropriate age. Condé built a huge landed fortune through alliance with Richelieu, most notably through the acquisition of Montmorency's possessions after 1632: C. Jouhaud, 'Politiques de princes: les Condé (1630-1652)', in P. Contamine (ed.), *L'Etat et les Aristocraties (France, Angleterre, Ecosse) XIIIe-XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1989), 335-355. In 1631 Soissons was given the governorships of Champagne and Brie, to add to that of Dauphiné, and was confirmed in the possession of the substantial revenues of the ecclesiastical benefices of his father: 'L'Armée d'Aunis devant La Rochelle (14 Mai-10 November 1622). Recueil de la Correspondance de Louis de Bourbon, Comte de Soissons', in *Archives Historiques de La Saintonge et de l'Aunis*, 56-57 (Saintes, 2003-5), ii, 467-480. Both Condé and Soissons were given major responsibilities during these years, including governing Paris and the Île de France during the King's absences.

³¹ Bernard de Nogaret, duc de La Valette - Épernon's second son - was married to Marie de Pontchâteau, another of Richelieu's cousins, in 1634.

but the toppling of Richelieu by encouraging domestic unrest.³² The Cardinal-Infante's 1636 manifesto was framed as an appeal to the French people to support his efforts to force Louis XIII and Richelieu to make peace, and was circulated in the towns of Champagne and Picardie.³³ Regular capitulations of key French strongholds throughout the war were surrounded by accusations and suspicions of treasonous collusion with the enemy. Most dramatically, both Orléans and Soissons once more went into open opposition in the autumn of 1636 by conspiring to assassinate Richelieu at Amiens.³⁴ Soon after the plot fell through, they co-ordinated a sudden departure from Court, accompanied by other senior nobles; Orléans headed for Guyenne and Soissons for Sedan.³⁵ They began fomenting domestic unrest and sought Spanish assistance to stage an armed rebellion against the Cardinal.

The reasons for the actions of the princes were veiled. The memoirs of their conspiratorial lieutenants – most prominent being those of Montrésor – explain that the princes believed Richelieu was a tyrant who must be overthrown for the public good.³⁶ But the claim that this public spiritedness was the sole motivation for the actions of Orléans and Soissons is unconvincing, though it undoubtedly influenced them. Soissons' relationship with Richelieu had been deteriorating for some years.

³² Stradling, 'Olivares and the Origins of the Franco-Spanish War, 1627-35'. See also, M.A. Echevarria Bacigalupe, *La diplomacia secreta en Flandes, 1598-1643* (Vizcaya, 1984).

³³ A.M.R.A., victime de Noailles, *Le maréchal de Guébriant, 1602 à 1643* (Paris, 1913), pp.29-30.

³⁴ On the Amiens plot, see: Dethan, *Gaston d'Orléans*, pp.236-8; Constant, *Conjurateurs*, pp.122-9. The doubts cast on the plot's existence by Dethan can be conclusively rejected. There are many other independent references to it in contemporary sources, including: N. Goulas, *Mémoires*, ed. C. Constant (3 vols.; Paris, 1879-1882), i, 293-4; J. Ravenel (ed.), 'Mémoire de Mazarin contre le Cardinal de Retz, Madame de Chevreuse, et autres partisans des Princes', in *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France*, 1 (1834), 229-253, p.235; Campion, *Lettres*, pp.36-7, Campion to M.D.R., 25 Sept. [sic] 1636; Talon, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Pujolat, vi, 67.

³⁵ Sedan was a semi-independent territory on the border between Champagne and Habsburg Luxembourg, ruled by Frederic-Maurice de La Tour, duc de Bouillon, as a sovereign prince under Louis XIII's nominal protection. Orléans did not actually make it to Guyenne, however, as he wished to ensure himself of Éperon's support first. He headed for his residence at Blois instead.

³⁶ The best guide to their thinking is Constant, *Conjurateurs*.

Despite being rewarded handsomely through co-operation with the Cardinal, he showed himself to be increasingly unwilling to cede precedence to him.³⁷ He had also refused to negotiate a marriage deal with Richelieu and instead spurned the Cardinal's niece, madame de Combalet, as 'une personne de petite condition'.³⁸ He was effectively unwilling to accept Richelieu, by dint of his unique position as Cardinal-Minister, as a social superior or equal. He would not, for example, accept his overall command as *generalissimo* of the army which had been put together to repel the Spanish from Picardie in 1636. In the build-up to Soissons' move towards rebellion, attempts were made by his mother to reconcile him with Richelieu, by trying to persuade him to submit to the Cardinal's personal authority, but he refused.³⁹ It was only then that he gave free reign to the radical activists among his household to conspire.

Orléans, for his part, remained at odds with Richelieu over similar dynastic issues; most notably that of his marriage to Marguerite de Lorraine, which Richelieu

³⁷ Richelieu, *Mémoires*, in Petitot and Monmerqué, xxviii, 279.

³⁸ *Journal de monsieur le cardinal de Richelieu, qu'il a fait durant le grand Orage de la Court en l'Année 1630 et 1631. Tiré des Mémoires qu'il a écrit de sa main* (n.p., 1648), pp.125-6; V. Siri, *Anecdotes du ministère du Cardinal de Richelieu et du règne de Louis XIII*, trans. G. de Valdory (2 vols.; Paris, 1717), i, 318-28; G. Tallemant des Réaux, *Les Historiettes de Tallemant Des Réaux : mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du XVIIe siècle* (6 vols.; Paris, 1834-1835), i, 133-5; R. Quazza, *Tommaso di Savoia-Carignano nelle campagne di Fiandra e di Francia 1635-1638* (Turin, 1941), p.156, n.124, quoting Priandi's despatch of 25 Nov. 1636; F. de Paule de Clermont, marquis de Montglat, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, v, 48; L. Regnier (ed.), *Fragments Inédits des Mémoires et des Lettres du P. Caussin* (Paris, 1915), p.24, 'A Monsieur le comte de Soissons' [n.d.]; *ibid.*, p.24, 'Consolation à Madame la comtesse de Soissons' [n.d.]; C. de Montchal, *Mémoires* (2 vols.; Rotterdam, 1718), ii, 681. Marie-Magdeleine de Vignerot, dame de Combalet, was the widow of Antoine du Roure, sieur de Combalet, and was Richelieu's niece by his sister Françoise's marriage to René de Vignerot.

³⁹ Campion, *Lettres*, pp.33-4, Campion to M.D.R., 30 Aug. 1636; Montglat, *Mémoires*, pp.48-9; M. de Chizay, *Mémoires de M. de Chizay sur le Règne de Louis XIII*, ed. R. Lavollée (Paris, 1914), p.267; Quazza, *Tommaso di Savoia*, pp.118-9, 124, and 152 (n.98), quoting Saint-Maurice's despatch of 7 October; Marescot to Béthune, 13 Sept., quoted in O. Vigier, 'Une invasion en France sous Louis XIII', *Revue des questions historiques*, 12 (1894), 440-92, p.482, n.3.

was continuing his efforts to have renounced.⁴⁰ Marguerite remained a *persona non grata* in France and Orléans remained without a male heir; his dynastic future was at stake. There were fears, especially among the other *grands*, that Orléans would be persuaded to renounce his marriage and marry Richelieu's niece, thus forging a formidable political alliance.⁴¹ It appears as though the prospect of alliance with the Cardinal was the Apple of Discord. During the lead up to their acts of rebellion in 1636, however, Orléans and Soissons reached a mutual understanding to oppose the upstart Richelieu and put their own rivalries aside.⁴² This implicitly included joint agreement to reject a marriage alliance with him.⁴³ There was therefore a political rebellion resulting from the disruptive impact of the issue of the Cardinal-Minister's position within the social and political hierarchy. The rebellion was then given life and form by radical noble supporters of the princes, who opposed the war-state and employed a highly traditional political platform to justify opposition.

With the threat that the Spanish would support the revolt of the princes, as well as the demands of a war effort that had thus far been somewhat disastrous, Richelieu and Louis XIII were forced to defuse the situation by making major concessions to both princes during 1637.⁴⁴ Orléans was given recognition of his

⁴⁰ M.-C. Vignal-Souleyreau, *Richelieu et la Lorraine* (Paris, 2004), pp. 161-5, 231.

⁴¹ In 1634 Presidente Costa visited Madrid on behalf of Soissons, explaining that the comte was now disgruntled that Richelieu was no longer offering Combalet to him, but to Orléans: BL Add 14000, fo.624, 'Descifrado de carta de Su Magestad', 7 Mar. 1634; *ibid.*, fo.636, Papel que dio el Presidente Costa, embiado por el Principe Thomas', n.d. [1634]; . The duc de Vendôme was also competing to ally with Richelieu. In 1635 he made a proposal for a double alliance: his eldest son would marry Mademoiselle de Brézé and either his daughter would marry La Meilleraie, or his second son would marry Mademoiselle du Plessis de Chivrey. This proposal was rejected, probably because de Brézé had already been promised to Condé's son: BL Eg 1688, fo.26, Charnacé to de Brézé, 5 Feb. [1635].

⁴² C. de Bordeille, comte de Montrésor, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, iii, 203-4.

⁴³ Quazza, *Tommaso di Savoia*, p.159 (n.139) [Dec 1636], quoting Père Monod despatch relating what Soissons' confessor had told him.

⁴⁴ Leroy, 'L'Affaire du Comte de Soissons'; Dethan, *Gaston d'Orléans*, pp.238-44; Henrard, *Marie de Médicis*, pp. 582-94; Dom Ganneron, *Annales*, ed. P. Laurent (Paris, 1893), pp.198-204.

marriage and agreement that Marguerite be permitted to return to France. He was also given a written promise from Richelieu that he would not try to marry his niece to Soissons.⁴⁵ Soissons was allowed to remain at Sedan for four years in full exercise of his charges and functions, including that of *grand maître* of the King's household, meaning that new appointees to many of the positions closest to the King were required to travel to Sedan to take their oaths of fidelity at the hands of one of the Cardinal's open enemies, whose close dealings with the Spanish were public knowledge.⁴⁶

This in turn encouraged further acts of opposition. Sedan became a new La Rochelle; a focal point for more-or-less-open opposition to the ministry and the war. From here on Richelieu struggled with the existence of an openly-defiant faction of *grands* and noble activists against his rule, which threatened to combine with popular unrest, to create a calamitous break-down in public order.

⁴⁵ Dethan, *Gaston d'Orléans*, pp.247-54. Dethan argues that Orléans wanted to marry her himself, but that the stumbling block was Louis XIII's objection to what he saw as a 'mésalliance'. This may explain why the deadlock over a possible marriage alliance between Orléans, Soissons and Richelieu was never broken.

⁴⁶ L. Trabouillet (ed.), *L'État de la France* (3 vols.; Paris, 1699), i, 51-4.

Chapter 1 - Court faction and the regency question (1638-1640)

Opening manoeuvres, 1638-1639

The new issue

On 5 September 1638 Anne of Austria gave birth to an heir to the French throne. During the multifarious celebrations of this much longed-for event, one of the common themes was the hope that the arrival of a Dauphin would bring peace and the ‘soulagement du peuple’.¹ But the birth of the son had been foreshadowed by a decline in the health of the father.

Earlier in the summer of 1638 the King’s doctors had warned Richelieu that taking Louis on campaign was damaging his already fragile health, but their advice was not heeded and Louis headed to the frontier in July.² As predicted, he was struck down by fever shortly after returning to St Germain in anticipation of the birth of his first child.³ On the day of the Dauphin’s arrival itself, Richelieu sent a messenger urgently to inquire as to the King’s well-being. Impatient for news, he soon sent another, writing that ‘En verité j’ay beaucoup d’inquiétude’ and speculated whether

¹ G. Colletet, *Poème sur la naissance de Monseigneur le Dauphin* (Paris, 1639), p.17; H. Jongleux (ed.), *Chroniques berrichonnes du XVIIe siècle. Journal des choses mémorables arrivées en la ville de Bourges et autres lieux de la province 1621-1694* (Bourges, 1881), p.28; A. Jacmon, *Mémoires*, ed. A. Chassaing (Le Puy-en-Velay, 1885), p.132; G. Patin, *Lettres*, ed. J.-H. Reveillé-Parise (3 vols.; Paris, 1846), i, 56, Patin to Belin, 4 Nov. 1638.

² V. Siri, *Anecdotes du ministère du Cardinal de Richelieu et du règne de Louis XIII* (2 vols.; Paris, 1717), ii, 52-3; L. Vaunois, *Vie de Louis XIII* (Paris, 1944), pp.487-90. The King’s ill-health is also mentioned in F.S.J.R. de Beauchamp, *Louis XIII d’après sa correspondance avec Richelieu* (Paris, 1902), p.336, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 24 Mar. 1638; *ibid.*, p.336, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 30 Mar. 1638.

³ P. Chevallier, *Louis XIII, roi cornélien* (Paris, 1979), pp.556-7, according to which Louis fell ill on 2 September while out hunting, but the *Mercure* reported that he had fallen ill earlier, in mid-August: *Le Mercure François*, xxii (Paris, 1646), p.291.

the illness might be ‘de conséquence’, despite the King’s *premier médecin*, Charles Bouvard, having assured him that it was not serious.⁴ The King’s symptoms continued and worsened.⁵ When representatives of the Parlement came to St Germain on 7 September, to congratulate Louis on the Dauphin’s arrival, they had to wait some time while the King was readied. Having spent the day in bed, Louis made it as far as a nearby chair to receive them.⁶ Richelieu was understandably keen to present the illness publicly as a mere cold, but Louis’ fevers continued, with ‘fits increasing to more violence’, and Richelieu noticeably refrained from coming to court where many *grands* had arrived for the Dauphin’s birth.⁷ Around the middle of the month word spread that Louis had recovered, but he immediately fell ill again when news of the terrible military failure at Fuenterrabía arrived on the 17th. The fevers continued until the end of the month.⁸

Louis had been unwell for much of the late 1620s and early 1630s, often seriously so, but from late 1634 he had fared much better. Historians usually operate on the belief that Louis’ health was of little concern after 1634 until late 1641, but the available evidence shows that he suffered a new decline from late 1638 onwards. A treatise by one of Louis XIII’s personal doctors, Robert Lyonnet, indicates that during the years 1638 to 1640 the King was frequently ill, describing how he was ‘tourmenté,

⁴ Avenel, vii, 146, Richelieu to Chavigny, 5 Sept. 1638.

⁵ Where historians have referred to this illness, they have (erroneously) claimed that it ended on 5 September with the birth of the Dauphin. See, for example: Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp.556-7; Le Vassor, v, 552.

⁶ M. Molé, *Mémoires*, ed. A. Champollion-Figeac (4 vols.; Paris, 1855-57) ii, 424-7.

⁷ Avenel, vi, 145, Richelieu to Chavigny, 4 Sept. 1638; BL Add 35097, fo.139, Scudamore to [Secretary of State], 10 Sept.; Vaunois, *Vie*, p.493, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 11 Sept. 1638.

⁸ *Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents formed by Alfred Morrison*, 2nd series, i (printed for private circulation, 1893), p.397, Bouthillier to Brézé, 16 Sept.; Avenel, vi, 177, Richelieu to Louis XIII, 17 Sept.; BL Add 35097, fo.140, Scudamore to [Secretary of State], 17 Sept.; Beauchamp, *Louis XIII*, p.347, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 18 Sept.; *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, ed. P.C. Molhuysen *et al* (2009), published on-line at URL: <http://grotius.huygens.knaw.nl>, accessed 10 June 2012, no.3785, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 2 Oct. 1638.

ne pouvait tenir en place, et son inquiétude avait pour résultat l'insomnie, le fièvre, des accès de goutte'.⁹

The combination of the birth of an heir and a decline in the King's health, made it highly probable that a minority would soon be an issue. Late 1638 consequently saw the early emergence of speculations at Court concerning the choice of regent.¹⁰ Regencies were particularly unsettling affairs in early modern France. There were no fixed constitutional rules defining either who would be regent, or what the framework of government should be. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, practices focused on the separate function of two vital roles: the tutelage of the minor King, which was normally entrusted to his mother (or another close female relative), and the regency of the realm, usually entrusted to the adult male closest in proximity to the throne assisted by a council of senior noblemen. The recent past had, however, seen a significant shift; Louise de Savoie had exercised power during Francis I's absences, while both Catherine de Médicis (for Charles IX) and Marie de

⁹ Dr. P. Guillon, *La Mort de Louis XIII* (Paris, 1897), p.85 and pp.63-97. Guillon analyses and summarises the account given by Lyonnet in his *Brevis dissertatio de morbis haereditariis* (Paris, 1647). Sources on Louis' health during his later adulthood are scarce, although many accounts exist of his death and final illness in 1643: Guillon, *Mort*, pp.11-19. For his childhood and early adult years (up to 1628) we have Jean Héroard's immense *Journal*, ed. M. Foisil (2 vols.; Paris, 1989). Lyonnet's book is therefore the only substantial source on the period between 1628 and late 1642. Lyonnet's account of a new phase of recurrent ill-health from September 1638 onwards necessitates an adjustment to the claims made by Hildesheimer and Laurain-Portemer that Louis enjoyed good health from the early 1630s through to late 1640 or 1641: M. Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines* (2 vols.; Paris, 1980-97), ii, xv-xvii, 265; F. Hildesheimer, *Richelieu* (Paris, 2004), p.448. Hildesheimer claims that at the end of 1640 Louis' doctors only gave him 6 more months to live, but there is no trace of this in either Lyonnet or Guillon. Neither Hildesheimer nor Laurain-Portemer give references for their assertions. The only modern work on Louis' health offers a pathological re-assessment, diagnosing him as a lifetime Crohn's disease sufferer, which would be entirely in keeping with the symptoms, as well as the pattern of periods of remission and relapse reflected in the material consulted for the present study: J.J. Bernier, P. Chevallier, D. Teysseire, J. André, 'La Maladie de Louis XIII. Tuberculose intestinale ou maladie de Crohn?', *La nouvelle Presse Médicale*, 10:27 (20 June 1981), 2243-2250. Louis, and his doctors, most often reported that he suffered from tertian fever ('fièvre tierce'), usually associated with malaria, or stomach problems ('flux de ventre', 'dévoiement', 'tranchées'), and gout; most, or all, of which may be misdiagnoses due to lack of awareness of the single underlying chronic illness (Crohn's disease), which remained well beyond the understanding of contemporary medical science.

¹⁰ BN Italien 1814, p.199, Correr to Doge, 2 Nov. 1638.

Médicis (for the young Louis XIII) had exercised the 'double garde' of tutelage and regency in tandem.¹¹

The “new” – though well over a century old – tradition, therefore, implied that Anne of Austria would assume the regency during the minority of Louis XIII’s son. She was supported in this by a strong sense of expectation, both popular and legal. When, in 1628, Jacques Corbin published his legal treatise, *Le code Louis XIII*, he included a section concerning ‘Les Roynes Régentes de la France et les exemples de leur Gouvernement heureux’, explaining that ‘la Régence est deuë aux Roynes’.¹² Along with Anne of Austria, the next highest contenders for a position of authority in the regency – by dint of consanguinity with the King – were the Princes of the Blood: Gaston d’Orléans, the Prince de Condé, and the comte de Soissons. As brother to Louis XIII and uncle to the new Dauphin, Gaston’s aspirations to the role of regent were muted by the priority accorded to queen mothers in recent times, but he could obtain a title such as that of *lieutenant général*, such as had been awarded to the First Prince of the Blood, Antoine de Navarre, during the minority of Charles IX. Another strong contender was Louis XIII’s mother, Marie de Médicis, but she was in exile and her ability to obtain permission to return would be further complicated by the prospect of a minority. Richelieu’s increasing supremacy over French affairs, however, posed a *de facto* challenge to the claims of Anne and the Princes. The speculations at Court

¹¹ P. Viollet, *Droit public. Histoire des institutions politiques et administratives de la France* (3 vols.; Paris, 1890-1903), ii, 91-6. Of particular importance in establishing these separate functions were The Ordonnance of Vincennes and the Lettres Patentes of Melun of August and October 1374 respectively. See also H. Lightman, ‘Political Power and the Queen of France: Pierre Dupuy’s treatise on regency governments’, *Canadian Journal of History*, 21:3 (1986) 299-312.

¹² J. Corbin, *Le code Louis XIII, Roy de France et de Navarre* (Paris, 1628), pp.2-4. Corbin was a member of Anne of Austria’s household, as one of her *maîtres de requêtes*, and favoured the continuation of Marie de Médicis’ role in the King’s council, despite the fact that her official regency had ended many years ago.

in the autumn of 1638 were therefore that the Cardinal would be appointed by the King to manage affairs during his son's minority.

Although they are not recorded in any known documents, we can be sure that Richelieu did not savour the prospect of a regency controlled by Anne of Austria, Gaston d'Orléans, or the two of them in tandem. He had been at loggerheads with both since the mid-1620s.¹³ In 1632 Cardin Le Bret, one of Richelieu's team of writers, published his immense *De la Souveraineté du Roy*, which argued that the wives of Kings had no natural claim on public authority. This included royal minorities or absences, and they could only become regents through the express will of the King.¹⁴ Le Bret's immediate purpose, writing in the aftermath of the Day of Dupes, was to argue against Marie de Médicis' on-going claims to a role in Louis XIII's council. The same work also argued against any claims by Princes of the Blood to a natural share of public authority or sovereignty.¹⁵ Between Corbin and Le Bret legal terrain had been mapped out which anticipated the contest that would arise after 1638 between Richelieu, Anne and Gaston.

On 6 June 1639, an envoy of Marie de Médicis presented a paper to the Council of State in Madrid, which advised the Spanish King that Richelieu was scheming to obtain the regency, in tandem with his chief ally, the Prince de Condé. Two rival coalitions opposed Richelieu: that of Marie de Médicis in league with her younger son Orléans; and that of Anne of Austria in allegiance with her husband's cousin, Soissons. The princely heirs to the throne were separated by their mutual mistrust and it was their rivalries that dictated the orientation of the factions at the

¹³ Kleinman, *Anne of Austria*, pp.68-114; G. Dethan, *Gaston d'Orléans, conspirateur et prince charmant* (Paris, 1959), pp.45-134, 215-44.

¹⁴ C. Le Bret, *De la Souveraineté du Roy* (Paris, 1632), pp.42-8.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp.49-58.

French court. According to Marie's paper, the only way to mount serious a challenge to the entrenched Richelieu-Condé grouping, was to bring together the factions of Anne and Orléans. The primary rivalry, therefore, was to be between Richelieu and Anne.¹⁶ Richelieu's behaviour during the preceding 15 months had done much to contribute to the belief that he was manoeuvring to secure the regency for himself. If his personal political achievements, as well as the carefully-constructed aggrandisement of himself and his family,¹⁷ were to be preserved, then he would have to maintain his personal authority.

Richelieu and the new mother

After the Val-de-Grâce affair of 1637, Anne of Austria is usually believed to have turned her back on political intrigue, and to have adopted a more compliant attitude towards the wishes of her husband and his chief minister.¹⁸ While historians recognise that Richelieu continued to treat her heavy-handedly, she is now viewed as inherently passive, and Anne's most attentive biographer has even suggested that this new mood of submission explains the conception of the Dauphin after twenty years of fruitless marriage.¹⁹ At the more extreme end, one historian has commented that, after the Dauphin's arrival, Anne was entirely 'metamorphosé' and sought rapprochement with the Cardinal in her son's best interests.²⁰ These assumptions are

¹⁶ AGS Est. Flandes 2157, 'Papel que el comendador Marteli presento en nombre de la Christianissima Reyna Madre', 6 June 1639.

¹⁷ J. Bergin, *Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the pursuit of wealth* (New Haven, 1985).

¹⁸ On the Val-de-Grâce affair see: Kleinman, *Anne of Austria*, pp.86-101; P.-M. Bondonio, 'L'affaire du Val-de-Grâce (août 1637). Les documents de la cassette de Richelieu', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 8 (1922), 111-165.

¹⁹ Kleinman, *Anne of Austria*, pp.104-7.

²⁰ Hildesheimer, *Richelieu*, p.411. See also, J.B. Wolf, *Louis XIV* (London, 1970), pp.30-2;

seemingly borne out by some of the extant correspondence, which suggests an effort by both parties to remain on good terms. Anne outwardly played the part of the devoted wife and Queen, apparently rejecting any dealings with those who had previously led her astray; most notably Madame de Chevreuse.²¹ There is, however, strong evidence that Anne was far from acquiescent and that the rancour between her and Richelieu increased during 1638. The relationship between Richelieu and the Queen was transformed into that of two rivals for future power.

As soon as it had become clear that Anne was pregnant,²² the appointment of a household for the future child – which was assumed in advance to be male – became a pivotal issue. The successful control of the household would play an important part in dictating who would have control over the Dauphin, which was implicitly the most fundamental territory for dictating the apportionment of the sovereign-like role of Regent.

²¹ See, for example, Anne's letter to Chevreuse in AAE CP Angleterre 47, fo.208, n.d. [September/October 1638], which urges her to remain loyal to the King. Such letters have successfully duped historians, but were most likely for appearances only, to persuade Richelieu and Louis that she was renouncing her former affiliations. A similar letter from Anne is mentioned in a letter from Lord Digby to Lord Montaignu, while in Paris, dated 12 March 1638: 'Quand cette dame viendra à Londres, dites lui que la lettre qu'elle y trouvera de la part de I (Anne) est par ordre de Basile (the King) et composé par Philinax (Richelieu) et que la responce en doit estre telle que Philinax et tout le monde le puisse voir': quoted in P.-M. Bondonio, 'Une négociation difficile de Richelieu: Madame de Chevreuse en Angleterre 1638-1639', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 46 (1932), 87-97, pp.91-2. Another example of Anne's apparent disavowal of her former intrigues can be found in Beauchamp, *Louis XIII*, p.320, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 12 Sept. 1637. Marie de Rohan, duchesse de Chevreuse, had initially reached prominence through her marriage to the duc de Luynes, a former favourite of Louis XIII. After his death she gained influence through friendship with Anne of Austria. She had fled France for Spain in 1637, before heading to England. There have been many accounts of her political career, but the only one of any merit is V. Cousin, *Madame de Chevreuse* (Paris, 1868). Like many significant female political participants during this era, she suffers from a combination of prejudice and neglect, to the great detriment of historical understanding: R. Briggs, 'Noble Conspiracy and Revolt in France, 1610-1660', *Seventeenth Century French Studies*, 12 (1990), 158-176, p.170.

²² News of Anne's pregnancy was circulating by late January: AAE MD 257, fo.1, Orléans to Chavigny, 24 Jan. 1638; *ibid.*, fo.3, Orléans to Louis XIII, 24 Jan. 1638; fo.5, Soissons to Louis XIII, 24 Jan. 1638.

Anne's preference as governess for her child was for her close friend Madame de Saint-Georges,²³ while for under-governess she favoured Madame du Tot. As early as January 1638, Anne approached Louis concerning their appointment; but he refused to comment and later reported to the Cardinal that 'je lui ai dit que je ne me voulais point encore hater de promettre ces charges, afin de pouvoir avoir votre sentiment là-dessus'.²⁴ In July the King's favourite, mademoiselle de Hautefort, also raised the issue.²⁵ Louis categorically denied that Richelieu was interfering in the selection and, in his subsequent report to Richelieu, Louis complained that Hautefort had 'prist ensuite le parti de la Reyne contre moi'.²⁶ A few days later, however, Richelieu persuaded Louis to join the military campaign in Picardie, a move which many believed to be a means for Richelieu to distance the King from the influences of Hautefort and the Queen.²⁷ The role played by military considerations in decisions concerning the conduct of the war – especially those regarding the King's movements – were now seen at court as being secondary to Richelieu's objective of securing his own grip on power. Within a week of being on campaign Richelieu had persuaded Louis to appoint two of his own clients, Madame de Lansac and Madame de La Chesnaye,²⁸ as governess and under-governess respectively.²⁹ Anne was infuriated;

²³ Jeanne de Harlay, marquise de Saint-Georges, was the daughter of Madame de Montglat who had presided over the 'flock' ('le troupeau') at St Germain, in which all of Henri IV's natural children had intermingled, and to whom the young Louis XIII had been greatly attached. Saint-Georges herself had spent much time around the royal family during Louis XIII's childhood, which gave her excellent credentials for the job. She was, however, closely associated with Marie de Médicis' faction, as well as the likes of La Valette and Soissons, and therefore represented a politically-unpalatable option as far as Richelieu was concerned.

²⁴ Beauchamp, *Louis XIII*, p.335, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 30 Jan. 1638.

²⁵ Marie, mademoiselle de Hautefort, was a lady of honour to the Queen. Marie had her own preference for the position of governess to the future Dauphin: her grandmother Madame de La Flotte.

²⁶ Vicomtesse de Galard (ed.), *Lettres du Roi Louis XIII au Cardinal de Richelieu et à M. de Bullion*, in *Mélanges publiés par la Société des Bibliophiles François* (2 vols., Paris, 1903), i, pièce no.2, p.13, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 17 July 1638.

²⁷ BN Italien 1813, p.331, Correr to Doge, 20 July 1638; Siri, *Anecdotes*, i, 47-9.

²⁸ François de Souvré, dame de Lansac, and Louise de Taverny, dame de La Chesnaye.

she saw these women as agents through whom Richelieu could control her child and spy on her own activities.³⁰ Thus the Cardinal had secured victory in the first skirmish for the regency.

From the early stages of the pregnancy, Richelieu also policed Anne's own household stringently, so as to impose his control and to root out those he felt might influence Anne against him. The Cardinal also continued to sow seeds of mistrust in the King's mind concerning his wife's political loyalties. In March 1638 Richelieu claimed to have discovered a cabal within the Queen's household. Her *maître d'hôtel*, Monsieur de Saint Ange,³¹ was ordered to leave court soon after and her *première dame d'honneur*, Madame de Sénécéy,³² was under grave suspicion, though she remained temporarily untouched.³³ The Cardinal continued to gather incriminating information concerning the activities of Sénécéy, as well as those of leading householders, such as President Bailleul and his wife.³⁴ The threat of further

²⁹ Avenel, vi, 73, Richelieu to Lansac, 25 July; *ibid.*, vi, 75, Richelieu to Le Gras, 25 July 1638. Le Gras later reported that Anne had received Lansac with civility: AAE MD 831, fo.4, [Le Gras] to Richelieu, 3 Aug. 1638.

³⁰ V. Cousin, *Madame de Hautefort* (Paris, 1868), p.354, Madame de Maline to [Richelieu], n.d. [1638/1639]. Lansac was reported by all observers as being a devoted *créature* of the Cardinal, who 'verra et mandera tout ce que la Reyne dira ou écrira': AAE MD 257, fo.274v., anonymous memorandum, 25 Aug. 1638. La Chesnaye was also suspect; she was married to Charles d'Aymé, a *valet de chambre* of the King, who was a known Richelieu client and informer. Other appointments to the Dauphin's household were also clients of Richelieu. Mademoiselle de Jussy, for example, an informer for Père Carré and Richelieu, was made *première femme de chambre*: E. Griselle, *État de la Maison du Roi Louis XIII* (Paris, 1912), p.166.

³¹ François le Charron, seigneur de Saint-Ange.

³² Marie-Catherine de La Rochefoucauld, widow, since 1622, of Henri de Bauffremont, Baron de Sénécéy.

³³ BN Italien 1813, p.88, Correr to Doge, 15 Mar. 1638; *ibid.*, p.100, Correr to Doge, 23 Mar. 1638.

³⁴ BN Italien 1813, p.333, Correr to Doge, 20 July 1638. In August Richelieu obtained further intelligence from Carré of supposed intrigues involving Sénécéy: AAE MD 831, fo.16, Carré to Richelieu, 7 Aug. 1638; *ibid.*, fo.47, Richelieu to Chavigny, 18 Aug. 1638. Nicholas de Bailleul, *président à mortier* in the Parlement of Paris, was chancellor of the Queen's household. His sister, daughter and grand-daughter were also in the Queen's service: R.A. Kleinman, 'Social Dynamics at the French Court: The Household of Anne of Austria', *French Historical Studies*, 16:3 (1990), 517-535.

sanctions loomed over Anne's entourage and expectations of new measures against the Queen continued after the arrival of the Dauphin.³⁵

In early November, when rumours of Richelieu's potential appointment as regent were rife, Anne received further bad news; upon returning from church, Anne was visited by Chavigny, who presented her with the order for Madame de Sénécey to leave court. Anne complained loudly and openly that 'they' – meaning her husband and Richelieu – wanted to remove from her house all those who served her well.³⁶ Sénécey initially refused to leave and Anne did not force her to go until compelled to do so by her husband, who had spoken to her according to a script prepared by Richelieu.³⁷

Sénécey's dismissal was part of a general purge of the Queen's household. Richelieu had regularly cleansed Anne's entourage of those who he claimed were plotting against him, but previous expulsions had only impacted on relatively junior positions. The available material indicates that this purge was the largest yet in terms of the turnover of her paid household staff.³⁸ Richelieu now installed his own *créatures*, Monsieur and Madame de Brassac,³⁹ as heads of Anne's household and entrusted them to establish a more effective framework for the supervision of her activities. Anne continued to vent her anger against the Cardinal and complained that

³⁵ A. de Campion, *Lettres* (Rouen, 1657), p.72, Campion to Soissons, 8 Sept. 1638; AMB CC 113, fo.239v., Morgues to Chifflet, 24 Sept. 1638.

³⁶ BN Italien, 1814, p.223, Correr to Doge, 9 Nov. 1638. Anne had been to church to undo the vow she had made to the Virgin Mary for protection during her pregnancy.

³⁷ Avenel, vi, 235, Richelieu to Louis XIII, 8 Nov. 1638.

³⁸ Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 39-41; BN Italien 1814, p.252, Correr to Doge, 23 Nov. 1638; Griselle, *Maison du Roy*. For an overview of Richelieu's purges of Anne of Austria's household and installation of his clients, see S. Kettering, 'Strategies of Power: Favorites and Women Household Clients at Louis XIII's Court', *French Historical Studies*, vol.33, no.2 (Spring, 2010), pp.177-200.

³⁹ Jean de Galard de Béarn, comte de Brassac, was appointed *chef du conseil* and *surintendente de la maison*; Catherine de St-Maure, Madame de Brassac, was appointed *dame d'honneur*.

‘co’l partorire un sole c’ha dato lume a tutta la Francia, habbi prodotto l’ambre a se stessa’.⁴⁰ She wrote to Richelieu asking him to intervene to halt the changes, but he only counselled her to obey her husband.

There is no material available from which to judge of the realities, if any, of the threats posed by those within Anne's entourage, but the nature of the appointments imposed by Richelieu suggests a highly domineering, and self-serving, set of political manoeuvres, through which he had dramatically extended his ability to control the royal family and the future sovereign. Madame de Brassac was described as a ‘parente molto congiunta del Signor Cardinale’ and Lansac as a ‘parente, e confidente del Signor Cardinale’, while La Chesnaye's husband was an existing Richelieu client employed to monitor the King.⁴¹ These acts once more gave rise to a perception of the Queen as subject to the Cardinal's tyranny. The difference from before, however, was that Anne was now the mother of a Dauphin, the wife of a sickly King, and the natural future regent in the eyes of many.

Richelieu was also taking measures to enhance his ability to govern the King, primarily through the introduction of a new – more compliant – personal favourite. In March 1638 he successfully inserted another one of his *créatures* into the King's household. This was Henri Coiffier de Ruzé d'Effiat, marquis de Cinq-Mars, who was now given one of the two charges of Master of the Wardrobe. Cinq-Mars had been groomed for favour by the Cardinal and introduced to Louis with the deliberate

⁴⁰ BN Italien 1814, p.253, Correr to Doge, 23 Nov. 1638; *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, accessed 7 July 2012, no. 3856, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 20 Nov. 1638.

⁴¹ BN Italien 1814, p.239, Correr to Doge, 16 Nov. 1638; *ibid.*, p.15, Correr to Doge, 10 Aug. 1638.

intention of establishing him as his favourite.⁴² Having the King's personal favourite under his control would give Richelieu a far greater political security and free him from many of the damaging rumours and intrigues of the Court, which rebounded on all other aspects of government. For the time being, however, Madame de Hautefort – an ally of the Queen and constant critic of Richelieu – remained ensconced in the King's favour.⁴³

The Richelieu-Condé faction

This period also saw the rapid expansion of the grip of Richelieu and his allies on the chief positions of power away from Court. Richelieu's most vital alliance was with the Prince de Condé, which had been formed during the aftermath of the Chalais conspiracy in 1626. Condé's collaboration had led to the immense enrichment and growth of influence of his *maison*, largely at the expense of other houses that failed to make satisfactory alliances with the Richelieu-Condé axis.⁴⁴ In 1638, for example, an aggressive assault was launched on the *maison d'Épernon*, especially its Guyenne powerbase.⁴⁵ Richelieu had enjoyed a strained but serviceable working relationship with the *maison d'Épernon* for most of his ministry.⁴⁶ In 1638, however, there was a

⁴² F. de Paule de Clermont, marquis de Montglat, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, v, 125. Cinq-Mars was the son of Antoine Coiffier-Ruzé, marquis d'Effiat, a friend and client of Richelieu's.

⁴³ Montglat, *Mémoires*, pp.59-60, 80.

⁴⁴ C. Jouhaud, 'Politiques de princes: les Condé (1630-1652)' in P. Contamine (ed.), *L'État et les Aristocraties (France, Angleterre, Ecosse) XIIIe-XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1989), 335-355; K. Beguin, *Les Princes de Condé. Rebelles, Courtisans et Mécènes dans la France du Grand Siècle* (Paris, 1999), pp.38-42.

⁴⁵ The campaign versus the *maison d'Épernon* is comparable to the undoing of the duc de Vendôme's influence in Brittany or that of the duc de Guise in Provence in the 1620s and early 1630s: J. B. Collins, *Classes, Estates, and Order in Early Modern Brittany* (Cambridge, 1994); J. Pearl, 'Guise and Provence: Political Conflicts in the Epoch of Richelieu', PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 1968.

⁴⁶ D.A. Parrott, *Richelieu's Army: War, Government and Society in France, 1624-1642* (Cambridge, 2001), pp.482-3.

noticeable shift: the stance of Richelieu and Condé towards the entrenched power of Épernon became decidedly hostile. In February news emerged that Condé was to travel south to take command of an army to invade Spain, but the real intention – as far as the Venetian ambassador was concerned – was to strip Épernon and La Valette of their military commands.⁴⁷ The following month dubious claims were made that a *valet de chambre* of Épernon, named Paillot, had conspired to assassinate Richelieu, though his confession had been extracted under torture and he had not provided any further information to substantiate the plot.⁴⁸ Such a case could be used to provide perfect ammunition to formally disgrace Épernon and his sons. When the Cardinal de La Valette was preparing to leave for his command in Italy, he did so with reluctance, as he expected to be forced into exile in Rome.⁴⁹

The duc de La Valette was appointed as Condé's lieutenant for the invasion of Spain, but was scapegoated for the subsequent military failure at Fuenterrabía. Richelieu had pinned his chief hopes for the year on the taking of the city, but the siege was poorly led and collapsed under pressure from a Spanish relief army in early September. The evidence for La Valette's culpability, however, is anything but convincing. A lengthy defence was penned on behalf of Épernon and La Valette concerning what they saw as a concerted effort on behalf of their enemies, mainly clients of Condé, to destroy them. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the treatment of La Valette was part of the more aggressive factional campaign of 1638 whereby

⁴⁷ BN Italien 1813, p.20, Correr to Doge, 2 Feb. 1638. La Valette and Épernon were by now recognised as joint governors of the Guyenne and had hitherto been accorded the command of the Army of Guyenne: I. Chrysafidou, 'Richelieu and the Grands: The duc d'Épernon', PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 1991, pp.194-5.

⁴⁸ BN Italien 1813, p.109, Correr to Doge, 30 Mar. 1638; BL Add 35097, Scudamore to [Secretary of State], 2 Apr. 1638.

⁴⁹ BN Italien 1813, p.118, 6 Apr. 1638. Louis, Cardinal de La Valette, was the third son of the duc d'Épernon and also a friend and client of Richelieu.

Richelieu and Condé conspired to bring down the *maison d'Épernon*.⁵⁰ Other observers also saw it in those terms.⁵¹ By the end of the year Épernon had been sent into internal exile, La Valette compelled to seek refuge in England, and Condé installed as the new governor of Guyenne in Épernon's stead.

Late 1638 and early 1639 also saw Condé seeking to agree the terms for the marriage of his son to Richelieu's niece, Mademoiselle de Brézé.⁵² This marriage would have great implications for the regency, by implicitly compromising Richelieu's loyalty to the King and his sons. The interests of Richelieu's family would inherently become tied to those of the First Prince of the Blood, which were not always in harmony with those of the ruling branch of the dynasty. The fears of Orléans and Soissons concerning a Richelieu regency, would have centred as much around Condé's aggrandisement at their expense, as they would around Richelieu's personal authority *per se*. The growth of the latter had become a vehicle for the former.

⁵⁰ BN Dupuy 536, fos.210-224, 'Mémoires de Messieurs les Ducs d'Espéron et de la Vallette pour répondre aux accusations quy ont été faites contre eux', signed Jean-Louis de La Valette, 14 Dec. 1638. Various other documents in the same file also support their case. There is also a lengthy self-defence by the duc de La Valette in BN Dupuy 590, fos.94-109, dated 8 October 1638.

⁵¹ The duc Bouillon's letter to Marie de Médicis, also of late 1638, stated that Condé had been dishonoured by his role in bringing down La Valette: AN R2 51, Lettres de Rois et de Reines de France/Marie de Médicis, Bouillon to Marie de Médicis, n.d. [late 1638]. Saint-Simon also believed La Valette to have been innocent of wrong-doing: L. de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon, *Parallèle des trois premiers rois Bourbons in Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. R. Dupuis, H. Comte and F. Bouvet, i (Paris, 1964), p. 441. The Venetian ambassador saw it as an opportunity for Richelieu and Condé to strike a blow against factional enemies: BN Italien 1814, p.128, Correr to Doge, 28 Sept. 1638. See also: J., marquis de Dampierre, *La Saintonge et les seigneurs de Plassac: le duc d'Épernon 1554-1642* (Paris, 1888), pp.282-95.

⁵² BN Italien 1814, p.239, 16 Nov. 1638; *ibid.*, p.361, 11 Jan. [1639]. Claire Clémence de Brézé was the daughter of Richelieu's sister, Nicole de Plessis, and Urbain de Maillé, duc de Brézé

The spring of 1639: Royal decline and ministerial designs

The prospect of a minority was once more in full vigour in the spring of 1639. Louis was again worryingly ill. He suffered recurring bouts of fever throughout April and early May, leading to enhanced fears that his death was imminent and that Richelieu would soon be officially designated as regent. Richelieu, moreover, was trying to persuade Louis to travel south to deal with the severe downturn in the French position in Piedmont and was believed to be working to have himself appointed regent in Paris during Louis' absence. The scheme was known at court as Richelieu's 'monstruoso e portentoso progetto' aimed not only at a temporary caretaking role, but also at securing the title of regent – or an equivalent title – for the longer term.⁵³

Louis refused to undertake the journey south, probably because he was too ill to do so. His chief doctor, Bouvard, subsequently advised Louis that he could not guarantee his health if he continued to participate in public affairs. It was held by some observers that Richelieu was using Bouvard to marginalise Louis from the conduct of affairs, so as to take full control as a minister-regent. It was probably not a coincidence, therefore, that Bouvard was ennobled at precisely this time (May 1639) and that Condé had been called to court to help bolster Richelieu's position during Louis' ill-health.⁵⁴

⁵³ *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.4027, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 19 Mar. 1639; *ibid.*, no.4079, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 23 Apr. 1639; *ibid.*, no.4080, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 23 Apr. 1639; Avenel, vii, 800, Richelieu to Condé, 27 Apr. 1639; *ibid.*, vi, 334, Richelieu to Condé, 28 Apr. 1639; *ibid.*, vi, 335, Richelieu to Louis XIII, 30 Apr. 1639; BN Italien 1815, p.114, Correr to Doge, 3 May 1639.

⁵⁴ *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.4122, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 21 May 1639. Bouvard's precise relationship with Richelieu is unclear, but they must have co-operated closely: Bouvard' son-in-law, Jacques Cousinot, was appointed as the Dauphin's doctor in 1638 and his brother-in-law, Jean Riolan, was a long-serving spy for Richelieu in Marie de Médicis' household. For Bouvard's

The same spring, moreover, saw the blocking of Marie de Médicis' calls to be allowed to return to France. Marie had been in exile in the Spanish Netherlands since fleeing France in July 1631. In August 1638 she had left Flanders and – after a short and inhospitable stint in the United Provinces – travelled to London. Having left enemy territory for the neutrality of England, Marie now sought to obtain permission to return to France. She persuaded her son-in-law, Charles I, to send a special envoy to negotiate. Lord Jermyn was duly despatched at the beginning of March to ask that she either be allowed to return, or that the French King provide her with an income during her residence in London.

The issue was put to the consideration of Louis XIII's council and recommendations penned by Séguier, Chavigny, des Noyers, Bouthillier, and Bullion. Richelieu clearly wished to sustain the appearance that the decision was being made independently of him, so as to dampen accusations that the Queen Mother's on-going exile resulted from his own antipathy. Each of the resulting recommendations expressed profound concerns about the idea of Marie de Médicis return; clearly following the party line defined by Richelieu. One of the objections raised was that, in the event of the King's death, Marie would try to lay claim to a share in the regency of her grandson. This would lead to the emergence of factional discord in the realm which France's enemies would seek to exploit.⁵⁵ Richelieu did not want Marie as an additional competitor during the anticipated regency. At the start of April, therefore,

ennoblement, see 'Lettres de noblesse données par le roi à Bouvard, son premier médecin', reproduced in Guillon, *Mort*, pp.154-7.

⁵⁵ C. de Bourdeille, comte de Montrésor, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Sambix (2 vols.; Cologne, 1723), i, 347-348, 'Sçavoir si S.M. doit permettre le retour de la Reine sa Mere en ce Royaume', Séguier, March 1639. The papers submitted by the other ministers are reproduced in the same volume, pp.341-50. This episode is covered in M. Carmona, *Marie de Médicis* (Paris, 1981), pp.570-75 and Monglat, *Mémoires*, pp.88-9. See also Avenel, vi, 311 for a response to Jermyn drafted by Richelieu, dated 4 April.

Jermyn was sent back to England with a negative response. Immediately after this an investigation commenced into a prisoner in the Bastille named Reveillon who, although he had been incarcerated for some time, had been accused by a fellow prisoner of loose talk about a plan to escape with the intention of assassinating the Cardinal. Reveillon, who had spent part of the early 1630s in exile in Brussels, was questioned about whether he had re-entered France in order to kill the Cardinal. He strenuously denied the accusations against him, but he obligingly implicated Marie de Médicis in his chequered backstory, thus providing the King with a timely reminder of why his mother was a *persona non grata* in the realm.⁵⁶

When Louis' health recovered slightly in June, he made for Hesdin, under siege by La Meilleraie and his army.⁵⁷ It was here that Cinq-Mars finally reached the pre-eminent favour with Louis that had been Richelieu's objective.⁵⁸ This was the culmination of the lengthy, and intentional, process of promotion dating back to at least March 1638. Cinq-Mars' function was now to operate as an informant and advocate around the King on behalf of Richelieu. The two men initially co-operated in what was described by Vittorio Siri as a 'belle harmonie'.⁵⁹ Such co-operation was

⁵⁶ Louis de Caumont, known as Reveillon, was a former domestic of maréchal de Marillac: AAE MD 833, fo.104, information from Pierre Foüache, 13 Apr. 1639; *ibid.*, fo.108, interrogation of Reveillon by Laffemas, 16 Apr. 1639; *ibid.*, fo.115, information from Beatrice de Gouyon, 20 Apr. 1639; *ibid.*, fo.116v., information from Louis Rabier, 26 Apr. 1639; BN Français 16539, fo.620, interrogation of Rochebernard, [Feb] 1642. Reveillon had been in the Bastille for years, so the dredging up of his case – based on accusations by fellow prisoners – at this juncture may well have been a ministerial contrivance. The prisoner Rochebernard, for example, had also been employed to make dubious accusations against Bassompierre in 1638, thereby helping to justify his continued detention in the Bastille: F., maréchal de Bassompierre, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, vi, 355.

⁵⁷ Charles de La Porte de La Meilleraie was Richelieu's cousin.

⁵⁸ Montglat, *Mémoires*, p.80.

⁵⁹ Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 62.

vital, as Louis was again ill while at the camp at Hesdin; suffering from a tumour, and feeling 'l'atteinte de ses maux d'autrefois'.⁶⁰

The reactions of Richelieu's opponents

The emergence of the regency question, along with Richelieu's manoeuvres, had a profound impact on the opposition. In March 1638 the arch-intriguer, Madame de Chevreuse, had left Spain and arrived in London, where she opened negotiations with Richelieu for a return to France. Richelieu and Louis were keen to bring her home; they were concerned about the damage she might do to their diplomatic efforts to ally with Charles I.⁶¹ But Chevreuse had been secretly advised by Anne of Austria not to accept Richelieu's offers which were 'all specious, and a trick to draw her into his net, as a further cause of annoyance to the Queen herself'.⁶² The Queen was not as passive as might be thought after her humiliations in 1637. Soon after receiving Anne's warning, Chevreuse sent Lord Crofts to France.⁶³ Crofts was a friend of François de Thou, the Prince de Marcillac and others, both of whom had often been used to pass letters between Chevreuse and the Queen.⁶⁴ He was also a habitué of Orléans'

⁶⁰ Guillon, *Mort*, p.86.

⁶¹ BN Français 15915, fo.131, Bouthillier to Bellière, 2 July 1638. The best account of their negotiations with Chevreuse, although excessively critical of her, can be found in P.-M. Bondonio, 'Une négociation difficile'.

⁶² *Calendar of State papers: Venice*, vol.24: 1636-1639 (London, 1923), pp. 468-75, no.535, Giustiniani to Doge, 26 Nov. 1638.

⁶³ William, first baron Crofts of Saxham. His name is usually given in French sources as Crafts. He was a prominent member of Queen Henrietta-Maria's household, who would be the subject of much suspicion from Parliament in later years. For Crofts' mission of December 1638, see Bondonio, 'Une négociation difficile', p.209.

⁶⁴ Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 108-9, also recounts that Chevreuse and Anne were still in communication at this time, via de Thou. This was François-Auguste de Thou, son of the famous historian Jacques-Auguste. François, Prince de Marcillac, later duc de La Rochefoucauld, had been imprisoned in the Bastille for aiding Chevreuse's flight into Spain in 1637 and was attached to the Queen.

entourage, having spent some time there at the beginning of the year.⁶⁵ It is likely that Crofts was instructed to contact members of Anne of Austria and Orléans' households, in order to help Chevreuse assess the political climate. Over the coming months she received various letters from friends and relatives warning her against returning to France. Despite the fact that Richelieu and Louis increasingly acquiesced in all of her requirements, Chevreuse went nowhere. Her negotiations with Richelieu dragged on for several months, but she seems to have been set against the idea of a return to France from early 1639 onwards.⁶⁶

Chevreuse and Médicis both, therefore, remained in London, having been deterred from returning to France. The duc de La Valette, fleeing Richelieu-Condé persecution over the Fuenterrabía affair, had arrived in Cornwall in October 1638. His initial intention had been to make for the Dutch States, where he could seek military service with France's allies, as many other political exiles had.⁶⁷ But his ship was harried in the channel by Dunkirker pirates, forcing him to land in England. Through the auspices of Chevreuse, and despite the reluctance of Charles I's councillors, La Valette was permitted to come to the English Court. Under her influence, Valette soon joined Chevreuse in talks with the Spanish Ambassador, Alonso de Cárdenas. One of La Valette's agents in Paris was in no doubt that 'l'on juge bien...que c'est Madame de Chevreuze qui a eû assez de pouvoir sur vostre esprit, pour vous [faire]

⁶⁵ M. de Marolles, *Mémoires* (3 vols.; Amsterdam, 1755), i, 217; F. de La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires* (Paris, 2006), p.69.

⁶⁶ AGRB T100 vol.221, fo.88, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 26 Jan. 1639, forwarding a report from Cárdenas in London, which expressed Chevreuse's intention to head for Flanders.

⁶⁷ During the 1630s various political opponents of Richelieu were exiled and entered the service of the foreign allies, including: the marquis de Hauterive, brother of the marquis de Châteauneuf (Dutch States); Henri de Beringhen, formerly the King's *grand maréchal des logis* (Dutch States); Jean de Sain-Bonnet, maréchal de Toiras (Savoy); and César, duc de Vendôme, a legitimated brother of Louis XIII (Dutch States). See, Le Vassor, iii, 571, 575; *ibid.*, iv, 221, 277.

changer voz premieres et bonnes Resolutions, en ces mauvaises icy'. Chevreuse also supported La Valette's demands to receive a substantial pension and be treated as a grandee of Spain.⁶⁸

During the spring and early summer La Valette, Chevreuse, and Cárdenas developed a plan to deliver Metz to the Habsburgs.⁶⁹ La Valette had operated as governor of Metz and the surrounding area on behalf of his father, who had been titular governor for over 50 years.⁷⁰ La Valette claimed he could persuade some of the city's officers to co-operate in the plot; the lieutenant-governor of the city, Roquépine, was seen as a 'confidente interessato del Duca d'Épernone'.⁷¹ Richelieu's intelligence, however, placed him one step ahead of the conspirators and swift measures were taken to secure Metz: various officers of the garrison were changed and Roquépine was placed under surveillance. Roquépine was reluctant to accept the changes and the Cardinal de La Valette was initially offended; he saw the new measures as an affront against his family's rights and had to be carefully managed by

⁶⁸ BN Dupuy 536, fo.87, 14 Dec. 1638, 'D.C.' [Cartier] to duc de La Valette. This was probably the sieur de Cartier, who was *secrétaire des bandes et infanterie françoises*, honorary tutor to La Valette's children, and one of La Valette's agents in Paris. See also AGRB T100 vol.222, fo.247, Cárdenas to [Cardinal-Infante], 10 June 1639.

⁶⁹ AGRB T100 vol.222, fos.242-250 contains a set of documents pertaining to the scheme. La Valette was due to leave London on 13 June to head for Metz and his manifesto was already drawn up to send to the printers in Antwerp.

⁷⁰ Bernard de La Valette's father, the duc d'Épernon had been received as governor of Metz in 1583, and harboured aspirations to convert it into an independent sovereignty similar to that enjoyed over Sedan by the duc de Bouillon. Bernard had been awarded the *survivance* for the governorship and had taken over the duties of governor from 1621 onwards. When his father was forced to resign the post in 1634, it was his brother, the Cardinal de La Valette who replaced him and still held the position in 1639. After 1634, Bernard played no further role, his *survivance* being defunct: Le Vassor, iv, 674-6; S. Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects: The princes of Sedan and the dukes of Bouillon in early modern France, c.1450-1652', DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2000, p.9; BN N.a.f. 5246, which contains a large collect of letters to La Valette relating to the government of Metz and the pays Metsin.

⁷¹ BN Italien 1814, p.289, Contarini to Doge, 7 Dec. 1639. This was Gilles du Bouzet de Roquépine. Of the small group of nobleman who had followed La Valette into exile in England was Jean-François Le Bigot, sieur de Saint-Quentin, whose father Jean had served as one of Épernon's captains at Metz. La Valette was also visited in England by the sieur de Montigny, whose family had held the lieutenant-governorship of Metz under Épernon control.

Richelieu and Chavigny.⁷² When an appeal for support arrived from the duc de La Valette, which called on Roquépine to offer ‘la resistance que l’honneur vous oblige aux Ennemis de celuy que vous connoissez pour Auteur de votre avancement’, no response was given.⁷³

Meanwhile Marie de Médicis, frustrated at the refusal to allow her back into France, had sent Jean-François Martelli to Madrid.⁷⁴ The purpose of Martelli’s mission was to petition the Spanish government to support Marie’s plans to coordinate the opposition to Richelieu. If he became regent, she argued, it would be disastrous for hopes of an end to the war. The first step would be to bring together a united front of Orléans, Anne of Austria and Soissons in order to oppose the Cardinal. The objective was to ‘stablezer la Reyna Reynante en la autoridad que mereze’. The Spanish, however, had by now lost all faith in Marie, after years of failed projects and expensive pensions. They were well aware, moreover, of the presence of Richelieu’s spies in her household, while the manner of her departure from Flanders the previous

⁷² AAE CP Sardaigne 28, fo.304, Cardinal de La Valette to [Roquépine], 8 May 1639; *ibid.*, fo.314, Cardinal de La Valette to Richelieu, 11 May 1639; Avenel, vi, 356, Richelieu to Cardinal de La Valette, 18 May 1639. After the assurances of Richelieu that he was not to be disgraced, the Cardinal de La Valette’s thoughts turned to ensuring that he obtained the confiscation of his brother’s goods which was bound to ensue from the legal proceedings against him: AAE CP Sardaigne 28, fo.398, Chavigny to Richelieu, 25 May; *ibid.*, fo.401, Richelieu to Cardinal de La Valette, 26 May; *ibid.*, fo.506, Cardinal de La Valette to Richelieu, 7 June 1639; *ibid.*, fo.507, Cardinal de La Valette to Richelieu, 8 June; Avenel, vi, 351, Richelieu to Chavigny and d’Hémery, Rueil, 17 May 1639; BN Français 15915, fo.344, Chavigny to Bellièvre, 12 July 1639; AAE CP Sardaigne 29, fo.45, Richelieu to Cardinal de La Valette, 14 July; *ibid.*, fo.49, Chavigny to Cardinal de La Valette, 21 July 1639.

⁷³ BN Dupuy 536, fo.254, La Valette to Roquépine, 28 July 1639; AGS Est. Flandes 2157, Cárdenas to Olivares, 4 Aug. 1639. The Cardinal de La Valette had urged him to obey Richelieu: AAE CP Sardaigne 29, fo.87, Chavigny to Cardinal de la Valette, 8 Aug. 1639. A subsequent emissary to Roquépine, this time from the governor of Luxembourg, met with similar silence: AAE CP Lorraine 31, fo.217, Roquépine to Chavigny, 5 Oct. 1639.

⁷⁴ Sometimes referred to as *commandeur* Martelli.

year had served to greatly increase the bad faith between Médicis and her son-in-law's government. Madrid declined to get involved in the new scheme.⁷⁵

The new factionalism also incorporated another leading exile: the comte de Soissons. Since November 1636 Soissons had resided at Sedan, having taken refuge there after conspiring along with Orléans to assassinate Richelieu. As an ally of the Queen, Soissons was tied to her claims to the regency government and could expect to secure a favourable role for himself within the future régime.⁷⁶ But Soissons was in no mind to take up arms against the Cardinal; he rebuffed Spanish overtures in the summer of 1638, much to the frustration of some of the other *grands*. Bouillon was keen to persuade Soissons to assert himself through revolt, as was the duc Vendôme who urged him to a 'généreux' resolution to free himself from Richelieu's oppression, and offered his own 'strength' in support.⁷⁷

Unlike La Valette, however, Soissons was already effectively in control of a stronghold (Sedan) where he could hope to repel any aggression instigated by Richelieu. He also still had his offices and incomes as Prince of the Blood, *grand maître de France*, governor of Champagne and Brie, governor of Dauphiné, as well as his various ecclesiastical revenues and territorial possessions. He did not therefore

⁷⁵ AGS Est. Flandes 2157, minutes of Council of State, [11] July 1639.

⁷⁶ De Thou, a part-time agent of the Queen and Chevreuse, was already in close correspondence with Bouillon, Soissons and some of his leading householders: BN Français 15620, fo.61, Soissons to de Thou, 22 Sep. [1638]; *ibid.*, fos.35-71, containing collection of letters of Soissons to de Thou, many of which date from 1638; AAE MD 831, fo.397, [de Thou] to Soissons, 29 Dec. 1638; BN N.a.f. 5130, fo.102, Bouillon to [de Thou], 4 Aug. 1638; BN Français 15620, fos.117-131, undated letters of Saint-Ybard to de Thou, several of which can be dated to 1638. This was Henri d'Escars comte de Saint-Ybard, one of Soissons' favourites.

⁷⁷ For Vendôme's pressure, see BN Italien 1815, p.114, Correr to Doge, 3 May 1639. For Bouillon's attitude and desire to rebel, see: AGRB T100 vol.229, fo.74, 'Sustancia de lo sucedido en Sedan al Ms Palavesino', n.d. [1638]; AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.297, 'Articulos propuestos por el Duque de Bouillon' [1639]. César de Bourbon, duc de Vendôme, was a legitimised elder brother of Louis XIII, who had been dispossessed of the governorship of Brittany after conspiring against Richelieu in the 1620s.

need to pursue the aggressive stance of La Valette in order to maintain his familial and personal independence or *biens*. Indeed, any such “criminal” activity would provide the pretext for coercive sanctions against him.

However, neither could Soissons simply sit and wait; his four year permission to reside at Sedan was nearly half-way through. He would need to engineer the basis to establish a satisfactorily secure accommodation with the French court before it ran out. Richelieu pressed him during 1638 and the early months of 1639 to return to Court, possibly once more offering the hand of his niece, Madame de Combalet.⁷⁸ Soissons, as ever, refused Richelieu’s overtures, citing the lack of *sûreté* in them. In April, he and Bouillon took the somewhat unexpected step of approaching the Papal Nuncio and the Venetian ambassador to obtain third party intermediation with the French Court. Correr explained to the Doge that Soissons ‘resti in necessita di abbracciare spedito che gli assicuri la fortuna risoluto durante la vita del Signor Cardinale di non accostarsi alla Corte’. In return, they offered to serve in either the Papal or Venetian armies against the Ottomans, who were rumoured to be looking to

⁷⁸ Soissons had expressed his desire for a role in the King’s service at the start of 1638: AAE MD 257, fo.5, Soissons to Louis XIII, 24 Jan. 1638. There were at least three subsequent attempts to negotiate a reconciliation: one via the duc de Longueville in February (BN Italien 1813, p.11, 26 Jan.; *ibid.*, p.20, 2 Feb.; *ibid.*, p.30, 9 Feb.; *ibid.*, p.63, 2 Mar.); one via the comtesse de Soissons in the summer (BN Italien 1813, p.174, 4 May; p.184, 11 May; p.216, 23 May; p.323, 13 July; BN Italien 1814, p.15, 10 Aug.; p.53, 28 Aug.); and one via the comte de Sardigny, who was sent to Sedan by Richelieu in November (BN Italien 1814, p.252, 23 Nov.). Sardigny’s mission was reported to include further proposals for a marriage between Soissons and Combalet.

expand westwards once more.⁷⁹ Soissons' over-riding concern was to preserve his moral independence and to avoid a risky rebellion unless absolutely necessary.⁸⁰

Sedan: the new La Rochelle

During the period of Soissons' residence at Sedan, a steady flow of malcontents joined him, in addition to his own householders. One such was Claude du Bec, who had been executed in effigy for *lese-majesté* in relation to the contentious rendition of La Capelle to the Spanish in 1636. He initially fled to Holland, but then found his way to Sedan to join Soissons.⁸¹ In May 1639, he was joined by Henri de Lorraine, Archbishop of Rheims and second son of Charles de Lorraine, duc de Guise.⁸² Henri had inherited the impressive Guise ecclesiastical empire, of which the Archbishopric

⁷⁹ The lengthy Ottoman war against the Persians had been concluded through the Treaty of Kasri Şirin in May 1639, and Sultan Murad IV was said to have vowed to turn his might against Christendom. Richelieu was seeking to direct Murad's energies against the Habsburgs in a bid to open up a further drain on their resources: Avenel, vi, 320, 'Mémoire au sieur de La Haye Ventelet, s'en allant ambassadeur en levant', 14 Apr. 1639; Le Vassor, v. 663-5.

⁸⁰ For the opening of talks with Venice, see: BN Italien 1815, p.106, Correr to Doge, 26 Apr.; *ibid.*, p.114, Correr to Doge, 3 May 1639. For the opening of talks with the Papacy, see: AN 273 AP 184, Dossier 1, containing two drafts of a letter from Bouillon to Cardinal Barberini, 19 Apr. 1639.

⁸¹ Claude was the son of René I du Bec, governor of La Capelle, and Jacqueline de Bueil, comtesse de Moret and a former mistress of Henri IV. In accounts of the 1630s, especially the surrender of La Capelle in 1636, Claude has been confused with his elder brother, René II, marquis de Vardes. René II had in fact fled to Flanders in 1631, and remained there for most of the 1630s, having been excluded from the pardon granted to d'Orléans and his followers in 1634; Avenel, iv, 632, Richelieu to Bouthiller, 18 Oct. 1634. It was Claude who surrendered the town in 1636 and was subsequently punished by Richelieu. In line with this conclusion, one finds that in contemporary documents, after 1633, Claude is consistently known as (the baron, or marquis) du Bec, while René II is referred to as (the marquis) de Vardes. The key sources are: N. Goulas, *Mémoires* (3 vols.; Paris, 1879-1882), i, 224-5; E. Piette, 'Les minutes historiques d'un notaire de Vervins', *La Thiérache: bulletin de la société archéologique de Vervins*, 4 (1876), 172-199; BN Cinq-Cents de Colbert 149, fo.125, 'Restablisement de mr le marquis du Bec', 1643.

⁸² BN Français 20547, fo.106, 'Histoire du mariage de Henry duc de Guise avec la Princesse Anne de Mantoue'; AAE MD 2164, fo.150, Richelieu to Louis XIII, 28 Feb. 1636; AGRB T100 vol.215, fo.329, Cardinal Infante to Philip IV, 10 Oct. 1636; Avenel, vi, 151, Richelieu to Chavigny, 6 Sept. 1638; *ibid.*, vi, 378-9, n.3; N.-M. Bernardin, *Un Précurseur de Racine: Tristan l'Hermitte sieur du Solier (1601-1655)* (Paris, 1895), pp.183-9; BN Italien 1814, p.292, Correr to Doge, 7 Dec. 1638; BN Italien 1815, p.161, Correr to Doge, 30 Mai 1639; J. Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate* (New Haven, 1996), pp.440-2, 464-5.

of Rheims was the cornerstone. Despite his clerical status, however, Henri had been courting Anne de Gonzague, younger daughter of the duke of Mantua, since at least 1636. He had tried unsuccessfully to obtain a joint refuge for them in Flanders as early as October 1636. In 1638 Henri asked Louis XIII for permission to marry Anne and to resign his benefices to his younger brothers, hoping that his father, or elder brother, would then assign some of their incomes to him.⁸³ Richelieu and Louis refused. Eventually, in May 1639, Richelieu gave Henri an ultimatum; within two days he must either resolve to take holy orders, or give up his benefices to be distributed at the King's pleasure. Henri and Anne had secretly married in 1638, so he could not comply, but neither was he willing to surrender his revenues. He therefore took refuge at Sedan, arriving on 23 May 1639. He was accompanied by his retinue, including the comte de Modène,⁸⁴ and Louis de Bridieu.⁸⁵ Henceforward Henri and his followers tied their fates to that of Soissons.

⁸³ Henri had one older brother, François, Prince de Joinville, and two younger brothers: Louis and Roger. Another younger brother, Charles Louis, had died in 1637.

⁸⁴ Esprit de Raimond de Mormoiron, comte de Modène, was the son of François, a close ally of the duc de Luynes and subsequently of the duc de Montmorency. François had been exiled to Avignon by Richelieu after the Day of Dupes and died in 1632. Esprit de Raimond, began as a follower of Orléans, but later passed into the service of Guise. He was related both to the Guise and Gonzague families: H. Chardon, *Nouveaux Documents sur la Vie de Molière: M. de Modène, ses deux femmes et Madeleine Béjart* (Paris, 1886).

⁸⁵ Louis de Bridieu, baron de Bonnay, vicomte de Germini; a long-time servant of Guise, who later achieved fame for his heroic defence of the town of Guise against the Spanish in 1650.

Increasing hostility, 1639-1640

Summer of tension

It was in this state of affairs that – after the fall of Hesdin in June 1639 – Louis and Richelieu marched an army towards Champagne, stoking up fears that they intended to lay siege to Sedan.

An Imperial army, under Piccolomini, had taken the offensive in June, inflicting a crushing defeat on the smaller force of the marquis de Feuquières at Thionville on the 7th.⁸⁶ Given that the main French army was busy laying siege to Hesdin, no major force barred the route into Champagne. Piccolomini, however, was cautious – he did not want to ‘perdre la gloire qu’il a acquise devant Thionville’⁸⁷ – and was not prepared to attempt a thrust deep into French territory with the forces at his disposal. Instead he laid siege to Mouzon where the garrison offered stern resistance and was soon relieved by the arrival of a small army under Châtillon, forcing Piccolomini to withdraw.⁸⁸ He subsequently departed the Champagne area for a proposed rendezvous with the Cardinal-Infante in Artois,⁸⁹ with the intention of relieving Hesdin.

When the army under Louis and Richelieu began moving towards Champagne, in early July, thus heading in the opposite direction from Piccolomini’s continuing march towards Artois, concerns inevitably arose that he and Richelieu

⁸⁶ Parrott, *Richelieu’s Army*, p.75.

⁸⁷ *Lettres de Jean Chapelain*, ed. P. Tamizey de Larroque (2 vols.; Paris, 1880-3), i, 445, Chapelain to Conrart, 30 June 1639.

⁸⁸ Richelieu reported that Piccolomini had lost 1,200 men in the attempt: Avenel, vi, 405, Richelieu to La Meilleraye, 24 June 1639, and note 1; Le Vassor, v, 677-8.

⁸⁹ Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, younger brother of Philip IV of Spain, was governor of the Spanish Netherlands.

were planning action against Sedan. Both men wished to dislodge Soissons from Sedan, separate him from Bouillon, and bring him back to Court, so as to defuse a potentially dangerous situation. Soissons had been named in the legal proceedings against La Valette in the spring, in relation to their intrigues of 1636 and 1637, which inevitably fuelled Soissons' fears.⁹⁰ A display of sabre-rattling was taking place.⁹¹

The *parti* at Sedan greatly feared that Louis and Richelieu in fact intended to lay siege to the place. Even before the march to Champagne had commenced, Alexandre de Campion had counselled Soissons to be on the look-out for aggression, writing that, 'vous devez tenir toujours la Place où vous estes en bon estat; tous vos serviteurs estant persuadez que si Monsieur le Cardinal croyoit s'en pouvoir rendre maistre, vostre traité ne vous garantiroit pas, veu que vous estes la seule personne qui l'incommode, vous voyant en lieu et en estat de luy courresus, s'il luy arrivoit une disgrâce, et il soupçonne mesme que vous en avez la volonté'.⁹² Soissons arranged for urgent work to strengthen the town's fortifications.⁹³ Messengers journeyed back and forth between Sedan and the King, as he drew nearer, in order to defuse the

⁹⁰ The Papal Nuncio reported Soissons' disgruntlement at being mentioned in the La Valette trial: P. Blet (ed.), *Correspondance du nonce en France Ranuccio Scotti (1639-1641)* (Rome, 1965) p.107, Scotti to Barberini, Paris, 10 June 1639. La Valette had been involved in the plot to assassinate Richelieu at Amiens in 1636 and subsequently tried to persuade his father to join the rebellion of Soissons and Orléans, but failed and was forced to seek reconciliation with the Cardinal: Goulas, *Mémoires*, i, 293-4; C. de Bourdeille, comte de Montrésor, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, iii, 204- 6; O. Talon, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, vi, 67.

⁹¹ The official reasoning for the King's eastward march was to safeguard the new conquest of Hesdin by drawing the enemy away from it: Avenel vi, 437, Richelieu to Châtillon, 20 July; *ibid.*, 441, Richelieu to La Meilleraye, 21 July; *ibid.*, 455, Richelieu to Prince of Orange, 30 July, which explained that Châtillon was to lay siege to Yvoy in Luxembourg, 'afin de contraindre les ennemis de diviser de plus en plus leurs forces'; *ibid.*, 457, Richelieu to La Meilleraye, 31 July 1639.

⁹² Campion, *Lettres*, p.68, Campion to Soissons, 1 July 1639. Alexandre de Campion was the older brother of Henri de Campion, the renowned memoirist. He had entered Soissons' service during the mid-1630s.

⁹³ AN R2 55, no.100, Elisabeth of Nassau to duc de Bouillon, 14 Aug. 1639. Bassompierre also reports that Soissons had some 2,000 troops brought into Sedan, but this is uncorroborated: F., maréchal de Bassompierre, *Journal de ma vie: mémoires du maréchal de Bassompierre*, ed. A. de Chantérac (4 vols.; Paris, 1870-1877), iv, 308.

situation.⁹⁴ Soissons sent Sardini to see the King to request approval for the on-going fortification works, which was duly given.⁹⁵

Steps were also taken to remove any *casus belli* which might be seized upon by the Cardinal to justify military action against Sedan. Soissons, for example, rendered the abbé de Croisilles to Richelieu. Croisilles, who held Soissons' ecclesiastical benefices *in commendam*, had contracted an illicit marriage and subsequently been arrested by Soissons. Richelieu, however, depicted the wayward abbé as a victim of Soissons' persecution and had petitioned for his release. Once handed over, Croisilles was freed.⁹⁶

A more damaging accusation being made against the *parti* at Sedan was that Piccolomini's army had been drawing supplies from Sedan during the attack on Mouzon in June. Piccolomini had indeed asked for supplies during Bouillon's absence, but the request had been turned down by his mother, Elisabeth of Nassau.⁹⁷ Aware of the potentially-dangerous accusations which might surface, she then wrote to the Court explaining what had happened and that no assistance had been given to

⁹⁴ BN Moreau 777, no.76, Richelieu to Soissons, 28 July; *ibid.*, no.85, Richelieu to Soissons, 26 July; AN R2 51, 'Lettres de Rois et de Reines de France/Louis XIII', unnumbered, letters of Richelieu, Louis XIII, and de Noyers to duchesse de Bouillon of 17, 21 and 22 July respectively; *ibid.*, unnumbered, Louis XIII to duc de Bouillon, 24 July; *ibid.*, unnumbered, Louis XIII to duchesse de Bouillon, 26 July; *ibid.*, unnumbered, Richelieu to duchesse de Bouillon, 26 July; BN Dupuy 549, fo.267, Louis XIII to Soissons, 24 July; AN R2 55, no.98, letters of Bouillon to Louis XIII, 24 and 25 July 1639.

⁹⁵ Le Vassor, v, 730. Alexandre Sardini (Sardigny), vicomte de Buzançais, had been attached to Soissons since at least 1626.

⁹⁶ G. Mongrédien, 'L'extravagante histoire du mariage de l'abbé de Croisilles', in *Le Lisez-moi Historique* (July 1934), 184-92; BN Moreau 777, no.76, Richelieu to Soissons, 28 July 1639. Jean-Baptiste de Crosilles, abbé de la Couture, was guilty, despite Richelieu's claims to the contrary, and was re-imprisoned in 1640. Croisilles was Soissons' *abbé commendataire*. For an explanation of the system of *commendataires*, see: M. André, P. Condis and J. Wagner, *Dictionnaire de droit canonique et des sciences en connexion avec le droit canon* (4 vols.; Paris, 1894-1901) i, 13-14, 442-4.

⁹⁷ J.L. Tulot (ed.), *Correspondance d'Elisabeth de Nassau, duchesse de Bouillon. Années 1630-1642*, published online at URL: <http://jeanluc.tulot.pagesperso-orange.fr/Edenassau09.pdf> (31 December 2006), accessed 10 July 2012, p.75, Elisabeth of Nassau to duc de Bouillon, 20 July 1639.

the enemy; this was well-received.⁹⁸ Louis claimed to be ‘estonné de l’apprehension que je vienzi d’apprendre qu’on a de mes armées a Sedan’ and assured them that he had no plans to open a siege.⁹⁹ The whole episode, while superficially uneventful, served to underline the extent of mistrust on both sides. Its consequences were far-reaching.

While at camp near Arras in July and acting as plenipotentiary of Emperor Ferdinand III, Piccolomini drafted a proposal for an alliance between the Habsburgs and the French malcontents led by Soissons. Piccolomini was a strong advocate of exploiting domestic French unrest as the only means to make significant, and hopefully decisive, progress on the Flanders frontier. In this proposal, he offered to submit himself and his army to Soissons’ command, in the interests of bringing an end to the destructive war which only continued due to ‘l’appassionata ambizione’ of Richelieu.¹⁰⁰

Via the intermediary of the abbé de Mercy,¹⁰¹ Piccolomini’s proposals were passed on to the duchesse de Bouillon at Maastricht.¹⁰² The latter was known for her

⁹⁸ AN R2 51, ‘Lettres de Rois et de Reines de France/Louis XIII’, unnumbered, two letters of de Noyers and Louis XIII to duchesse de Bouillon, dated 21 and 22 July 1639 respectively.

⁹⁹ AN R2 51, ‘Lettres de Rois et de Reines de France/Louis XIII’, Louis XIII to duchesse de Bouillon, 24 July; *ibid.*, Louis XIII to duc de Bouillon, 24 July 1639.

¹⁰⁰ On Piccolomini’s movements after Thionville, see Montglat, *Mémoires*, pp.79-80. For his proposals to Soissons, see AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.316-19v., ‘Instruzione al sigr Abate de Mercy per quello che ha da trattare col sigr Conte di Soissons’, signed Piccolomini, [14] July 1639. Piccolomini was in close correspondence with Ferdinand III’s chief minister, Maximilian von Trauttmansdorff, as well as the Cardinal-Infante, concerning the re-opening of negotiations with Bouillon and Soissons as a means by which to strengthen the Habsburg war effort: *Documenta Bohemica Bellum Tricennale Illustrantia* (7 vols.; Prague, 1971-81), vi, 304, 322.

¹⁰¹ Pierre-Ernst, abbé de Mercy, was a cadet of some dozen or so brothers of a Lorrainer family, many of whom were officers in Imperial or Spanish service, most notably Franz von Mercy, commander of the Bavarian army in the 1640s.

¹⁰² Eléonor de Bergh, wife of the duc de Bouillon, was a member of the Flanders nobility who had spent much of her life at the Brussels court, and may well have been personally known to Mercy and Piccolomini. She had strong connections to Spanish cause; her father and three of her uncles had held senior commands in the Spanish Army of Flanders, though her uncle Hendrik van den Bergh had

*dévo*t inclinations and her powerful influence over her husband, which had led him to convert to Catholicism in the early 1630s.¹⁰³ She relayed Piccolomini's message to her husband and thanked Mercy for the concern he was taking for their interests. After several weeks of delays, Mercy finally received confirmation that the duc was keen to commence negotiations.¹⁰⁴ Soissons was reluctant to take the decisive step, but Bouillon offered to return to Sedan to help persuade him in person.¹⁰⁵ Even then it is clear that Soissons had undergone a shift of attitude, stimulated by the sabre-rattling of Richelieu and the King. In August the governor of Sedan reported to Bouillon that, 'Monsieur le comte me dict encores du jour d'hier qu'il vouloir avec vous prendre une résolution de courage le plus nécessaire et y faire sa pièce'.¹⁰⁶

That winter Piccolomini and Mercy travelled to Brussels to ratify their proposals with the Cardinal-Infante, on behalf of the King of Spain, and to frame a joint mission to negotiate a treaty with the French malcontents at Sedan. The Piccolomini draft from July formed, virtually unchanged, the basis for proposals

become a figurehead for the Flanders nobility in the 1632 rebellion against Spanish rule and had subsequently entered the service of the Dutch Estates. Hendrik died in 1638.

¹⁰³ Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects', pp.330-4; AN R2 55, no.222, 'Oraison funèbre sur le mort de très haut et très puissant prince Monseigneur Frederic Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne', 9 Sept. 1652, by J. Godefroy.

¹⁰⁴ Copies of Mercy's correspondence pertaining to these talks can be found in AGRB T100 vol.550. Mercy had been operating as a diplomatic agent for Piccolomini for some time and had been held prisoner at Maastricht between approximately April and July 1639, after being captured carrying orders from the Cardinal-infant to officers in the Army of Flanders. This was possibly engineered as an opportunity to make initial contact with the Bouillons: AN 273 AP 184, Letters of Henry-Frédéric de Nassau, Prince d'Orange to duc de Bouillon, 9, 19, 28 May, and 10 June 1639; J.L. Tulot (ed.), *Correspondances de Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne et d'Eléonore de Bergh*, published online at URL: <http://jeanluc.tulot.pagesperso-orange.fr/Edenassau10.pdf> (31 December 2006), accessed 19 June 2012, letters of duc de Bouillon to duchesse de Bouillon, dated 1 July (p.99), 3 July (p.100) and 15 Sept. (p.104), in which it appears Bouillon paid the ransom for Mercy's release via a gentleman named Thins. Mercy must then have gone more or less directly to see Piccolomini at Arras to receive the proposals he had drawn up on 14 July, before leaving around 26 July: *Documenta Bohemica*, vi, 319, Piccolomini to Bucquoy, 26 July 1639.

¹⁰⁵ *Documenta Bohemica*, vi, 334, Piccolomini to Ferdinand III, 18 Oct. 1639; AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.297, 'Articulos propuestos por el Duque de Bouillon', n.d. [1639].

¹⁰⁶ AN R2 55, no.101, Conte to Bouillon, 14 Aug. 1639.

(dated 20 November 1639) to be carried to Sedan by Mercy in tandem with César de Chambley.¹⁰⁷

The armed intimidation by Louis and Richelieu had been intended to induce a climb-down or submission, but instead had produced quite the opposite effect; it had persuaded the parti at Sedan of the need to explore the option of an alliance with Spanish and Imperial powers.

The créature turned rival

During the first half of August 1639 news came of the taking of Turin by the Spanish and the decision was made that Louis should travel to Pignerol, to shore up the Franco-Savoyard alliance.¹⁰⁸ Cinq-Mars suggested to the King that the Cardinal be appointed to act as regent in Paris during his journey south.¹⁰⁹ Louis rejected the idea and Paris was left in the hands of a council of ministers,¹¹⁰ while Richelieu accompanied the King. It is possible to glimpse here, however, a ploy by the Cardinal to maintain control in the event of the King's death and the pivotal role of Cinq-Mars' influence within the scheme. By acting as temporary regent in Paris, Richelieu would

¹⁰⁷ Chambley, as representative of the Cardinal-Infante, was also tasked with keeping an eye on Mercy: AGRB T100 vol.225, fo.87, 'Instruccion secreta para el s'ro Cessar Chambley', Brussels, 20 Dec. 1639, which talks of 'la mozedad y viveza del companero' (the youth and liveliness of your companion), and the need to prevent this from resulting in difficulties. It stressed the need to show full confidence in Mercy, without giving any cause for suspicion, while closely monitoring his actions. The mistrust seemed to stem also from the belief that Mercy 'se incliner[a] siempre a la parte de quien le embia [Piccolomini]'. Chambley would need to represent the true interests of the King of Spain, but without quarrelling with Mercy. The documents they carried can be found in AGRB T100 vol.225, fos.87-103v., in the form of letters of credence, instructions, secret instructions and the proposed treaty.

¹⁰⁸ Avenel, vi, 456, Richelieu to La Meilleraye, 10 Aug. 1639, which seems to be the first mention, 'en très-grand secret', that King was to go to the Italian border. For a summary of the 1639 campaign in Piedmont see Parrott, *Richelieu's Army*, pp.139-41.

¹⁰⁹ *Correspondance du Nonce*, p.248, Scotti to Barberini, 27 Jan. 1640.

¹¹⁰ Avenel, vi, 494, Richelieu to 'Messieurs du Conseil', 27 Aug. 1639.

have been able to demonstrate his qualifications for the job on a longer-term basis, while also putting himself in control of the capital and its parlement should the afflicted King die while travelling southwards.

Louis suffered on-going bouts of ill-health during the journey south, especially at Chalon-sur-Saône, where he had ‘fort fièvre accompagnée d’un grand desvoiyement’ and was compelled to rest for eight days.¹¹¹ This no doubt ensured that the regency issue remained prominent in the minds of those at Court. Anne of Austria soon became aware of, and was outraged by, Richelieu’s bid to be appointed regent; a fact of which Richelieu in turn was made aware of by one of his informants within her household.¹¹²

When the King returned to the Île de France in the autumn of 1639, Cinq-Mars was awarded the high-ranking position of *Grand Écuyer de France*, to the surprise of many, after which he became known as ‘Monsieur le Grand’. The King’s previous favourite, Madame de Hautefort, was sent away from court along with several of Anne’s maids of honour.¹¹³ This was a dramatic blow by Richelieu and Cinq-Mars against the Queen’s ability to influence her husband, which further cemented their hold over Louis.

In early 1640 Louis was ill again, while news emerged that Anne of Austria was pregnant once more.¹¹⁴ Although Richelieu had not yet secured formal claim to the title of regent, he was still active in positioning himself to obtain it. He was

¹¹¹ Avenel, vi, 517, Richelieu to Bullion, 2 Sept. 1639; *ibid.*, vi, 334 (n.2); Bassompierre, *Journal*, iv, 316; Guillon, *Mort*, p.86.

¹¹² Cousin, *Hautefort*, p.358, Madame de Maline to Richelieu, n.d. [1639].

¹¹³ Kettering, ‘Strategies of Power’, p.21; BN Italien 1816, p.58, 25 Nov. 1639.

¹¹⁴ Vaunois, *Vie*, p.517; Bassompierre, *Journal*, iv, 328.

rumoured to be seeking to have the Dauphin entrusted into his hands at the Ponts-de-Cé, a stronghold over which he had full control despite not officially being its governor.¹¹⁵ In the spring confirmation finally emerged that mademoiselle de Brézé was to wed the duc d'Enghien, thus cementing his alliance with the Condé family. Richelieu was also seen to be energetically playing court to the duc d'Orléans, with the hope of obtaining his support in the event of a minority, while the King's health deteriorated further.¹¹⁶

A fundamental fissure, however, was emerging at the heart of Richelieu's system; his relationship with Cinq-Mars was collapsing. The Cardinal's concerns had initially been raised by Cinq-Mars' appointment as *Grand Écuyer* in November. The Cardinal's preference had been to award Cinq-Mars a lesser title, such as that of *Premier Écuyer de la Petite Écurie*, but such was Cinq-Mars' sway over Louis, and such was his burgeoning sense of personal ambition, that he had obtained the greater title despite Richelieu's wishes.¹¹⁷ Further reward followed on 12 January when Louis awarded Cinq-Mars the lucrative comté of Dammartin.¹¹⁸

In January and February 1640, Richelieu was already sponsoring moves to counteract Cinq-Mars' alarming degree of favour with the King, through the auspices of La Chesnaye, Louis' *premier valet de chambre* and a rival to Cinq-Mars as personal favourite. The episode is shrouded in mystery, but the outcome was that

¹¹⁵ *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.4485, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 22 Jan. 1640. Ponts-de-Cé was a fortified crossing of the Loire river, of great strategic importance, just above Angers. Richelieu had exercised control over the governorship of Ponts-de-Cé, as well as that of Angers, since approximately 1620: Bergin, *Power and the pursuit of wealth*, p.82

¹¹⁶ *Correspondance du nonce en France*, p.276, Scotti to Barberini, 16 Mar. 1640; BN Italien 1816, p.416, Correr to Doge, 10 Apr. 1640.

¹¹⁷ There is no satisfactory account of Cinq-Mars' rise to favour. The best option is to consult J.P. Basserie, *La Conjuration de Cinq-Mars* (Paris, 1896), pp.10-23.

¹¹⁸ Basserie, *La Conjuration*, pp.32-3.

Cinq-Mars discovered both that La Chesnaye was intriguing to destroy his favour with the King, as well as the fact that Richelieu was behind him. Cinq-Mars persuaded the King to discharge La Chesnaye, along with some of his accomplices within the King's household. This was a major success for Cinq-Mars; some of Richelieu's key clients had been dismissed by the King without consulting him, and at the behest of the man who was now becoming a dangerous competitor.¹¹⁹

Cinq-Mars was now set not only on defending his own position, but on undoing the Cardinal's authority. Historians usually date this resolve to a later period, somewhere between mid-August 1640 and the start of 1641.¹²⁰ On 6 June, however, the Spanish agents had already written from Sedan that 'la conspiraçion de San Mar contra el cardinal Richilieu esta en major estado que nunca y que ha resuelto de todo punto de perderle'. If it was 'in better shape than ever', it must have been operating for weeks, probably months. Alexandre de Campion had been trying – on behalf of Soissons – to forge a friendship with Cinq-Mars since August 1639, and may have already established an agreement for mutual action against Richelieu. Cinq-Mars was now proposing to ally himself with Soissons, cemented through marriage to the latter's niece, daughter of the duc de Longueville.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Bassompierre, *Journal*, iv, 330; BN Italien 1816, p.384, Correr to Doge, 27 Mar. 1640; Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 62-9; Goulas, *Mémoires*, i, 346.

¹²⁰ Basserie, *La Conjuración*, pp.43-60; P. de Vaissière, *Conjuración de Cinq-Mars* (Paris, 1928), pp.26-30, both of which date Cinq-Mars' resolution to depose Richelieu somewhere between August 1640 and early 1641, but both are also disjointed and get vital episodes mixed up. Campion, *Lettres*, p.75, Campion to Soissons, 20 Aug. 1640, also indicates Cinq-Mars' hostile intentions towards Richelieu.

¹²¹ AGRB T100 vol.550, Mercy and Chambley to [Cardinal-Infante], 6 June 1640; Campion, *Lettres*, p.70, Campion to Soissons, 3 Aug. 1639.

Treaties at London and Sedan

In June 1640, talks finally commenced at Sedan with Mercy and Chambley.¹²² On 22 July Bouillon and Henri de Lorraine, who had now become Prince de Joinville,¹²³ signed the proposed articles, adding comments and new articles of their own. Soissons' signature was notably absent, but he was still named in the second article as 'chef et général'. He was mentioned a total of seven times, with Bouillon and Henri de Lorraine's additions speaking ambiguously of the 'Princes confédérés', rather than stating individual names. This ambiguity was an intentional ploy to allow Soissons to give his assent to the talks, but without fully committing himself, and without putting his signature to any documents that might be used to incriminate him.¹²⁴

Under the treaty, Piccolomini was to bring an army of some 16,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry to the Champagne frontier to be placed under Soissons' command.¹²⁵ Two memorandums signed by Bouillon and Henri de Lorraine on the same day give further detail. Bouillon proposed that an army should enter France via Lorraine to seize St Menehou, thus cutting the supply lines to the strategically-important towns of Metz and Toul. A (separate) army under Soissons would enter Champagne via Donchery, crossing the Meuse there, before heading to Rethel and

¹²² Mercy and Chambley departed Brussels around early January, but their arrival at Sedan had met with various delays. Bouillon instructed them not to arrive at Sedan until he himself was there: AGRB T100 vol.571, fo.17, Chambley to Cardinal-Infante, 21 Jan. 1640; AGRB T100 vol.550, Mercy to [Salamanca], 16 Mar. 1640. Bouillon himself was delayed by ill-health. As a consequence, the Habsburg agents did not reach Sedan until late April, or early May, and even then their talks were further delayed by Bouillon's health problems.

¹²³ Henri's older brother, François, had died on 7 December 1639. Henri now claimed his brother's title. This state of affairs was short-lived; his father died on 30 September 1640, after which Henri inherited the higher-ranking title of duc de Guise.

¹²⁴ BN N.a.f. 29, item 1 (treaty of July 1640).

¹²⁵ BN N.a.f. 29, item 1 (treaty of July 1640), article 1.

Château-Porcien, from where they would issue a call to the other towns of Champagne, ‘quy luy ont promis, estant de son gouvernement’. At the same time, the Army of Flanders would attack Picardie, where Soissons was assured of the ‘best places’ on the Somme.¹²⁶

In London, meanwhile, the French exiles had entered new talks with Habsburg envoys. The duc de La Valette, encouraged by Chevreuse, Médicis, and the support of the duc de Soubise,¹²⁷ was making plans to invade France. The Spanish Ambassador, Cárdenas, had been joined in early 1640 by an envoy from Vienna, François-Paul de Lisola, who brought offers from the Emperor of further military support for the French malcontents.¹²⁸ Lisola’s mission – in tandem with Piccolomini’s approach to Sedan – was part of a two-pronged initiative by Vienna, which sought to bring Louis XIII round to acceptable peace terms by removing Richelieu. Two additional Spanish emissaries were also sent to London, in order to negotiate with both Charles I’s government and the French malcontents: the Marquis de Velada and Virgilio Malvezzi.¹²⁹ Representatives of the duc de Lorraine,¹³⁰ as

¹²⁶ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.261, ‘Instruction des choses qu’outre les Articles du Traicté general le Sieur Secrétaire de Chambley doit représenter de la part de Monsieur le Prince de Joinville’, signed Henry de Lorraine, 22 July 1640; *ibid.*, fo.265, ‘Instruction pour le Sieur Secrétaire César de Chambley’, duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640.

¹²⁷ Benjamin de Rohan, seigneur de Soubise, younger brother of the duc de Rohan. He had been part of the negotiations since at least August 1639: AAE MD 834, fo.39, Carré to [Richelieu], 31 Aug. 1639.

¹²⁸ The best source for Lisola’s mission is the posthumously-edited H. Reynald, ‘Le Baron de Lisola: sa jeunesse, et sa première ambassade en Angleterre (1613-1645)’, *Revue historique*, 27 (1885), 300-51.

¹²⁹ London was now becoming a vital arena for Habsburg attempts to shift the balance in the war against France. The fall of Breisach in 1638 had meant that the Spanish land route – the so-called “Spanish Road” – to Flanders was cut. The battle of the Downs in 1639 had seen the defeat of a Spanish Armada, whose primary purpose had been to deliver troops and money to the Spanish Netherlands. If Charles I could be persuaded to bring England’s considerable naval resources to bear against the Dutch, it would be possible to secure the sea route to Flanders. Charles and the Earl of Strafford, his chief minister, were keen to secure Spanish finance to wage war against the Scots. An Anglo-Spanish deal therefore seemed a strong possibility: J.H. Elliott, ‘The Year of the Three Ambassadors’, in H. Lloyd-Jones, V. Pearl and B. Worden (eds.), *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper* (London, 1981), 165-181. On the Spanish Road and the Battle of the Downs, see G. Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659* (Cambridge, 1972),

well as of Prince Thomas,¹³¹ also arrived around this time. All of these Catholic, foreign dignitaries became involved in the secret negotiations, which exacerbated puritan suspicions of Charles I and Strafford.¹³² The Spanish negotiations with La Valette and Soubise were largely adjunct to the parallel talks for an Anglo-Spanish alliance and were conducted during, and in the week immediately following the dissolution of, the Short Parlement.

A draft treaty was subsequently signed by La Valette and Soubise, in early May, which outlined a plan for them to ally with the Habsburgs so as to invade France.¹³³ La Valette was to be equipped with some 12,000 Spanish troops. Crossing from England, the duc would descend on the French coast in the Médoc region, where he could exploit the Épernon power-base to take Bordeaux and raise Guyenne in rebellion. Soubise would simultaneously land at La Rochelle, where he was assured of a warm welcome, and from where he would raise the Huguenots.¹³⁴ Other landing points in Normandy, at St Malo or Bayonne were also suggested.

pp.80-101; R. A. Stradling, 'Catastrophe and Recovery: The Defeat of Spain, 1639-43', in *Spain's Struggle for Europe, 1598-1668* (London, 1994), pp.197-212.

¹³⁰ Lorraine's agent was Henri de Livron, marquis de Ville.

¹³¹ Prince Thomas' agent was Colonel d'Allot, sometimes given as du Hallot, Dalot, or similar variants. He was active in encouraging the French exiles to foment rebellion inside France: BN Français 15995, fo.15, Montereul to Bellièvre, 23 Feb.; *ibid.* fo.56, Montereul to [Chavigny], 9 Feb. 1640.

¹³² C. Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill, 1983), apportions a large part of the blame for the breakdown in Charles' relationship with Parliament to the suspicion surrounding the activities of these Spanish and French Papists in London.

¹³³ Elliott, 'Year of the Three Ambassadors', pp.171-5. The Short Parlement was dissolved on 5 May 1640.

¹³⁴ AAE MD 836, fo.260, 'Memoire de la conduite de Mr le Duc de La Valette et de Mr de Soubise', 1640; AAE CP Espagne 19, fo.439, 'Memoire Veritable du trette fait par les seigneurs ducques de la Vallette y de Soubize avecq Le Roy d'Espagne', n.d. [1640]; BN Français 15995, fo.142, Montereul [to Chavigny], 16 Nov. 1640.

Soissons had also sent envoys to La Valette to suggest that they ‘agir de conser’.¹³⁵ If Sedan and London were to be combined, it is unlikely that they would have attempted close co-operation at such distances. Instead they reached broad agreement as to complementary timings and schemes of campaign. One of the key intermediaries for this co-ordination was Madame de Chevreuse, who travelled from London to Flanders in May 1640, becoming involved with negotiations of Soissons’ representatives in Brussels. She also sent an agent in Madrid to press Olivares for his support for their projects.¹³⁶ Spanish diplomats also sought to co-ordinate the two spheres of activity.¹³⁷ If both projects commenced around the same time – towards the end of the 1640 campaign season, or the beginning of that of 1641 – then their combined effect would have a crippling effect on the French war-effort.

The impact of the Dauphin’s birth and of the new decline in Louis XIII’s health had resulted in increased factional strife, which was developing into a militant stand-off between the Cardinal and his opponents. To what extent Richelieu was intentionally antagonistic, so as to provoke an armed confrontation, remains unclear, but this was certainly the result of his behaviour. The Cardinal’s efforts to cement his grip over the household of the Queen, the Dauphin and the King, had begun to backfire. Rather than a powerful ally, Cinq-Mars was now becoming a committed

¹³⁵ BN Français 6651, fo.88, untitled statement by La Vigerie, 14 Nov. 1640. Soissons had openly sent an envoy to England in late September 1638 on the pretext of purchasing horses and dogs, whom the French Ambassador, Bellièvre, had assisted. It would therefore have been relatively easy for him to pass messages to those in London: BN Français 15916, fo.142, Soissons to Bellièvre, 28 Sept. 1638; *ibid.*, fo.183, Soissons to Bellièvre, 11 Feb. 1639. There were also links between those at Sedan and the duc d’Épernon, which emerged during the Madaillan trial: Y.-M. Bercé, ‘Procès et mort du baron de Madaillan, 1641-1645’, *Sociétés et idéologies des temps modernes*, ed. J. Fouilleron et al (2 vols.; Montpellier, 1996), i, 293-302.

¹³⁶ BN Français 15610, p.593, Arnaud to Barillon, 13 May 1640; AAE MD 835, fo.98, Montereul [to Chavigny], 2 May 1640; AAE CP Pays-Bas Espagnol 14, fo.59, Gerbier to [Richelieu], 7 July 1640; Elliott, ‘Year of the three ambassadors’, pp.169-71.

¹³⁷ AGRB T100 vol.225, fo.385v., Philip IV to the Cardinal-Infante, 4 Sept. 1640.

enemy who was working with the exiles. Despite the traumatic experience of 1637, Anne of Austria remained in contact with those conspiring against Richelieu and in motherhood now had greater motivation than ever to seek measures to preserve her position. Her allies in exile had begun moves to acquire the military and financial resources to mount a challenge to Richelieu's grip on power, seeking to preserve Anne's claims to the role of Regent through alliances with the Habsburg powers.

Chapter 2 - War and the foundations of opposition (1635-1641)

*'Lors q'un puissant favory gouverne un estat on ne se trompe jamais en jugeant des affaires publiques par les interestz de ce favory'*¹

The political platform

War and ministerial tyranny

While the *grands* were agitated by factional struggles - exacerbated after 1638 by the prospect of a minority kingship - the nation was increasingly agitated by the demands of prolonged war.

France was engaged in near-constant war from 1629 onwards. Richelieu was accused of being a war-monger, and was criticised for his confrontational stance towards the Catholic Habsburgs. The necessities of financing war, and the need for domestic stability, had required harsh political measures and massive tax increases. These policies rendered Richelieu vulnerable to accusations of tyrannical government, which poured voluminously from the pens of writers such as Mathieu de Morgues in the first half of the 1630s.²

¹ AAE CP Espagne 19, fo.219, 'Raisons pour Monstrer que la France ne veult point la paix selon l'interest du Cardinal de Richelieu' [1638].

² For the earlier attacks of Morgues, and others, against Richelieu: W.F. Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton, 1972), pp.207-24, 252-61, 374-9, 383-9; S.-H. Lim, 'La pensée politique des "Bons catholiques" dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle (1598-1642)', PhD thesis, Université de Paris IV, Sorbonne, 1998.

After the declaration of war against Spain in 1635, France became engaged in a much larger military conflict involving the maintenance of armies operating in several theatres of war. The requirements of sustaining the war effort grew accordingly; tax increases, new taxes, the billeting of troops in towns and villages, the violence and disorder of underpaid and underfed soldiers, and numerous other exactions resulted.³ The early years of the new war were disappointing. There was little to show for France's efforts in 1635, and during the disastrous 1636 campaign Habsburg forces cut through northern France, causing panic in Paris.⁴

The summer of 1636 saw harsh criticism of Richelieu's ministry, including the voicing of dangerous accusations against him in Parlement.⁵ This allied with widespread discontent in the south – especially the revolt of the Croquants – to create a sense of dramatic ministerial failure. Early Habsburg successes gave weight to the view that Richelieu had been 'folle et téméraire' to declare war on Spain,⁶ and that the conflict should be brought to an end as soon as possible. It was painfully evident that

³ D.A. Parrott, *Richelieu's Army: War, Government and Society in France, 1624-1642* (Cambridge, 2001), pp.505-46; Y.-M. Bercé, *Histoire des Croquants* (2 vols.; Paris, 1974), i, 67-118.

⁴ A detailed account of the 1636 campaign can be found in O. Vigier, 'Une invasion en France sous Louis XIII', *Revue des questions historiques*, 12 (1894), 440-92.

⁵ BL Add 35097, fo.33, Scudamore to [Secretary of State], 5 Aug. 1636; *ibid.*, fo.35v., Scudamore to [Secretary of State], 15 Aug. 1636; BL Add 45142, fo.37, Scudamore to [Secretary of State], n.d. [Aug. 1636]; Le Vassor, v, 191; Avenel, v, 541 (n.1); Vigier, 'Invasion', pp.460-3, 472-3; R. Quazza, *Tommaso di Savoia-Carignano nelle campagne di Fiandra e di Francia 1635-1638* (Torino, 1941), p.144, n.54; Lonchay and Cuvelier, *Correspondance*, iii, 130, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 31 July 1636; *Documenta Bohemica Bellum Tricennale Illustrantia*, vi, ed. B. Badura (Prague, 1979), p.119, Piccolomini to Gallas, 28 Aug. 1636.

⁶ François VI, duc de La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Lafond (Paris, 2006), p.65. Criticisms of the declaration of war, and of the failure to prepare, were widespread: C. de Bordeille, comte de Montrésor, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, iii, 202; Dom Ganneron, *Annales*, ed. P. Laurent (Paris, 1893), p.194; *La Voix Gémissante du Peuple Chrétien et catholique* (Paris, 1640), p.53; A. de Campion, *Lettres* (Rouen, 1657), p.25, Campion to M.D.R., 27 July 1636. Grotius was also highly critical, and reported Condé as openly criticising it as well: *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, ed. P.C. Molhuysen *et al*, published online at URL: <http://grotius.huygens.knaw.nl> (2009), accessed 15 Apr. 20120, no.2365, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 25 Nov. 1635.

French preparations for war with Spain had been inadequate, underlining the concerns over Richelieu's competence and motives.

The opprobrium concerning the post-1635 war hatched out in the form of new plots to remove Richelieu. These were engineered by an emerging generation of opponents among the entourages of Orléans and Soissons; most notably the comte de Montrésor and his first-cousin, the comte de Saint-Ybard.⁷ At Amiens in October 1636, these men conspired to assassinate Richelieu with their masters' approval. When the plot failed, Orléans and Soissons fled Paris to commence a military rebellion.⁸ Their critique of the Cardinal's régime was given more systematic and public form in Mathieu de Morgues' *Dernier advis à la France par un bon chrestien et fidèle citoyen*, which appeared soon after.⁹ Richelieu's 'folie', explained Morgues, had brought Poles, Cossacks, Croats and Hungarians into France. Richelieu had engaged France in war, but, 'il nous a osté les forces, qui sont les affections des Grands, des Nobles et des peuples, et en dissipant les finances, il coupe les nerfs qui repousseroient le mal qu'il a provoqué'.¹⁰ The rebellion failed to materialise, as Orléans soon accommodated with Richelieu, obtaining recognition of his marriage to Marguerite de Lorraine. Soissons, who was given refuge at Sedan by the duc de Bouillon, negotiated a deal with the Spanish but was offered major concessions by

⁷ Claude de Bourdeille, comte de Montrésor, and Henri d'Escars, comte de Saint-Ybard. Many variant spellings of Saint-Ybard's name have been given currency, the most common being: Saint-Ybal; Saint-Ibal; Saint-Ibar; Saint-Ibalt; and Saint-Ibald. He himself was inconsistent in his spelling of his name. The *terre* from which his name derived, however, was Saint-Ybard. For the radicals in the entourages of Orléans and Soissons, see J.M. Constant, *Les Conjurateurs: Le premier libéralisme politique sous Richelieu* (Paris, 1987), pp.102-22.

⁸ For the 1636-7 conspiracies see above pp.13-16.

⁹ M. de Morgues, *Derniers advis à la France, par un bon chrestien et fidèle citoyen* (n.d., n.p.). This probably appeared either in late 1636 or early 1637, as the flight of Orléans and Soissons from Paris - and hence the commencement of their rebellion (to which it reads as an accompanying a call to arms) - occurred on 20 November 1636.

¹⁰ *Dernier advis*, p.98

Richelieu, which he chose to accept only when the chances of successful rebellion appeared to have diminished.

Between 1637 and 1641 France waged a series of extremely costly campaigns which produced little in the way of strategic advantage, despite some trumpeted successes in the form of strongholds taken.¹¹ It became clear that France and Spain were now engaged in a war of attrition. Military frustration led to further criticism of Richelieu's ministry among the nobility and aggravated the mood of discontent across France.

The conduct of the war became the subject of a cogent critique in *La Voix Gémissante du Peuple Chrétien* of 1640. An anonymous work, it was also a well-produced, lengthy and sophisticated piece of propaganda. One of its chief accusations against the régime was of failure to achieve military success on a scale which would justify the immense expenditure and costs of the war effort to the public: 'La prise d'Hesdin qui a cousté des millions à V.M. et la perte de cinq ou six mil hommes, n'a servy que pour relievier en partie les bresches de la reputation des armes Françoises, et pour moderer la douleur excessive de vos sujets, inconsolables dans la perte de ceux qui leur appartenoient, et qui sont malheureusement pery aux portes de Thionville, dans les desroute d'une armée de quinze mil hommes en bataille range, où le General a donné son baston, pour obtenir la vie; où les Fils des Mareschaux de France ont servy de victims aux cimeties des Croates; où les Maistres de Camp, et les principaux Officiers ont vommy l'ame sanglante'.

¹¹ For an analytical account of the war between 1635 and 1642: Parrott, *Richelieu's Army*, pp.110-63.

The *Voix Gémissante* painted a wholly negative view of the futility of the massive war effort: ‘ils voyent que tant de belles Armées qu’on leve le long de l’hyver, et qu’on nourrit avec le sang du peuple, pour executer les resolutions sanglantes du Cardinal, après plusieurs efforts inutiles retournent à leurs garnisons, comme les finances viennent aux coffres des Princes, c’est à dire, extremement diminuées.’¹² The author described the great preparations for the 1638 campaign, and then its abject failure in the abandonment of the sieges of St Omer and Fuenterrabía, concluding that, ‘les lions d’Espagne ne tremblent pas devant les cocqs’, and that ‘les estrangers arborent leurs trophées sur les lieux que nous ont servy de funestes tombeaux.’¹³ The following campaign had gone little better due to the abandonment of Salces, ‘la conquest d’une année, pour laquelle les finances du Roy n’avoient rien espargné.’¹⁴ Since the start of the war, no progress had been made in Flanders, France having spent two years retaking those places which she had lost to the Spanish, and having fared little better in Italy.¹⁵ This was ‘une guerre tres injuste, et tres-infructueuse, qui finira...par la ruine de la France souspirante.’, but which the Cardinal was determined to continue regardless.¹⁶ The war also exacerbated many former grievances against Richelieu’s ministry. The Cardinal had left nothing but, ‘la foiblesse et la necessité’ in the countryside, and Morgues called on the ‘Pauvre peuple’, to assemble ‘pour crier, et pour faire crier ce que les hommes sages et genereux le conseilleront’.¹⁷

¹² *Voix Gémissante*, ‘Au Roy’.

¹³ *Voix Gémissante*, pp.57-60, 195-202.

¹⁴ *Voix Gémissante*, p.205.

¹⁵ *Voix Gémissante*, pp.114, 122-3, 188.

¹⁶ *Voix Gémissante*, pp.77, 185-94.

¹⁷ *Dernier advis*, pp.98, 107.

As the war dragged on, the issue of peace became the most vulnerable facet of Richelieu's politics. There were regular efforts by both Richelieu and Olivares from 1636 onwards to agree the basis for negotiation peace, but they went nowhere.¹⁸ While both men agreed that a lengthy truce should be established in order to enable a peace congress to take place at Cologne, there were fundamental disagreements concerning the basis of that truce. Richelieu insisted on the maintenance of the *status quo*, with France retaining Lorraine and her gains in Germany, Italy, Hainaut and Luxembourg, while the Habsburgs retained the Palatinate, Wurttemberg and the electorate of Trèves. Olivares, however, sought the reciprocal restitution of territorial gains – including Lorraine – as part of the truce. Even if he planned to strike a lesser bargain subsequently, Richelieu's requirements for the truce indicated a desire to hold on to major conquests within the eventual peace.¹⁹ When he held talks with Don Miguel de Salamanca in May 1638,²⁰ Richelieu consented to reciprocal restitution, but only as part of the eventual peace deal, and only if France retained Lorraine and Pignerol.²¹ Unacceptable to Olivares and the Spanish council, Richelieu's requirements – and the subsequent breakdown of the truce talks after 1640 – indicated that the war of attrition had only just begun. Even if France now appeared to be doing better militarily, it was unclear as to how the Spanish would be persuaded to accept Richelieu's terms without many years of struggle.

¹⁸ A. Leman, *Richelieu et Olivares: leurs négociations secrètes de 1636 à 1642 pour le rétablissement de la paix* (Lille, 1938).

¹⁹ AAE CP Espagne vol.19, fo.219, 'Raisons pour Monstrer que la France ne veult point la paix selon l'interest du Cardinal de Richelieu' [1638]

²⁰ Salamanca was on his way back from Madrid to Brussels to serve as a political advisor to the Cardinal-Infante.

²¹ Leman, *Richelieu and Olivares*, pp.66-9.

Richelieu's conclusion from Olivares' refusal to accept his terms of a truce, was not simply to observe that the Spanish were stubborn, but to angrily condemn their 'malice', believing that they saw a truce simply as a breathing space to await a change of government policy in France – brought about by the death of the King or the Cardinal – which would then enable the Spanish to obtain more favourable peace terms. France's domestic weaknesses were therefore the basis on which the Spanish refused to come to "just" terms. If the King should die, they envisaged a favourable régime based on, 'une grandeur absolue de La Reyne'. The solution, as Richelieu counselled it, was to continue 'fortement la guerre', while taking every measure possible to combat the 'desordres qui arriveroient si le Roy ou le Cardinal venoient a mourir'.²² His frustration at Spanish hopes to leverage France's domestic instability probably only spurred Richelieu on to foment discord in the King of Spain's affairs by supporting the Catalan Revolt.²³

Richelieu's failure to bring peace eroded his political credibility and increased cynicism concerning his motives. The war, in the eyes of Richelieu's opponents, had no just basis. Its sole purpose was to satisfy 'la passion du Cardinal', and to ensure the continuation of his own political authority; 'l'ambition d'un Cardinal est l'unique cause de la ruine de l'Europe'. The Cardinal, 'ne deteste rien plus que la Paix'.²⁴ As Morgues wrote, 'Ne t'amuse plus par les belles esperances de la paix, elle est tellement contraire au naturel et à la fortune de celui qui t'afflige, qu'il ne la faut point

²² AAE CP Espagne 20, fo.45, 'Relation de l'entrevue entre Jacques de Brecht envoyé d'Espagne avec Monsieur le Cardinal', 13 June 1640; *ibid.*, fo.54, 'Avis de Mr le Cardinal'.

²³ AAE MD 258, fo.218, 'Fragment de Mémoires sur l'année 1639' (which also covers 1640).

²⁴ *Voix Gémissante*, 'Au Roy', and pp.14, 202-8.

attendre que par sa ruine'.²⁵ Montrésor explained it thus: 'tout le monde étoit persuade qu'il [Richelieu] avoit commencé la guerre purement pour satisfaire à sa prodigieuse ambition; que par le même motif il la voudroit continuer, et que les charges et dignités ne seroient conferees qu'à ses proches. Joint qu'il feroit, à toutes les occasions qui s'en présenteroient, remarquer la dureté qu'il avoit pour la desolation et la misère des peuples, et qu'il soucioit encore moins de sacrifier la noblesse, pourvu qu'il établi son autorité au plus haut point qu'elle pouvoit être portée'.²⁶ Furthermore, while the people were being taxed to breaking point, the Cardinal 'remplit ses coffres dans la Citadelle du Havre de Grace, et de Brouage, pour avoir dequoy soustenir une guerre intestine, au cas qu'il y soit relegué par quelque disgrace: ou pour en faire part à quelque grand Prince, qui espousera la Combalet'.²⁷ The groundswell for peace in France was extensive.²⁸

The claims of his critics that Richelieu was a barrier to peace, contrast sharply with the supposed pacifism of Richelieu upon which many modern (especially German) historians insist.²⁹ Undue emphasis has been placed on some of Richelieu's

²⁵ *Dernier advis*, p.107.

²⁶ Montrésor, *Mémoires*, p.203. Other commentators similarly believed Richelieu was too self-interested in the continuation of war to bring peace: *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.4485, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 22 Jan. 1640; AMB CC 112, fo.223, Morgues to Chifflet, 21 Sept. 1638; BN Italien 1814, p.128, Correr to Doge, 28 Sept. 1638; *Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Ireland, of the Reign of Charles I. 1633-1647* (London, 1901), p.154, [unknown] to the Lord Deputy [Strafford], 8 Mar. 1637. The same line of argument is emphasised in the 'Raisons pour Monstrer que la France ne veult point la paix selon l'interest du Cardinal de Richelieu' of 1638: AAE CP Espagne vol.19, fo.219.

²⁷ *Voix Gémissante*, p.113.

²⁸ *Correspondance du nonce en France: Ranuccio Scotti (1639-1641)*, ed. P. Blet (Rome, 1965), p.121, Scotti to Barberini, 27 July 1639; *ibid.*, p.507, Scotti to Barberini, 15 Mar. 1641; *Documenta Bohemica*, vi, 119, Piccolomini to Galas, 28 Aug. 1636; *Chroniques Berrichonnes du XVIIe siècle: Journal des choses mémorables arrivées en la ville de Bourges et autres lieux de la province 1621-1694*, ed. H. Jongleux (Bourges, 1881), p.28.

²⁹ There is an immense, though often repetitive, literature on Richelieu's peace plans, primarily in German. An excellent introduction can be found in H. Weber, "'Une Bonne Paix': Richelieu's Foreign Policy and the Peace of Christendom", in J. Bergin and L. Brockliss (eds.), *Richelieu and His Age* (Oxford, 1992), pp.45-69. For his conception of collective security, see K. Malettke, 'Le concept de sécurité collective de Richelieu et les traités de paix de Westphalie', in L. Bély (ed.), *L'Europe des*

more high-flown statements claiming to seek to liberate Europe from Habsburg domination and to be striving to ensure a permanent peace through the establishment of leagues in Germany and Italy. Richelieu's public propaganda machine had repeatedly argued for the need to oppose the threat of Spanish encirclement and designs on universal monarchy, while touting the objective of 'an honourable, sure, and durable peace which may be general', conceived as a universal European peace under French leadership.³⁰ We must remember, however, that Richelieu's memorandums, which outlined the finer points of his diplomatic objectives – with its supposedly incipient conception of collective European security – would not have been seen by any one apart from the King and a relatively small number of senior ministers and diplomats. The practical realities of Richelieu's diplomatic objectives would therefore have remained unknown to the wider political nation.

A discussion of the issue of what Richelieu's "true" tactics and objectives were on this issue, would require a full-length study of its own, and is not possible here. The more important issue for the current thesis, however, is that of contemporary perceptions. Richelieu frequently protested his devotion to peace in effulgent terms. In May 1640 he proclaimed that, 'Je desire la paix avec tant de

Traité de Westphalie: esprit de la diplomatie et diplomatie de l'esprit (Paris, 2000), 55-66. Church, as many other commentators have been, is too willing to be impressed that Richelieu placed legal precedents at the heart of his diplomatic arguments. Any players seeking to operate diplomatically had to establish a legal basis for their claims. That Richelieu's writings reveal that he claimed to be operating within international legal frameworks proves nothing concerning the issue of his ultimate objectives or principles, or that his values were those of right rather than might. Such analysis has had an entirely disproportionate, and dangerous, impact on Richelieu's modern legacy. See, for example, the entirely idealised Richelieu presented in J. Wollenberg, 'Richelieu et le système Européen de sécurité collective', *Dix-septième siècle*, 210 (2010), 99-112. Rather than taking his statements at face value, it is necessary to contextualise them through an appreciation of the competing claims and arguments pertaining to the specific issues and spheres of conflict in question. A sense of some of the real complexities underlying, or standing outside, Richelieu's representations of diplomatic legality, see D. A. Parrott, 'The Mantuan Succession, 1627-31: A Sovereignty Dispute in Early Modern Europe', *English Historical Review*, 112 (1997), 20-65.

³⁰ *Le Mercure François* (24 vols.; Paris, 1612-47), xx, 958-9. See also, Church, *Richelieu*, pp.294-302.

passion quil ny a rien que ie ne veuille faire en mon particulier pour une si bonne fin.’³¹ but his top priority appeared to be territorial acquisition, to be confirmed *de facto* by a truce based on the *status quo*, which in turn rendered a truce unachievable.

Richelieu’s claims to be committed to Europe’s liberties are unconvincing. Jacques Cassan had been commissioned by Louis XIII to author *La Recherche des droicts du Roy*, which appeared in 1633, and pressed the French King’s claims to most of Europe’s crowns. Besian Arroy’s *La Justice des armes des Rois de France* of 1634 asserted French claims to the Holy Roman Empire, the Spanish Low Countries, Lorraine, Sicily, Spain and Portugal. Cassan and Besian Arroy contributed to a growing trend to chauvinistic assertion of an expansionist and imperial mission for the Bourbon dynasty.³² It was Richelieu, moreover, who brought Tommaso Campanella to France in 1634. Campanella was one of the great apostles of a quasi-Christian utopia founded on universal monarchy – a hegemonic domination of Europe by one of its Catholic princes. Initially Campanella assigned the role of future universal monarchs to the Habsburgs. During his final years in Paris during the late 1630s, and while in receipt of a royal pension, however, Campanella adapted his vision; utopia was now to be achieved through Bourbon ascendancy established by the magi-like Richelieu.³³ On top of the expansionist chauvinism inherent in the works of Cassan

³¹ AAE CP Espagne 20, fo.31, Richelieu to Paul de Fiesque, May 1640, in relation to talks with the Papal Nuncio concerning truce proposals by Olivares.

³² A.Y. Haran, *Le Lys et Le Globe: messianisme dynastique et reve imperial en France a l'aube des temps modernes* (Seyssel, 2003), pp.182-6. Cassan’s work was well-received, and was re-edited several times during the 1630s.

³³ L. Blanchet, *Campanella* (Paris, 1920), pp.58-65 provides a summary of Campanella’s time in France and his relations with Richelieu. On Campanella’s prophetic vision for the French monarchy: J.M. Headley, *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World* (Princeton, 1997), pp.233-45; J.-L. Fournel, ‘Tommaso Campanella et la Monarchie de France : empire universel et équilibre des puissances’, *Quaderni della Fondazione Luigi Firpo*, 3 (1998), 1-35.

and Besian Arroy, Richelieu employed the services of Dupuy, Godefroy, and other *érudits*, to research French claims to contested territories.³⁴

The suspicion among many of Richelieu's critics, was that France had been dragged into something akin to a "perpetual war for perpetual peace", and that the (unstated) official objective, apart from Richelieu's personal advancement, was to replace the *pax hispanica* with the *pax gallica*.³⁵ Richelieu's claims to be interested in the protection of Europe's minor states from the threat of Habsburg oppression, must have sounded mockingly false to the Lorrainers who had witnessed the brutal invasion of their *patrie* by Louis XIII's armies in 1632 and 1633, an annexation legitimised post-facto through highly spurious legal proceedings against Duke Charles.³⁶ Nor indeed did Richelieu's arguments assuage the increasing concerns of many belonging to other peripheral states, such as Savoy, and Mantua, concerning the designs of Richelieu to undermine their independence and place them under the *de facto* domination of French arms. This point was made in a contemporary pamphlet - 'Raisons pour Monstrer que la France ne veult la paix selon l'interest du Cardinal de Richelieu' - which pointed that some German and Italian princes had abandoned the French cause for this very reason, and no longer believed Richelieu's claims to seek 'l'esgalité de la balance' or the 'liberté et utilité publique'.³⁷

³⁴ AAE CP Espagne 19, fo.417, 'Scavoir s'il faut faire la Paix en renonceant aux anciens droits de la France ou non' [1640]; *ibid.*, fo.418, untitled note and dossier concerning French claims on Navarre, Catalonia, Roussillon, Flanders, the Duchy of Bourgogne, Hesdin, Milan, and Naples.

³⁵ On the term *pax hispanica*, see: J.H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven, 1986), pp.488-91; B.J. García García, *La Pax Hispanica: Política exterior del Duque de Lerma* (Leuven, 1996).

³⁶ P. Chevallier, *Louis XIII, roi cornélien* (Paris, 1979), pp.471-3; M.-C. Vignal Souleyreau, *Richelieu et la Lorraine* (Paris, 2004), pp.231-3.

³⁷ S. Externbrink, *'Le coeur du monde': Frankreich und die norditalienischen Staaten (Mantua, Parma, Savoyen) im Zeitalter Richelieus, 1624-1635* (Münster, 1999); AAE CP Espagne vol.19,

If Richelieu sought the peace of Christendom, it was a peace in which he envisioned the French King playing a dominant role as guarantor, who would therefore need “access” to both Italy and Germany, so as to intervene militarily if necessary. Access would be established through territorial acquisitions providing convenient gateways for Louis’ armies to pass through.³⁸ Moreover, such a benevolent venture as a general peace for Christendom was unlikely to excite the endeavours of the Most Christian King, unless he saw therein a vehicle for his own domination and *gloire*. Richelieu – well-intentioned or not – was unable to exceed the politically-interested restrictions of the role of *premier ministre* to the King of France.

It is also doubtful whether the King appreciated the nuances of Richelieu’s vision, and the extremely long process of military and diplomatic struggle that would be required to achieve it. When in June 1638, for example, Louis wrote to Richelieu of his high hopes for ‘une bonne paix cet hiver’ - based on an intercepted despatch from the Cardinal-Infante to Olivares - it seems not.³⁹ The complexities of establishing the international framework Richelieu envisioned were probably beyond Louis’ grasp, and his commitment to the general peace desired by Richelieu was frequently questioned, causing persistent headaches for Richelieu who was required to reassure France’s allies that Louis XIII would not sign a separate deal. Notably, in the case of the Dutch states, Richelieu was careful to point out that it was due to his own faith in the Prince of Orange’s promises that he continued to persuade Louis to

fo.219, ‘Raisons pour Monstrer que la France ne veult point la paix selon l’interest du Cardinal de Richelieu’ [1638].

³⁸ Weber, “‘Une Bonne Paix’”, pp.59-61; H. Weber, ‘Richelieu et le Rhin’, *Revue historique*, 239 (1968), 265-80.

³⁹ F.S.J.R. Beauchamp, *Louis XIII d’après sa correspondance avec Richelieu* (Paris, 1902), p.339, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 10 June 1638.

co-ordinate his campaigns with the Dutch and to provide them with large subsidies. Implicit in Richelieu's approach was that the King's commitment to the war was fragile, and that the subsidies upon which Orange's military aspirations relied were therefore dependent on the maintenance of Richelieu's persuasive capabilities and hence his political credit in France.⁴⁰

Towards the end of *La Voix Gémissante* an appeal was made to Louis XIII to 'quitte les avantages presens, et ceux quy l'advenir luy promet', which would require the war to drag on indefinitely, so as to bring peace to assuage his people's suffering. Louis' dynastic ambitions, which Richelieu was encouraging him to pursue, should take second priority to his responsibilities. Moreover, it predicted that if he did succeed in his current goals, he would merely sow the seeds of future wars, and 'revolutions éternelles'.⁴¹

Richelieu, the King and the elusive peace

The question loomed increasingly large as to whether Richelieu enjoyed the King's full support, and whether the King was willing to continue the war at such high expense. Richelieu's ability to maintain the King's favour has occupied the attention of many historians, and it is not within the scope of the current study to systematically re-assess these already well-muddied waters.⁴² Despite many

⁴⁰ Avenel, vi, 307, Richelieu to Prince of Orange, 30 Mar. 1639; *ibid.*, vi, 328, 'Brouillard d'instruction donnée à M. d'Estrades', 23 Apr. 1639; *ibid.*, vi, 613, 'Instruction de M. d'Estrades', 22 Nov. 1639; BL Add 24205/1, fo.110, Richelieu to Aersons, 3 July 1640.

⁴¹ *Voix Gémissante*, pp.240-2.

⁴² For a stimulating discussion of this issue, see A. Lloyd Moote, 'Richelieu as Chief Minister. A Comparative Study of the Favourite in Early Seventeenth-Century Politics', in Bergin and Brockliss (eds.), *Richelieu and His Age*, 13-43. Representations of this vital relationship are legion; some have

treatments of the issue, however, there is a notable reluctance to offer an analytical treatment incorporating varied evidence; most treatments establish their premises largely through exclusion of contrary evidence, rather than through assessment of it. A definitive answer is probably impossible, especially given the kind of issues thoughtfully raised by Ranum concerning the manipulation and surveillance of the King, as well as the ability of Richelieu to obtain letters from the King's secretaries written and signed as if from the King himself.⁴³ Studies such as those of Batiffol, Moote and Topin, which assume that Louis' extant letters reflect his "true" sentiments, should no longer suffice to posthumously clear the air between the two men. A more fruitful approach is to employ ambassadorial correspondence, which provides observations of the relationship at relatively close hand. The most convincing treatment of their relationship is therefore played out in the pages of Pierre Chevallier's magisterial account of the reign. For him, Louis had 'une certaine dualité', and the relationship between him and Richelieu was stormy, while somehow remaining intact. Richelieu, he concluded, was the one who wielded power, with Louis tasked with approving measures proposed by his minister.⁴⁴

tried, unconvincingly, to argue that Richelieu always enjoyed Louis' full backing; a trend fashionable among many *étatiste* historians. See, for example, L. Batiffol, *Richelieu et le roi Louis XIII: Les véritables rapports du souverain et de son ministre* (Paris, 1934); M. Topin, *Louis XIII et Richelieu* (Paris, 1876), pp.4-18 and *passim*. For a more recent analysis, stressing Richelieu's ability to maintain the King's favour, though too selective in its sources, see A. Lloyd Moote, *Louis XIII, the Just* (Berkeley, 1989). Among those offering a more balanced view are: J.H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, 1984); O. Ranum, *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII* (Oxford, 1963); Chevallier, *Louis XIII*; F. Hildesheimer, *Richelieu* (Paris, 2004). Some interesting perspectives are offered in F. Hildesheimer, *La double mort du roi Louis XIII* (Paris, 2007), which focuses on the final 6 months of Louis's reign after Richelieu's death in December 1642. Hildesheimer stresses Louis' desire to continue Richelieu's policies, but also his desire to modify the mode of government towards a more personal rule and one which re-incorporated many of Richelieu's political enemies.

⁴³ Ranum, *Councillors*, p.68 and *passim*.

⁴⁴ Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, p.584 and *passim*. Chevallier's fresh insights into the relationship of King and Cardinal derive primarily from his use of the despatches of the Papal Nuncio and Venetian ambassador. He is, however, somewhat selective in his application of these sources and tends to

Whatever the degree of co-operation and agreement between the two men in the 1620s, it is important to recognise that the relationship deteriorated after 1635. Due to the frustrations of prolonged war a 'crisis of confidence' emerged between Louis and his minister.⁴⁵ There was consequently a strong suspicion among the French nobility that Richelieu's mandate to hold power was vulnerable. This perception was fuelled by the regular leaking of reports concerning the Cardinal-King relationship.

In December 1637, the King's confessor, Père Caussin was sent to internal exile at Rennes. Caussin had been dismissed for his attempt to persuade the King to dismiss Richelieu and bring peace.⁴⁶ From Rennes, Caussin penned letters to senior members of the court (such as Condé and Soissons) and members of Parlement, denouncing Richelieu's nefarious tactics for controlling the King, who he claimed was strongly disposed towards peace. One of Richelieu's methods was the employment of the King's confessor; in his letter to Condé, for example, Caussin wrote that Richelieu 'ne vouloit pas auprès du roy un confesseur, mais un espion'. Caussin's other letters confirmed, 'la surveillance secrète dont le roi était constamment l'objet de la part des agents du cardinal'.⁴⁷ In a letter to the Comtesse

exclude much evidence that undermines preconceived assumptions concerning the political history of the period.

⁴⁵ M.C. Vignal-Souleyreau, *Richelieu ou la Quête d'Europe* (Paris, 2008), p.278.

⁴⁶ Rochemonteix, Camille de, *Nicolas Caussin: Confesseur de Louis XIII et le Cardinal de Richelieu* (Paris, 1911), *passim*; P. Lécivain, 'L'Éloquence sacrée à l'épreuve de la politique. Quand un conflit d'influence devient une affaire d'état', in S. Conte (ed.), *Nicolas Caussin: rhétorique et spiritualité à l'époque de Louis XIII* (Berlin, 2007), 59-76; D. Valle, 'Il Padre Pietro Monod della compagnia di Gesù consigliere di stato e istoriografo della Casa di Savoia e le su relazioni col Cardinale Richelieu con appendice di documenti inediti', in *Miscellanea di Storia Italiana*, 3a serie, xiv (Turin, 1910), 269-366, pp.297-300. Valle quotes at length from the despatches of the Savoyard ambassadors in Paris (Saint-Maurice, Mondino and Monod) offering significant insights into the political intrigues of 1637.

⁴⁷ Rochemonteix, *Caussin*, pp.85-6; L. Régnier (ed.), *Fragments inédits des Mémoires et des Lettres du P. Caussin sous Louis XIII* (Paris, 1915), pp.23-5. While in exile Caussin wrote to many other

de Soissons, written in either 1638 or 1639, Caussin wrote this powerful assessment of Richelieu's control over the King:

“Elle était poussée à un si haut point, qu’il estait parvenu à l’arracher de tous ses proches, des devoirs de la nature, des soins et des compassions qu’il devait avoir pour son peuple, à se saisir violemment de tous les mouvements de son âme, par les soubçons, les craintes et les frayeurs qu’il luy causoit incessamment sur tout ce qu’il y avait de plus pur et de plus courageux de son royaume. Je dis devant Dieu et devant les saint anges, à la face du ciel et de la terre, ce que j’ay recogneu par mes expériences, ce que j’ay veu, ce que j’ay ouy, ce que j’ay visiblement découvert; ce quy peut tesmoigner suffisamment que le Roy n’estait nullement libre en toutes les affaires les plus considérables quy se sont passées dans un sy triste gouvernement”.⁴⁸

Caussin even went on to explain how he had observed that Louis, on the rare occasions that he was freed from the Cardinal's surveillance, was a different man. On one occasion, when he was away from Richelieu for two or three weeks, Caussin says that Louis: ‘parlait en roy, il raisonnait en philosophie, il condamnait les actions de son ministre, il blâmait son ambition, sa convoitise, son arrogance, ses rapines, ses délices et ses vengeances; il désirait faire la paix, soulager son pauvre peuple, rappeler sa mère, rendre la liberté aux captifs et la patrie aux bannys; il s’offensait de sa captivité, et ne la nommait point autrement qu’une tyrannie.’.⁴⁹

important figures of the court and Parlement, such as: Chevreuse; Hautefort; Sénécay; Mesmes; Bailleul, and Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld.

⁴⁸ Rochemonteix, *Caussin*, p.182.

⁴⁹ Rochemonteix, *Caussin*, p.184. Note that Rochemonteix convincingly demolishes the wider allegations against Caussin – made by Richelieu – of participating in a far-reaching political and diplomatic conspiracy with the Savoyard Père Monod: *ibid.*, pp.291-8.

Caussin, having spent 9 months as the King's confessor, and having been employed by Richelieu to help influence the King,⁵⁰ would have been seen as a reliable source on the nature of Cardinal-King relations. There were many instances which confirmed the accusation made by Caussin that Richelieu was denying access to the King to those who were likely to speak independently to him. In the months before the declaration of war in 1635, Mademoiselle de La Fayette had emerged as a new favourite to Louis.⁵¹ She became critical of Richelieu, and pressed the interests of the Queen (who herself favoured peace). During 1637 matters came to a head when Richelieu was forced to conspire to distance her from the King, by persuading her to enter the convent of Saint-Marie de la Visitation. When the King subsequently began paying long, secretive visits to her, Richelieu employed his *créatures* to persuade Louis to stop his visits, and sought every possible excuse to have the King travel away from Paris. His fear was that the devout La Fayette would persuade the King to dismiss him and bring peace.⁵²

After the removal of La Fayette, Richelieu had hoped to install one of his *créatures*, Mademoiselle de Chémérault,⁵³ as favourite, but instead the troublesome Madame de Hautefort enjoyed a return to favour.⁵⁴ This caused Richelieu a further problem, as she too was dedicated to the Queen and opposed the Cardinal's influence

⁵⁰ Rochemonteix, *Caussin*, pp.116-8.

⁵¹ Louise-Angélique de La Fayette, was a Maid of Honour to Anne of Austria. Her favour with the King dated from at least February 1635: BL Eg 1688, fo.26, Charnacé to Brézé, 5 Feb. [1635].

⁵² Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp.429-37.

⁵³ François de Barbezières, Mademoiselle de Chémérault.

⁵⁴ Hautefort had formerly been Louis' favourite in the early 1630s, prior to Madame de La Fayette's rise to prominence.

over the King. He eventually engineered her removal from court in the autumn of 1639.⁵⁵

In a similar vein, the sieur de Pontis' memoirs describe encounters with the King that were concealed from Richelieu due to Louis' fear of his minister.⁵⁶ There was also an incident in 1640 when a bastard son of the duc d'Épernon was imprisoned in the Bastille for having told de Noyers that 'il avoit quelque chose à dire au Roy d'important'.⁵⁷ There were also many occasions when those who were befriending the King, but whom Richelieu saw as a bad influence, were swiftly removed from court; a fate which befell both the comte de Cramail and François de Baradat in 1635.⁵⁸ Most of these episodes were common knowledge, and therefore nurtured the controversy concerning Richelieu's manipulation of his sovereign.

Allied with the extremely thorough implementation of censorship, these episodes fuelled the perception that Richelieu prevented Louis from hearing the truth as to the terrible impact of the war effort, and from realising the lack of strategic progress being made. Montchal, for example, claimed that, after Richelieu's establishment, it became 'un crime nouveau de dire à Sa Majesté une verité qui n'eût suggerée, ou de lui parler d'aucune affaire, qu'après avoir pris langue de lui

⁵⁵ V. Cousin, *Madame de Hautefort* (Paris, 1868), pp.37-45.

⁵⁶ B.-L. de Pontis, *Mémoires* (1715), pp.270-5.

⁵⁷ BN Français 15610, p.634, Arnaud to Barillon, 17 June 1640. The son in question was probably Bernard, prior of Bellefonds.

⁵⁸ Adrian de Monluc, comte de Cramail, had accompanied the King on campaign but was imprisoned at Richelieu's request after he began to speak too freely. François de Baradat, seigneur de Damery – a former royal favourite – was invited back to court by Louis in 1635, only to be sent away the same day at Richelieu's behest. He was later killed by his valet in mysterious circumstances. These events were probably stimulated by Richelieu's insecurities stemming from the fact that in 1635 Louis went on campaign without him: F. de Paule de Clermont, marquis de Montglat, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, v, 32-3; H.-A. de Loménie, comte de Brienne, *Mémoires*, in Petitot and Monmerqué, xxxvi, 51; BN Français 15644, fo.587, 'Memoire fait par Monsieur le Cardinal de Richelieu sur la detention du Comte de Cramail', 23 Oct. 1635; BN Français 15610, p.563, Arnaud to Barillon, 4 Apr. 1640.

[Richelieu]’.⁵⁹ The anonymous *La Voix Gémissante* claimed that Richelieu systematically prevented anyone from telling Louis the truth. Those who had sought to give ‘bons avis’ had lost their goods and been banished from court. Those who had tried to put their complaints in writing had been sent to the scaffold.⁶⁰ Guy Patin wrote in 1637, ‘Plût à Dieu que le Roit sût, par la bouche d’un homme de bien, le malheureux estat de son royaume et la disette de son peuple: il y donnerait infailliblement tout autre ordre qu’il ne fait.’⁶¹ Many other examples could be cited.

Louis was not simply a pawn under Richelieu’s control, however. Richelieu exercised close surveillance of the King, and manipulated when and how vital information was presented to him, to which he added great powers of persuasion. Dupuy, in his *Mémoires et instructions*, describes Louis XIII as always hating Richelieu, yet being blinded and beguiled by him.⁶² Alexandre de Campion’s letters to Soissons – reporting on meetings with both King and Cardinal – provide illustrations supporting a more nuanced view, wherein Richelieu’s control was part persuasion, part manipulation and part surveillance by *créatures*. Access to the King – as Soissons’ representative – does not seem to have been a problem for Campion, but speaking to the King without one of Richelieu’s *créatures* being present was problematic. Campion recognised, however, that even when he did get the

⁵⁹ C. de Montchal, *Mémoires* (2 vols.; Rotterdam, 1718), i, 8.

⁶⁰ *Voix Gémissante*, ‘Au Roy’, pp.3-4, 7, 13-21, and *passim*.

⁶¹ Patin to Belin, 18 Jan. 1637, quoted in G. Ferretti, ‘Introduction’, in P.F. de La Hogue, *Lettres aux Frères Dupuy et à Leur Entourage (1623-1662)*, ed. G. Ferretti (2 vols.; Florence, 1997), i, 72.

⁶² P. Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions pour servir à justifier l’innocence de Messire François-Auguste de Thou*, in *Histoire de Jacques-Auguste de Thou*, xv (London, 1734), p.8.

opportunity to speak candidly to Louis, the Cardinal would ‘gagner’ the King anyway.⁶³

Another similar indication of Louis’ attitude towards the Cardinal can be found in the letters of Mademoiselle de Chémereault. Chémereault was one of Richelieu’s *créatures*, and a maid of honour in the Queen’s household, who regularly reported to Richelieu concerning the attempts of Anne of Austria and Madame de Hautefort to sway the King against him. It is evident from some of Chémereault’s reports that Louis was duplicitous; he allowed Hautefort to criticise Richelieu, and promised to protect her against the Cardinal.⁶⁴

For the Venetian ambassador, Correr, fear of offending Richelieu prevailed over all other priorities for the King.⁶⁵ The ambassador was fairly well acquainted with Louis’ mind on the issue of peace. In August 1640, when out hunting together, Louis spoke to Correr of his great longing for peace, his regrets at the devastation of the land and of the sufferings of his people. Later that day the ambassador encountered Richelieu, who had been informed by the King of what had passed between them and who consequently spoke to him of how the slightest failure filled

⁶³ Campion, *Lettres*, p.69, Campion to Soissons, 1 July 1639; *ibid.*, p.79, Campion to Soissons, 16 Dec. 1640. It is also instructive to compare Campion’s description of his encounter with the King in late December 1640 with the account given by the King himself in a letter to Richelieu. Key differences between the two accounts suggest that the King was unwilling to admit that he had allowed Campion to speak candidly to him, prior to the arrival of a letter from Richelieu explaining how the King should conduct himself during the meeting: Campion, *Lettres*, p.82, Campion to Soissons, 26 Dec. 1640; AAE MD 2164, fo.138, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 28 Dec. 1640. The 2-day discrepancy in datings between the King’s letter and that of Campion, probably reflects a dating error – of which there are many – in Campion’s edition of his letters.

⁶⁴ Cousin, *Hautefort*, p.354, Madame Maline to Richelieu, n.d. [1638/1639]; *ibid.*, p.357, Madame Maline to Richelieu, n.d. [1638/1639]; Montglat, *Mémoires*, p.80.

⁶⁵ BN Italien 1815, p.114, Correr to Doge, 3 May 1639.

the King with apprehension and melancholy. In effect Louis abhorred the war, but continued it nonetheless, thanks to continual persuasion.⁶⁶

Many of the people involved in the examples outlined above, had connections to the grandee opponents of Richelieu: Alexandre de Campion was active in Soissons' service and provided him with detailed reports of his activities; Caussin wrote revealing letters to Soissons and others at Court; the Queen corresponded with the likes of Madame du Fargis in exile, and had lines of communication with Soissons at Sedan, as well as with Orléans; ambassadors, such as Correr and Scotti, had fairly open dealings with Soissons, Guise and Bouillon. Negative perceptions of Richelieu's control over the King, were widely-circulated, reinforced and enunciated through these networks. The flow of information concerning the actual state of affairs between King and Cardinal, energised and legitimised the opposition, and significantly undermined Richelieu's claims to legitimate exercise of ministerial authority.

The conclusion for many of Richelieu's enemies was that his position around the King was vulnerable. Bouillon stuck consistently to the view that the King's faith in Richelieu was brittle and could easily be shattered. He wrote to Marie de Médicis that he had been informed of the 'furieuse aversion' that Louis had against the Cardinal, such that he wished to be rid of him.⁶⁷ In 1640 he wrote that, 'prevoyant bien que ses [Richelieu's] mauvais conseils seront a la fin reconus du roy de france, qu'il veut metre en Estat de ne luy pouvoir oster les meilleures places du Royaume et

⁶⁶ Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, pp.585-6.

⁶⁷ AN R2 51, Lettres de Rois et de Reines de France/Marie de Médicis, nos.9-10, minute of letter from Bouillon to [Marie de Médicis], n.d. [1638].

tous les tresors qu'il a entre ses mains sachant desja bien quells sont les desgouts que sa Majesté a de luy pour l'avoir jété en une guerre qui ne vad qu'a la destruction de la Religion Catholique'.⁶⁸ 'L'on assure', wrote an agent from France, 'que le Cardinal n'a jamais eu des parailles inquietudes a celles qui le tiennent maintenant'.⁶⁹ By May 1640, the abbé de Mercy reported that Bouillon, Soissons and Guise sought to conspire against Richelieu so as to 'le Ruynara cerca de su Rey'.⁷⁰

In addition, Richelieu's self-glorification and self-enrichment acted as a major spoiler on his claims to be engaged in disinterested service to his King. His public ostentation was a political liability that probably made many of his erstwhile supporters uneasy.⁷¹ A work of 1643 dedicated to the comte d'Harcourt, one of Richelieu's long-standing allies, spoke of the failings of overly harsh and avaricious ministers. It explained that 'on ne peut estre fidelle, et aymer son interest', and sympathised with the unwillingness of the King's subjects to suffer such abuses of power.⁷² The overlapping of public and private was a normal aspect of early modern government, but there was also a strong sense that Richelieu, and his clients, were exceeding the permissible degree of enrichment from office.⁷³ Concerns over the

⁶⁸ AGRB T100 vol.652, 'Instruction pour le Sieur Secretaire Cesar de Chambley, s'en allant retrouver Monsieur le Comte de Picolominy, et autres personnes comises pour le Traicté', duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640.

⁶⁹ ARGB T100 vol.550, 'Avisos de Francia', n.d.

⁷⁰ AGRB T100 vol.550, Mercy to [Salamanca], 23 May 1640.

⁷¹ F. Duval, marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil, *Mémoires*, in Petitot and Monmerqué, li, 209-10

⁷² *Le Guerrier Prudent et Polytique. Dedié a Monseigneur le comte de Harcourt* (Paris, 1643), pp.139-47. Accusations of Richelieu's corruption and avaricious enrichment in office were legion after Richelieu's death: G. Ferretti, 'Littérature clandestine et lutte politique. L'héritage de Richelieu au temps de Mazarin (1642-1661)', in L. Bély(ed.), *L'Europe des traités de Westphalie*, 469-485, pp.472-3; *Limpieté Sanglante du Cardinal de Richelieu* (Antwerp, 1642), p.3.

⁷³ After Richelieu's death, there were brief calls for a *chambre de justice* to investigate 'financial abuses' during his ministry: J. Bergin, *Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth* (New Haven, 1985), p.264. French élites were deeply enmeshed in the financial interests of the monarchy and none more so than Richelieu: Bergin, *Power and the Pursuit of Wealth*, *passim*, as well as the literature cited on pp.4-5; D. Dessert, *Argent, pouvoir et société au Grand Siècle* (Paris, 1984), pp.341-

inappropriate growth of one individual's power, moreover, was a strong stimulus to side with those who could counter-balance, or destroy, him.

It is also notable that, despite Richelieu's tactic of claiming that opposition to the King's minister equated to *lèse-majesté*, the juridical application of that principle was tentative. Hélène Fernandez-Lacôte, in her study of Richelieu's political trials, concludes that no one was truly recognised, in his presence, of being guilty of *lèse-majesté* for having attempted, or planned, to assassinate Richelieu.⁷⁴

The perceptions of those who opposed Richelieu, therefore, were evidence-based. The energising and legitimising impact of this on the conspirators should not be underestimated. The combined effect of the groundswell of opposition to the war, and the perception that the King was keen to make peace, fuelled the claims of his adversaries that Richelieu was a tyrant who had usurped the King's authority.⁷⁵

Justifying treason and the protection of 'la Patrie'

Richelieu's critics consistently represented him as a tyrant, who pursued war for the purpose of maintaining and extending his own power. The comte de Montrésor wrote

78. Complaints that corrupt ministers and financiers were profiteering from the fiscal system supposedly justified by the necessities of war, were rife among the manifestos of both popular and noble revolt under Richelieu: Bercé, *Croquants*, ii, 391-2, 605-6. The question of attitudes concerning appropriate conduct in public office, as well as acceptable levels of personal enrichment, is a vital aspect of political culture and perceptions of minister-favourites, which awaits systematic study.

⁷⁴ H. Fernandez-Lacôte, *Les Procès de Richelieu* (Paris, 2010), pp.289-95.

⁷⁵ Of course, others of a more conservative inclination, or who sought patronage from Richelieu, chose to believe that the King fully backed the Cardinal. Goulas, for example, wrote of 'la tyrannie du cardinal de Richelieu', which 'je veux qu'il soit bon de le détruire', but went on to say that 'par malheur, le Roy n'en est pas (persuadé) et croi que ce que vous appelez tyrannie est son service, et veut maintenir le tyran'; N. Goulas, *La Deffense de feu M. Goulas*, in *Mémoires et autres inédits de Nicolas Goulas: gentilhomme ordinaire de la chambre du duc d'Orléans*, ed. N. Hepp (Paris, 1995), p.246.

in his memoirs of ‘la tyrannie du Cardinal de Richelieu’ and the ‘persécutions d’un ministre si violent’.⁷⁶ The duc de La Valette condemned the government of France as ‘dispoticum’, unjust and tyrannical, and contrary to the fundamental laws of the realm.⁷⁷ He would later write of ‘la violence du gouvernement et les mouvements desreglés de quelques ministres’.⁷⁸ Even the somewhat conservative Goulas spoke of, ‘la tyrannie du cardinal de Richelieu’, which ‘je veux qu’il soit bon de le détruire’,⁷⁹ while Charles de Montchal likened him to the classical tyrants.⁸⁰ In his proposals for allegiance with the Spanish in 1639, Bouillon described Richelieu as a tyrant who was oppressing both the French people and the rest of Christianity.⁸¹ The comte de Fontrailles railed against his ‘domination si absolue’.⁸²

Defining Richelieu as a tyrant, who was preventing the peace, inferred that it would be in the public interest to remove him from office. Arlette Jouanna’s thesis on the *Devoir de Révolte* has established the existence of a consistent, cogent and patriotic rhetorical framework for justifying rebellion in the early modern era. The *Devoir de Révolte* was underpinned by the arguments of many European political theorists for the legality of deposing a tyrant, by both violent and non-violent methods. Even Bodin, one of the quintessential *politique* theorists, had endorsed the

⁷⁶ Montrésor, *Mémoires*, p.205.

⁷⁷ *Documenta Bohemica*, vi, 372, report from Lisola concerning talks with La Valette and Soubise, May 1640.

⁷⁸ BN Dupuy 915, fo.107, La Valette to abbé de Thou, 2 Oct. 1642.

⁷⁹ Goulas, *Deffense*, p.246.

⁸⁰ Montchal, *Mémoires*, ii, 625.

⁸¹ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.297, ‘Articulos propuestos por el Duque de Bouillon’, n.d. [1639].

⁸² L. d’Astarac, vicomte de Fontrailles, *Relation faite par M. de Fontrailles des choses particulières de la cour arrivées pendant la faveur de M. de Cinq-Mars*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, iii, 245. Many others can be added, including: Montglat, *Mémoires*, p.26, speaking of the, ‘ambition démesurée’ and desire for ‘la conservation et accroissement de son autorité’, which drove Richelieu; E. comte de La Châtre, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, iii, 271; J. de Langlade, baron de Saumières, *Mémoires de la Vie de Frédéric-Maurice de La Tour d’Auvergne, duc de Bouillon* (Paris, 1692), p.38; BN Dupuy 625, fo.112, ‘Advis d’un Docteur de la Sorbonne Sur la mort de Monsieur le Cardinal’.

right to depose, or kill, a tyrant in his *Six Livres de la République* of 1576.⁸³ Conspiracy and rebellion could therefore be represented as legitimate political acts in defence of the *patrie*.⁸⁴

Such arguments, however, were almost exclusively concerned with tyrants who were Kings or Princes, and not with the problem of the power of their ministers.⁸⁵ It was therefore highly significant that Richelieu was consistently accused of being a usurper. As Montrésor wrote in his memoirs, ‘ce n’étoit plus le Roi qui agissoit, c’était lui [Richelieu] qui s’étoit emparé de l’autorité royale’.⁸⁶ Fontrailles similarly believed that Richelieu had attained, ‘une si grande autorité dans l’Etat, qu’il n’avoit introduit dans les affaires et les principaux emplois que les personnes que ses bienfaits lui avoient acquises pour creatures; il s’étoit emparé de l’esprit du Roi’. Richelieu sought to control the duc d’Orléans – when heir to the throne – so as to ‘perpétuer sa domination si absolue, qu’elle seroit égale, si elle ne surpassoit celle que les maires du palais avoient autrefois usurpée’.⁸⁷ It is noticeable that the *Declaration et Protestation* against Marie de Médicis’ favourite, Concino Concini, of March 1617, had made the same comparison with the usurpations of the Mayors of the Palace of ages past, which implied a threat to the ruling dynasty itself.⁸⁸

⁸³ Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, ii, 286.

⁸⁴ A. Jouanna, *Le devoir de révolte* (Paris, 1989).

⁸⁵ M. Turchetti, *Tyrannie et tyrannicide de l’Antiquité à nos jours* (Paris, 2001); R. Mousnier, *The Assassination of Henri IV. The Tyrannicide Problem and the Consolidation of the French Absolute Monarchy in the Early 17th Century* (trans., London, 1973). A study of the treatment of ministerial power, and minister-tyrants, in this body of literature is a notable absence.

⁸⁶ Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1838), p.205.

⁸⁷ Fontrailles, *Relation*, p.245.

⁸⁸ O. Ranum, ‘The French Ritual of Tyrannicide in the Late Sixteenth Century’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 11:1 (1980), 63-82, p.76. This harked back to the era of the Merovingian dynasty, which had been usurped by the hereditary Mayors of the Palace in the eight century, to establish themselves on the French throne, as what became known as the Carolingian dynasty. The parallel to the powers of Richelieu, and Concini, thus implied a similar threat to Louis XIII and his descendants.

Being a supposed usurper placed Richelieu in a relatively precise category of tyrant and one where the political theorists were much more lenient concerning the permissibility of violent overthrow. In his *De jure belli ac pacis*, Grotius saw the problem of a usurper as a straightforward case of what actions were allowed to remove the tyrant; in effect, the ends justified the means. Many other political theorists agreed; among them Suarez and Thomas Aquinas.⁸⁹ In the name of removing a tyrannical minister who had usurped royal authority, one was empowered to contravene the laws of the realm by taking up arms.

The above argument did not go unchallenged, however. One of the great successes of Richelieu's propaganda was to argue cogently that his critics were really opposing the legitimate authority of the monarch, rather than solely that of his minister. Probably the clearest articulation of this argument was in the official response to Gaston d'Orléans' 1631 manifesto, which had denounced Richelieu as a usurper of royal authority. Issued in the King's name it underlined that the government of Richelieu was fully endorsed by Louis XIII, and was innocent of any wrong-doing. The works of Jean Sirmond, among others, spent much time developing this justification. In *La Défense du Roy et de ses ministres contre le Manifeste que sous le nom de Monsieur on fait courre parmi le peuple*, also of 1631, Sirmond argued forcefully that attacks on the King's ministers were to be considered *lèse-majesté*.⁹⁰

In 1636 or 1637, Sirmond penned his *Advis du françois fidelle aux malcontans retirez de la Cour*, in which he reiterated similar views to those of his *Défense du Roy*

⁸⁹ Turchetti, *Tyrannie et Tyrannicide*, pp.546-7, 569-71.

⁹⁰ Church, *Richelieu*, pp.207-12.

et de ses ministers, deriding its abuse of the language of the public good: ‘Un homme qui veut remuer, qui veut entreprendre, ne parle jamais de ses interests, il ne parle que du public’.⁹¹ The supposed objective of defending the public good, for Richelieu and his propagandists, was a mere cloak for the advancement of the private interests of the conspirators. But, as the war continued, these arguments became less credible in view of the fragility of Richelieu’s political position.

At the end of his *Dernier Advis*, after an extensive denunciation of Richelieu’s tyranny, Mathieu de Morgues issued a broad call to action. Addressing Orléans and the Princes of the Blood he proclaimed that, ‘Il y a plus de gloire de renverser un tyran, qui n’est point nay pour vous commander, que de battre un ennemy estrange, ou de dompter un peuple rebelle.’ He then appealed to the wider nobility to overthrow the tyrant, for the Church to raise its voice, for the officers of the realm to make ‘genereuses remonstrances’, and for the people to assemble in protest.⁹² Père Caussin’s most pressing letters from exile would later be penned to Condé, Orléans, and, the most substantial one of all, to Soissons. As Princes of the Blood, it was inherently their duty to take action against Richelieu. In Condé’s case, Caussin was calling on him to refuse a marriage alliance with the Cardinal, a refusal which would become an act of rebellion by preventing the *premier ministre* from cementing his personal and familial position within the political and social hierarchies. The frank

⁹¹ J. Sirmond, *Advis du françois fidelle aux malcontans retirez de la Cour* (n.p., n.d.), p.28. The ‘malcontans retirez de la Cour’ to which the work refers are probably Orléans and Soissons, who fled Paris in November 1636, so a dating of late 1636 or early 1637 is appropriate.

⁹² *Dernier Advis*, pp.105-7.

tone of the denunciations of Richelieu in Caussin's missives to the comte and comtesse Soissons, moreover, is akin to that of a call to arms.⁹³

Although *La Voix Gémissante* did not call for rebellion openly, its mode of expression was tantamount to it. It warned the King to remedy France's predicament by dismissing Richelieu, lest, 'le gros de la tempeste, que les animositez des Provinces outrages, que les maledictions de tant de personnes grièvement interessées, que la colere & la vengeance de toute l'Europe, ne se dechargent sur la pauvre France'. It advised the King, in effect, not to stand by Richelieu: 'Il vaut mieux de confesser d'avoir esté seduit, que de se declarer Autheur de tant de malheurs', and explains that, 'ni Dieu, ni le Peuple n'en peut estre satisfait, si on ne punit rigoureusement le seducter'.⁹⁴

These public acts of invocation to revolt were issued by devout churchmen, or in devout terms, but their chief audience consisted of the Princes of the Blood with their aspiring *capos di parte* who were far from devout (Montrésor, Saint-Ybard, Retz *et al*). Rebellion was thus a job for libertine *esprits-forts*,⁹⁵ in the service of the ambitious princes, legitimised and incited by a devout cry for restoration of peace, harmony and order throughout Christendom.

There were those among the French nobility who were willing to answer. For Montrésor it was a duty to one's 'patrie' to risk oneself and take action: 'il ne falloit

⁹³ Rochemonteix, *Caussin*, pp.182-4.

⁹⁴ *La Voix Gémissante*, pp.193-4, 115-6. McKennan rightly highlights these passages also: 'Gaston d'Orléans and the Grands'. p.325.

⁹⁵ The term *esprits forts* refers to exponents of the current of atheistic libertinage running through the seventeenth-century. During the 1630s-1650s, however, it seems to have become strongly-identified with the conspiratorial opponents of Richelieu and Mazarin: R. Pintard, *Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1947), pp.14-5; F.B. de Motteville, *Mémoires*, ed. C.B. Petitot (Paris, 1824), p.410; C. Saumaise and A. Rivet, *Correspondance echangée entre 1632 et 1648*, ed. P. Leroy, H. Bots and E. Peters (Amsterdam, 1987), p.221, Rivet to Saumaise, 11 July 1640.

pas demeurer inutile, de voir, les bras croisés, la ruine de sa patrie et celle de son maître [Orléans], sans tenter les moyens de les en garantir.’⁹⁶ It is significant to note how Montrésor’s justification for rebellion employed the language of republican civic duty and self-sacrifice to the public good. He depicted the attitudes of his cousin, Saint-Ybard, in similar terms. Contrastingly, Goulas criticised Montrésor’s actions, writing that ‘le veritable honneur est de ne pas ruiner sa patrie’.⁹⁷ The language of ‘patrie’, with its connotations of civic activism and a concern for public welfare, was thus flexible enough to be used to justify rebellion, as well as obedience.

Modern historians are all too often implicitly beholden to modern notions of patriotic service, which are anachronistic when applied retroactively to the early modern era. The modern concept of a duty to self-sacrifice was largely lacking, and had nothing like the power that it does today. For the seventeenth-century nobleman, ‘patriotic action...was widely regarded as an opportunity, a chance for individual achievement’, and was a means to the acquisition of personal renown and *gloire*. As such it was less a ‘social duty’, than it was an opportunity for ‘self-fulfilment’ and a vehicle for ‘social ambition’.⁹⁸ Patriotism was a ‘theatre for self-glorification’.⁹⁹ Although Richelieu seemed to demand and expect a higher degree of disinterested sacrifice in the pursuit of military victory, he rarely, if ever, obtained it. The reality was a mixture of threats, exemplary punishments and compromise.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1838), p.203.

⁹⁷ Goulas, *Deffense*, p.245.

⁹⁸ W.H. Barber, ‘Patriotism and *Gloire* in Corneille’s *Horace*’, *Modern Language Review*, 46 (1951), pp.368-78, pp.369-70, and *passim*.

⁹⁹ D. Maskell, ‘Corneille’s, *Examens* examined: The case of *Horace*’, *French Studies* (1997), LI(3), pp.267-80, p.277.

¹⁰⁰ Parrott, *Richelieu’s Army*, pp.463-504.

Many of those nobles who engaged in rebellion were excellent early modern patriots, who often spent long periods in royal service. Soissons was a member of the King's military command at various points: he took a leading role in the campaign of the royal army against the Huguenots of Poitou and La Rochelle in 1622;¹⁰¹ he served in the forcing of the Susa pass in 1629;¹⁰² and in both 1635 and 1636 he commanded the army of Champagne, tasked with defending north-eastern France against Habsburg incursions. Many of Soissons' householders, who served him in those military endeavours, also functioned as his lieutenants in revolt: Saint-Ybard, Fiesque,¹⁰³ Varicarville,¹⁰⁴ Campion, and probably others.¹⁰⁵ There were countless similar examples of such chequered careers: the maréchal de Toiras who valiantly fought off the English invader from the Île de Ré in 1627, subsequently served with distinction in the War of the Mantuan Succession, but was disgraced in 1633 on suspicion of being in league with the rebellion of the duc de Montmorency;¹⁰⁶ Montmorency himself was another shining example.¹⁰⁷ Even Richelieu, before his entry into the King's council, had played a leading part in constructing Marie de Médicis' rebellion of 1620, of which one outcome was the promise of a Cardinal's hat

¹⁰¹ J. Glénisson, J. Daniel and P. Gautret (eds.), *L'Armée d'Aunis devant La Rochelle (14 Mai-10 Novembre 1622)*. *Recueil de la Correspondance de Louis de Bourbon, Comte de Soissons*, in *Archives Historiques de La Saintonge et de l'Aunis*, vols. LVI-LVII (Saintes, 2003-2005); Le Vassor, ii, 464 and 505.

¹⁰² Le Vassor, iii, 317.

¹⁰³ Charles-Léon, comte de Fiesque.

¹⁰⁴ Charles de Varicarville, of whom there is a colourful depiction in Pintard, *Libertinage Erudit*, pp.369-71.

¹⁰⁵ Saint-Ybard, Varicarville, Fiesque and Campion, all served under Soissons in the 1636 campaign: Campion, *Lettres*, p.27, Campion to M.D.R., 5 Aug. 1636; Richelieu, *Mémoires*, ix, 213. Saint-Ybard and Varicarville had also served at the military engagement at the Pont de Carignan in August 1630: R. Arnauld d'Andilly, *Journal inédit* (Paris, 1909), iv., 59.

¹⁰⁶ M. Baudier, *Histoire du Mareschal de Toiras* (Paris, 1644); BN Français 15644, fo.879v., 'Memoires touchant la naissance moeurs et conduite de M. de Toiras'.

¹⁰⁷ S. Du Cros, *Mémoires de Henry dernier duc de Montmorency* (Paris, 1665).

for him. Richelieu's conspiratorial role may even have extended to seeking financial support for the rebellion from foreign powers.¹⁰⁸

Likewise, there has been a significant revision of treatments of the *dévo*t figures of the first half of the seventeenth-century. Previously caricatured as inherently pro-Spanish and politically-incapable, men such as Cardinal Bérulle,¹⁰⁹ Michel de Marillac¹¹⁰ and Mathieu de Morgues, are now being recast as essentially pro-monarchical characters who sought to reconcile their fervent Catholicity with service to *patrie*.¹¹¹ It is simply inappropriate to talk of patriots and traitors as being two distinct categories or "types" of people during this era.

A Spanish devoir de révolte?

French noblemen frequently appealed to foreign powers, particularly the Spanish, to provide the resources they needed for rebellion. As Jouanna writes, 'il était habituel de faire appel à l'aide étrangère'.¹¹² The *Devoir de Révolte*, by validating rebellion as a means of conducting politics justifiable by its ends, could logically be extended to

¹⁰⁸ Bergin, *Rise of Richelieu*, pp.203-11; J. Russell Major, *The Monarchy, Estates and Aristocracy in Renaissance France* (London, 1988), p.394.

¹⁰⁹ Pierre, Cardinal de Bérulle had been a prominent member of Louis XIII's government and an influential *dévo*t until his death in 1629.

¹¹⁰ Michel de Marillac had been *garde des sceaux* prior to his arrest in 1631 for his allegiance to Marie de Medicis. He was put on trial on dubious grounds and died in captivity in 1632.

¹¹¹ C. Maillat-Rao, 'Mathieu de Morgues and Michel de Marillac: The Dévots and Absolutism', *French History*, vol.25, no.3, 2011, pp.279-297; S.-M. Morgain, *La Théologie Politique de Pierre de Bérulle (1598-1629)* (Paris, 2001); D.A. Bailey, 'Power and Piety: The Religiosity of Michel de Marillac', *Canadian Journal of History*, 42 no.1, Spring-Summer 2007, pp.1-24; D.A. Bailey, 'Anti-Richelieu Propaganda and the Dévots: A Reinterpretation of Mathieu de Morgues', *Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the Western Society for French History, November 21-23, 1974*, (Austin, Texas, 1975) pp.94-103. The other important contribution to this revision comes in the form of emphasising Richelieu's *dévo*t credentials: J. Bergin, 'Richelieu and His Bishops? Ministerial Power and Episcopal Patronage under Louis XIII', Bergin and Brockliss (eds.), *Richelieu and His Age*, 175-202; idem., *The Making of the French Episcopate* (New Haven, 1996), Chapter 12.

¹¹² Jouanna, *Le devoir de révolte*, p.385.

the various methods of expediting rebellion, including the resort to Spanish assistance. In this respect, the maintenance of French liberties and the defence of *patrie* were sometimes dependent on Spanish power.

There were, however, significant moral dilemmas involved. Some comments by memoirists seem to imply that French nobles simply made their choices by calculating advantages and disadvantages in relation to solely personal objectives, and that there was no ruffling of patriotic or other ethical scruples. This can give the appearance that treason simply was not problematic, and that they did what was expedient in their pursuit of their own interests.¹¹³ Noemi Hepp has suggested that the issue of foreign alliances was potentially ‘un *no-man’s-land* de la morale politique.’¹¹⁴ But there was more to it than that; there is persistent evidence of conflicting loyalties and competing priorities: to King, *état*, *maison*, religion, personal ambition, and religion, as well as to both patrons and clients. The pursuit of all of them came into consideration in the maintenance, and furthering of one’s honour and reputation. The recourse to the language of public service, protection of the *patrie* and *fidelité* to the King reflected genuine desires, but these were blended with other priorities, such that a satisfactory accommodation with, or position within, the patriotic service of the King, depended not simply on being there, but on being

¹¹³ Various examples of such thinking, from contemporary memoirs are cited in: S. Bertière, ‘L’Image de la Ligue dans les Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz’, in K. Cameron and E. Woodrough (eds.), *Ethics and Politics in Seventeenth Century France* (Exeter, 1996), 55-64, pp.60-62; D.A. Watts, ‘La notion de patrie chez les memorialistes d’avant la Fronde: Le problème de trahison’, in N. Hepp and J. Hennequin (eds.), *Les Valeurs chez les Mémorialistes Français du XVIIe siècle avant la Fronde* (Paris, 1979), 195-209, pp.197-200.

¹¹⁴ N. Hepp, ‘Considérations morales et politiques autour d’Henri II de Montmorency: Une polyphonie discordante’, in Cameron and Woodrough (eds.), *Ethics and Politics*, 83-91, p.91.

appropriate to one's other expectations and social priorities. The means to achieving the appropriate position was sometimes through acts of rebellion.¹¹⁵

The comte de Soissons was consistently reluctant to make the move into open rebellion, and to ally with foreign powers. In 1637, he had flirted with the idea, but had opted instead to reconcile with Richelieu when the orientation of military events seemed unfavourable to rebellion, and the offers coming from the French court had become adequately generous.¹¹⁶ What good would an unsuccessful rebellion do? It was more useful to reconcile advantageously and live to fight another day. Monsieur le Comte was alert to his public role, being, 'un bon et généreux Prince, qui aime le Roy et l'Estat, comme il doit'.¹¹⁷ Spanish advances were made to him in 1638, through the intermediary of Prince Thomas, but these were rejected by Soissons, despite the enthusiasm of his ally Bouillon. The discussion of Bouillon with Prince Thomas' agent, Pallavicino, tells us much about Spanish understanding of the *Devoir de Révolte*. It would be, Pallavicino said, 'la mayor gloria que el Conde de Sueson podria adquerir y el de ser Instrumento de una paz universal'; he sought to lure Soissons not with promises of material reward, but moral glory to be achieved by bringing peace to France and Christendom.¹¹⁸

The memoirs of Retz depict conferences at Sedan, between approximately 1638 and 1641, concerning the issue of whether or not to treat with the Spanish, although he is not to be taken at face-value. In Retz's account, Soissons was

¹¹⁵ An understanding implicit in many recent studies: Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects'; J. Inglis-Jones, 'The Grand Condé in exile: Power Politics in France, Spain and the Spanish Netherlands 1652-1659', DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1994; K. Béguin, *Les Princes de Condé. Rebelles, Courtisans et Mécènes dans la France du Grand Siècle* (Paris, 1999).

¹¹⁶ Leroy, 'L'Affaire du Comte de Soissons'.

¹¹⁷ Campion, *Lettres*, p.32, Campion to M.D.R., 30 Aug. 1636.

¹¹⁸ AGRB T100 vol.229, fo.74, 'Sustancia de lo sucedido en Sedan al Ms Palavesino', n.d. [1638].

unwilling to accept repeated Spanish offers, despite the efforts of Bouillon and Saint-Ybard to persuade him otherwise.¹¹⁹ Saumières, a secretary of Bouillon, gives a radically different account in his own memoirs, in which it is Soissons who eagerly proposes alliance with the Spanish, and Bouillon who counsels against it. It is clear, however, that Saumières sets out to systematically deny and diminish his former master's inclination towards Spanish treason, probably seeking to provide a history of the *maison de La Tour d'Auvergne's* recent past which would be palatable to the court of Louis XIV.¹²⁰ All other sources indicate that Bouillon was one of the most ardent advocates of doing deals with the King of Spain. What Saumières' account underlines, despite - or perhaps because of - its deceptions, is the heated nature of the debate surrounding the extension of the *Devoir de Révolte* to incorporate foreign alliances.

As Watts' perceptive essay concludes, those few accounts of discussions of the issue of treason reveal that it was at once 'problématique, dramatique et quelquefois tragique'.¹²¹ Treating with the Spanish, was not something to which the followers of the *grands* were unmindful. They feared its implications, and had an

¹¹⁹ J.-F.-P. de Gondi, cardinal de Retz, *Mémoires*, ed. S. Bertière (Paris, 1998), pp.245-9. Contrary to Retz's claim that he was a conservative, Varicarville was also one of the radical voices encouraging Soissons to rebellion: Campion, *Lettres*, p.90, Campion to Varicarville, 2 June 1641.

¹²⁰ Saumières, *Mémoires*, pp.45-7. During the reign of Louis XIV, the *maison de La Tour d'Auvergne*, shorn of its pretensions to the sovereignty of Sedan, had become a much more domestically-orientated set of *grands*, who had obtained the Court status – more useful by the standards of the 1660s and beyond – of *Princes Étrangères*. The treasonous actions of Frédéric-Maurice, duc de Bouillon would have needed to be played-down in order to meet the needs of his children, as well as the continuing career and favour enjoyed by their uncle, Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne, at Louis XIV's court. Similar tactics were employed by other memoirists when writing about their actions during the rebellions of the mid-century. This is a point developed in relation to Retz's depiction of his role in the Fronde in S. P. Vance, *The Memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz* (Tübingen, 2005), pp.108-122. The *maison de La Tour d'Auvergne* actively re-invented its own past under Louis XIV, and courted major controversy as a result: C. Loriquet, *Le Cardinal de Bouillon, Baluze, Mabillon et Th. Ruinart dans l'affaire de l'Histoire Générale de la Maison d'Auvergne* (Reims, 1870).

¹²¹ Watts, 'La notion de patrie', p.206.

appreciation of public opinion's sensitivities over the issue. It was essential, for this reason, that certain basic criteria were met in the conduct of rebellion.

Firstly, it was vital to act as servants of members of the royal family, who enjoyed semi-sovereign status, in pursuit of the public good. Henri de Campion, younger brother of Alexandre, makes some revealing comments concerning this issue in his memoirs. In 1634, Henri had been willing to move from the service of the King to that of Orléans, even though the latter was at that time in exile in the Spanish Netherlands, where he was fomenting rebellion. Campion reasoned that serving the heir to the throne (Orléans) in what was intended to be a project against Richelieu, rather than the King, was not treason, and clearly felt that he was being offered a beneficial career move.¹²² For Henri the heir to the throne was a source of legitimacy greater than Richelieu.

By contrast, Orléans' *secrétaire des commandements*, Nicolas Goulas, believed that allying with the Spanish, 'ne la [a rebellion] pouvoit soustenir sans noircir et deshonnorer les rebelles', and threatened to open the door once more for the Spanish enemy to enter the kingdom, 'le flambeau à la main, plus animez et plus cruels'.¹²³ It is notable, however, that he does not assert that such actions were treasonous, and, despite his own reservations, Goulas still faithfully followed Orléans into his Flanders exile in 1632, and remained in his service thereafter.¹²⁴

The Spanish were also convinced of the necessity that their French allies be led by an adult Prince of the Blood, or other senior member of the royal family; the

¹²² H. Campion, *Mémoires*, ed. M. Fumaroli (2nd ed.; Paris, 1990), pp.47-8.

¹²³ Goulas, *Deffense*, p.245.

¹²⁴ NA SP 77/22, fo.268, 'Liste de Ceux de qualité de la suite de monsr le Duc d'Orléans retourné a Brouy le 21 Novembre 1632'.

closer to the throne itself the better. The abbé de Mercy, believed that only with such leadership could large swathes of France be expected to throw their lot in with the rebellion.¹²⁵ Spanish ministers consistently pressed for Soissons' engagement, and hoped that through the influences of Bouillon, Guise, Marie de Médicis and Madame, they could enlist Orléans as well. When Mercy travelled to Sedan in early 1640, along with César Chambley, he was equipped not just with proposals for the treaty articles and eventual rebellion, but with instructions as to how to persuade Soissons to provide his leadership, by explaining to him his responsibilities as a Prince of the Blood: 'it is incumbent on the authority of the Comte de Soissons to make known to all of France the good intention of this treaty and the desire we have to deliver her from her current "oppression", rendering her tranquil through peace and the restoration of commerce'.¹²⁶ Spanish ministers needed French princes to assure the French people of the sincerity of Spain's pacifistic intentions, thus enabling mass support for the rebellion.

Concerned that Soissons would be reluctant to rebel, as he had been in 1637, Mathieu de Morgues advised the Cardinal-Infante and his ministers to explain to the prince that he, 'peult dire qu'il ne prend les armes que pour se garder d'oppression, et pour le bien public', and that Richelieu is sustaining war in order to maintain his own

¹²⁵ AGRB T100 vol.550, Mercy and Chambley to [Salamanca], 6 June 1640.

¹²⁶ BN Espagnol 144, fo.4, 'L'Instruction pour l'Abbe de Merzy et le Secretaire Cesar de Chambley', 20 Nov. 1639; BN N.a.f. 29, item 1 (treaty of July 1640), articles 2,5,6 and 8; AGRB T100 vol.654, fo.11, 'Junta en que concurrien el Presidente Roose y Don Antonio Sarmiento en razon de incluyr a la Reyna Madre en la liga de los Principes de Sedan', 27 July 1641; AGRB T100 vol.230, fo.115, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 4 Oct. 1641; Marie de Médicis also offered to help enlist her daughter, the Duchess of Savoy: AGRB T100 vol.221, fo.161, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 24 Feb. 1639.

authority, and that this is the only barrier to peace. He noted that Soissons agreed, three years previously, to ‘user de ces paroles’ in his Manifesto.¹²⁷

The central significance of the leadership of a Prince of the Blood during this period, allied with the project of peace, echoed the earlier self-representation of Marie de Médicis which presented her role, as Queen Mother to Louis XIII, Philip IV, Charles I, and the duke of Savoy, as that of a bringer of peace; her claim was to a specifically harmonising role within Christendom.¹²⁸ The Princes of the Blood, similarly sought to claim for themselves the role of a special duty, belonging to them by birth, to assuage public ills. Royal blood, within the increasingly dynastically-focused state, had attained a sanctified status.¹²⁹ The Princes of the Blood shared in that status due to their consanguinity with the King, and their inalienable right to inherit from him. Jouhaud finds that Condé enjoyed a, ‘participation consubstantielle...au pouvoir royal et donc son intégration au système de l’Etat de plus en plus centré sur la personne du roi’.¹³⁰ Soissons and Orléans had similar status, which brought with it the ability to legitimise the otherwise impermissible.

A proposal of the articles signed at Sedan on 22 July 1640 was that, ‘pour donner moins de jalousie aux françois, leurs [the French malcontents] troupes et

¹²⁷ AGRB T100 vol.572, fo.61, ‘Memoires sur les affaires du Conte de Soissons’, Mathieu de Morgues, n.d. [Feb. 1641].

¹²⁸ K. Crawford, *Perilous Performances: Gender and Regency in Early Modern France* (Cambridge Mass., 2004), pp.59-97.

¹²⁹ On the dynastic nature of the seventeenth-century French state, see H.H. Rowen, *The King's State: Proprietary Dynasticism in Early Modern France* (New Brunswick, 1980); R.A. Jackson, *Vive le Roi!* (Chapel Hill, 1984); S. Hanley, *The Lit de Justice of the Kings of France: Constitutional ideology in legend, ritual, and discourse* (Princeton and Guildford, 1983); G. Rowlands, *The dynastic state and the army under Louis XIV: royal service and private interest* (Cambridge, 2002).

¹³⁰ C. Jouhaud, ‘Politiques de princes: les Condé (1630-1652)’, in P. Contamine (ed.), *L’État et les Aristocraties (France, Angleterre, Ecosse) XIIIe-XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1989), 335-55, pp.338-9. For the elevation of the Princes of the Blood within the dynastic conception of the monarchy, see R. A. Jackson, ‘Peers of France and Princes of the Blood’, *French Historical Studies*, 7:1 (1971), 27-46; Hanley, *Lit de Justice*, pp.287-91.

celles qui leurs seront donnés [by the Habsburgs] parestron soubz le nom de Madame, avec les escharpes blanches'.¹³¹ Madame in this context refers to Orléans' wife, Marguerite de Lorraine. As wife to the second in line to the throne,¹³² and therefore a potential future Queen of France, Madame's name was to be employed to help authorise the rebellion. It might also serve to inveigle Orléans himself into directly supporting the scheme.

The second vital criterion in the employment of Spanish support was to operate within clearly defined objectives, which could be seen to conform to the overall purpose of the *bien public*. The treaties of the conspiracies against Richelieu were not framed as entries into Spanish service per se, but as joint projects to achieve stated political and diplomatic objectives, within which Spanish forces and logistical resources were to be harnessed. The overall leaders of the projects were to be French Princes of the Blood who 'la comandera absolument avec assurance qu'il sera obey, dois le moindre soldat, jusques a tous les aultres generaux, mesmes de la personne dudit Sieur Comte Picolominy'.¹³³ Some ambiguity remained, however, as the troops to be levied by Henri de Lorraine, were to 'prester conjointement le serment a la tres auguste maison d'Austriche et aux Princes et Confederez pour la pacification de la Chrestienete en la forme accordée'.¹³⁴

¹³¹ The white sash had become the recognised hallmark of French troops since the accession of Henri IV. They had also been worn by Henri III's troops during the Wars of Religion: G. Daniel, *Histoire de la milice françoise* (2 vols.; Paris, 1721), i, 474-5.

¹³² Orléans was second in line to the throne after the birth of the Dauphin in September 1638, and was third in line after the duc d'Anjou's birth in September 1640.

¹³³ BN N.a.f. 29, item 1 (treaty of July 1640), article 2.

¹³⁴ BN N.a.f. 29, item 4, 'Points accordez avec le Sr Duc de Guise', 10 Mar. 1641, article 2. Henri de Lorraine had now become duc de Guise, due to the death of his father.

The French malcontents remained, therefore, tied to their *patrie* and sovereign. Just as many years previously the majority of the Catholic League had remained committed to the succession of a French prince to the throne, and were opposed to the Spanish claimant.¹³⁵ The opponents of Richelieu remained committed Frenchmen. It is inappropriate, therefore, to assert that those who sought Spanish support for their political projects were ‘inféodée aux Espagnols’, or that the French nobility operated simply as a ‘cinquième colonne’ of the Spanish Monarchy.¹³⁶ Neither did the decision as to whether or not to deal with the Spanish stem, ‘de considerations purement personnelles’,¹³⁷ but from a mixture of priorities and issues both public and private.

Putting faith in the Habsburgs

As thorny as the moral justifications for Spanish alliances, was the issue of the practicalities of relying on the Spanish. Would they be willing and able to help?

On the first question, there can be no doubt that the Spanish governments, both in Madrid, and Brussels, were keen to aid French rebels against Richelieu during the late 1630s and early 1640s. Prior to open war, however, the story is much more mixed, with the Habsburgs often rejecting opportunities to rupture her neighbour’s domestic peace. When they did get involved prior to the 1635, the strength of Habsburg commitment to assign major resources to support French malcontents

¹³⁵ F. J. Baumgartner, *Radical Reactionaries: The political thought of the French Catholic League* (Geneva, 1976), pp.175-6, 231-3.

¹³⁶ Bertière, ‘L’Image de la Ligue’, p.60; Hugon, *Au Service du Roi Catholique*, p.350; R.A. Stradling, ‘“The Two Great Luminaries of our Planet”: Spain and France in the Policy of Olivares’, in *Spain’s Struggle for Europe 1598-1668* (London, 1994), 121-45, p.134.

¹³⁷ Bertière, ‘L’Image de la Ligue’, p.61.

remained doubtful, fluctuating in relation to wider diplomatic strategies.¹³⁸ By the late 1630s, however, it had become clear that France and the Habsburgs had become engaged in a major war of attrition. Any opportunity to seize the advantage in such a conflict had to be taken seriously. Just as with the French ministry, the Spanish government after 1635 was increasingly unable to foresee a means to bring the enemy to a “reasonable” peace which did not involve the exploitation of its domestic unrest.¹³⁹

For the Cardinal-Infante, the opportunities that Richelieu’s opponents presented were extremely valuable. The Franco-Dutch alliance had ensured that the Army of Flanders had persistently faced the challenge of fighting war on two fronts. As long as this remained the case, the best that the Cardinal-Infante could achieve under his own steam were defensive operations. Brussels was increasingly reliant on the successful outcome of its appeals to the Emperor for assistance in order to shift the balance in its favour. The heavy defeat suffered by the French at Thionville in 1639 was, for example, inflicted by Piccolomini and an army of Imperial troops, which had been placed under the Cardinal-Infante's control for the year.¹⁴⁰ The

¹³⁸ Spanish governments were always willing to listen to French malcontents, but in times of peace they often rejected their proposals. The support given to Huguenot leaders in the 1620s was an exception, but even that was limited to sustaining the *parti* so as to weaken and distract the French King from foreign initiatives. As the 1630s progressed, and military conflict with the French King loomed, Spanish policy makers took an increasingly interventionist approach and applied greater resources in the pursuit of the more ambitious objectives of peace and régime change: J.-P. Amalric, ‘L’Oeil et la Main de l’Espagne dans les Affaires Françaises (1621-1633)’, in K.-H. Körner and M. Vitse (eds.), *Las influencias mutuas entre España y Europa a partir del siglo XVI* (Wiesbaden, 1988), 23-35; H. Lonchay, *La Rivalité de la France et de l’Espagne aux Pays-Bas (1635-1700)* (Bruxelles, 1896), chapter 3; Hugon, *Au Service du Roi Catholique*, pp.324-49; Elliott, *Olivares*, chapter 12 and *passim*.

¹³⁹ Elliott, *Olivares*, pp.600-1; J.H. Elliott, ‘The Year of the Three Ambassadors’, in H. Lloyd-Jones, V. Pearl and B. Worden (eds.), *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper* (London, 1981), 165-181; Lonchay, *Rivalité*, pp.23-109.

¹⁴⁰ While this assessment holds true for the waging of war by Brussels between 1635 and 1641, the situation had shifted by 1642, when Francisco de Melo assumed command of the Army of Flanders. Melo enjoyed considerable success during 1642, suggesting a rejuvenation of Brussels' relative military

possibility of leveraging domestic French unrest, therefore, offered the elusive prospect of positive gain, which might in turn bring an end to the war.

During the late 1630s and early 1640s, Habsburg agents proactively approached French malcontents: Prince Thomas sent Pallavicino to Sedan in 1638 to stir-up Soissons and Bouillon; Piccolomini sent Mercy to Sedan in 1639, acting on behalf of Ferdinand III; the Cardinal-Infante sent Chambley to Sedan in 1639; François Lisola was sent by Ferdinand III to London in 1640 to encourage La Valette to revolt; Lisola also approached Condé and Rambouillet on behalf of the Emperor; Philip IV sent Malvezzi and Velada to London in 1640 to encourage La Valette and Soubise to revolt.¹⁴¹

Spanish ministers were convinced that Richelieu was the source of their King's problems, just as they were of the fact that, if not for his domination, the French would descend back into their former state of internecine strife. Spanish interpretations of the situation almost exactly mirrored that of the French opposition, thus rendering relatively simple the task of agreeing mutual objectives. Richelieu as sole true enemy of the House of Austria was one of the central tenets of the *Manifeste pour la justice des armes de la très-auguste Maison d'Autriche* of 1635, which was

capabilites, though it may well be that the declining military efforts of the Dutch states had much to answer for. Melo's successes, however, were short lived; he suffered major defeat at Rocroi in 1643 partly due to having become over confident: J. Israel, 'Olivares, the Cardinal-Infante and Spain's strategy in the Low Countries: The Road to Rocroi, 1635-1643', in *Conflicts of Empires: Spain, the Low Countries and the struggle for World supremacy, 1585-1713* (London, 1997), 63-91; idem, 'Frederick Henry and the Dutch political factions 1625-1642', in *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurs: The Dutch, the Spanish Monarchy and the Jews, 1585-1713* (London, 1990), 73-99.

¹⁴¹ AGRB T100 vol.229, fos.71-77v., 'Papeles del Marques Palavesino sobre lo que le sucedio con el Duque de Bullon en el Viaje de Sedan', [1638]; AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.316, 'Instruzione al sigr Abate de Mercy per quello che ha da trattare col sigr Conte di Soissons', [14] July 1639; AGRB T100 vol.225, fo.93, 'Instruzion para el Abad de Mercy y el Secretario Cesar de Chambley', 20 Nov. 1639; H. Reynald, 'Le Baron de Lisola: sa jeunesse, et sa première ambassade en Angleterre (1613-1645)', *Revue historique*, 27 (1885), 300-51, pp.306-35; BN N.a.f. 5245/2, fo.368, Ferdinand III to La Valette, 10 Dec. 1641.

written for the Cardinal-Infante by Mathieu de Morgues, and had a major influence on subsequent Spanish polemics.¹⁴² The analyses by French dissidents merged into an almost indistinguishable whole with that by Spanish propagandists; a phenomenon symbolised by Morgues as a French *dévo*t, living on Spanish soil as a naturalised subject of the King of Spain.¹⁴³ Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, one of Spain's premier diplomats, penned a *Respuesta al manifiesto de Francia* in 1635, 'a bold and forthright attack on Cardinal Richelieu and his policies'. Saavedra reiterated the same accusation as Richelieu's French critics. Richelieu's rule was a 'tiranie' which had placed France's provinces 'en esclavitud', and he had fanned the flames of war so as to make himself indispensable to Louis XIII.¹⁴⁴ Saavedra repeated the same accusation the following year in his *Discurso sobre el estado presente de Europa*.¹⁴⁵

For Guillén de la Carrera, another Spanish writer, Richelieu was the source of France's internal political problems, and was 'el autor y primer móvil de todas las quimeras que se fingieron para dividir al Rey cristianísimo de su sangre'.¹⁴⁶ Similar analyses can also be found in works by Francisco de Quevedo and José Pellicer de Tovar.¹⁴⁷ Another diplomat in Spanish service, Antoine Brun, writing in defence of Franche-Comté's interests, argued that the threat she faced was that of falling under

¹⁴² J.M. Jover, *1635: Historia de una polemica y semblanza de una generacion* (Madrid, 1949), pp.142-6; M.S. Arredondo, *Literatura y Propaganda en tiempo de Quevedo: Guerras y plumas contra Francia, Cataluña y Portugal* (Madrid, 2011), pp.90-92.

¹⁴³ P. Henrard, 'Mathieu de Morgues et la Maison Plantin', *Bulletins de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 2e série, xlix (1880), 542-89; A. Castan and P. Henrard, 'Mathieu de Morgues et Philippe Chifflet', *Académie Royale de Belgique*, 3e série, 10:8 (1885), 1-22.

¹⁴⁴ J.C. Dowling, *Diego de Saavedra Fajardo* (Boston, 1977), pp.69-71. Although no French copy of the *Respuesta* has come to light, Dowling argues that one must have existed if it was to have its desired impact. The *Respuesta* is reproduced in Jover, *1635*, pp.512-24.

¹⁴⁵ M. Fraga-Iribarne, *Don Diego de Saavedra y Fajardo y la Diplomacia de su Epoca* (Madrid, 1955), p.243.

¹⁴⁶ *Manifiesto de España y Francia*, quoted in Jover, *1635*, p.145, from a manuscript which he dates as to 1635: *ibid.*, pp.25-7, n.43.

¹⁴⁷ Arredondo, *Literatura y Propaganda*, pp.144-7, 156-7.

the same ‘dure servitude’ and ‘joug...sous lequel les naturels François gémissent si tristement’.¹⁴⁸

During his 1638 meeting with Bouillon, Pallavicino spoke of the notorious wickedness of Richelieu, and warned that, in order to be rid of Bouillon and Soissons, Richelieu would promise anything, but would then strike against them as soon as he was able.¹⁴⁹ A similarly untrustworthy Cardinal was presented by Virgilio Malvezzi in his talks with the duc de Lorraine in 1641.¹⁵⁰

Much Spanish invective at this time was not simply directed against France, or indeed against her King, but against Richelieu. It was often framed not just as an analysis of international affairs and international law, but as an analysis of France’s domestic affairs, of Richelieu’s tyranny and personal ambitions, of his reasons for pursuing the war in relation to those ambitions and his personal political position within France.

These polemics also took on subtle guises, which established a “pseudo-French” critique of Richelieu. Saavedra’s *Respuesta*, for example, was presented as an anonymous work in which a supposed translator published a *Memorial enviado al rey cristianísimo por uno de sus más fieles vasallos*. It was thus able to present the words of a faithful Frenchman, claiming to speak the undoctored truth.¹⁵¹ Richelieu was again depicted as a tyrant. His war also came in for similar criticism. So damaging was the war-régime to France, concluded Saavedra’s *caballero frances*, that

¹⁴⁸ *Le Manifeste d'Antoine Brun*, ed. E. Longin, (Vesoul, 1905), p.77.

¹⁴⁹ AGRB T100 vol.229, fo.74, ‘Sustancia de lo sucedido en Sedan al Ms Palavesino’, n.d. [1638].

¹⁵⁰ AGRB T100 vol.376, ‘Papel al Duque de Lorena’, [1641].

¹⁵¹ M.S. Arredondo, ‘La espada y la pluma contra Francia en el siglo XVII: cartas de Quevedo y Saavedra Fajardo’, *Criticón*, 56 (1992), 103-115, pp.105, 108-9.

the Cardinal, ‘por sacar un ojo a España, quiere arrancar el corazón de Francia’.¹⁵²

Other works taking a similar rhetorical approach were the undated *Oratione Sincerissima fatta da un Humile et Affettuoso Servitore della Corona di Francia*, and Quevedo’s *Visita y anatomía de la cabeza del cardinal de Richelieu* of 1635.¹⁵³

Alternatively one could assume the title of a specific Frenchman, such as was the case in the anonymous *Respuesta al manifiesto de Francia que salió en nombre del Duque de Monbazon, Par de Francia*.¹⁵⁴

This rhetorical and argumentative line, interpreting Europe’s ills through the prism of France’s domestic divisions, would become a continued tactic throughout the war. Spanish propaganda used many other approaches too, but the development of a French rhetorical voice was particularly significant. Saavedra, having previously written ‘como uno de ellos’, went on in the *Suspiros de Francia* of 1643, to assume the persona of France herself.¹⁵⁵ Saavedra wrote other pamphlets during the 1640s, which targeted a domestic French audience, including a *Carta de un francés a otro del Parlamento de París*, which he hoped would ‘hará Buenos efectos en Francia por lo que aquellos vasallos aborrecen la guerra’.¹⁵⁶ These methods were, as Arredondo shows, directly authorised and supervised by the Spanish King and his government.

¹⁵² *Respuesta*, quoted in Arredondo, ‘La espada y la pluma’, p.112 and *passim*.

¹⁵³ The *Oratione* is partially reproduced in Jover, *1635*, pp.533-4. On Quevedo’s *Visita y anatomía*, see Arredondo, *Literatura y Propaganda*, pp.144-7.

¹⁵⁴ Partially reproduced in Jover, *1635*, pp.525-7, from a manuscript belonging to the wave of Spanish responses of 1635 to the French justifications for declaring war: Jover, *1635*, pp.246-7. On Spanish polemicists’ use of rhetorical personae, see Arredondo, *Literatura y Propaganda*, pp.78-9, 92. There is an excellent discussion of rhetorical methods in early modern propaganda in: J.K. Sawyer, *Printed Poison: Pamphlet propaganda, faction politics, and the public sphere in early Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 1990), pp.89-95.

¹⁵⁵ Arredondo, ‘La espada y la pluma’, pp.106-7.

¹⁵⁶ Saavedra to Philip IV, 1644, quoted in Arredondo, ‘La espada y la pluma’, p.106.

They are characteristic of Habsburg propaganda to a French audience during the Fronde, and influenced Europe-wide polemics against the Sun King.¹⁵⁷

The question remained, however, of whether the Spanish were able to help, or whether such alliances could be effective. Historians have often tended to assume that Spanish promises were hugely inflated, greatly exceeded what they were actually able to deliver, and thus succeeded in tempting French noblemen to their own destruction. These assumptions derive from the failures of attempts to employ Spanish arms in rebellion in 1632 (the Orléans-Montmorency revolt in the Languedoc), and other similar episodes. Despite the fact that detailed analyses of Spanish-backed rebellion are either lacking, or – where they do exist – usually suggest Spanish deficiencies were not to blame,¹⁵⁸ the implicit assumption of most historiography is that the French *grands'* willingness to believe that Spanish alliances could be effective can only have reflected their political naivety, or perhaps even some form of death wish,¹⁵⁹ surely they knew that previous schemes of this sort

¹⁵⁷ See, for example: *Lettre de M. Brun, ambassadeur pour Sa Majesté Catholique en Hollande, envoyée à messieurs du Parlement de Paris sur l'innocence de messieurs les princes contre les fourberies et calomnies de Mazarin* (La Haye, 1650); *La Lettre du roi d'Espagne et celle de l'empereur envoyées aux Parisiens, touchant les motifs de la paix generale* (Paris, 1649). As the century wore on, however, the Habsburg critique of Louis XIV's France diminished, while the wider European one grew dramatically. As in the time of Richelieu, these external critiques closely resembled domestic ones: J. Klaitz, *Printed Propaganda under Louis XIV: Absolute Monarchy and Public Opinion* (Princeton, 1976), pp.23-6; P.J.W. Van Malssen, *Louis XIV d'après les pamphlets répandus en Hollande* (Amsterdam, 1936).

¹⁵⁸ For 1632, Amalric and Van der Essen both show that events simply ran ahead of the preparations of Olivares and Montmorency, largely because of Orléans' impatience: Amalric, 'L'Oeil et la Main'; A. Van der Essen, *Le Cardinal-Infant et la politique européenne de l'Espagne 1609-1641*, i, (Louvain, 1944), pp.67-9. For the attempts to employ Spanish arms to stage rebellion in 1641 and 1642 – as well as a re-appraisal of the reasons for their failure – see below, chapters 3 and 4. During the Fronde, the standard view appears to be that Spanish support for the Princes never matched their expectations: O. Ranum, *The Fronde: a French revolution, 1648-1652* (New York, 1993), pp.256-7, 319; Inglis-Jones, 'Grand Condé', pp.61-2. It is important to note, however, that Inglis-Jones is concerned with Condé only, and does not therefore present a comprehensive treatment of Spanish intervention in the Fronde and the issues of promises made, support provided and impact, which await systematic study.

¹⁵⁹ Being unwilling to accept the rational purposes of opposing Richelieu, while also being beguiled by the tragic grandeur of the inherently-doomed bid for *liberté*, some French historians have suggested in

always ended badly, and were always doomed to failure? As Bertière wonders of Soissons, 'Avait-il oublié Montmorency?'.¹⁶⁰

Clearly some attempts at Spanish alliance had gone awry in the past. The Constable of Bourbon had conspired with Emperor Charles V in the 1520s, with the result that he lost his possessions in France and died in foreign service.¹⁶¹ Another who had fared badly was Marshal Biron, an erstwhile companion-in-arms of Henri IV, who was executed in 1602 for treating with the Spanish.¹⁶² But others had fared better, and in recent years France's Princes had tended to get away with treasonous alliances with surprising impunity. Gaston d'Orléans, as heir to the throne, had repeatedly obtained pardons after plotting to employ Spanish arms to overturn Richelieu's ministry, most notably in 1634 and 1637. A few of his followers had been sacrificed along the way, but the vast majority remained unscathed.¹⁶³ In 1626, Soissons had withdrawn to Savoy to become involved in the elaborate conspiracies of the Duke of Buckingham and Madame de Chevreuse, which involved plans to stage a military rebellion inside France backed by Lorraine, Savoy and England. Two years later, after the project's failure, Soissons was reconciled with Richelieu and Louis, who allowed him to return to France without sanctions, after which a purple period of accumulation of lucrative offices and benefices ensued. None of Soissons' followers

recent years that the rebellions against Richelieu were in effect elaborate suicides: J.M. Constant, *La Folle Liberté des Baroques (1600-1661)* (Paris, 2007); Hepp, 'Considérations morales', p.90.

¹⁶⁰ S. Bertière, *Mazarin: le maître du jeu* (Paris, 2007), p.152.

¹⁶¹ Charles III, duc de Bourbon, was made Constable of France by Francis I in 1515: V.J. Pitts, *The Man Who Sacked Rome: Charles de Bourbon, Constable of France (1490-1527)* (New York, 1993).

¹⁶² Charles de Gontaut, duc de Biron: Hugon, *Au Service du Roi Catholique*, pp.310-7; J.L. Cano de Gardoqui, *La Conspiracion de Biron (1602)* (Valladolid, 1970).

¹⁶³ Dethan, *Gaston d'Orléans*, pp.83-134. For the 1634 and 1637 deals, see above pp.11, 15-6.

had been punished, and no legal proceedings were brought against him.¹⁶⁴ Soissons had, moreover, skilfully employed the threat of Spanish rebellion to his own advantage in 1637, to secure a deal assuring his independent residence at Sedan, and safeguarding his supporters' from persecution.¹⁶⁵

When looked at closely, quite the opposite picture emerges from that of an automatically and inevitably counter-productive tactic. Foreign alliances, although risky, were often a means to the achievement of otherwise impossible tactical gains for those of high status, and very rarely resulted in their own downfall.

The allure of Habsburg support was reinforced by powerful demonstrations of military might during the 1630s. Northern France, moreover, was intrinsically exposed to incursions from Flanders, and Paris was vulnerable due to its proximity to the frontier.¹⁶⁶ The resounding Habsburg victory at Nördlingen in 1634, as well as the dramatic invasion of France in 1636, were evidence that the formidable capabilities of the Army of Flanders and of the Imperial forces under skilled generals like Piccolomini and Jean de Werth, presented a more than viable springboard for rebellion. The notion of a Spanish Monarchy in terminal decline, which had irreversibly set in by around 1640 has been exaggerated and misused.¹⁶⁷ The defeat of a vast Spanish fleet at the battle of the Downs in 1639 did not prevent some 9,000 reinforcements reaching Flanders and, as Geoffrey Parker's figures show, the number

¹⁶⁴ R. Lockyer, *Buckingham: the life and political career of George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham 1592-1628* (London, 1981), pp.369-71, 394-5, 406; Cousin, *Chevreuse*, pp.85-90, 382-91.

¹⁶⁵ Leroy, 'L'Affaire du Comte de Soissons'.

¹⁶⁶ Israel, 'The Road to Rocroi', pp.63-6.

¹⁶⁷ For a revisionist interpretation see R. A. Stradling, 'Defeat and Recovery: The Defeat of Spain, 1639-43', in *Spain's Struggle for Europe, 157-212*.

of troops under arms in the Army of Flanders was as high, perhaps higher, than it had been at any time since 1572.¹⁶⁸

There is a further paradox at work here. If the chief purpose of obtaining Spanish support was to tap into the Habsburgs' logistical and military resources, then there is an implication that the French conspirators were inherently too weak to operate independently and therefore posed little threat. Some commentators have emphasised that the days had passed when the French *grands* could raise large armies of supporters through the leveraging of their own clientele and vassals, and certainly not in large enough numbers to make rebellion sustainable. The problem of resources had been exacerbated by the gradual assertion of the monarchy's monopoly of military power and the erosion of the vertical ties between provincial elites and the *grands* during the first third of the century. The dismantling of fortifications; the suppression of the Huguenots, and the extension of royal patronage over the army all contributed to this.¹⁶⁹ Some historians have suggested that the most significant factor for the *grands* was simply the spiralling cost of funding an army. If the *grands* were to rebel, and to pit themselves against the central government's superior financial credit, they needed major foreign investment to make up the deficit. The received view is therefore that the *grands* were experiencing the loss of their former capability to raise domestic rebellion through their own *largesse*, and that recourse to foreign support was on the increase under Richelieu as a result.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ G. Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659* (Cambridge, 1972).

¹⁶⁹ Lublinskaya, *French Absolutism*, pp.146-219; Parker, *French Absolutism*, pp.95-117.

¹⁷⁰ Parker, *French Absolutism*, p.102; G. Rowlands, 'The Monopolisation of Military Power in France, 1515 to 1715', in *Der Frieden: Rekonstruktion einer europäischen Vision*, Vol.2: *Friede und Krieg in der Frühen Neuzeit. Die europäische Staatenordnung und die außereuropäische Welt* (München, 2001), 139-160, pp.150-1.

Such arguments have, however, been exaggerated. The capability of the *grands* to cause major problems remained intact for much longer than is frequently given credit.¹⁷¹ Their financial resources were still significant. Recent work has demonstrated the high degree to which the French war effort relied on the *grands* to shoulder the financial burden by maintaining personal regiments, and military householders.¹⁷² Although the reduction of the Huguenot "state within the state" during the 1620s was a major step in neutralizing the threat of grandee revolt, moreover, the threat of discontent nevertheless remained and could still disrupt France's domestic affairs.

The assumption that the recourse to foreign support during Richelieu's era was a direct symptom of decline is, furthermore, deceptive. French noblemen had formed such alliances for centuries. The notorious Ligue du Bien Public in 1465 was largely dependent on the Duke of Burgundy's resources, and the indecisive Battle of Montlhéry was effectively fought between King Louis XI and an army primarily comprised of the Duke of Burgundy's forces.¹⁷³ The Constable of Bourbon, who had chosen the path of rebellion, was forced to flee France in 1523 for fear of arrest, but, after having boasted that he would be followed by 1,000 gentlemen, was, in the end, escorted into foreign territory by a solitary individual. However, he was subsequently appointed to prestigious military command by Charles V, and successfully expelled the French army from Lombardy. If it had not been for his untimely death outside the

¹⁷¹ A view recently expressed in: Rowlands, 'The Monopolisation of Military Power'.

¹⁷² Parrott, *Richelieu's Army*, pp.229-230, 287-92, 336-41.

¹⁷³ R. Vaughan, *Valois Burgundy* (London, 1975), pp.107, 155. On the Battle of Montlhéry: P.M. Kendall, *Louis XI* (London, 1971), pp.155-69.

walls of Rome in 1527, he may well have been restored to his French possessions through the weight of his foreign backing.¹⁷⁴

Much of the resources of both Catholics and Huguenots during The Wars of Religion had flowed from neighbouring monarchs.¹⁷⁵ In fact, it is hard to find French rebellions or factions which were not heavily reliant on foreign support in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, and the general inability of senior nobles to raise large-scale indigenous rebellion, from their own influence and resources alone, during these earlier periods, has been well noted.¹⁷⁶ The conception of an era of essentially “domestic” rebellion is likely therefore to be something of a historiographical myth, or a false-assumption.

Mutual Objectives

A further issue for French nobles was whether or not they could trust the Spanish. Surely, in the event of a rebellion, the Habsburgs would take full advantage of France's domestic troubles to tear her apart? Critics of such conspiracies often tried to argue that the rebels were being fooled by duplicitous Spanish claims to be disinterestedly seeking the good of Christendom.

¹⁷⁴ D. Potter, *A History of France, 1460-1560: The Emergence of a Nation State* (London, 1995), p.197; Pitts, *The Man Who Sacked Rome*. Charles de Bourbon's situation after leaving France in 1523 and entering Imperial service, is comparable to that of the Prince de Condé when he also left France in 1652 and entered the service of the King of Spain in Flanders. Condé obtained permission to return to France as part of the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659 which ensured highly-rewarded settlement for his rebellion: Inglis-Jones, 'Grand Condé in exile', *passim*.

¹⁷⁵ J. de Croze, *Les Guises, les Valois, et Philippe II* (2 vols.; Paris, 1866); S. Brunet, 'Philippe II et la Ligue Parisienne (1588)', *Revue historique*, 656 (2010), 795-844; D. J. B. Trim, 'The "Secret War" of Elizabeth I: England and the Huguenots during the early Wars of Religion', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 27:2 (1999), 189-199; M.P. Holt, *The French wars of religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge, 1986), pp.56, 112, 134, 128-9, 140-1, 151.

¹⁷⁶ Potter, *France 1460-1560*, pp.195-8.

The treaties of the Sedan *parti* between 1630 and 1642 were, however, essentially prototype peace deals between a post-Richelieu France and the Habsburgs. They were not projects to dismember France, as some have represented them.¹⁷⁷ The language of the conspirators themselves suggests a mixture of those committed to the cause of peace, and those, like Guise, who emphasised specific personal interests; in his case relating to the maintenance of specific possessions.¹⁷⁸ On the whole, however, the negotiations with Spanish representatives between 1638 and 1641 demonstrate a consistent concern for peace. Bouillon in particular pledged to work with ‘zele et fidelité’ to such a ‘sy bonne oeuvre’, and that he, ‘n’aura jamais aucune pensee, ni de son interest particulier ou utilité’.¹⁷⁹ In 1641, Soissons told his confessor, ‘que no hazia la guerra a Su Rey sino al Cardenal Rochelieu que impidia la Paz de la Christianidad y sobre este pretexto queria Vivir y morir’.¹⁸⁰ He may have described it as a ‘pretext’, but peace for Christendom was a goal for which he was prepared to give his life.¹⁸¹

The Spanish repeatedly assured Soissons, and his co-conspirators, of their sincerity over the issue of peace, and internal council papers offer no contradiction.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Amalric, ‘L’oeil et la main’, pp.34-5.

¹⁷⁸ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.261, ‘Instruction des choses qu’oultre les Articles du Traicté general le Sr Secretaire de Chambley doit représenter de la part de Monsieur le Prince de Joinville’, 22 July 1640.

¹⁷⁹ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.265, ‘Instruction pour le Sieur Secretaire Cesar de Chambley’, duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640.

¹⁸⁰ BL Add 14000, fo.572, Ugarte to Velez de Medrano, 11 July 1641.

¹⁸¹ The objective of peace is often described as a “pretext” in negotiation documents, but Soissons’ words to his confessor alert us to the potential ambiguity in the term’s usage.

¹⁸² BN Espagnol 144, fo.4, ‘L’Instruction pour l’Abbe de Merzy et le Secretaire Cesar de Chambley’, 20 Nov. 1639; AGRB T100 vol.229, fo.74, ‘Sustancia de lo sucedido en Sedan al Ms Palavesino’ [1638]; AGRB T100 vol.225, fo.87, ‘Instruccion secreta para el señor Cessar Chambley’, 20 Dec. 1639; *ibid.*, fo.101, Piccolomini to Soissons, 1 Nov. 1639; BL Add 14000, f.542v., ‘Papel en que Don Miguel de Salamanca representa a su A. el señor Infante el estado de la materia secreta con los Principes que estan en Sedan’, 5 Jan. 1641; *ibid.*, fo.558v., ‘Copia de la consulta que hicieron don Antonio Sarmiento y el Marques Virgilio Malvezzi’, n.d. [Apr. 1641]; *ibid.*, fo.562, ‘Instruccion de lo que vos Don Antonio Sarmiento de Acuña...observareys en los tratados, y conferencias, que tubieredes

Spanish rhetoric during the post-1635 war was consistently pro-peace and defensive, though the fact that it was the French King who had declared war first inherently dictated their stance. Spanish propagandists persistently accused France, and especially Richelieu, of fanning the flames of war.¹⁸³ In line with the rationale expounded by the French opposition, the Spanish justified their actions as an intervention to liberate the people and the King of France from Richelieu's tyranny, in order to bring peace to Europe. It was neither the defence of religion, nor a bid to partition France, but the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* that Spanish ministers sought. Indeed their anti-Richelieu and anti-France propaganda post-1635, was developed into a cogent critique of French bellicosity, which continued to mature during the reign of Louis XIV in works such as Lisola's *Bouclier d'Etat*.¹⁸⁴

The alleged tyranny of Richelieu formed the basis for a Habsburg intervention in French domestic affairs, based on principles which were supported by many political theorists. Bodin, for example, allowed for a foreign prince to intervene against a ruler who had become a tyrant, 'to defend the honour, goods and lives of such as are unjustly oppressed'. Grotius maintained the same, adding that even if the subjects of a King were denied the right to resist, as some argued, a foreign power could do so on one's behalf: 'ce que l'on ne peut pas faire soi-même, un autre peut le faire pour nous'.¹⁸⁵

con los Duques de Guissa, y Bullon, y con el Conde de Soissons', 23 Apr. 1641; AGS Est. Flandes 2057, 'El Consejo de Estado', 5 Mar. 1642.

¹⁸³ Jover, 1635; Dowling, *Saavedra Fajardo*, pp.67-71; Arredondo, *Literatura y Propaganda*, p.137;

¹⁸⁴ F.P., baron de Lisola, *Bouclier d'Etat et de justice contre le dessein manifestement découvert de la Monarchie Universelle* (n.p., 1667).

¹⁸⁵ J. Bodin, *Six Books of a Commonweal*, quoted in Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1980-92), ii, 286; H. Grotius, *Le droit de la guerre et de la paix*, trad. J. Barbeyrac (2 vols.; Amsterdam, 1724.), ii, 698-701.

While concerned for the preservation of the French Monarchy, Richelieu's opponents showed total disregard for French conquests achieved during the post-1635 war. The malcontents most likely saw them as adjunct to Richelieu's political credit, and therefore not something they had any interest in haggling over with the Spanish. To secure a peace that incorporated acquisitions made under Richelieu's ministeriat would be to secure, at least in part, his political legacy. The power of this thinking is demonstrated in Mazarin's Carnets for 1643, reporting that the Bishop of Beauvais had said that in order to 'effacer la mémoire du cardinal de Richelieu en France' it was necessary that in the peace treaty, everything should be re-established as it was before him.¹⁸⁶ The only distinction made, however, was that those possessions acquired prior to the official declaration of war in 1635, such as Lorraine, were out of consideration for the mutual restoration of territories in the event of a successful outcome, as were those acquired by the Swedes or other allies of France on whose behalf the French malcontents could not speak.¹⁸⁷

If there is a legitimate charge of "naiveté" against the French rebels in their dealings with the Spanish, it was not that they were allowing the Spanish carte blanche to tear France apart. However, the Spanish government was clearly not solely interested in the "common good" of Christendom or that of the French people, but was more concerned with facilitating the restoration of French conquests, so as to achieve 'peace with honour'.¹⁸⁸ There were comments suggesting that many Spanish ministers and diplomats did not think the French malcontents' projects would in

¹⁸⁶ V. Cousin, 'Des Carnets autographes du cardinal Mazarin, conservés à la bibliothèque impériale', *Journal des Savants* (1854), part III, 600-636, p.606.

¹⁸⁷ See Bouillon's comments in: BN N.a.f. 29, item 1 (treaty of July 1640), article 4.

¹⁸⁸ Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*, p.171.

themselves bring peace, but hoped they would succeed in stirring up Louis XIII's domestic troubles such that the Habsburgs might obtain the requisite breathing space to reverse the tide of the war, and to quell the unrest in Catalonia and Portugal.¹⁸⁹ To this extent, they were manipulating the French opposition in a bid to pursue their own ends, but their essential objective was still peace.

The manipulation was, however, mutual. The importance of the goal of peace for the French conspirators individually was as a means to obtain their own re-establishment, and protection, within France in the event of the war ending. They feared that if peace came between France and Spain, without them being under the protection of the Spanish, then they would not be restored as part of the peace, and would be cast adrift, subject to Richelieu's undistracted wrath.¹⁹⁰ Shorn of their short-term sûreté due to an inability to reconcile with Richelieu's ministeriat, they could ensure their long-term security by attaching themselves to a future peace treaty.¹⁹¹ Their deals with the Spanish, therefore, also included clauses pertaining to their own re-establishment in their 'biens, charges, honneurs, et pretentions', with safeguards that, if the project failed, the King of Spain would compensate them with similar positions, and territories from among his own domains. The claims outlined are primarily patrimonial, and reflect the on-going realisation of princely aspirations.¹⁹² So the French malcontents still had a clear self-interest in framing their

¹⁸⁹ See for example: AGRB T100 vol.572, fo.58, memo by Chambley, n.d. [Feb. 1641].

¹⁹⁰ AGRB T100 vol.229, fo.74, 'Sustancia de los sucedido en Sedan al Ms Palavesino' [1638].

¹⁹¹ This dynamic was at work after the Fronde too. Retz complained of his treatment after the Treaty of Pyrenees, that he was being punished for not allying with Spanish: 'C'est ma fidélité que l'on punit': Bertière, 'L'Image de la Ligue', p.64.

¹⁹² BN Espagnol 144, fol.4, 'L'Instruction pour l'Abbe de Merzy et le Secretaire Cesar de Chambley', 20 Nov. 1639, article 5. Henri de Lorraine was the most specific about his requirements: AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.261, 'Instruction des choses...de la part de Monsieur le Prince de Joinville', 22 July 1640. Article 3 of the latter document includes the preservation of his benefices for his *maison* and the return

revolt as a peace project, and were not entering their dealings with the Spanish as simple idealists.

The rebellion and its domestic supporters

Propaganda and public opinion

In a pair of memorandums of July 1640, Guise and Bouillon iterated the support they expected to obtain which would enable them to 'souslever' France. They were confident of their ability to persuade large swathes of the country; its people, strongholds, and soldiers, to declare their support, forcing the government to sue for peace due to the impossibility of suppressing such large scale domestic unrest while continuing the war. The combined effect of this would be to cripple its ability to raise revenue to finance the war, and stretch its capacities to breaking point. The public declaration of large swathes of the country would force Louis to realise that Richelieu was more of a liability than an asset.

Were they simply exaggerating hostility to the Cardinal's régime so as to persuade, or hoodwink the Habsburgs into supporting hopeless schemes, perhaps just

of his father's former possessions of the governorship of Provence and the office of Admiral du Levant, as well as the revenues of the Guise sovereignty of Château Renaud and the return of other family possessions which had been seized. It is notable, however, that the ministers in Brussels refused to commit to Henri's extensive demands: AGRB T100 vol.653, fo.250, 'Tocante los Intereses del Arcobispo de Rheims, Principe de Joinville', n.d. Bouillon repeatedly made clear that he sought to retain his sovereign possession of Sedan: BL Add 14000, fo.562, Cardinal-Infante's instructions for Sarmiento, 23 Apr.1641. La Valette wanted to be treated as a grandee of Spain. In plotting to obtain Metz he was also re-asserting his long-standing status as lieutenant-governor under his father, the duc d'Épernon, and furthering the aspirations of their *maison* to sovereignty over the city: AGRB T100 vol.222, fo.247, Cárdenas to Cardinal-Infante, 10 June 1639; *ibid.*, fo.250, untitled memorandum detailing La Valette's demands, [1639]; also see above p.36.

so as to draw a Spanish pension?¹⁹³ Were they deluding themselves with wishful thinking? These were both no doubt factors, but they factors do not explain the extensive claims made by Richelieu's enemies in exile, and the many eager advocates in Spanish ranks who took them up.¹⁹⁴

The French exiles had many contacts inside France, as well as agents travelling throughout the country, ensuring a steady flow of information.¹⁹⁵ There was a relatively free movement of noblemen between the Court and Sedan, visiting Soissons as head of the King's household.¹⁹⁶ The duc de Bouillon had many agents and servants who represented him in his governorship at Maastricht, or his various lands inside France, and many who regularly travelled between Sedan and these places. He corresponded with all of these people, as did his mother. He had an extensive family network with which he regularly corresponded.¹⁹⁷ The conspirators

¹⁹³ The exiles would clearly need income to replace that which they had lost by fleeing France, but it is too far-fetched to impute that this was the sole, or even primary, motivation for their actions while in exile as claimed in P. Bondonio, 'Une négociation difficile de Richelieu: Madame de Chevreuse en Angleterre 1638-1639' *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 46 (1932), 87-97, p.88. For Bondonio, Chevreuse never had any political purpose or objectives, simply a frivolous lifestyle that needed to be funded by whoever she could persuade to believe her insinuations and false promises.

¹⁹⁴ The keenest advocates seem to have been Olivares himself and his clients in Flanders: Elliott, *Olivares*, pp.572, 613-4; BL Add 14000, fo.545v., 'Parecer, que dio Don Antonio Sarmiento a su A. el señor Infante', 14 Feb. 1641; *ibid.*, fo.558v. 'Copia de la consulta que hicieron don Antonio Sarmiento y el Marques Virgilio Malvezzi', n.d. [Apr. 1641]; AGRB T100 vol.572, fo.58, memo by Chambley, n.d. [Feb. 1641].

¹⁹⁵ Reynald, 'Le Baron de Lisola', p.309, on an agent of Soubise sent to see the Croquants in Spring of 1640; AAE CP Angleterre 47, fo.222, Montereul [to Chavigny], 24 Jan. 1641, noting the movements of two gentlemen of La Valette's between southern France and England. For other similar references: AAE CP Angleterre 47, fo.112, Leicester to Windebank, 21 May 1638; *ibid.*, fo.524, Bellièvre to [Chavigny], 28 July 1639; *ibid.*, fo.528, Bellièvre to [Chavigny], 4 Aug. 1639.

¹⁹⁶ Beauchamp, *Louis XIII*, p.465, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 5 Jan. 1640.

¹⁹⁷ From his extant correspondence in the Archives Nationales, we know that Bouillon regularly exchanged news with his mother (Elisabeth of Nassau), his uncle (Frederik-Henry, Prince of Orange) his wife (Eléonore de Bergh), his brother (Turenne), his sisters and brothers-in-law (Messrs de Roucy and de La Trémoille), as well as Louis-Philippe, Prince Palatine. He also corresponded with various – often peripatetic – agents (chiefly Machant, Desloges and Chadirac): J.L. Tulot (ed.), *Correspondance d'Elisabeth de Nassau, duchesse de Bouillon. Années 1630-1642*, published online at URL: <http://jeanluc.tulot.pagesperso-orange.fr/Edenassau09.pdf> (31 December 2006); J.L. Tulot (ed.), *Correspondances de Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne et d'Eléonore de Bergh*, published online at URL: <http://jeanluc.tulot.pagesperso-orange.fr/Edenassau10.pdf> (31 December 2006);

also shared their information directly with the Spanish; in December 1640, for example, an envoy of the duc de La Valette presented a paper to the Council of State in Madrid concerning his findings on having traversed France.¹⁹⁸ Richelieu's France was not an impregnable fortress where, in the words of one commentator, 'La surveillance opérée par Richelieu, la propaganda des libellistes et l'exil des principaux opposants ferment le Royaume à toute intrusion espagnole',¹⁹⁹ but was a highly porous body of labyrinthine connections and information.

All of this gave Richelieu's adversaries a better sense of France's mood than we could possibly hope to muster hundreds of years after the fact. They may have exaggerated their claims, but they did not invent them. There was widespread discontent across the social spectrum.

One of the chief areas where the existing historiographical assumptions stress conservative inertia, however, relates to public opinion. Richelieu was undoubtedly a superb propagandist, as much in his ability to choreograph it as to compose it himself. He deployed the full array of media to communicate his political and social messages, commissioning a host of talented writers, painters, playwrights, political pamphleteers, architects, sculptors and theologians, to construct an impressive edifice of persuasion, which historians are – perhaps to the neglect of other approaches – now exploring to the full.²⁰⁰ As impressive as this propaganda legacy is to modern eyes,

Turenne, *Lettres*; AN R2 55; AN 273 AP 184; AN 273 AP 180. The dossier of the abbé de Mercy's correspondence with the Brussels government while he was at Sedan, contains intelligence gathered from 'adherents' of the duc de Bouillon: AGRB T100 vol.550, unnumbered item, 18 Nov. [1640].

¹⁹⁸ AGS Estado Francia K1419, item 182, 'Avis du Conseil d'Etat au Roi', Madrid, 10 Dec. 1640.

¹⁹⁹ Hugon, *Au Service du Roy Catholique*, p.107.

²⁰⁰ Church, *Richelieu*; E. Thuau, *Raison d'État*; Duccini, *Faire Voir, Faire Croire*; G. Fagniez, 'L'opinion publique et la polémique au temps de Richelieu, à propos d'une publication récente', *Revue des questions historiques*, 60 (1896), 442-84; G. Fagniez, 'L'Opinion publique et la presse politique

however, what it does it not tell us is how his ministry was perceived by his contemporaries, or whether he enjoyed their support. Nevertheless there is a tendency, in the absence of modern opinion polls, for historians to operate on the assumption that the majority of the political nation supported Richelieu's policies, or at least feared the supposed chaos that a successful rebellion might bring in its wake.

William Church's superb study of Richelieu's political propaganda, for example, makes some dubious assertions about public opinion during the latter years of Louis XIII's reign. He comments that during the last years of Richelieu's ministry, 'a large majority of published works on political matters praised the Cardinal in the most extravagant terms', and rightly notes that works criticising him 'were surprisingly few'. As statements of fact these are incontrovertible, but he goes on to infer that, 'As time elapsed Richelieu's accomplishments became clearer to his contemporaries'.²⁰¹ Church's underlying assumption is that the proportions of extant printed works in praise of Richelieu versus those critical of him, can be taken as a direct reflection of public opinion. Examining a small handful of these works, he concludes that 'Reason of state in internal affairs brought very tangible benefits to all' and that 'a growing number of contemporaries approved of his [Richelieu's] foreign and domestic policies'.²⁰² He produces no other evidence to support these claims. William McKennan, whose primary focus is on the opposition to Richelieu, concludes

sous Louis XIII, 1624-1626', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 14 (1900), 352-401; M. Deloche, *Autour de la plume de Richelieu* (Paris, 1920); H.M. Solomon, *Public welfare, science and propaganda in seventeenth century France: The innovations of Théophraste Renaudot* (Princeton, 1972); D. Harai, 'Du radeau des âmes à la nef de l'état: une lecture symbolique de l'ascension de Richelieu (1608-1642)', *Recherches Vendéennes*, 16 (2009), 229-71; H.G. Hall, *Richelieu's Desmarets and the century of Louis XIV* (Oxford, 1990); G. Couton, *Richelieu et le théâtre* (Paris, 2008); H.T. Goldfarb (ed.), *Richelieu: L'Art et le Pouvoir* (Montreal, 2002); J.-C. Boyer, B. Gaehtgens, and B. Gady (eds.), *Richelieu, patron des arts* (Paris, 2009).

²⁰¹ Church, *Richelieu*, p.411.

²⁰² Church, *Richelieu*, p.415.

that the output of his critics, ‘when compared to those of the *étatistes*, appear meagre indeed’. From this statement, he jumps, without providing further evidence, to the conclusion that the arguments of Richelieu’s critics ‘failed to capture the interest or the support of the majority of the public’.²⁰³

Like Church, McKennan makes a judgement on French public opinion based on the relative paucity of hostile printed literature within the libraries of the western world. What this evidence reflects, however, is the success of Richelieu in preventing his adversaries from publishing their views. As Jeffrey Sawyer has shown, Richelieu enforced an impressive censorship machine, and exercised extensive control over the printing establishment, which, ‘all but eliminated the opposition press in France’.²⁰⁴ Additionally, the volume of material published in favour of Richelieu’s policies was not an unequivocal indicator of assent, but formed part of either the on-going propaganda offensives orchestrated by the ministry, or consisted of career-making pieces offered in hope of advancement. We should not take, therefore, the volume of extant hostile texts as a statistical barometer of public opinion. Richelieu enforced silence on those who would criticise him, and persuaded many to write in his favour, which is a far cry from saying he had won the battle for the nation’s hearts and minds.

The degree of written output by the opposition was, moreover, much greater than previously thought, but the fact is that little of it remains. Richelieu’s critics were largely forced to publish in exile, most frequently in Antwerp and London. For

²⁰³ W.W. McKennan, *Gaston d’Orléans and the Grands: The Opposition to Absolutism under Louis XIII (1610-1643)*, PhD thesis, Brown University, 1972, p.328.

²⁰⁴ Sawyer, *Printed Poison*, pp.136-44.

example, we know that a work by Le Coigneux,²⁰⁵ which was reported to be critical of Richelieu and the King, was circulating in London in early 1639, but no copy of it has yet come to light.²⁰⁶ Another critical work was circulating in London in 1640, this time by Jean-Jacques Courvoisier, a friar who had formerly been the duc de Bellegarde's confessor.²⁰⁷ While copies of many of Mathieu de Morgues' hostile works, which were mostly published in Antwerp, have survived, we know that he published other such works of which copies have not been found.²⁰⁸

Despite the severe penalties – sometimes death – for the writing, printing or selling of politically-unacceptable material, moreover, some hostile works continued to circulate inside France. The English ambassador in Paris noted in January 1637 that 'Divers writings have of late bin passed up inciting the common people to sedition and directing them to some particular persons by name whoe are thought to have bin principall directors of these taxes'.²⁰⁹ One of the most prominent opposition publications appeared in 1640, in the form of Charles Hersent's *Optati Galli*, which launched a stinging criticism of Richelieu's treatment of the Church. It was widely-circulated - 'Il n'y a evesque ni curé dans Paris à qui on n'en ait fait tenir des

²⁰⁵ Jacques Le Coigneux was a *président à mortier* of the Parlement de Paris. A follower of Orléans after the Day of Dupes, he was not included in the 1634 reconciliation and later took refuge in England, where he became involved in the intrigues of Marie de Médicis and La Valette: Church, *Richelieu*, pp.319-21; AAE CP Angleterre 48, fo.235, Carré [to Richelieu], 30 Jan. 1641.

²⁰⁶ AAE CP Angleterre 47, fo.345, Bellière to [Chavigny], 3 Feb. 1639.

²⁰⁷ AAE MD 286, fos.89-193, listing of Richelieu's correspondence for 1640, which on fo.114 mentions a letter from Carré, dated 11 July, concerning Courvoisier's work. Roger de Saint-Larry de Termes, duc de Bellegarde, was a former favourite of Henri III and then of Marie de Médicis, with whom he sided after the Day of Dupes. He was included in Orléans' pardon in 1634. Courvoisier, however, remained in exile, where he attached himself to the duc de Lorraine and penned propaganda for the Brussels government.

²⁰⁸ Morgues' correspondence with Balthazar Moretus, of the Plantin printing house in Antwerp, mentions a Morgues work published in March 1638 referred to as 'Vos Raisons', as well as a work Morgues was commissioned to write in 1638, by the Cardinal-Infante, in response to a 'certain livre du duc de Rohan' (presumably his *De l'Interest des Princes* published in Paris earlier that year): Henrard, 'Mathieu de Morgues et la Maison Plantin', pp.565, 574.

²⁰⁹ BL Add 35097, fo.60, Scudamore to [Secretary of State], 20/30 Jan 1637.

pacquets'²¹⁰ - suggesting a co-ordinated, and risky, operation by Richelieu's clerical opponents. Hersent argued for Papal supremacy and, crucially, denied that the French King had the right to demand subventions from the clergy. The *Optati Galli*, however, was swiftly condemned by the *Parlement* and the usual book-burnings then staged. This was followed by a series of refutations ordered by Richelieu.²¹¹ There were also other illicit works circulating inside France, and being suppressed. One such was a biography of Saint-Bernard, copies of which a certain Pierre Anguemont was arrested for selling in 1641.²¹² Saint-Bernard was a renowned twelfth-century defender of the ultramontaine authority of the Papacy, and was thus seen as a subversive figure. The Papal Nuncio reported the suppression of an anti-Richelieu pamphlet which was circulating in Paris in 1640, though its identity is unknown.²¹³ Another work was published in 1641 by Jacques Ribier, a *maître des requêtes*, calling for peace and the re-establishment of *Parlement's* authority. Ribier's work was suppressed by order of the Court.²¹⁴ Given what we know of the ruthlessness and

²¹⁰ *Optati Galli de cavendo schismate, ad illustrissimos ac reverendissimos ecclesiae gallicane primates, archiepiscopos, episcopos* (Paris, 1640); Saumaise and Rivet, *Correspondance*, p.175, Saumaise to Rivet, 25 Mar. 1640. For the condemnation of this piece see the *arrêt* of 4 April 1640: BN Français 22087, fo.101; M. Molé, *Mémoires*, ed. A. Champollion-Figeac (4 vols.; Paris, 1855-57), ii, 484-9. One of Richelieu's agents later made claims substantiating the widely-held rumours that Richelieu had designs on the role of patriarch: *Quelques pages inédites de Louis de Rechignevoisin de Guron, évêque de Tulle et de Comminges*, ed. P. Tamizey de Larroque (Tulle, 1885), pp.29-30. The same claim was supported by Montchal, *Mémoires*, i, 33 and *passim*. Charles Hersent was a Doctor of the Sorbonne, who had formerly written in defence of Richelieu's policies. He took refuge in Rome after publishing the *Optati Galli*.

²¹¹ Thuau, *Raison d'État*, pp.150-1; Church, *Richelieu*, pp.406-11; Ferretti, 'Introduction', pp.53-5. Several works refuted Hersent, including: I. Habert, *De Consensus Hierarchiae et Monarchiae* (Paris, 1640).

²¹² BN Français 22087, fo.102, 'Extrait des Registres de la Police du Chastelet de Paris', 12 July 1641.

²¹³ *Correspondance du Nonce*, p.283, Scotti to Barberini, 30 Mar. 1640. The identity of this work is unclear. Scotti's editor, Pierre Blet, suggested it was the *Saint Défense pour Son eminence*, but this work was written under the name 'Pontméan', as were various works in praise of Richelieu: Church, *Richelieu*, pp.412-3. The identity of the work Scotti was referring to, therefore, remains unclear.

²¹⁴ BN Français 15611, fo.167, Arnaud to Barillon, 7 July 1641. It is notable that Church – unaware of the condemnation of Ribier's work – characterises it as a pro-Richelieu piece; Church, *Richelieu*, p.413. Richelieu later described Ribier as 'un fascheux esprit, qui du temps de Mr de Lopès avoit toujours brouillé': Avenel, vii, 110, Richelieu to Chavigny and de Noyers, 30 Aug. 1642. Ribier's

vehemence of the censorship régime, any attempts to publish critical works, reflected a significant degree of effort and conviction.

Most opposition works, moreover, were not published, and circulated in manuscript. These have received even less attention from posterity. Caussin's *Consolation à la France* penned in 1639, was a significant piece of anti-Richelieu propaganda, but finds no place in the seminal analyses of Church, Thuau or Duccini.²¹⁵ Many other cogent critical works remain unedited, such as the 'Raisons pour Monstrer que la France ne veult point la paix selon l'interest du Cardinal de Richelieu', which probably dates from 1638,²¹⁶ or the 'Complainte du labourer a Mon Segneur le Cardinal de Richelieu', criticising the abuses in the collection of the *tailles* and the disastrous impact this was having on the people of France.²¹⁷ Some unpublished works by Richelieu's critics have not survived at all. A notable example of which was a history of Louis XIII's reign by Mathieu de Morgues, which would almost certainly have provided much fresh insight into the period.²¹⁸ Another piece of

brother, Guillaume, had refused Richelieu's request for him to participate the King's council, and was frequently consulted by Orléans: L. Moreri, *La grand dictionnaire historique* (10 vols.; Paris, 1759), ix, 173.

²¹⁵ Rochemonteix, *Caussin*, pp.78-81.

²¹⁶ AAE CP Espagne 19, fo.219.

²¹⁷ AAE MD 837, fo.318, n.d. [1640].

²¹⁸ This work is mentioned as early as 1643: Henrard, 'Mathieu de Morgues et la Maison Plantin', p.576. Guy Patin described the work as the 'parfaite Histoire de Louis XIII', which he had been told contained, 'une infinité de particularités de la Cour depuis soixante ans' and 'des vérités fort sanglantes du Gouvernement de ce Cardinal'. Patin eagerly awaited the work's publication, as an antidote to recent works, such as that of Antoine Aubery - published by the Duchesse d'Aiguillon (Richelieu's niece) - which was 'méprisée, étant trop suspecte pour le lieu d'où elle vient', and because of Aubery's habit of writing 'mercenairement, et de prostituer la plume au gré de cette Dame' who honoured her uncle 'comme d'un Dieu'. Patin was referring to Aubery's *Histoire du cardinal duc de Richelieu* (Paris, 1660). Morgues instructed that publication of his history should only take place after his death and deposited six manuscript copies with friends, but none has as yet come to light: *Lettres de Guy Patin*, ed. J.-H. Reveillé-Parise (3 vols.; Paris, 1846), ii, 325, Patin to Spon, 13 July 1657; *ibid.*, iii, 457, Patin to Falconnet, 8 Feb. 1664; *ibid.*, iii, 517, Patin to Falconnet, 20 Mar. 1665; *ibid.*, iii, 662, Patin to Falconnet, 2 Sept. 1667; *ibid.*, iii, 769, Patin to Falconnet, 15 Dec. 1670; *ibid.*, iii, 774, Patin to Falconnet, 14 Jan. 1671.

Morgues', entitled 'Amarcanus' was refused at the printers in 1636, and has yet to come to light.²¹⁹

The memoirs, private correspondences, and diplomatic despatches of the time, moreover, provide us with important sources of information on the public mood and perceptions of Richelieu's policies. Although, not statistically representative either, these sources suggest a widespread discontent with the war-state, not just among peasants and urban poor, but increasingly amongst *noblesse d'épée* and *noblesse de robe* élites.²²⁰

Richelieu's skilful control of public discourse did much to obscure from view the increasingly unsympathetic sentiments of much of the actual public. As Sawyer rightly argues, this censorship would have done much to prevent his active opponents from gathering direct support and establishing political territory, but nevertheless does not mean that we can infer that Richelieu enjoyed popular support among the political élites.

²¹⁹ Henrard, 'Mathieu de Morgues et la Maison Plantin', p.580.

²²⁰ Among the private correspondences are the letters of Philippe de Marescot to the comte de Béthune, and those of Alexandre de Campion: Vigier, 'Invasion', p.460, n.3; Campion, *Lettres*. There are many sets of ambassadorial despatches which offer precious insight. Those of the English ambassadors - Scudamore and Brown - can be found in the British Library (Add 35097, Add 45142, and Add 12184), while those of the earl of Leicester appear in A. Collins (ed.), *Letters and Memorials of State* (2 vols.; London, 1746), ii, 377-662. Those of the Papal Nuncio, Scotti, have been edited: P. Blet (ed.), *Correspondance du nonce en France Ranuccio Scotti (1639-1641)* (Rome, 1965). It is likely that the despatches of the other Nuncios (Bolognetti and Grimaldi) are similarly useful. They can be consulted in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano: Chevallier, *Louis XIII*, p.659, provides references. There are transcriptions of the despatches of the Venetian ambassadors (Contarini, Correr, and Giustiniani) in the Bibliothèque Nationale: BN Italien 1810-9. The despatches of the Savoyard and Mantuan ambassadors (Mondino, Saint-Maurice, Priandi) are often quoted at length in the work of Romolo Quazza, otherwise they can be consulted in their respective state archives: Quazza, *Tommaso di Savoia*. There are also the despatches of the Swedish ambassador (Grotius), which have been edited as: *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, ed. P.C. Molhuysen *et al*, published online at URL: <http://grotius.huygens.knaw.nl> (2009).

There is also evidence that some of those members of the élites who are usually seen as supporters, indeed servants, of Richelieu, were by 1640 becoming highly critical of him. Pierre Dupuy and his circle are a case in point. A lawyer in the Parlement and a great historical scholar, Pierre, as well as his brother Jacques, actively co-operated with Richelieu, and spent much of his time in the 1630s compiling material to inform and support the Cardinal's policies.²²¹ In the collection of Dupuy's papers in the Bibliothèque Nationale, however, is a Latin harangue against the Cardinal, 'Discours Latin contre les cruautés du Cardinal de Richelieu',²²² penned by Ismaël Boulliau and dated 1640.²²³ This work accused Richelieu of being a tyrant and of sowing divisions within the royal family. Boulliau was one of the habitués of the *Cabinet Dupuy*, which met daily at the Hôtel de Thou, and which was convoked by the Dupuy brothers.²²⁴ François de Thou, at whose house the *cabinet* met, had by this time become an active agent in the conspiracies at Sedan, and in the projects forming around Cinq-Mars.²²⁵ Another member of the Dupuy circle was Guez de Balzac.²²⁶ Balzac had previously authored the immense treatise *Le Prince*; published in 1631, this work was one of the most extreme enunciations of the absolutist

²²¹ Ferretti, 'Introduction', pp.48-67.

²²² BN Dupuy 625, fo.89. The same Dupuy volume provides other hints of a subterranean strain of antipathy to Richelieu's régime, in the form of a list in Dupuy's hand of all those exiled, imprisoned, or executed during his years of power: *ibid.*, fo.94.

²²³ Boulliau was an accomplished astronomer, mathematician and classical scholar, who lodged at the Hôtel de Thou. Boulliau's papers, also in the Bibliothèque Nationale, contain a copy of a letter addressed to the abbé de Mercy, suggesting he may have been close to the Spanish-backed opposition: BN Français 13027, fo.50v.

²²⁴ Ferretti argues that it was only the treatment of de Thou in 1642 which brought about a shift in Pierre Dupuy's attitude towards Richelieu, but the evidence of Boulliau's discourse suggests this dating should be moved forward by at least 2 years: Ferretti, 'Introduction', pp.48-67. The issue of Dupuy's relationship with Richelieu, as Ferretti underlines, calls out for systematic study.

²²⁵ J. Delatour, "Les armes en main et les larmes aux yeux", le procès de Cinq-Mars et de Thou', in *Les Procès Politiques (XIV-XVII siècle)*, ed. Y-M. Bercé (Rome, 2007), p.357.

²²⁶ Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac was one of the founding members of the *Académie*.

principles of Richelieu's government.²²⁷ By the late 1630s, however, Balzac had become an ardent critic of Richelieu. In a series of Latin poems, such as the *Indignatio in Poetas Neronianorum Temporum*, Balzac attacked the bloody politics of the tyrant.²²⁸ These poems were not published until the 1650s, but were in circulation in the late 1630s in manuscript copy.²²⁹ In 1642 or early 1643, Pierre Dupuy began preparation of his *Mémoires et instructions pour servir à justifier innocence de Messier François-Auguste de Thou*, in which he launched a tirade of accusations against the tyranny of the Cardinal, possessed of 'profonde ambition' and 'avarice insatiable'. The whole kingdom, he claimed, had suffered under 'ce fléau de l'Europe'.²³⁰

The same clandestine critique infused other circles. Balzac's poems attacking Richelieu were dedicated to the marquis de Montausier,²³¹ a habitué of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, which was in turn another centre of Parisian social and cultural life. The same poems circulated among men of letters such as Jean Chapelain and François

²²⁷ On Balzac as a Richelieu propagandist see Church, *Richelieu*, pp.165-7, 238-9, 250.

²²⁸ Ferretti, 'Introduction', p.71.; M. Fumaroli, 'Critique et création littéraire: J.L. Guez de Balzac et P. Corneille (1637-1645)', *Travaux de Linguistique et de Littérature publiés par le Centre de Philologie et de Littératures Romanes de l'Université de Strasbourg*, 13:2 (1975), 73-89; F.E. Sutcliffe, *Guez de Balzac et son temps* (Paris, 1959), pp.34-48. In early 1640, Balzac received a visit from de Thou and Montrésor: *Lettres de Jean Chapelain*, ed. P. Tamizey de Larroque, (2 vols.; Paris, 1880-3), i, 569-70, Chapelain to Balzac, 12 Feb. 1640. It is notable that much of the opposition literature of this era was penned in Latin, which may explain the lack of scholarly attention. The *Bibliotheca gallo-suecica. Erasmus Irenicus collegit; Utopiae* (Paris, 1642) penned around 1641, probably by Antoine Brun, listed various Latin texts full of invectives against France. The 1640s saw an ensuing publication dialogue between Brun and Morgues (now defending the French position against Habsburg attack), all of which was conducted in Latin: J.F. Michaud, *Biographie universelle, ancienne et moderne*, vi (Paris, 1812), 102-103. This part of Morgues' career has largely been overlooked by the existing studies of him.

²²⁹ C. Drouhet (ed.), *Tableau chronologique des lettres du poète François Mainard: accompagné de lettres inédits* (Paris, 1909), p.54, Mainard to Balzac, June 1638; *ibid.*, p.59, Mainard to Frémin, Nov.-Dec. 1638; *ibid.*, Mainard to Flotte, Aug. 1640.

²³⁰ Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions*, p.5 and *passim*.

²³¹ Charles de Saint-Maure, marquis de Montausier.

Mainard, whose own letters testify to his hatred for the régime of Richelieu, or 'Ferragus' as he called him.²³²

Nobilities

The conspirators made great play of their support among the nobility as a whole. Among the robe, it was reported that many members of the Parlement of Rouen, disgruntled at their treatment by Richelieu in 1639, were expected to support the Sedan princes. The entire Parlement had been disbanded and exiled from Rouen at the start of 1640, accused of having encouraged the Nu-Pieds revolt. Henry de Lorraine was in contact with the ousted *premier président* Charles de Faucon de Frainville, who probably acted as unofficial spokesperson for the exiled magistrates. Across the province, the Norman nobility was discontented after years of fiscal exactions and the brutal suppression of the Nu-Pieds revolt by Comte Jean de Gassion and chancellor Séguier.²³³ Bouillon also claimed to have the support of many members of the Parlement of Paris, and the number was steadily increasing due to the 'mauvais traitement qu'ilz recoivent.'²³⁴

²³² Drouhet, *Tableau chronologique*, p.60, Mainard to Tristan, Dec. 1638/ Jan. 1639; *ibid.*, p.76, Mainard to Flotte, Jan. 1641. The dubbing of Richelieu as 'Ferragus' was a trait shared by Balzac: Fumaroli, 'Critique et création littéraire', p.76. Ferragus was a mythical (and seemingly invincible) Saracen giant, who featured in medieval romances, and was usually slain by Charlemagne's nephew Roland (or Orlando). Mainard was also a close friend of the abbé de Saint-Vincent, one of the chief orchestrators of clerical opposition to Richelieu: C. de Montchal, 'Mémoires de M. de Montchal', *L'Europe Savante* (November 1718), 3-43, pp.13-4.

²³³ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.261, 'Instruction des choses', 22 July 1640; M. Foisil, *La Révolte des Nu-Pieds*, (Paris, 1970), pp.206-16 and *passim*; A. Floquet, *Histoire du Parlement de Normandie* (7 vols.; Rouen, 1840), iv, 654-78; *ibid.*, v, 1-2, 75-93.

²³⁴ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.265, 'Instruction pour le Sieur Secrétaire César de Chambley', duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640.

There were also intimations by Henri de Lorraine of support in July 1640 from amongst the clergy, though he did not give names. Bouillon mentioned a general discontent among the prelates due to plans to subject them to the *taille*.²³⁵ The clergy, like so many others, were discontented at the Crown's on-going manoeuvres to obtain money from them to help fund the war.²³⁶

The Princes also had assurances of support from many towns and strongholds across France. Some were places directly under their personal control, or that of their *maisons*. It is not specified who the Princes' contacts were, but they were most likely to have been officers of the garrisons, or governors of the towns in question. In 1640 Soissons had assurances concerning unnamed places in Normandy. Henri de Lorraine was confident of two Normandy ports, Fécamp and Ville Dieu,²³⁷ as well as some of the towns of the Nivernois, such that he hoped to raise the whole province in support of the rebellion. Henri's influence in the Nivernois was aided by his secret marriage to Anne de Gonzague, whose sister, Marie, had the temporary governorship of the duchy of Nevers which dominated the Nivernois.²³⁸ Henri de Lorraine also hoped to sustain the unrest at Moulins - which had erupted in June 1640 - along with some of the other places of the Bourbonnais, of which Moulins was capital. He also believed

²³⁵ This in fact turned out to be a new tax to be raised on the clergy in return for their on-going exemption from the *taille*; Ranum, *Councillors*, pp.159-60.

²³⁶ Montchal, 'Mémoires de M. de Montchal', pp.11-15.

²³⁷ Henri had been abbé de Fécamp since 1617. This position had brought with it the right to appoint the town captain: S. Caroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise family and the making of Europe* (Oxford, 2009), p.86.

²³⁸ Marie and Anne de Gonzague were daughters of Charles I de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, and duc de Mantoue from 1627. After Charles I's death in 1637, his grandson Charles II – nephew to Marie and Anne – was set to inherit. His rights were disputed, however, under the *droit d'Aubaine*, which excluded those born abroad from inheriting French possessions. As a result, the Gonzague-Nevers' French territories – chiefly the duchy of Nevers and Charleville – were being administered by Marie with the encouragement of Richelieu, who had taken advantage of the situation to introduce a royal garrison and lieutenant at Mont-Olympe, which adjoined Charleville: J. Hubert, *Histoire de Charleville depuis son origine jusqu'en 1854* (Charleville, 1854), pp.127-8.

he could make himself master of Rheims, and had hopes for Rethel, Château-Porcien and Troyes. Bouillon added that several towns of Champagne were promised to Soissons, as he was their provincial governor.²³⁹ Other towns targeted by the malcontents were Mézières, Stenay, Donchery, Rocroi, Saint-Quentin, Péronne, and Calais. There were also *châteaux forts* - such as Joinville and Sommevoire - in the Marne region, which were under the control of Henri de Lorraine's family and upon which he could rely.²⁴⁰

Popular unrest

In addition to the pledges of noble malcontents, both the Sedan and London cabals also planned to stir up and exploit provincial unrest to their advantage. The conspirators repeatedly alluded to the fact that one of their chief tactics was to 'foment les revoltes'.²⁴¹ The agents of the Habsburg powers, moreover, were instructed to aid in this endeavour, 'puis que riens n'ouvre plus les yeux [des] Roys'.²⁴²

Provincial unrest had been a regular phenomenon during Richelieu's ministry, but the over-riding necessities of financing the war effort through huge tax increases,

²³⁹ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo. 261, 'Instruction des choses', 22 July 1640; *ibid.*, fo.265, 'Instruction pour le Sieur Secretaire Cesar de Chambley', duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640. On the unrest at Moulins: B. Porchnev, *Les Soulèvements populaires en France de 1623 à 1648* (Paris, 1963), pp.186-213.

²⁴⁰ BS FP 132, p.119, information from Claude de La Combe; *ibid.*, p.120, information from Artus de La Mine.

²⁴¹ BN N.a.f. 29, item 1 (treaty of July 1640), article 8.

²⁴² BN Espagnol 144, fo.4, 'L'Instruction pour l'Abbe de Merzy et le Secretaire Cesar de Chambley', 20 Nov. 1639.

after 1635, had given rise to a swathe of much-larger uprisings in the western provinces.²⁴³

Riots had broken out in the Guyenne in 1635, followed by the insurrections of the *Croquants* in Angoumois and Périgord in 1636. In 1637, messengers passed between the leaders of the Croquants, such as La Mothe La Forêt, and Soissons at Sedan. Offers of support from Soissons were used as a means to encourage more people to join the Croquants revolt. The threat of co-operative action between the Croquants and the King's cousin therefore became a pressing concern for Richelieu and Louis XIII, but diminished after the battle of La Sauvetat-du-Dropt on 1 June, where the duc de La Valette's forces defeated the army of the Croquants.²⁴⁴ Further uprisings emerged, however, in 1638, and henceforward bands of trouble-makers conducted a form of guerrilla warfare from their bases in the forest of Vergt, under the leadership of Pierre Greletty. Subsequent attempts to bring them to heel in 1639 and 1640 proved costly and ineffective.²⁴⁵

When, in late 1639, the Sedan faction turned their energies once more to the task of building rebellion, they renewed their dealings with the Croquants. The spring of 1640 saw Greletty's forces enjoying greater success than ever, having defeated a third attempt at suppression, this time by the comte de Grignols at the head of royal troops.²⁴⁶ The Brussels archives contain a letter from the abbé de Mercy at Sedan in June 1640, reporting that the duc de Bouillon was reaching out to the leaders of the

²⁴³ For a detailed account of these uprisings between 1635 and 1641 see: Bercé, *Croquants*, ii, 294-462.

²⁴⁴ Beauchamp, *Louis XIII*, p.301, King to Richelieu, 29 May 1637; *ibid.*, p.306, King to Richelieu, 13 June 1637; *ibid.*, p.308, King to Richelieu, 20 June 1637; Bercé, *Croquants*, ii, 431-2.

²⁴⁵ *Livre-Journal de Pierre de Bessot 1609-1652*, ed. P. Tamizey de Larroque, in *Bulletin de la société historique et archéologique de Périgord*, 20 (1893), 70-115; Bercé, *Croquants*, ii, 456-7.

²⁴⁶ André de Talleyrand, comte de Grignols.

various popular revolts, some of whom were soon to arrive at Sedan for talks. Mercy mentions, in particular, a certain Pedescot, one of the 'autores' of the revolts in the Guyenne.²⁴⁷ Soubise had also sent an agent from London to see the Croquants that spring.²⁴⁸ Having opted to continue their revolt, the Croquants would have welcomed the offers of political alliance being offered by Richelieu's grandee opponents. Their support would enhance the Croquants' options for achieving a satisfactory accommodation with the King.

Soon after this, Bouillon wrote that he had been assured of the greater part of Guyenne, which had resolved to take up arms, even without any promise of foreign support, and would have already done so if some of the nobility had not prevented them, 'afin de mieux faire la chose, et avec concert, de sort qu'elle n'attend que le temps, et generalement tous les peuples prendront les armes, et la plus part de la Noblesse'.²⁴⁹

The precise nature, and extent, of the collusion, however, is unclear. It is likely that the men with whom the Sedan cabal was in contact were *petit noblesse* attempting to manipulate the tens of thousands of peasants and urban poor who had taken up arms. Pedescot, for example, was described as an 'autore' of the revolts in the Guyenne, as opposed to a leader *per se*. Local gentry would have been in a position to aid, encourage and, though only partially, to guide the protest, but the level

²⁴⁷ AGRB T100 vol.550, Mercy and Chambley to [Salamanca], 6 June 1640. The possibility of contact between the Princes at Sedan and the leaders of the Croquants revolt around this time has already been suggested by Bercé, who drew attention to contemporary claims that emerged during the Madaillan trial of late 1641 and early 1642: Y.-M. Bercé, 'Exercice de Complot et Secret d'Etat dans la France de 1640', *Vives Lettres*, 1 (1996), 63-73; Bercé, 'Procès et mort du baron de Madaillan, 1641-1645', in J. Fouilleron *et al* (eds.), *Sociétés et idéologies des Temps modernes* (2 vols.; Montpellier, 1996), i, 293-302.

²⁴⁸ Reynald, 'Le Baron de Lisola', p.308

²⁴⁹ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.265, 'Instruction pour le Sieur Secrétaire César de Chambley', duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640.

of control assumed in Bouillon and Mercy's letters was probably over-ambitious and may have reflected unrealistic claims being made by these intermediaries concerning the level of influence they could bring to bear on the actions of the Croquants.

Bouillon himself did, however, have significant influence in the region, especially in the Périgord. He possessed the vicomté de Turenne in Quercy and Limousin, and the little vicomté de Lanquais near Bergerac, where there had already been unrest due to the intrusions of soldiers into the region and attempts by the Crown to collect new taxes. Pressure was being exerted upon the *maison de La Tour* to defend the traditional privileges of this community.²⁵⁰ During 1640 itself, right next to the vicomté de Turenne, some twenty parishes on the plateau Limousin, belonging to Sauveboeuf (attached to Orléans), had risen up against royal justice.²⁵¹ A representative of the Poitevins, moreover, had also been sent to ask Soubise to lead them.²⁵² There was a two-way exchange between these senior dissidents, and lesser nobility claiming to represent the forces of popular discontent, concerning mutual plans of action.

By January 1641, the Sedan *parti* believed that 'la Guienne est plus en disposition de se révolter que jamais'.²⁵³ To aid the uprising, the conspirators proposed that the duc d'Elbeuf be released from Spanish service in Flanders, so as to re-enter France clandestinely and operate as general in the Guyenne. In addition they

²⁵⁰ Bercé, *Croquants*, i, 94, 133-4. Bouillon also had many 'belles terres' in the Auvergne: 'Relation de l'Etat de la Province d'Auvergne' [1637], reproduced in R. Mousnier (ed.), *Lettres et Mémoires au Chancelier Séguier 1633-49* (2 vols.; Paris, 1964), ii, 1135-72, 1158.

²⁵¹ Bercé, *Croquants*, i, 142-3.

²⁵² Reynald, 'Le Baron de Lisola', p. 311.

²⁵³ AGRB T100 vol.550, Guise and Bouillon to Mercy, 30 Jan. 1641.

suggested that Spanish forces appear on the southern border, ‘pour attirer les forces de la Province, et leur donner par la plus de jour de s’émouvoir’.²⁵⁴

There is evidence of similar collusion with the revolt of the Nu-Pieds in Normandy. These uprisings had begun explosively in the summer of 1639 and had been savagely suppressed during the autumn and winter months. But unrest had re-emerged and was still ongoing in 1641. The Imperial agent in London, François de Lisola, reported that emissaries had passed between the French exiles in England and the Nu-Pieds, to propose that they recommence their unrest in tandem with the planned invasion of the Spanish-financed army of La Valette and Soubise.²⁵⁵ Bouillon also claimed to be assured of Normandy; although the people there had been ‘rudement chastiez’ - a reference to the punishments meted out by Séguier the previous year - they were ‘desireux de se vanger’.²⁵⁶ It is clear that Habsburg diplomacy, from Brussels, Vienna and Madrid, hoped that a military expedition by the French malcontents in London, under La Valette and Soubise, would exploit and combine with the uprisings in Normandy. Talk of a potential ‘Normandy diversion’ consequently seasoned Spanish discussions of the situation within France throughout 1640.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ AGRB T100, vol.652, fo.265, 'Instruction pour le Sieur Secretaire Cesar de Chambley', duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640; BN N.a.f. 29, item 1 (treaty of July 1640), article 8.

²⁵⁵ Reynald, ‘Le Baron de Lisola’, pp.308-11. There were reports of the exiles' intelligences in Normandy, of which there were traces in the correspondance of the French embassy in London: BN Français 15915, fo.353, Chavigny to Bellière, 10 Aug. 1639; BN Français 15995, Montereul [to Chavigny], 19 Apr. 1640; *ibid.*, Montereul [to Chavigny], 25 Apr. 1640.

²⁵⁶ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.265, 'Instruction pour le Sieur Secretaire Cesar de Chambley', duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640.

²⁵⁷ See, for example: AGRB T100 vol.374, letters of Marquis de Velada to Cardinal-Infante, fo.147 (28 Apr. 1640), fo.168 (5 May 1640), and fo.195 (12 May 1640). Madeleine Foisil, in her study of the revolt of the Nu-Pieds, explored the role of the nobility in some depth and, while she found evidence of the involvement of some lesser noblemen, she found no suggestion that senior nobility was engaged. Her efforts, however, focused on the duc de Vendôme, but there is now evidence that there was co-

The extent and nature of the role of the nobility in provincial unrest in early modern France has been hotly contested, and the findings presented here are in no way extensive enough to propose a new model.²⁵⁸ The interactions evident during the latter years of Richelieu's ministry, however, demonstrate the degree, greater than hitherto suggested, to which the politics of local revolt were integrated into the political conflicts of the *grands*. The two phenomena were closely linked. Class divisions, between haves and have-nots, no doubt permeated many local conflicts, but there remained strong impulses towards the formation of vertical alliances in which diverse parties temporarily sought common cause in the face of the fiscal and political exactions necessitated by war. The thesis, pushed hardest by Mousnier, that the nobility was decisive in inciting and directing popular revolt by leveraging ties of *fidélité*, is unconvincing,²⁵⁹ but it is entirely logical that - despite class-based antagonisms - the leaders of revolt should seek political patronage from élite brokers who could offer a redress of grievances. This brokerage could come from senior nobility currently incorporated into the regime's clientage and patronage system, or alternatively from those currently excluded and seeking incorporation, or a redress of their own grievances through forms of rebellion.

operation with the London and Sedan cabals around 1640, and this probably had similar dynamics to their dealings with the revolts in Guyenne: Foisil, *Nu-Pieds*, pp.206-16, 240-3.

²⁵⁸ See the discussions in: D. Parker, *Class and State in Ancien Régime France: The road to modernity?* (London, 1996), chapter 3; R. Briggs, 'Popular revolt in its social context', in *Communities of Belief: Cultural and social tension in early modern France* (Oxford, 1989), 106-77. Broadly-speaking, the debate has pitted an analysis emphasising class-based antagonisms, initially put forward by Porchnev and then developed in much more sophisticated terms by Parker, Beik and others, against the assessment of Mousnier, who emphasised the role of the nobility operating through vertical ties of *fidélité*, which has been developed in various directions by Bercé, Pillorget and others: Porchnev, *Soulèvements populaires*; Parker, *Class and State*; W. Beik, *Urban protest in seventeenth-century France: the culture of retribution* (Cambridge, 1997); R. Mousnier, 'Research into the Popular Uprisings in France before the Fronde', in P.J. Coveney (ed.), *France in Crisis 1620-1675* (Totowa, 1977), 136-168; Bercé, *Croquants*; R. Pillorget, *Les Mouvements insurrectionnels de Provence entre 1596 et 1715* (Paris, 1975).

²⁵⁹ Mousnier, 'Research into the Popular Uprisings'.

The on-going popular revolts in 1639 and 1640 offered the prospect of being able to combine provincial unrest with the rebellion of the *grands*. The architects of grandee rebellion sought to encourage the revolts and to co-ordinate their actions, ‘affin d’y faire un effect plus considerable’.²⁶⁰ The July 1640 articles, signed by Bouillon and Guise, stated that the Princes would make it known to the leaders (‘Chefs’) of the revolts ‘comme ils seront appuyez...Dequoy les Princes confederez prendront le soin’. The Princes would offer political protection, and, by implication, the possibility of obtaining an end to unpopular taxes and of avoiding punishment. Mercy’s letter of June 1640 further explains that the Princes sought to ‘encaminar el efecto’ of the revolts, which ‘obrara poderosamente en favor de nuestro partido’.

From the many available studies of popular unrest, and of the failings of provincial and social solidarity,²⁶¹ it is highly unlikely that a lasting coalition of popular and grandee revolt was in the making under Richelieu. Far greater evidence would be needed to substantiate such a thesis. What the claims of Bouillon, Guise, La Valette and Soubise do highlight, however, is the surprising extent to which these senior noblemen believed in the possibility of co-ordinating with popular unrest, so much so that it cannot simply be explained away as naivety or wishful thinking. These men were taking huge risks based on assumptions about the willingness and ability of local leaders to deliver on pledges of support.

²⁶⁰ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.265, ‘Instruction pour le Sieur Secretaire Cesar de Chambley’, duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640.

²⁶¹ While there are myriad individual nuances of interpretation, there is a general agreement among historians that the fragmented nature of French society prevented varying social groups and malcontents from ‘coalescing into a real challenge to the government’: Briggs, ‘Popular Revolt’, p.176. Broadly similar explanations, for example, are offered in: Parker, *Class and State*; Beik, *Absolutism and Society*.

As well as acts of open revolt, there was a lower-level and more general resistance to government taxation, which was encouraged by the rebellions of the senior nobility. Mercy wrote of this in August 1640, describing the ‘peuples des provinces qui nous sont acquis et affectionnés’, who would ‘empeschera que le Cardinal de Richelieu leve sur la france les deniers qu’il at accoustume pour continuer la guerre. L’annee qui vient les declarations se ferant a bonne heure avant que les tailles et imposts se mettent sur les peuples Villes et provinces’.²⁶² Indeed the central issue of taxes was also significant to the aspirations to raise the provinces in rebellion; La Valette intended to raise Guyenne, for example, with promises of abolishing taxes.²⁶³ Conversely, Spanish ministers feared that if the rebellion failed, Richelieu ‘augmentera son credit’ such that he would ‘achevera de tirer de la france jusques au dernier denier, avec quoy il portera la guerre au dehors, et fomentera les divisions de plus en plus dans l’empire, et espaigne’.²⁶⁴

One observer wrote, in February 1642, concerning the prospect of raising money in the Guyenne, ‘il ne fault rien attendre de la Guyenne que par la force et le chastiment, et Mr le Prince nous en dict de mesme du Languedoc’, going on to conclude that the government’s tax receipts, ‘iroient peu a peu s’affoiblissant’, and could not be made good through loans.²⁶⁵ For the government these anti-tax revolts represented a major threat to the ability to finance the war and would translate into military defeat leading to peace on unsatisfactory terms.

²⁶² AGRB T100 vol.550, Mercy to [Salamanca], 22 Aug. 1640; *ibid.*, Mercy to [Salamanca], 14 Aug. 1640.

²⁶³ AAE CP Espagne 19, ‘Memoire Veritable du tretté faict par les seigneurs duques de La Vallette y de Soubize avec Le Roy d’Espagne’, n.d. [1640].

²⁶⁴ AGRB T100 vol.572, fo.58, memo by Chambley, n.d. [Feb. 1641].

²⁶⁵ AAE MD 842, fo.43, memorandum concerning the establishment of the *sol pour livre* in the south of France, 17 Feb. 1642.

The Huguenots

The engagement of the duc de Soubise in the London parti also brought with it the hope of raising the Huguenots in rebellion. There is a tendency to ignore the on-going disenchantment of the Huguenots in France, on the assumption that the defeat of La Rochelle in 1629 eradicated them as a political force.²⁶⁶ Admittedly, the Huguenots no longer had the strongholds of their heyday, but during a time of war, with the state's resources at full-stretch, a Huguenot rebellion would still have great impact.

Soubise was a remnant of the earlier age of Huguenot rebellion, who had sought refuge in England in the 1620s. No doubt his influence among the French Huguenots had declined as a result of his prolonged absence, but with the death of his elder brother, the duc de Rohan,²⁶⁷ in 1638 Soubise was now the natural figurehead for Huguenot revolt. His brother had served the French King militarily after their reconciliation in 1629, but had once more become alienated from the Parisian régime during the last year of his life. Rohan took refuge in Geneva in 1637 after the collapse of his small army and the abandonment of the Grisons and the Valtelline due to inadequate resources, with a cloud of suspicion hanging over him concerning his conduct. He had then entered Bernard of Saxe-Weimar's service, as a volunteer, and offered him his daughter's hand in marriage. Richelieu was greatly concerned about the alliance of these two Protestant figureheads, both of whom were discontented with

²⁶⁶ D. Parker, *La Rochelle and the French Monarchy: Conflict and order in seventeenth-century France* (London, 1980); M. Prestwich, in I. Scouloudi (ed.), 'The Huguenots under Richelieu and Mazarin, 1629-41: A Golden Age?', *The Huguenots in Britain and their French Background, 1550-1800* (London, 1987), 175-197, pp.175-6.

²⁶⁷ Henry III, duc de Rohan.

him.²⁶⁸ It was during this period of disgrace that Rohan sought an alliance with Soissons, through the intermediary of Ruvigny,²⁶⁹ though Soissons turned Rohan's offers down on the basis that he was at that time not seeking to rebel, having obtained generous terms of accommodation with the King several months previously.²⁷⁰ In January 1638, the Cardinal-Infant wrote to the Spanish King proposing that they make a new attempt to bring Rohan back into the Spanish fold, having recognised that he was once more discontented.²⁷¹ Rohan had clearly been looking for means to repair his predicament by forceful, rebellious action, an objective which was cut short by his untimely death in April 1638. When Soubise came to the court at London in 1639 carrying proposals to raise the Huguenots, he was following the path recently taken by his brother.²⁷²

Soubise was, furthermore, still an influential player. He had become a figurehead for the many foreign Calvinists in England, and it was to him they looked for representation at Court in London. It should be remembered that Soubise and Rohan were both godfathers to Charles I,²⁷³ and old friends of his father, James I. Many veterans of the Huguenot rebellions of the 1620s were still in Soubise's service. One such was the Baron de Mitois, whom Soubise employed once again to foment

²⁶⁸ Le Vassor, v, 304-316, 353, 469-71; Griffet, iii, 131. The fear in Paris was that Rohan and Saxe-Weimar would raise the French Huguenots in rebellion once more.

²⁶⁹ Henry Massuès, seigneur de Ruvigny, was a leading Huguenot. Ruvigny was later implicated in the conspiracies of 1642: AAE MD 843, fo.173, Chavigny and de Noyers to Richelieu, 3 Aug. 1642.

²⁷⁰ Campion, *Lettres*, p.67, Campion to Soissons, 31 Dec 1637.

²⁷¹ Lonchay and Cuvelier, *Correspondance*, iii, 217, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 28 Jan. 1638.

²⁷² Reynald, 'Le Baron de Lisola', p.311. Soubise was also motivated by revenge, as he believed Richelieu had poisoned his brother.

²⁷³ H. Trevor-Roper, *Europe's Physician: the various life of Sir Theodore de Mayerne* (New Haven, 2006), p.46.

unrest at La Rochelle,²⁷⁴ where he had promises of support. One of Soubise's other assets was the preaching of Ézéchiél Mermet, a 'ministre celebre' who had been an influential radical in earlier times, and who was now pastor of the Église Française in London, as well as chaplain of the House of Rohan.²⁷⁵ By 1640 Mermet was receiving a Spanish pension, and was to land at La Rochelle with Soubise to help him raise his co-religionists. Soubise was also in touch with Jean-Casimir d'Ocoy de Couvrelles, who had assumed a prominent role in the early 1620s, 'comme un des auteurs des mouvements', and now represented discontented Huguenot nobles in the Angoumois, whose revolt finally erupted in 1643.²⁷⁶

The assumption in current historiography of a contented and quiescent Huguenot populace after 1629, needs to be re-examined. Richelieu himself always claimed in his public writings to have destroyed the Huguenots as a political force in France, and this has never been questioned by historians.²⁷⁷ But Richelieu, and after him, Mazarin, were careful not to stir up religious strife that might stimulate the Huguenots to rebellion; both men seemed aware that armed insurrection remained a strong possibility, and had to tread carefully given the traditional alliance of the

²⁷⁴ Séguier, *Lettres*, ii, 718, Favier [to Séguier], 1 Feb. 1645; E. and E. Haag, *La France protestante* (10 vols.; Paris, 1846-59), ii, 238, and *ibid.*, vii, 429-30. The Baron de Mitois [or Mithois] was a Norman nobleman.

²⁷⁵ BN Français 15995, fo.142, Montereul [to Chavigny], 16 Nov. 1640; Haag, *La France protestante*, vii, 391-2.

²⁷⁶ Couvrelles is sometimes given incorrectly as Courcelles. In either 1640 or 1641 he visited Soubise in London: 'Instruction pour le sieur marquis d'Aumont, touchant les soulèvements arrivés aux paroisses de Rié et autres de Poitou', 29 Dec. 1643, reproduced in L. Delavaud, 'Troubles en Poitou, Saintonge, Aunis et Angoumois, 1643 et 1644', in *Archives historiques de la Saintonge et de l'Aunis*, 19 (1891), 253-352. Couvrelles had previously been sent in the 1620s to obtain Charles I's support for the Huguenot rebellion.

²⁷⁷ A.J. Du Plessis, cardinal de Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, ed. L. André (Paris, 1947), pp.107-8. For an example of the degree of acceptance of Richelieu's claims in modern historiography: R. Gwynn, *Huguenot heritage: The history and contribution of the Huguenots in Britain* (Brighton, 2001), pp.24-5, who writes that, after the fall of La Rochelle in 1629, 'The defeated Calvinist party could no longer be of any political advantage to the aristocracy, and its political involvement ceased abruptly. Thereafter the Protestants were model subjects'. See also, M. Schybergson, *Le duc de Rohan et la chute du parti protestante en France* (Paris, 1880), p.96.

Huguenots with foreign protestant powers.²⁷⁸ Richelieu himself had cited his fear of Huguenot unrest as a reason for offering Soissons such generous terms of accommodation in the summer of 1637.²⁷⁹ The unrest of 1643-1645 in the Guyenne, after the deaths of both Louis XIII and Richelieu, had a strong Huguenot element, and many of the noble assemblies consisted of primarily Huguenot noblemen lead by associates of Soubise, though he himself died in October 1642.²⁸⁰ It seems likely that a high degree of persistent Huguenot unrest has been obscured by the existence of endemic, widespread popular revolts against government taxation and the billeting of troops. Historians of this unrest have made little effort to assess the religious element; Bercé, for example, gives only a brief mention of it, and argues that: 'le motif religieux apparaissait secondaire'.²⁸¹ This may be the case, at least in terms of their public utterances, but it was nevertheless a significant issue, and it may well be that leading Huguenots deliberately exploited unrest directed against the fisc, and the ravages of war, to try to defend their local religious privileges as well. What mattered was the combination of issues.

²⁷⁸ This period of the history of the Huguenots in France has been almost entirely neglected, on the assumption that they were essentially passive. For one exception, which suggests the period was one of a newly vibrant Calvinism, see Prestwich, 'The Huguenots under Richelieu'. Even in the mid-eighteenth century, French *grands* were still basing plans for rebellion on the prospect of raising the Huguenots in revolt: J.D. Woodbridge, *Revolt in pre-revolutionary France: The Prince of Conti's conspiracy against Louis XV, 1755-1757* (Baltimore, 1995), pp.162-9 and *passim*. The Huguenots' affinities with foreign powers, especially the English, have not been systematically studied, though a sense of their on-going significance in Richelieu's time can be gleaned from T. Cogswell, 'Prelude to Ré: The Anglo-French Struggle over La Rochelle, 1624-1627', *History*, 71 (1986), 1-21.

²⁷⁹ Leroy, 'L'Affaire du Comte de Soissons', p.61.

²⁸⁰ Among the names cited in the assemblies of 1643-1644 were Couvrelles, Guibert, La Caze, La Ferrière, La Vallade, La Vigerie, Lignièrès, Riaux, Saint-Georges de Verac, and Vigier, all of whom were part of the Huguenot rebellions of the 1620s: Delavaud, 'Troubles en Poitou', pp.15-30; A. de Barthélemy (ed.), *Actes de l'assemblée générale des églises réformées de France et souveraineté du Béarn (1620-1622)* (Poitiers, 1876); J. de Bouffard-Madiane, *Mémoires de J. de Bouffard-Madiane sur les guerres civiles du duc de Rohan: 1610-1629* (Toulouse, 1897), pp.16, 89-92, 103, 223-4.

²⁸¹ Bercé, *Croquants*, ii, 666.

Conclusion

It is hard to gauge precisely the extent of the support in France for the planned rebellion, but the evidence demonstrates a profound and sophisticated critique of Richelieu's war effort, and his failure to bring peace. The failings of his ministry were much more apparent to his contemporaries than centuries of historiography have allowed. Allied with profound popular unrest, a discontented nobility and Spanish support his grandee opponents were confident in laying claim to a solid basis to overthrow Richelieu's ministry.

Chapter 3 - The Guerre de Sedan and the Princes of the Peace (1641)

*'La conspiration des Princes fût pour le Cardinal,
comme les Serpens que l'on peut détruire aisément
quand ils sont petits, mais qui devenus grands,
effraient ceux qui n'en faisoient d'abord aucun
compte'*¹

The Rejection of Compromise

The rebellion delayed and the 'ministre soleil' uncovered

The French opposition based at London and Sedan continued to foment and prepare domestic support for the planned rebellion, but encountered substantial delays in the ratification of their treaties with the Habsburgs. In late August 1640, César Chambley departed Sedan for Germany to have the 22nd July treaty approved by the Emperor and Piccolomini, in the hope that Imperial troops might be readied to enter France in October. He was severely delayed, however, facing huge problems in traversing hostile territory.² Any hope of executing the plan that year was lost.

The London part of the project had also suffered major setbacks. This was caused by the weakening positions of both Charles I and Philip IV in the face of domestic unrest.³ In the autumn, however, their hopes were once more raised, as Olivares finally arranged payment of some of the money due to the exiles under the

¹ V. Siri, *Mercure de Vittorio Siri, Conseiller d'Etat et Historiographe de Sa Majesté Très Chrétienne*, trad. J.-B. Réquier (3 vols.; Paris, 1756-9), i, 237.

² AGRB T100 vol.571 contains Chambley's letters during his journey.

³ J.H. Elliott, 'The Year of the Three Ambassadors', in H. Lloyd-Jones, V. Pearl and B. Worden (eds.), *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper* (London, 1981), 165-181., pp.175-80.

May 1640 treaty. New emissaries were then sent from London: Filouse, La Valette's *maître d'hôtel*, was sent to Madrid, while La Vigerie,⁴ Soubise's *écuyer*, was to find the marquis de La Force with letters encouraging him to raise the Huguenots of the Guyenne in rebellion. It was probably La Vigerie who wrote to Olivares of his visit to 'diversas partes de francia' sounding out the popular mood, and the degree of support for a rebellion.⁵ In November, however, he was captured in Poitou and brought to the Bastille.

On 14 November, La Vigerie furnished Richelieu with a statement of his knowledge of the conspiracy, including the promises of the Kings of Spain and England to support a descent at La Rochelle, or a Norman port, by La Valette and Soubise. He also accused Soissons of being in league with La Valette.⁶ The marquis de La Force was correspondingly instructed to document what La Vigerie had told him of the plot, which probably explains the presence in the archives of a separate memorandum giving very similar information to that of La Vigerie's own statement.⁷ The Venetian ambassador was certain that Richelieu would exploit these new developments to force Soissons to either leave Sedan, or to remain there as a criminal, in which case they would be able to confiscate his offices and pensions.⁸

⁴ Charles des Montilz, sieur de La Vigerie was a Huguenot nobleman who had been involved in the defense of La Rochelle in the 1620s. His name is sometimes written as La Richerie, La Rainville, La Riville or La Vacherie, reflecting contemporary confusion over his identity.

⁵ BN Français 15995, fo.142, Montreuil [to Chavigny], 16 Nov. 1640; AGS Estado Francia K1419, Item 182, 'Avis du Conseil d'État au Roi', 10 Dec. 1640.

⁶ BN Français 6651, fo.88, untitled statement by La Vigerie, 14 Nov. 1640. See also the further letter from La Vigerie to Richelieu in, AAE MD 840, fo.249, n.d. [1641].

⁷ AAE CP Espagne 19, fo.439, 'Memoire Veritable du trette fait par les seigneurs ducqyes de La Vallette y de Soubize avecq Le Roy d'Espagne'. Note that this has incorrectly been dated and filed as 1639, but its contents indicate a dating of no earlier than 14 November 1640.

⁸ F.S.J.R. de Beauchamp, *Louis XIII d'après sa correspondance avec Richelieu* (Paris, 1902), p.391, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 14 Nov. 1640; BN Italien 1817, p.318, Correr to Doge, 18 Dec. 1640.

The response from Sedan was a double strategy, designed to keep options open. In early December, the dukes of Bouillon and Guise sent the abbé de Mercy back to Brussels to press the Cardinal-Infante into the urgent revival of their negotiations. They stated that Soissons now intended to join the treaty, and included detailed plans which depended upon his engagement.⁹ At the same time, Soissons sent Alexandre de Campion to Paris with letters defending his innocence to both King and Cardinal.¹⁰ When visited by Campion, Richelieu explained the nature of La Vigerie's information and spoke of Mercy's visits to Sedan; the evidence was stacking up and Campion's protests fell on deaf ears. The pressure mounted, as Soissons was now denied the execution of his orders as *grand maître*.¹¹ On the 18th, Soissons wrote to de Thou that, 'ce que je puis juger de se procédé est une haine contre moy sy grande que je pense qu'on me voudra faire pis'.¹²

While at the Hôtel de Soissons in Paris, Campion took counsel from Père Gondi,¹³ from Soissons' mother, and from two prominent parlementaires: Presidents Bailleul and Mesmes,¹⁴ both of whom were members of the Queen's household. Together they agreed that Soissons should demand that his 'accusateurs' and

⁹ Mercy was sent to Brussels carrying letters addressed to Piccolomini and Salamanca, as well as a paper containing twenty proposals from Guise and Bouillon; AGRB T100 vol.652, fos.173-178, 190, 192-193 and 195.

¹⁰ Soissons' letters are reproduced in A. Aubery, *Mémoires pour l'Histoire du Cardinal duc de Richelieu* (5 vols.; Cologne, 1667), v, 358-9.

¹¹ BN Italien 1817, p.295, Correr to Doge, 11 Dec.; l'Abbé J. Gillet, *La Chartreuse de Mont-Dieu au Diocèse de Reims* (Reims, 1889), pp.472-3, mentions that householders of the King were subsequently forbidden from visiting the *grand maître* at Sedan, presumably such that they could no longer be sworn in by him.

¹² BN N.a.f. 5130, fo.105, Soissons to de Thou, 18 Dec. [1640].

¹³ Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi, Oratorian and formerly general of the galleys (a position he had been compelled to cede to Richelieu's nephew in 1635), and father of Jean-François de Paul Gondi, later Cardinal de Retz. He had been attached to the *maison de Soissons* for some years: J.L. Tulot (ed.), *Correspondance d'Elisabeth de Nassau, duchesse de Bouillon. Années 1630-1642*, published online at URL: <http://jeanluc.tulot.pagesperso-orange.fr/Edenassau09.pdf> (31 December 2006), accessed 2 May 2012, p.64, Elisabeth of Nassau to duc de Bouillon, 16 Sept. 1637.

¹⁴ Henri de Mesmes, seigneur d'Irval.

'accusations' be heard before Parlement, which he subsequently did in a letter to the King dated 21 December.¹⁵ Campion presented a similar letter to Richelieu, who responded with 'emportements et menaces', instead of 'sa douceur ordinaire'.¹⁶

It was during this time that Campion took part in the debates at the Hôtel de Soissons which were later recounted in his brother's *Entretiens*.¹⁷ These discussions were concerned with the political ethics and legitimacy of Richelieu's régime, and have provided valuable material for historians of noble *mentalités*.¹⁸ Their specific context, however, has been somewhat neglected. Through a combination of internal and external information, it is possible to date them to either December 1640 or early January 1641. In the first *entretien* Campion consults Bailleul concerning Soissons' case, and the latter counsels him that they should not put faith solely in their own innocence, but 'prendre d'ailleurs ses sûretés'. This would seem to be an allusion either to seeking redress in Parlement, or perhaps even defensive acts of rebellion. Campion, in his reply, hinted at the crux of the problem of defending Soissons' case: 'je n'aie pu défendre son innocence, sans accuser indirectement ceux qui l'ont rendue suspecte'. However, he implicitly went on to admit that his negotiations in Paris were but a smokescreen to win time 'pour ménager ici nos amis, et nous mettre en état de nous défendre; puisque entre nous l'on veut imposer de si dures lois au prince, de la part duquel je suis ici, que je vois toute espérance d'accommodement perdue'.¹⁹

¹⁵ Aubery, *Mémoires pour l'Histoire*, v, 359, Soissons to Louis XIII, 21 Dec. 1640.

¹⁶ A. de Campion, *Lettres* (Rouen, 1657), p.82, Campion to Soissons, 26 Dec. 1640.

¹⁷ N. de Campion, *Trois entretiens sur divers sujets d'histoire, de politique et de morale*, in M. Fumaroli (ed.), *Mémoires de Henri de Campion* (2nd ed.; Paris, 1990).

¹⁸ See, in particular; J.M. Constant, *Les Conjurateurs* (Paris, 1987), pp.200-26.

¹⁹ Campion, *Trois entretiens*, pp.232-5.

The collaboration of Louis XIII's cousin with Parlement could be seen as an attempt to replicate a similar coup against the chief minister as had recently come to pass in England with the arrest of the Earl of Strafford in November; a coup achieved through the combined pressure of Parliament and a group of *grandeues*.²⁰ Although the Parlement de Paris could not act as independently as its namesake across the Channel, it could still be employed to help discredit Richelieu, and to exclude him from the regency. Richelieu worked hard to keep his King in no doubt about the appropriate course of action, providing him with a memorandum on 'le mauvais dessein' of Soissons, as well as his involvement in moves to engineer a truce between the Spanish Monarchy and the Dutch Estates.²¹ Soissons' request was rejected. Louis privately concluded that 'le plus tôt que on la pourra faire éclater sera le meilleur', though he still maintained the public façade of wishing to believe in Soissons' innocence.²² On the evening of 22 January, Gondi, Mesmes and Bailleul were exiled from Paris for their part in the affair, as well as for other acts of opposition in Parlement itself, which Scotti interpreted as 'des signes précurseurs de la ruine du comte de Soissons'.²³ Word now had it that Royal action in Parlement against the Princes at Sedan was being prepared, and that 'on estudie les Procèz faits aux Princes du Sang'.²⁴ For the

²⁰ J. Adamson, *The Noble Revolt* (London, 2009), pp.95-113. The patronage and influence of the French *grands* in the Parlement de Paris remains an unexplored subject. Links between Parlement and opponents of Richelieu were clearly significant during the agitations of 1631-1632, for example: L. Kadlec, *Quand le parlement de Paris s'oppose à l'Autorité Royale: L'affaire de la chambre de justice de l'Arsenal (14 juin 1631-mars 1632)* (Paris, 2007), pp.108-9.

²¹ Beauchamp, *Louis XIII*, p.396, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 3 Jan. 1641.

²² Beauchamp, *Louis XIII*, p.397, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 8 Jan. 1641; Aubery, *Mémoires pour l'Histoire*, v, 360, Soissons to Louis XIII, 11 Jan. 1641.

²³ Blet, P. (ed.), *Correspondance du nonce en France: Ranuccio Scotti (1639-1641)* (Rome, 1965), p.467, Scotti to Barberini, 25 Jan. 1641; BN Italien 1817, p.416, Correr to Doge, 29 Jan. 1641.

²⁴ BN Français 15611, fo.13v., Arnaud to Barillon, 23 Jan. 1641; fo.15v., Arnaud to Barillon, 27 Jan. 1641.

Princes, these steps demonstrated, ‘qu’il ne doibt plus rien prétendre du Cardinal de Richelieu’.²⁵

The burgeoning threat against Richelieu’s enemies also manifested itself in the legal case against the duc de Vendôme, resulting from accusations of involvement in a plot to assassinate the Cardinal. Two hermits had been arrested and placed in the Châtelet de Paris in December 1640 for unspecified crimes. Upon being sentenced to torture in mid-January, however, they claimed that they merited death because they had in fact been sent to Paris to kill the Cardinal, on the orders of Vendôme. After they repeated their claims in further interrogations, as well as in confrontations with other supposed witnesses, legal proceedings were then commenced against Vendôme.

Many commentators have cast serious doubt on the veracity of the claims made against Vendôme.²⁶ Richelieu had, moreover, received information concerning the same plot from a book-dealer named Allard in 1639, reporting comments that the hermits had made to him concerning their encounter with Vendôme back in 1638. This means that Richelieu then put the affair to one side, presumably not seeing it as a serious threat.²⁷ That the two hermits then surfaced in Paris in December 1640 accused of other crimes, were subsequently sentenced to the question ‘ordinaire et extraordinaire’, and that, when placed in that situation, they revealed what had passed in 1638, now seems to have been the result of contrivance rather than coincidence.²⁸ Vendôme was instructed to come to Paris to answer the charges against him, but

²⁵ AGRB T100 vol.550, Guise and Bouillon to Mercy, 30 Jan. 1641.

²⁶ BN Français 15611, fo.10, Arnaud to Barillon, 20 Jan 1641; *ibid.*, fo.15v, Arnaud to Barillon, 27 Jan. 1641; M. Topin, *Louis XIII et Richelieu* (Paris, 1876), pp.371-5; Avenel, vi, 791-4.

²⁷ See for example: AAE MD 830, fo.133, statement by Louis Allard, 23 Mar. 1639.

²⁸ AN U815, fo.36, ‘Extraict des registres de parlement’, 17 May 1641; BN Dupuy 590, fo.126, anonymous memo on the affair, n.d.

chose instead to flee to England, and within a week of his arrival in London he had become involved in the Spanish plots of his fellow exiles.²⁹ Given the information recently arising from sources in London, as well as from the interrogation of La Vigerie, the *ersatz* case of the two hermits seems to have been part of Richelieu's drive to neutralise the threat posed by his political enemies.

Henri de Lorraine, archbishop of Rheims, also found himself under intense pressure. He had maintained a separate line of negotiation with Richelieu and the King since arriving at Sedan in May 1639. He still wanted permission to marry Anne de Gonzague, and to resign his benefices to his younger brothers, but satisfactory agreement had not yet been reached, despite his offer to surrender the archbishopric of Rheims itself.³⁰ The burdens on Henri, however, had multiplied. The death of his elder brother François in November 1639 had made him heir to the Guise titles, and the resignation of his benefices had therefore become a dynastic necessity. He now also pursued the restoration of his father's titles and offices in France, particularly the governorship of Provence and the Admiralty of the Levant. Likewise he sought the restoration of other Guise family possessions, most notably the sovereignty of Château-Regnault.³¹ This was increasingly vital given that the dispossession of the duc de Lorraine had in *de facto* terms rendered the Guises cadets of an ex-sovereign household, thus calling their princely status into question. When Henri's father died in September 1640, this confirmed the imperatives which he had already accepted to

²⁹ BN Italien 1817, p.416, Correr to Doge, 29 Jan.; *ibid.*, p.435, Correr to Doge, 5 Feb.; BN Français 15995, fo.196, Montereul [to Chavigny], 21 Feb.; *ibid.*, fo.200, Montereuil [to Chavigny?] 28 Feb.

³⁰ A copy of a letter from Henri reconfirming his demands can be found among the Venetian ambassador's correspondence; BN Italien 1817, p.440, Henry de Lorraine to Louis XIII, 13 Jan. 1641.

³¹ Henri's demands can be found in, AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.261, 'Instruction des choses qu'outre les Articles du Traicté general le Sr Secretaire de Chambley doit représenter de la part de Monsieur le Prince de Joinville', 22 July 1640.

be his own. As duc de Guise, and head of an illustrious house of *princes étrangers*, it was contentious to treat him, as Richelieu was doing, as a rebellious subject of the King of France, and to brandish the threat of criminal proceedings. With his princely status came a degree of independence and immunity from such prosecution.³² It was almost inevitable from this point onwards that he would maintain his demands at all costs, and the prospect of a minority in France may well have encouraged such risk-taking. Richelieu, however, was unwilling to compromise on his demands concerning Henri's benefices, and in January 1641 made accusations surrounding his talks with the Cardinal-Infante, demanding that he leave Sedan and seek reconciliation.³³

It was now, in February 1641, that Richelieu nailed his colours to the regency's mast. The marriage contract of the duc d'Enghien with Mademoiselle de Maillé-Brézé was finally signed on the 7th. As well as what was stated in the contract, the unwritten dowry was to consist of Soissons' offices.³⁴ Around the same time, the sale of all grain and wine to Sedan was forbidden on grounds that it was suspected of passing to the enemy territory of Luxembourg. All routes to and from Sedan were subsequently 'bouchez'.³⁵ A few weeks later, Louis visited Parlement to register a dramatic declaration, forbidding it from concerning itself with matters of state, and

³² J. Spangler, *The Society of Princes: The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France* (Farnham, 2009), pp.252-6; S. Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects: The princes of Sedan and the dukes of Bouillon in early modern France, c.1450-1652', DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2000, pp.12-3.

³³ E. Longin, *Anne de Gonzague en Franche-Comté (1641)* (Besançon, 1908), pp.21-8.

³⁴ BN Français 15611, fo.18v, Arnaud to Barillon, 30 Jan 1641; G.D. de Albertis, *Cristina di Francia* (Turin, 1943), p.232, citing a despatch of the conte di Moretta dated 26 Jan. 1641; Chizay, *Mémoires*, pp.290, 294.

³⁵ AGRB T100 vol.550, Guise and Bouillon to Mercy, 30 Jan. 1641; BN Italien 1817, p.435, Correr to Doge, 5 Feb. He also reports a private conversation with Richelieu in which the latter mooted the idea of laying siege to Sedan at the earliest opportunity.

permanently expelling several of its councillors.³⁶ This was almost unanimously perceived to be both at once a blow struck against Soissons and the other malcontent princes, as well as a pre-emptive measure to undermine Parlement's ability to appoint a regency in favour of the Queen.³⁷ The declaration opened with a long preamble criticising Parlement for its role in the establishment of Marie de Médicis as regent in 1610, after which 'les factions commencèrent à se former dans l'État'. Female regency was equated with discord.

This declaration, accompanied by the Enghien-Brézé marriage, was in effect a public affirmation of Richelieu's intention to exclude Anne of Austria from the regency, and to rely on Condé as his support.³⁸ Yet again it was clear that the factional struggle between Richelieu and his political enemies was inextricably bound up with the prospect of a royal minority. It was now that Richelieu began

³⁶ M. de Molé, *Mémoires*, ed. A. Champollion-Figeac, (4 vols.; Paris, 1855-7), ii, p.498. Those expelled were Scarron, Laisné, Bidaut, Sevin and Salo, while Barillon's charge of *président aux enquêtes* was suppressed.

³⁷ *Correspondance du Nonce*, pp.486-7, Scotti to Barberini, 22 Feb.; BN Italien 1817, p.453, Correr to Doge, 12 Feb.; *ibid.*, p.465, Correr to Doge, 19 Feb.; BN Français 15611, fo.38, Arnaud to Barillon 20 Feb. *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, ed. P.C. Molhuysen *et al*, published online at URL: <http://grotius.huygens.knaw.nl> (2009), accessed 9 June 2012, no.5076, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 23 Feb. 1641; *Manifeste de Monsieur le duc de Bouillon à la Reyne Regente*, (n.p., n.d. [1643]), pp.8-9; P. Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions pour servir à justifier l'innocence de Messire François-Auguste de Thou*, in *Histoire de Jacques-Auguste de Thou*, xv (London, 1734), p.53; M. de Chizay, *Mémoires de M. de Chizay sur le Règne de Louis XIII*, ed. R. Lavollée (Paris, 1914), p.315. Several additional contemporary sources are cited in Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, pp.268-71. Hildesheimer, however, has judged such an interpretation 'téléologique' and 'excessive', preferring to interpret the 21st February *lit de justice* anachronistically as simply part of Richelieu's great scheme to establish monarchical absolutism to the detriment of France's representative institutions; "Le Roi veut demeurer le maître et pour ce faire, le parlement souffre" *Autour du coup de Majesté du 21 Février 1641*, *Recherches vendéennes*, 16 (2009), 215-228.

³⁸ H.P. de Limières, *Histoire du règne de Louis XIV roi de France et de Navarre* (2nd ed., 10 vols.; Amsterdam, 1718), i,42.

appropriating the iconography of sovereignty, by having images of himself as *le ministre soleil* printed in abundance and posted in Paris' streets.³⁹

Fomenting discord: Spain's sole means of salvation?

In Brussels the Cardinal-Infante was evidently eager to renew his treaty with the Princes at Sedan, but was still awaiting a response from the Emperor concerning his readiness to supply troops, and Piccolomini in particular.⁴⁰ At the end of January, Guise and Bouillon pushed for a response; with the increasing pressure on Sedan, they wrote, 'nous serons necessitez sy nous n'avons noz seurtez de votre costé de nous acommoder'. They confirmed that Soissons was 'entierement pour nous, et se declarera quant et nous. Ce qu'il a faict pour s'en redimer n'ayant servy qu'a l'opprimer', but a resolution from the Habsburgs was urgently necessary.⁴¹

Finally Chambley caught up with the Emperor at Ratisbonne, where he signed the necessary plenipotentiary enabling the Cardinal-Infante and his ministers to negotiate a treaty on his behalf. There was still, however, no clear agreement as to the provision of Imperial troops.⁴² In early March, after the usual inter-ministerial

³⁹ *Correspondance du Nonce*, pp.486-7, Scotti to Barberini, 22 Feb; G. Ferretti, 'Richelieu, le "Ministre-soleil" de la France, d'après une gravure d'Abraham Bosse', *Genèses*, 3 (2002), 136-153.

⁴⁰ AGRB T100 vol.296, item 18, Cardinal-Infante to Guise, 18 Jan. 1641; *ibid.*, item 20., Cardinal-infante to Bouillon, n.d. [18 Jan. 1641].

⁴¹ AGRB T100 vol.550, Guise and Bouillon to Mercy, 30 Jan. 1641.

⁴² AGRB T100 vol.572, fo.11, Chambley to Cardinal-Infante, 9 Jan. 1641; *ibid.*, fo45, memmo by Chambley, 3 Feb. [1641].

deliberations, the Cardinal-Infante despatched Don Miguel de Salamanca, to represent himself, King Philip IV and Emperor Ferdinand III in the renewed talks at Sedan.⁴³

The Cardinal-Infante's letter of 9 March to his elder brother, Philip IV, gives a clear sense of the importance he placed on these negotiations within the overall war effort. In his view, the Imperial and Spanish armies were at such a low ebb that the only means to bring the government in Paris to reason, was by forming a 'partido' within France.⁴⁴ In his reply, Philip strongly approved, and underlined the project's necessity as the sole means to 'atazar la injusticia' of Louis XIII's support for the duc de Braganza's bid for the Portuguese throne.⁴⁵ In the same vein, Olivares now saw the Sedan malcontents as 'the sole means of salvation from the shipwreck', which threatened to destroy the Spanish Monarchy.⁴⁶

Despite this, the Cardinal-Infante doubted that Bouillon and Guise had much chance of overthrowing Richelieu and bringing an immediate peace; the dukes were

⁴³ The Cardinal-Infante notified Philip IV of Salamanca's mission in a letter of 9 March 1641, to which were attached his instructions and the paper of twenty proposals as presented by Bouillon and Guise, to which the Cardinal-Infante had added comments: AGRB T100 vol.228, fo.75; BL Add 14000, fo.548v., 'Memoria de las puntos de que el Abbad de Mercy ha de dar quanta'. In his memoirs, Retz describes, and places great importance on, a council held by Soissons at Sedan, which he claims preceded the Salamanca's visit, wherein the vacillating Soissons was eventually persuaded to choose the path of armed rebellion: J.-F.-P. de Gondi, cardinal de Retz, *Mémoires*, ed. S. Bertière (Paris, 1998), pp.247-9. Unfortunately Retz's fascinating account of this episode is tainted by his claims that, in addition to himself and Bouillon, the council also included Bardouville, Saint-Ybard and Varicarville. The latter two, however, were still in Holland, while Bardouville had died over a year previously in 1639: Campion, *Lettres*, p.91, Campion to Saint-Ybard, 2 June 1641; BN Français 15611, fo.123v., Arnaud to Barillon, 2 June 1641; BN Français 15620, fo.114v., Cardinal de La Valette to de Thou, 23 Sept. 1639. The council described by Retz was probably a fiction through which to depict these men's attitudes, though even seen in that light it should not be seen as a reliable characterisation.

⁴⁴ AGRB T100 vol.228, fo.75, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 9 Mar. 1641.

⁴⁵ BL Add 14000, fo.560v., Philip IV to Cardinal-Infante, 22 Apr. 1641; BN Italien 1817, p.569, Correr to Doge, 26 Mar. 1641. Ambassadors of the duc de Braganza had recently arrived in Paris to negotiate.

⁴⁶ Consulta of the Council of State of 10 May 1641, quoted in J.H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven, 1986), pp.613-4. This work is also the best account of Madrid's perceptions of the progress, or lack thereof, in the war. See also: R. Vermeir, *En Estado de Guerra: Felipe IV y Flandes, 1629-1648* (Córdoba, 2006), pp.169-72. Note that A. Van der Essen, *Le Cardinal-infant et la politique européenne de l'Espagne, 1609-1641* (Brussels, 1944) actually ends in 1634, as volume two was never published.

undoubtedly promising more than they could deliver, and the Emperor was refusing to agree the troops, which had originally been offered via Piccolomini in 1639, and which formed the basis for the July 1640 treaty. The Cardinal-Infante was, nevertheless, optimistic that the Princes would provide a diversion, which, by forcing the French King to employ an army against Sedan, would enable him to make progress against targets elsewhere on the French frontier.⁴⁷ In this way, fostering the French malcontents was now of pivotal importance both to tactical plans for the waging of the war in the Spanish Netherlands, as well as to the aspirations of the Habsburg governments towards a general peace.

It is therefore important to recognise that Spanish thinking on this issue intermingled realistic tactical expectation with more ambitious hopes of régime change in France. It was not, therefore, mere desperation, or “clutching at straws”, to co-ordinate with French malcontents. The French government likewise doubted its own ability to force a satisfactory peace through open warfare alone, and was also placing its hopes on fomenting rebellion inside the Spanish Monarchy, chiefly in Catalonia, and Portugal, but also in Flanders and Naples.⁴⁸ Fomenting domestic

⁴⁷ BL Add 14000, fo.562, Cardinal-Infante’s instructions to Antonio Sarmiento, 23 Apr. 1641; also BL Add 14000, fo.545v., ‘Parecer, que dio Don Antonio Sarmiento a su A. el señor Infante’, 14 Feb. 1641; for mention of specific target of Arras, see Lonchay and Cuvelier, *Correspondance*, iii, 383, Philip IV to Cardinal-Infante, 10 Nov. 1640; J.A.Vincart, *Relación de la Campaña de Flandes de 1641*, pub. A. Rodríguez Villa, *Curiosidades de la Historia de España*, iii (Madrid, 1890), p.106. Vincart was a semi-official war chronicler and junior member of the Brussels war ministry. Charles de La Porte, seigneur de La Meilleraye was Richelieu’s first cousin and *grand maître de l’artillerie*.

⁴⁸ C. Vassal-Reig, *La Prise de Perpignan (1641-1642)* (Paris, 1939); I.S. Revah, *Le Cardinal de Richelieu et la restauration de Portugal* (Lisbon, 1950); R. Villari, *The Revolt of Naples* (Cambridge, 1993); The Archives des Affaires étrangères, in Paris, are littered with evidence of Richelieu’s efforts to incite revolt in the Spanish Netherlands, both before and after the outbreak of war in 1635: see, for example, CP Pays-Bas Espagnol 14, fo.21, ‘Mémoire pour donner pouvoir a comte d’Egmont de traiter avec les villes du Pays bas Espagnol’. For the overall failure of the French military effort to reap significant strategic advantage, see: D.A. Parrott, ‘France’s War against the Habsburgs, 1624-1659: the Politics of Military Failure’, in E. García Hernán and D. Maffi (eds.), *Guerra y Sociedad en la Monarquía Hispánica* (2 vols.; Madrid, 2006), i, 31-48.

unrest was now an integral element in both side's plans. When forming military campaigns to seize enemy strongholds, the procurement of intelligence and treasonous assistance from local residents was a vital element.⁴⁹ Any campaign on enemy territory carried with it the hope of inciting revolt in the impacted area. If the campaign was particularly successful, a calamitous combination of military defeat and domestic unrest might just force the enemy government to come to terms at the negotiating table.⁵⁰ This aspect of military activity, however, was kept hidden; not just for necessary secrecy, but because the achievement of *gloire* for a King or his generals depended on the perception that victory had been won on the battlefield, rather than appropriated through treachery and bribes. After the re-taking of Corbie in 1636, Soissons publicly claimed that the town had capitulated due to the bribing of its governor by Richelieu, and was subsequently accused of diminishing the *gloire* of the King's armies.⁵¹

Richelieu's intransigence and the March treaty

On 8 March, the duc de Longueville and the comtesse de Soissons were given an audience with Richelieu. They assured the Cardinal that Soissons had done nothing to contravene the terms of his 1637 treaty. The comtesse then spoke of the

⁴⁹ There were continual French and Spanish plots to obtain the fortified towns on the borderlands between France and Flanders through espionage. See, among countless other examples: *Correspondance de Richard Pauli-Stravius (1634-1642)*, ed. W. Brulez (Brussels, 1955), p.134, Pauli-Stravius to Barberini, 24 Apr. 1636; Richelieu, *Mémoires*, in Petitot and Monmerqué, xxix, 203-4; Avenel, vi, p.156, Richelieu to Chavigny, 8 Sept. 1638; AAE MD 1677, fo.299, Richelieu to St-Preuil, 31 July 1638; AGRB T100 vol.646, fo.84, Salamanca to Perchamp, 12 Sept. 1638. A. de Ville, *De la charge des gouverneurs des places* (Paris, 1639), pp.164-74, dedicated to Richelieu, gives a fascinating insight into contemporary thinking on the issue of how to prevent enemy intelligences within fortified towns.

⁵⁰ A point well-made in J.H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, 1984), pp.144-6.

⁵¹ Richelieu, *Mémoires*, xxix, 255-6.

assurances that her son sought on behalf of the duc de Bouillon, backed up by the sieur de La Croisette who had returned from Sedan the previous evening.⁵² The Cardinal gave the same responses as he had to Campion in December; he had reliable information that those at Sedan were soliciting both troops and money, in the hope that Soissons' name would bring many places, as well as members of the royal armies, to join a revolt, which would be supported by a simultaneous naval enterprise on La Rochelle. Furthermore, he knew that Bouillon was holding talks with the enemy. Longueville then suggested that, seeing as the evidence related to activities occurring in Soissons' name only, there was therefore nothing which Richelieu or the King had against Soissons himself, and perhaps he might once more be allowed the free exercise of his offices? The Cardinal flatly rebuffed this suggestion; he was sure that Soissons must be aware of Bouillon's treasonous dealings. Monsieur le Comte now had two options: either to separate himself from Bouillon and to demonstrate his innocence by leaving Sedan for a more palatable residence, or for both men to admit their errors and beg of the King's forgiveness, which the Cardinal assured him would be given and everything restored as it had been before.

That evening Longueville summarised the meeting in a letter to Soissons, concluding: 'c'est à vous Monsieur à regarder [sollidement] la dessus avec Monsr de bouillon et dy prandre de bonnes resolutions'.⁵³ Two days later, on 10 March, Bouillon and Guise signed a treaty with Salamanca, composed of twelve articles 'pour delivrer la France d'oppression et luy rendre le repos et la paix', along with separate

⁵² Jean de Rochefort, sieur de La Croisette was an agent of the duc de Longueville, who had also been engaged in the 1637 negotiations to reconcile the comte de Soissons with the King, and had made several visits to Sedan.

⁵³ BN Moreau 777, no.145, although no year is given, it is clear from the references to Ratisbonne that this dates from 1641. Correr relays a detailed account of this conversation, as given to him personally by Richelieu, in his despatch of 23 March: BN Italien 1817, p.566.

bilateral agreements dedicating themselves to the service of the House of Austria.⁵⁴ This was clearly a decisive moment in the conspirators' minds, and it was around this time that Guise wrote: 'L'on nous a reffusé tout accomodement, sy ce n'estoit en se déshonorant et s'abandonnant les uns les autres, à quoy nous n'avons point voulu entendre, de sorte que tout nostre salut ne despend plus que de la bonté et de nos espées et de nos résolutions'.⁵⁵

Despite being well-aware of the threatening presence of Spanish agents at Sedan, Richelieu was giving no scope for compromise.⁵⁶ He was not concerned to avert an armed rebellion, as he had been when the danger loomed in 1637. The tendency of overly-sympathetic historiography has been simply to see Richelieu's stance at such times as a demonstration of his resolve, while assuming that when he compromised he did so purely for sound political reasons, but many well-placed contemporary commentators questioned both Richelieu's judgement and motives concerning this affair; for many he was behaving complacently and was placing self-interest above needs of State. The judgement of Vittorio Siri, who later became a royal historiographer, deserves to be quoted in full:

'le Cardinal étoit si enivré de ses succès, si constamment persuadé de la foiblesse des forces Autrichiennes, et si plein de mépris pour les prétendues

⁵⁴ Originals of these three documents are in BN N.a.f. 29, Items 2-4, of which copies are in AGRB T100 vol.653, fos.77-88. H. Lonchay, *La Rivalité de la France et de l'Espagne aux Pays-Bas (1635-1700)* (Bruxelles, 1896), p.107, notes the absence of an original in Brussels. Note that there is no evidence here that Bouillon was reluctant to treat with Spain and that he had to be persuaded into it by Soissons, as claimed in J. de Langlade, baron de, Saumières, *Mémoires de la Vie de Frédéric-Maurice de La Tour d'Auvergne, duc de Bouillon* (Paris, 1692). This work, by Bouillon's ex-secretary, contains persistent manipulations to absolve him of any role in the instigation of Spanish treasons, and has sometimes been accepted uncritically by historians. Père Griffet, for example, relies on it extensively for his account of the rebellion of 1641: Griffet, iii, 352-72.

⁵⁵ R. de Bouillé, *Histoire des ducs de Guise* (4 vols.; Paris, 1850), iv, 426.

⁵⁶ Indeed Salamanca's visit to Sedan was a particularly ill-kept secret. In a letter to her husband, the duchesse de Bouillon reported rumours of it circulating in The Hague in early February: AN 273 AP 184, un-numbered item, 11 Feb. 1641.

conspirations des Princes mécontents, qu'il ne craignoit en aucune maniere, qu'ils puissent nuire à ses desseins. Il mettoit même tous ses ressorts en usage, pour les obliger à faire leur Traité avec les Espagnols, afin de les perdre'.⁵⁷

Correr, furthermore, reported a conversation with Richelieu during the first few days of February, in which the Cardinal spoke of the plans of the malcontents at Sedan, describing them as impossible, and stating that the conspirators themselves were as lacking in faith as they were in brains.⁵⁸ Correr later delivered a damning assessment in conversation with the Papal Nuncio; that Richelieu wanted to destroy Soissons for having refused to marry his niece, and Guise for having refused to cede his abbeys to him,⁵⁹ while at the end of Correr's 5 March despatch to the Doge he explained in cipher that the Cardinal wanted to purchase Sedan, but as far as Bouillon was concerned it was not for sale.⁶⁰ In these events we can see played out Richelieu's manoeuvrings to eliminate senior enemies who might challenge him for control of the regency, in a manner that seems to have been readily apparent to those around him, costing him significant amounts of political credibility.

The absence of the comte de Soissons' signature on the 10th March agreement shows that he still hoped to keep his options open and, as long as he did so, there would still be scope for him to negotiate a settlement for his junior partners whatever they might stand accused of. Soissons' more radical supporters were frustrated by his indecision,⁶¹ but his refusal to contravene the terms of the 1637 treaty, unless given no alternative, served to give greater justification for a subsequent resort to arms. The

⁵⁷ Siri, *Mercure*, i, 228.

⁵⁸ BN Italien 1817, pp.437-8, 5 Feb. 1641.

⁵⁹ *Correspondance du Nonce*, p.544, Scotti to Barberini, 5 May 1641. The vultures had been circling over the benefices of Guise and Soissons for some time: BN Français, 15611, fos.22, Arnaud to Barillon, 3 Feb. 1641.

⁶⁰ BN Italien 1817, p.515, Correr to Doge, 5 Mar. 1641.

⁶¹ See above pp.88-91.

political platform of the Princes was thoroughly imbued with moral appeals, which would be much more potent coming from a Prince of the Blood seen to be the victim of ministerial tyranny, rather than as the puppet of Bouillon and Guise, both of whom were princes étrangers, whose interests were much more likely to diverge from those of the King.⁶² Moreover, there were good grounds for Soissons to be cautious at this particular juncture. The recent successes of the Swedish army under Banér, meant that the Emperor's ability to supply an army could not be taken for granted.⁶³ It would be unwise for Soissons to commit to rebellion until he had confirmation of the Emperor's support.

Despite Soissons' cautiousness, the conspirators' plans were evolving swiftly. In proposals delivered to Brussels in December, Bouillon and Guise claimed to possess the means to take both Stenay and Charleville, and that Soissons was assured of Péronne through an anonymous maréchal de camp, who could secure a further town which was also left unnamed. This referred to Charles de Monchy, son of Georges de Monchy, marquis d'Hocquincourt, governor of both Péronne and Boulogne.⁶⁴ Charles had previously been governor of Péronne, but had been ordered

⁶² For excellent overviews of the *princes étrangers* see: Spangler, *Society of Princes*, Chapter 1; Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects', pp.12-4.

⁶³ Johan Banér was general of the Swedish army operating in Germany, who had mounted a dynamic winter offensive in January in order to disrupt the Imperial Reichstag at Ratisbonne. Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, Piccolomini and Mercy (an elder brother of the abbé) were assembling troops on the Danube with which to repel Banér: P.H. Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy: A History of the Thirty Years War* (London, 2009), pp.624-7.

⁶⁴ Charles de Monchy had a superb military career in French service, alternating with bouts of rebellion. In 1636 he was awarded the governorships of Péronne, Montdidier and Roye. In 1639 he was made maréchal de camp, and in 1651 became a maréchal de France. In 1653 he was appointed Viceroy of Catalonia. Georges de Monchy, marquis d'Hocquincourt, was a staunch régime loyalist, having been appointed Grand-Prévôt de l'Hôtel du Roi in 1630 and Lieutenant-General of Lorraine in 1636. Charles was involved in a further plot to deliver Péronne to the Spanish in 1655, but on that occasion was thwarted by his son, Georges II de Monchy. He then followed the Grande Condé into Spanish service and died at the Battle of Dunkirk in 1658: *Archives généalogiques et historiques de la*

by Louis XIII to resign in favour of his father - with whom he was at odds - in 1639. He perhaps hoped to regain his position by introducing Spanish troops into the town.⁶⁵ Soissons was also assured that, once he had openly declared himself, the comte de Gassion would join the rebellion with his troops,⁶⁶ consisting of some 1,200 cavalry, and that many others from the royal armies would follow suit.⁶⁷

The Brussels government examined these proposals with a critical eye, sensing that they were the product of a degree of wishful thinking. As they themselves knew from hard-won experience, people and provinces generally did not declare their support for a rebellious *parti* until a significant victory had already been won.⁶⁸ The ministers did, however, show a keen interest in those items pertaining specifically to Soissons. By demonstrating good faith in these proposals they hoped to coax Soissons into investing greater trust in them, ideally by adding his prized signature to the treaty.⁶⁹

noblesse de France, (ed.) P. Lainé (11 vols.; Paris, 1828-50), ii, 59 (n.1); BN Espagnol 144, fo.21, 'Instruccion de lo que vos el Abbad de Merci...haveis de Executar', 13 Apr. 1648.

⁶⁵ BN Italien 1817, p.645, Correr to Doge, 23 Apr. 1641.

⁶⁶ Jean, comte de Gassion.

⁶⁷ BL Add 14000, fo.548v., 'Memoria de los puntos de que el Abbad de Mercy ha de dar quanta a Su A.', n.d. The inclusion of Gassion is intriguing. If Pure's *Histoire du Gassion* is to be believed, Richelieu, suspecting that Gassion was likely to be approached by the malcontents at Sedan, had sought to co-opt him as a double-agent; a proposal which the maréchal spurned as being dishonourable. Pure's work, however, and the documents it reproduces, are the sole source for Richelieu's attempt to enlist Gassion in this way. Avenel initially rejects claims that any such attempt was made, but subsequently accepts it as probable. Given the new evidence concerning Gassion's engagement with the rebels, it seems increasingly likely that Richelieu sought him out, at the very least to let him know that he was being closely watched: Avenel, *Lettres*, vi, 736-7; *ibid.*, vii, 843-7. Gassion's name had also been implicated in the cabals surrounding the comte de Soissons in 1637, so his sympathies were clearly divided and he probably intended to make a choice of allegiances based on the turn of events: AAE MD 2164, fo.74v., Louis XIII to Richelieu, 4 June 1637.

⁶⁸ BL Add 14000, fo.558v., 'Copia de la cons'ta que hicieron don Antonio Sarmiento y el Marques Virgilio Malvezzi', n.d.[1641]. See also, AGRB T100 vol.653, fo. 252, 'Le parece que le Baron de Bec a donné sur les points proposez par l'Abbé de Mercy', n.d. [1641].

⁶⁹ BL Add 14000 fo.548v., 'Memoria de los puntos de que el Abbad de Mercy ha de dar quanta a Su A.', n.d., especially point 3.

By the time of the signing of the 10th March deal the earlier proposals of the Princes had been abbreviated to a promise to deliver Péronne, plus a general expression of their intent to obtain other strongholds. The rebels were to be supported by an army under Piccolomini, due in mid-May, consisting of some 8,000 to 10,000 infantry and 4,000 to 5,000 cavalry.⁷⁰ This scheme would satisfy the need, recognised since the early stages of the war by commanders such as Piccolomini, to seize and hold a significant stronghold within France which could serve as a base from which to consolidate progress and make further headway into the heart of the country towards Paris.⁷¹ This motive was reinforced by the Cardinal-Infante's desire to obtain some security from the conspirators, to avoid being let down as he had been in 1637. As a result, he saw the delivery of a suitable fortified town as a security to be delivered before any money was to be awarded to the French conspirators,⁷² an approach which threatened to alienate his new allies. On the 8 and 9 of April, Guise and Bouillon wrote to Don Miguel de Salamanca complaining of this, and threatening to reconcile with Paris.⁷³

Sedan itself was the glaring omission from the places mentioned in either the initial proposals or the final March treaty. As sovereign prince of Sedan, Bouillon was clearly unwilling to jeopardise his control of the city any more than was

⁷⁰ BN Français N.a.f. 29, item 2.

⁷¹ See, for example, a discussion of the forthcoming campaign in *Documenta Bohemica Bellum Tricennale Illustrantia*, vi, ed. B. Badura (Prague, 1979), pp.164-6, Piccolomini to Cardinal-Infante, 4 Mar. 1637.

⁷² Lonchay, *Rivalité*, p.107, based on Cardinal-Infante's letter to Philip IV of 4 April. The Cardinal-Infante had been subjected to criticism from Madrid concerning the 1637 treaty's lack of rigour and had been forced to defend his actions after the late volte-face by Soissons: Lonchay and Cuvelier, *Correspondance*, iii, 166, Philip IV to Cardinal-Infante, 10 Aug. 1637; *ibid.*, iii, 188, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 16 Oct. 1637.

⁷³ Lonchay, *Rivalité*, p.108.

absolutely necessary.⁷⁴ In the bilateral treaty signed between the duc de Bouillon and Don Miguel de Salamanca on 10 March, the duke dedicated himself to the service of the House of Austria, and put himself and his territories under its protection. He therein agreed that, should the ‘Princes et Confederez’ fail to deliver a stronghold on either the Meuse or the Somme sufficient for the security and supply of the Spanish troops, he would offer them the use of the town of Sedan.⁷⁵ Crucially, Bouillon had refused to offer them use of the château of Sedan itself. He clearly saw both the French and Spanish Kings as threats to his sovereign independence. One of his agents, the baron de Salignac,⁷⁶ defended Bouillon’s position in Brussels during meetings in April, which the Cardinal-Infante paraphrased thus: ‘que no vendra james el de Bullon en darle [Sedan’s chateau] por no tener otra plaça, y que pues se aventura a perder lo que Francia le quita por no poner la en riesgo’.⁷⁷

Sedan was now under preparation for war: its fortifications were being strengthened and the Princes were levying troops, though no Spanish money had as yet been delivered. They were also gathering momentum through defections from the King’s armies.⁷⁸ In response to these developments, the governors of the towns

⁷⁴ For an extensive treatment of the ducs de Bouillon as independent sovereigns of Sedan and the strategies they employed to maintain their independence, see Hodson, ‘Sovereigns and Subjects’, *passim*.

⁷⁵ See the bilateral deal signed by Bouillon on 10 March 1641, in BN N.a.f. 29, item 3, article 2.

⁷⁶ Baron de Salignac ‘dit La Montagne’, played a major role for the rebels, undertaking numerous missions to Flanders and Liège, in order to negotiate with Brussels, handle money, and co-ordinate troop levies: AN 273 AP 178, dossier ‘Guerre de Sedan’; AGRB T100 vol.550, ‘Memoria de Monsr de la Montaigne’, 22 Mar. 1641. He was most likely François de Salignac, baron de la Motte Fénélon, seigneur de Mareuil et de Montague, baron de Maignac. He was related by marriage to the Bourdeilles family, also based in the Périgord, from which Montrésor hailed: BN Périgord 164, fo.38v.

⁷⁷ BL Add 14000, fo.562, Cardinal-Infante’s instructions for Sarmiento, 23 Apr.1641.

⁷⁸ On the 20th Grémonville, intendant to the Army of Champagne, reported the defection to Sedan of three officers from Turenne’s regiment, which was now being ordered to go to Italy: AAE MD 287, fo.37.

surrounding Sedan had all been instructed to go to their posts.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, Soissons was furthering his contacts in Paris and the rest of France in order to extend his support. Retz claimed in his *Mémoires* to have been sent to Paris in order to ready the capital for an uprising, plotting with high profile detainees in the Bastille (Bassompierre, Cramail and Vitry), to co-ordinate the seizure of strategic points in the centre of the city.⁸⁰ Retz also described distributing money to the Parisian poor in Soissons' name and holding discussions with key officials of the city, who were attached to his service. Although some historians have sought to extract as much juice from Retz's account as possible, all of this is unsubstantiated by other sources, and should be read with caution given Retz's tendency to embellish. Around the same time emissaries from Sedan were reportedly crossing France in a drive to prepare opinion, recruit troops and foment rebellion in other parts of the realm.⁸¹

Despite these activities and the continued inflow of incriminating information reaching Richelieu's desk,⁸² attempts at negotiation still continued between Paris and Sedan. The duc de Guise's talks, having failed through Correr, were now revived

⁷⁹ Arnaud to Barillon in BN Français 15611, fo.60 (18 Mar.), fo.67v. (27 Mar.), fo.73 (7 Apr.), fo.116v. (22 May 1641); *Correspondance du Nonce*, p.532, Scotti to Barberini, 19 Apr. 1641; Correr to Doge in BN Italien 1817, p.568 (26 Mar.), p.592 (2 Apr.), p.610 (9 Apr.) and p.644 (23 Apr. 1641).

⁸⁰ Retz, *Mémoires*, pp.26-30. The freedoms awarded to high profile prisoners in the Château de Vincennes or the Bastille were surprising, perhaps even by contemporary standards. There were even claims that the Bastille's governor, Du Tremblay, asked Bassompierre to act as interim governor during his absences: AAE MD 833, fo.255, 'Advis contre les sieurs le mareschal de Bassompierre et le sieur gouverneur de la Bastille', July 1639.

⁸¹ Y.-M. Bercé, 'Exercice de Complot et Secret d'Etat dans la France de 1640', *Vives Lettres*, 1 (Strasbourg, 1996), 63-73, p.68, though he does not substantiate this claim. However, there is a 'Memoire de feu mr le Cardinal de Richelieu pour servir contre Mr le comte de Soissons Mr le Duc de Bouillon et Guise', which probably dates from May, and largely consists of a list of agents from Sedan who had recently been arrested in various places: BS FP 132, p.105, n.d. One can reasonably assume that there were others who had eluded arrest.

⁸² Arnaud reported on 20 March that some letters of Bouillon to Ratisbonne had been intercepted: BN Français 15611, f.61v.. On 7 April, he reported that 'Il est certain, que Mr le Cardinal Infant avoit envoyé un certain Don Michel de Salamanca Me de Camp Espagnol pour traiter avec Mr de Bouillon', BN Français 15611, fo.75. Similarly, on 15 April, Chavigny reported that 'Nous avons avis certain que M.de Rheims et M. de Bouillon ont traité avec le roy d'Espagne, Avenel, vii, 857; similarly BN Français 15611, fo.88, Arnaud to Barrillon, 21 Apr. 1641.

through Condé whose aid Anne de Gonzague had enlisted, with some of Guise's benefices being offered as a sweetener to the Prince.⁸³ Guise's response, however, was that he did not want to separate himself from Soissons.⁸⁴

In early April repeated efforts were made, to urge Bouillon, Guise and Soissons respectively to admit their treasonous negotiations. As ever, particular focus was placed on attempts to persuade Soissons to leave Sedan, thus separating himself from Bouillon.⁸⁵ Along with offers of a pardon, came threats of sanctions should they fail to comply: in his instructions on sending Salignac into Flanders on 13 April, Bouillon claimed that Richelieu's latest representations were framed such that, if not accepted, it would lead to the confiscation of all his properties in France, as well as the destruction of the territories of Sedan and Raucourt, within 10 days.⁸⁶ While Soissons remained steadfast, seeds of fear were sown in Bouillon's mind that the King's cousin might accept a separate pardon.⁸⁷ Soissons was too concerned for his safety to leave Sedan, while also fearing the dishonour should he fail to stand by Bouillon, who had offered him protection for nearly four years. As Arnaud reported: 'Si Mgr le Comte le [Bouillon] vouloit abandonner il auroit tout ce qu'il demanderoit; mais il est bien esloigné de le vouloir faire'. The comte de Soissons was no Gaston

⁸³ BN Français 15611, fo.75, Arnaud to Barillon, Paris, 7 Apr. For a rather pessimistic letter of Anne de Gonzague regarding attempts to reconcile de Guise's affair while he was at Sedan see BN Français 3845, fo.41, A. de Gonzague to [M. de Gonzague], undated.

⁸⁴ BN Français 15611, fo.85, Arnaud to Barillon, 17 Apr. 1641.

⁸⁵ BN Italien 1817, p.626, Correr to Doge, 16 Apr. 1641; AGRB T100 vol.229 fo.59, Guise to Beck, 9 Apr. 1641.

⁸⁶ BL Add 14000, f.560, Bouillon's instructions for La Montagne [Salignac], 13Apr. 1641.

⁸⁷ AN 273 AP 184, un-numbered, duchesse de Bouillon to duc de Bouillon, 4 Mar. 1641.

d'Orléans when it came to abandoning friends and servants who engaged in conspiracy in his name.⁸⁸

The April plots

April was punctuated by a flurry of attempts by the malcontents to secure a town in honour of the treaty. On the 9th an attempt to seize Péronne was made, which failed due to the actions of the town's governor, the marquis d'Hocquincourt. Several arrests were made, including a captain of the garrison.⁸⁹ Three days later his son, Charles de Monchy, was arrested in the King's antechamber, possibly after a tip-off from his father. However, the King wrote to the marquis on the same day explaining that his son had been arrested because, 'ceux de Sedan ont persuadé aux Espagnols qu'il pouvoit faire entreprise sur Péronne', as if a specific piece of intelligence had been obtained concerning the March treaty, which referred to an anonymous *maréchal de camp* who could deliver the town.⁹⁰ With Charles and his accomplices firmly behind bars, no further plots were undertaken against the town.

⁸⁸ Arnaud keeps up a regular reportage of rumours concerning the negotiations during the early months of 1641; see, for example, BN Français 15611 fos.69, 77v, 83, 88, 91v. For the duc d'Orléans life of conspiracy see G. Dethan, *Gaston d'Orléans: Conspirator et Prince Charmant* (Paris, 1959), especially pp.455-469. Comments regarding the dishonourable and unreliable nature of Orléans when it came to honouring his servants in conspiracy were widespread during his life. See, for example, *Les Lettres de Guy Patin à Charles Spon. Janvier 1649-Février 1655*, ed. L. Jestaz (2 vols.; Paris, 2006), ii, 1054, Patin to Spon, 7 Apr. 1653, who writes, 'Ce prince est malheureux pour son irresolution et vrayement traine-gibet, qui perd et ruine tous ceux qui s'attachent à luy, tesmoins feu M. de Montmoranci, le comte de Soissons...?'

⁸⁹ BN Italien 1817, p.627, Correr to Doge, 14 Apr. 1641; *ibid.*, p.645, Correr to Doge, 23 Apr. 1641.

⁹⁰ Avenel, vi, 770-1, Louis XIII to Hocquincourt, 12 Apr. 1641; J. de Boibergues, *Le Mémorial d'un Bourgeois de Domart sur les guerres de Louis XIII et de Louis XIV (1634-1655)*, ed. A. Ledieu (Abbeville, 1893), p.413; BN Français 15610, fo.81v., Arnaud to Barillon, 14 Apr. 1641. For the suggestion that Charles de Monchy had been arrested based on accusations made by his father: BN Italien 1817, p.645, Correr to Doge, 23 Apr.

He was released several weeks later, without being charged, probably as a reward for his father's continued loyalty.⁹¹

However, the conspirators were also making great efforts to gain the recently-constructed citadel of Mont-Olympe, which commanded the Meuse next to Charleville and Mézières.⁹² If the citadel could be taken, both these towns would likely fall into the rebel Princes' hands. The significance of this target reflected a wider military-dynastic strategy. Mont-Olympe itself was adjunct to Château-Regnault, a tiny sovereignty previously possessed by the Guise family, which Richelieu had obtained for Louis XIII in 1629, and which the present duc de Guise sought to re-obtain.⁹³ Mont-Olympe overlooked Charleville, built on another patch of sovereign territory owned by the duc de Nevers, but which his aunts – Anne and Marie de Gonzague – were pressing to inherit via the *droit d'aubaine*. Through Guise's (as yet unrecognised) marriage to Anne, a contiguous patchwork of sovereign territory could be forged, which, in tandem with the also-contiguous territories of the duc de Bouillon around Sedan, would form a significant military-diplomatic power bloc.

⁹¹ Probably also aided by the fact that on 6 May Charles wrote to Richelieu asking for his freedom 'que pour la sacrifier et mourir pour vostre Eminence': AAE MD 840, fo.54. His release is confirmed in BN Italien 1818, p.22, Correr to Doge, 28 May 1641. Note, however, that Charles later supported Condé in his opposition to Mazarin.

⁹² A brief history of Mont-Olympe is given in N. Albot, 'Tentative du Comte de Soissons sur le Mont-Olympe en 1641', *Revue historique ardennaise*, 3 (1896), 67-95.

⁹³ J. Hubert, *Histoire de Charleville* (Charleville, 1854), p.106; P. d'Avity, *Le Monde, ou la description générale de ses quatre parties*, iv (Paris, 1660), pp.417-8; BN Français 4712, item 82, unsigned memorandum describing Château-Regnault, n.d. [1625]; BL Add 12184, Brown to [Secretary of State], 27 Aug./6 Sept. 1641. In May 1646 a deal was struck with Guise exchanging Château-Regnault, and other territories, for Châteauneuf-sur-Loire: F. Le Maire, *Histoire et Antiquitez de la Ville et Duché d'Orléans* (Orléans, 1648), i, 36. He later sought to repurchase it in 1660; Spangler, *Society of Princes*, p.15.

Various documents concerning the plots on Mont-Olympe survive, offering a detailed, yet fractured, picture of events.⁹⁴ The comte de Modène,⁹⁵ representing Guise, was trying to persuade some of the officers of Mont-Olympe's garrison, La Combe and St Martin,⁹⁶ to accept money and the promise of future positions, in return for delivering the town to the army of General Beck,⁹⁷ towards whom another of Guise's gentlemen, Bridieu,⁹⁸ had been despatched as liaison. After a series of clandestine meetings in and around Charleville involving Modène's agents,⁹⁹ the plan was ready for execution by the second week of April.

Some have claimed that the Mont-Olympe plot was unsuccessful due to a failure by the Spanish to pay the promised bribe to its garrison, but this can be definitively ruled out.¹⁰⁰ Modène personally delivered the first instalment in gold coin, which had been sown into specially-designed leather belts, which so weighed him down 'qu'il avoit eu de la payne a monter à Cheval'¹⁰¹. The rest of the money was to be paid by the Spanish upon delivery of the town. Beck certainly had the funds, the Cardinal-Infante having given him 80,000 livres with the express

⁹⁴ Chiefly: AAE MD 838, fo.237, Interrogation of Anne Gobert, 8 June; BS FP 132, pp.109-114, 'Mémoires des témoins', n.d.; neither of which are dealt with in Albot, 'Tentative du Comte de Soissons', which, as well as giving a very brief outline of the affair, reproduces the interrogations of Toussaint de Bordeaux on 9 and 11 May, along with other supporting documents.

⁹⁵ Esprit de Raimond de Mormoiron, comte de Modène.

⁹⁶ Claude de La Combe, seigneur de Bernanze and Jean-Pierre de la Nape, seigneur de St Martin: BS FP 132, pp.109-111, 'Mémoires des témoins', n.d.

⁹⁷ Jean, baron de Beck, was a general in imperial service, later governor of Luxembourg.

⁹⁸ Louis de Bridieu, baron de Bonnay, vicomte de Germini. For his role in the Mont-Olympe affair, see Lonchay, *Rivalité*, p.107. He also helped conduct the Princes' affairs in Brussels: A. Caston and P. Henrard, 'Mathieu de Morgues et Philippe Chifflet', *Bulletins de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*, 3e série, vol.10, no.8 (1885), 1-22, p.12.

⁹⁹ Modène's intermediaries were his valet Toussaint de Bourdeaux, and Artus de La Mine, *commis général de la monnaie* of Charleville.

¹⁰⁰ For claims that Spanish failure to deliver the bribe was the cause of the plot's failure: Lonchay, *Rivalité*, p.107; A. Waddington, *La République des Provinces-Unies, la France et les Pays-Bas espagnols, de 1630 à 1650* (2 vols.; Paris, 1895-7), i, 331.

¹⁰¹ AAE MD 838, fo.237, Interrogation of Anne Gobert, 8 June 1641.

instruction not to hand any of it over until the ‘gage promis’ - code for Mont-Olympe or Péronne - had been delivered.

Two attempts were made to co-ordinate Beck’s entry into the citadel on 11 and 17 April, but they were aborted because the waters of the Meuse were deemed too high for the Spanish troops to cross.¹⁰² On-going attempts were made to execute the same plan as late as the first week of May, but the Princes had been duped: La Combe and St Martin had alerted their commanding officer, Biscarrat,¹⁰³ who in turn had notified Richelieu.¹⁰⁴ Modène’s agent, La Mine, also betrayed the plot.¹⁰⁵ It is probable that they were allowing the plot to proceed in hope of capturing Guise’s agents, and of dealing a surprise blow to Beck’s troops.¹⁰⁶ The arrest of Modène’s valet - one of his chief agents in the conspiracy - on 9 May, represented the final nail in the plot’s coffin and confirmed growing suspicions among those at Sedan that they had been betrayed. The Princes themselves were convinced that it was Modène’s agent, La Mine, who had betrayed them, and one of their hangers-on at Sedan kindly offered to drag him behind the Bethléem Convent just outside Charleville and stab him to death, in return for the princely sum of 200 pistoles.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Albot, ‘Tentative du Comte de Soissons’, p.82, second interrogation of Toussaint de Bordeaux, 11 May 1641; also BS FP 132, p.109, ‘Mémoires des témoins’, n.d.

¹⁰³ Siri, *Mercur*, i, 237. Jacques de Rotondis, seigneur de Biscarras; he had served Orléans during the 1632 rebellion, which explains why the conspirators of 1641 felt he could be persuaded to switch allegiances once more: P. Henrard, *Marie de Médicis dans les Pays-Bas 1631-1638* (Brussels, 1876), p.179.

¹⁰⁴ Arnaud reports the discovery of the Mont-Olympe plot in a letter to Barillon of 24 April: BN Français 15611, fo.89.

¹⁰⁵ H. Descharmes, ‘Le rôle d’Artus de La Mine, lors de la tentative sur le Mont-Olympe’, *Revue historique ardennaise*, 10 (1903), 338-43.

¹⁰⁶ Following exactly the kind of ‘contre-trahison’ that Antoine de Ville advised governors of fortified towns to employ in his recent *De la charge des gouverneurs des places* (Paris, 1639), pp.168-70.

¹⁰⁷ AAE MD 838, fos.237, Interrogation of Anne Gobert, 8 June 1641.

This represented a major setback; as far as Brussels was concerned the dukes had not delivered their part of the March deal, though not through lack of intent.¹⁰⁸ The whole rebellion would be significantly delayed.

There are also traces of the exposure of further plots against other frontier towns, such as Donchery and Stenay, which were secondary targets for those at Sedan.¹⁰⁹ A further scheme against Ardres was hatched from within the London-based entourage of Marie de Médicis. It too had been uncovered. As a result, the Queen Mother's revenues were now being diverted to fortify the frontier towns against 'pareilles entreprises'.¹¹⁰

The reaction in Paris

During the unravelling of the Mont-Olympe plot, further moves were being made which drew Paris and Sedan closer to military confrontation. In early April, maréchal Châtillon¹¹¹ was instructed to assemble the Army of Champagne at Rheims in order to counter the threat from Sedan.¹¹² His job was to hold off the revolt, while La Meilleraye laid siege to Aire-sur-la-Lys. Richelieu knew that there were insufficient military resources to attempt to lay siege to two major places at the same time.¹¹³ He

¹⁰⁸ BL Add 14000, fo.562, Cardinal-Infante's instructions for Antonio Sarmiento on his mission to Sedan, 23 Apr. 1641.

¹⁰⁹ BN Français 15611, fo.88v., Arnaud to Barillon, 24 Apr. 1641; BN Italien 1817, p.658, Correr to Doge, 29 Apr. 1641.

¹¹⁰ AAE MD 245, fo.355, Richelieu to Chavigny, 19 Apr. 1641.

¹¹¹ Gaspard III de Coligny, marquis de Châtillon.

¹¹² BN Français 15611, fo.74v., Arnaud to Barillon, 7 Apr. 1641; BN Français 3765, fo.4v., 'Pouvoir de Monsieur le Mareschal de chastillon de commander l'armée du Roy en champaigne', 18 Apr. 1641.

¹¹³ Correr speculated on Richelieu's plans in his despatches: BN Italien 1817, p.568 (26 Mar.), p.610 (9 Apr.), p.644 (23 Apr.).

wished, thus to prevent Sedan from undermining his pre-ordained plan of campaign, which focused on the headline-grabbing seizure of the stronghold of Aire.

Yet, despite his need to contain the Sedan threat, Richelieu criticised Soissons request, ‘hors des terms d’un sujet’, to have his case heard before Parlement. He now advised the King to replace Soissons as governor of Champagne and Dauphiné, to stop his pensions and strip him of his benefices.¹¹⁴ He continued in his refusal to offer concessions to the Princes on any other basis than an admission of their crimes and separation from each other. In the light of the tenuousness of his military plans, Richelieu’s lack of restraint towards the Princes at Sedan is hard to understand.

These measures, moreover, trailed behind events elsewhere. In mid-month disturbing news arrived from Germany: the Swedish army under Banér had been forced to undertake a gruelling retreat by Imperial forces under the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, and Piccolomini.¹¹⁵ Suddenly the prospect of significant Imperial support for Flanders and Sedan loomed large. This probably motivated Louis’s decision to instruct the marquis de Sourdis to make yet another attempt at reconciliation with Soissons.¹¹⁶ The situation was now becoming the cause of grave concern in Paris. Along with the various plots against Péronne, Mont-Olympe and other frontier towns, Richelieu must now have been aware of the levying of troops in Liège by the Princes and some of the defections from the royal armies.

¹¹⁴ Avenel, vi, 780-3, ‘Avis sur le sujet de M. le Comte, et de Mrs de Guise et de Bouillon’. Avenel places this undated document at the end of April, but it seems more likely to have been during the first two weeks of the month, as it makes no mention of the plots against Péronne and Mont-Olympe, which would have been vital inclusions in a memorandum concerning the threat from Sedan.

¹¹⁵ Wilson, *Europe’s Tragedy*, pp.626-7. Archduke Leopold Wilhelm was the younger brother of Emperor Ferdinand III and later became governor of the Spanish Netherlands.

¹¹⁶ *Correspondance du Nonce*, p.532, Scotti to Barberini, 19 Apr. 1641. Charles d’Escoubleau, marquis de Sourdis.

There was evident concern, moreover, as to the dependability of the Prince of Orange, who had suggested that he would not stand by as his nephew Bouillon was attacked by Richelieu. If the Dutch States General either took this occasion to sign a truce with Spain, or to offer their support to Sedan, it would be a disaster of the highest proportions for Richelieu. Alongside the activities at Sedan, Brussels' diplomats, aided by Bouillon, were making an energetic bid to sway the Prince of Orange.¹¹⁷

It was also now evident that on-going talks to resolve the deadlock in Piedmont were failing. The negotiations of Giulio Mazarin with Prince Thomas and his brother Cardinal Maurice,¹¹⁸ held the key to French hopes of progress in the vital Italian theatre of the war with Spain. Having signed a treaty to transfer his allegiances from Spain to France at the end of 1640, Prince Thomas was now disillusioned and had re-opened talks with the Spanish.¹¹⁹ He was in fact looking towards Sedan,

¹¹⁷ In April the Prince of Orange had reportedly said to the French agent, La Tuillerie, that he would assist Bouillon rather than see him perish: BN Français 15611, fo.89, Arnaud to Barillon, 24 Apr. 1641. For Spanish diplomatic efforts in tandem with Bouillon, see: BL Add 14000, fo.169v., 'Consulta de Don Antonio Sarmiento', 28 Feb. 1641; Lonchay and Cuvelier, *Correspondance*, iii, Philip IV to Cardinal-Infante, 6 May 1641. The Sedan parti had been involved in similar diplomatic overtures towards the Dutch since 1637, mooted a potential marriage between Soissons and the daughter of the Prince of Orange: AAE CP Pays-Bas Espagnol 12, fo.13, Gerbier to Auger, 28 Feb. 1637; AAE MD 2164, fo.77, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 18 June 1637. The same marriage was proposed again in 1641: AAE MD 287, 'Table sommaire des lettres, mémoires et papiers d'Etat adressés ou remis cette année au Cardinal de Richelieu' [1641], fo.130, summary of La Tuillerie despatch, 25 Feb. 1641.

¹¹⁸ Tommaso Francesco of Savoy, prince of Carignano, and his brother Cardinal Maurizio of Savoy, were uncles of the young Duke of Savoy. Tommaso and Maurizio were pressing their claims to a role in the regency government currently presided over by the duke's mother, Christina, sister of Louis XIII. The rivalry for the regency had developed into civil war, in which Christina was supported by France, and her brothers-in-law by the Spanish: Albertis, *Cristina di Francia*, pp.230-40.

¹¹⁹ The Papal Nuncio, Scotti, wrote to Barberini on 28 December 1640 that Prince Thomas was on the verge of signing an accord with France, but by 4 January he had become disillusioned that the accord had been prematurely publicised. Prince Thomas was particularly sensitive to such issues, due to the presence of his wife and child in Madrid under what was fast becoming a form of house arrest designed to ensure his, albeit unwilling, loyalty to the Spanish cause: *Correspondance du Nonce*, p.438, 21 Dec. 1640; *ibid.*, p.444, 28 Dec. 1640; *ibid.*, p.451, 4 Jan. 1641. By 1 March it had become clear that the Prince was once more re-negotiating his position with the Spanish and that France had been duped; *Correspondance du Nonce*, p.495, Scotti to Barberini, 1 Mar. 1641.

hopeful that they would successfully overthrow Richelieu.¹²⁰ He sent one of his gentlemen, Pallavicino, northwards to find ‘noz amis en levant les soubçons qu’on avoit de moy’, carrying a candid letter to his brother-in-law, Soissons, with instructions to report in detail on his talks with Mazarin, and to encourage him to break with France.¹²¹ Pallavicino also delivered a similar letter to the duc de Lorraine, before heading to Flanders.¹²²

The opposition to Richelieu was also threatening to derail his means of financing the war. In the autumn of 1640, Richelieu had sought large contributions from the clergy through the payment of ‘droits d’amortissement’, but resistance to this, and alternative measures, resulted in the decision to call an Assembly of the Clergy in order to obtain the necessary funds. *Lettres de Cachet* were issued on 14 December, calling an assembly at Mantes, which commenced on 25 February.

The assembly’s early manoeuvres were disastrous for Richelieu. His initial request, for the sum of 6.6 million *livres* was rejected in favour of a much smaller amount. The archbishops of Sens and Toulouse,¹²³ both of whom he had tried to prevent attending, were swiftly elected presidents of the assembly. An Assembly of the Clergy was the only body, other than the Monarchy itself or an Estates General, which had a national remit, and its proceedings were henceforward conducted largely

¹²⁰ Letters of Prince Thomas to Jean-Jacques Chifflet: AMB CC 24, fo.658 (19 Aug. 1641), fo.737 (12 Mar. 1641), fo.743 (2 July. 1641).

¹²¹ AGRB T100 vol.653, fo.170, Junta of 9 May 1641.

¹²² AMB CC 24, fo.739, Prince Thomas to Chifflet, 4 Apr. 1641; BN Moreau 777, no.89, Prince Thomas to M. le Comte de Soissons, 10 Apr. 1641; BN Français 10760, fo.68, report by Guillaume Peny, 22 Apr. 1641.

¹²³ Octave de Bellegarde, archbishop of Sens, was a cousin of Roger II de Bellegarde an opponent of Richelieu who had been exiled after the Day of Dupes: J. Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate* (New Haven, 1996), p.572. Charles de Montchal, archbishop of Toulouse, was a client of the duc d’Épernon and a persistent critic of Richelieu’s handling of the church: Bergin, *French Episcopate*, pp.672-3; C. de Montchal, *Mémoires* (2 vols.; Rotterdam, 1718), ii, 595.

under the influence of a group of prelates believed by Richelieu to be in league with the Princes at Sedan and their bid to end the war. Several weeks of wrangling ensued, as they resisted moves to increase the amount to be provided to the King.¹²⁴

As the Princes at Sedan gained momentum, so did perceptions of their potential impact. The Venetian ambassador, having hitherto been fairly sanguine about this issue, perceived by late April an emerging sense of panic among Richelieu and his ministers, which he himself believed was justified by the now serious risk of upheaval. Not only was Richelieu concerned that the rebels would be supported by Spain and the Liègeois, but that the majority of the malcontent nobility of France would throw in their lot with them, and might bring with them those troops which they commanded in the royal armies. Correr believed that the rebellion might transform the affairs of the whole of Christendom, all due to enmity that had originated with the refusal of Soissons to marry Richelieu's niece. By 7 May, he was describing the 'grave apprehensions' of Richelieu, who now seemed repentant of having pushed things so far with the Princes at Sedan, perceiving that his previous plans were no longer appropriate. Correr described how Richelieu feared that the Prince of Orange was seeking an accommodation with Philip IV, while France's 'infinite' malcontents would support the rebellion. During the first week of May the Cardinal had confined himself to his room under pretext of a fever, but in reality because he had not wished to be seen to be so disturbed by the current turn of

¹²⁴ C. de Montchal, 'Mémoires de M. de Montchal', *L'Europe Savante*, November 1718, 3-43 (additions to the 2 volume edition of Montchal's memoirs published earlier that year). See also, Griffet, iii, 321-3; P. Blet, *Le Clergé du Grand Siècle en ses assemblées 1615-1715* (Paris, 1995), pp.73-7.

events.¹²⁵ The severe illness of Banér,¹²⁶ the engagement of the Dutch in Spanish peace talks, as well as the on-going failure to resolve the stalemate in Piedmont, much of which was taking shape around the spectre of a rebellion by a well-respected Prince of the Blood at Sedan, were generating a “perfect storm” for Richelieu. He now faced the unravelling of France’s delicately-poised war effort by a domestic political tempest, which he himself had done much to stir up.

The Treaty of Sedan

On 10 April, an agent arrived at Beck’s camp carrying letters from Guise and Bouillon calling the Spanish to urgently send a representative to negotiate Soissons’ inclusion into the treaty. Guise explained that he and Bouillon had conducted matters such that Soissons was now ‘disposé à faire un traicté’, particularly as Guise had just broken fully with Richelieu and rejected a ‘carte blanche’ offer.¹²⁷ Bouillon now wrote to Brussels affirming that Soissons had vowed to enter the treaty. Bouillon claimed, moreover, that several provinces of France had sent word that they were now just awaiting a rebel army in the field, in order to divert the King’s forces, before taking up arms.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Correr despatches to the Doge in BN Italien 1817, p.656 (29 Apr.), p.673 (7 May 1641).

¹²⁶ Banér fell ill in late March after his retreat from Ratisbonne. By mid-April his condition was severe: J. Le Labourer, *Histoire du Mareschal de Guebriant* (Paris, 1676), pp.290-1, 298, 305. He died on 10 May. The result was a hiatus in leadership of his already-beleaguered Swedish army.

¹²⁷ AGRB T100 vol.229, fo.59, Guise to Beck, 9 Apr. 1641; *ibid.*, fo.65, Bouillon to Beck, 9 Apr. 1641; *ibid.*, fo.67v., ‘Instruction pour le Sr de Bridieu’, 9 Apr. 1641.

¹²⁸ AGRB T100 vol.229, fo.69, Bouillon to Salamanca, 8 Apr. 1641.

Beck and Salamanca pressed the Cardinal-Infante to act on this information.¹²⁹

The unanimous view in Brussels was that it was absolutely necessary to have a Prince of the Blood leading the *parti* if it was to stand a chance of achieving its wider objectives. A new envoy, Don Antonio Sarmiento,¹³⁰ was consequently given full powers to negotiate a deal on behalf of Brussels, Madrid and Vienna, and instructed to get Soissons' signature by any means possible. Sarmiento was given full powers to make further concessions without prior approval. Don Miguel de Salamanca was simultaneously sent to the Empire to press for the Emperor to allow Piccolomini to bring his army in support of the French rebels. The recent Imperial successes against Banér had raised hopes that significant support could now be given for the war in Flanders.¹³¹

On 30 April, Soissons, alongside Bouillon and Guise, rewarded years of secret diplomacy and agitation, by signing a treaty with Sarmiento composed of thirty-one un-numbered articles. In accordance with the articles signed by Bouillon on 10 March, and in view of the failure of the plots on Péronne and Mont-Olympe, Sedan itself was explicitly agreed as the point of invasion.¹³² The decision of the King's cousin to enter an alliance with Spain had finally been taken, but only after Richelieu and the King had instigated a series of aggressive actions from Paris, enabling him,

¹²⁹ There was much talk in Brussels of the prospects for including Soissons in a revised treaty during April: Consultas of Don Antonio Sarmiento and Virigilio Malvezzi of the 17th and 18th in BL Add. 14000, fo.557v. and fo.558v.; *ibid.*, fo.561, Cardinal-Infante's instructions to Sarmiento, 23 Apr. 1641. These instructions are strikingly similar to those given to the abbé de Mercy in November 1639, which also emphasised the benefits of obtaining a Prince of the Blood: BN Espagnol 144, fo.4.

¹³⁰ Don Antonio Sarmiento de Acuña, comte de Crescente, chevalier d'Alcantara, son of Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, comte de Gondomar.

¹³¹ AN R2 58, un-numbered item, Diego de La Torre to Bouillon and Guise, 20 Apr.; AGRB T100 vol.228, fo.249, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 6 Apr.; *ibid.*, fo.300, 'Instruccion de lo que vos Don Miguel de Salamanca...haveis de llevar entendido en la visita y negoçiaçiones a que os embio con el Emp'or, y otros Principes de Alemania', 9 Apr. 1641.

¹³² A French original of the treaty is in BN N.a.f. 29.

albeit tenuously, to maintain his claims that he was undertaking an essentially defensive response.¹³³

Signed on the same day, moreover, were bilateral articles concerning Soissons alone. It confirmed his pension – set at 6,000 escus per month – as well the promise of the King of Spain to protect the goods of the *maison de Soissons*, and to ensure his restoration in the event of a general peace. In the final clause was raised the issue of the regency, explaining that, if the ‘Roy tres chrestien’ should die, it would ‘beaucoup alterer les choses en France’ such that Soissons would be of greater use inside the country, ‘tant pour le service de la Royne tres Chrestienne que de Mess’rs ses enfans comme pour la bonne administration des affaires de ceste corone la’. In this case he would be free to re-enter France to find the Queen at Paris or wherever else in the Kingdom she may be, after which he promised to ‘faire son possible pour procurer la paix generale et union des deux Coronnes’.¹³⁴

¹³³ Several people awarded themselves the credit for persuading Soissons to rebel. Guise did so, later in 1641: BN Espagnol 144, fo.8, ‘Instruction pour l’abbé de Mercy’, 20 Sept. 1641. Mercy did likewise in his account of these events penned nearly thirty years later: BN Français 16391, fos.297-435, ‘Mémoires sur la naissance et les actions de tous les grands Capitaines de nostre siècle’, abbé de Mercy, 1670, especially fos.325-6.

¹³⁴ AGRB T100 vol.653, fo.142, ‘Articles accordés de la part de Sa Majesté Catholique a tres haut et tres puissant prince Louis de Bourbon conte de Soissons...’. This document is notably absent from the set in BN N.a.f. 29.

The gathering storm

Faction building

Behind all the public rhetoric, therefore, lay the regency issue. As outlined back in 1639 by Martelli,¹³⁵ Soissons and Anne of Austria were aligned. The 30th April deal had been negotiated with Sarmiento, a close companion of Madame de Chevreuse who still operated under Anne of Austria's *aegis*.¹³⁶ Members of her household, Bailleul and Mesmes, had been implicated in his bid to co-ordinate Soissons' opposition with Parlement. President Bailleul in particular was the chancellor of Anne's household and his wife had many friends in Anne's entourage, some of whom, such as St. Louis, Richelieu had sought to remove earlier in the year, around the same time as Bailleul was exiled.¹³⁷ De Thou, a known intermediary between Anne and Chevreuse, was a close associate and frequent visitor of Soissons and Bouillon at Sedan, while also acting as a conduit for relations between radical agents of Soissons and Orléans: Saint-Ybard, Varicarville and Montrésor.¹³⁸ At court, Soissons also had the allegiance of Cinq-Mars, who was now fully committed to the

¹³⁵ See above pp.37-8, regarding the paper presented by Martelli in Madrid.

¹³⁶ See above pp.34-5.

¹³⁷ BN Français 15611, fo.31, Arnaud to Barillon, 13 Feb. 1641. Suspicions regarding Bailleul's conduct had been reported to Richelieu in 1638, which he in turn relayed to the King to add further weight to existing evidence of his intrigues: AAE MD 831, fo.16, Carré to Richelieu, 7 Aug. 1638; *ibid.*, fo.47, Richelieu to Louis XIII, 18 Aug. 1638.

¹³⁸ De Thou's correspondence with Soissons strongly suggests that he was engaged in the conspiracies. His correspondence with Saint-Ybard shows him arranging clandestine meetings, forwarding letters from Montrésor to, and obtaining money for, Saint-Ybard during the latter's period of disgrace in the Dutch Provinces between approximately 1639 and 1641. For de Thou's correspondence, see: BN Français 15620, fos.35-71 (from Soissons) and fos.117-131 (from Saint-Ybard); Campion, *Lettres*, pp.113-117 (from Campion); BN NAF 5130, fos.104-5, letters of Soissons, and fo.102, letter of Bouillon, 4 Aug. 1638. The fullest depiction of de Thou's familial links is in, J.Delatour, "Les armes en main et les larmes aux yeux", le procès de Cinq-Mars et de Thou', in Y.-M. Bercé (ed.), *Les Procès Politiques (XIV-XVII siècle)* (Rome, 2007), 351-93.

downfall of Richelieu, and to whom figures such as de Thou and Fontrailles were attaching themselves.¹³⁹

There were also many members of the King's household who were clients of Soissons. As Campion had written in November 1636, 'Vous avez tant de créatures dans la Maison du Roy, et dans ses troupes, que vous n'y estes pas moins aimé que chez vous'; a message he reiterated during a visit to the Court in July 1639.¹⁴⁰ This was largely as a result of his position as *grand maître*, which gave him the authority to influence the disposal of many offices close to the King's person. A clear example of the embedding of Soissons' clients was that of the baron de Mézières, who, as well as being Soissons' chamberlain, was also a gentleman of the King's chamber. Many members of Mézières' extended family also held office in the King's household.¹⁴¹ Having access to the King's person, and the ability to position clients around the King, were the most vital modes of obtaining political influence and merit. Soissons may be categorised as Richelieu's most potent enemy, for he could contest the Cardinal's authority on this most crucial territory.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Fontrailles, *Relation*, pp.246-8.

¹⁴⁰ Campion, *Lettres*, p.39, Campion to Soissons, 14 Nov. 1636, and p.68, Campion to Soissons, 1 July 1639.

¹⁴¹ S. de Laverny, *Les domestiques commenseaux du roi de France au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 2002), p.265. We lack a study of the King's household that enables us to analyse the factional politics and functioning of patronage therein. Soissons' role as *grand maître* was clearly more than a mere "rubber-stamping" of candidates already decided by Richelieu or the King, as he had been receiving visits during his time at Sedan from members at court seeking his imprimatur, a practice that the King forbade in February 1641. Many documents relating to the King's household were later found in his lodgings at Sedan: Siri, *Mercure*, i, 227; BN Italien 1817, p.436, Correr to Doge, 5 Feb. 1641; AN 273 AP 178 Dossier 2, 'Extrait des registres du Greffier du Baillage de Sedan', 6 July 1641.

¹⁴² There is a substantial historiography discussing in the theoretical importance of personal interaction with the King within the political culture of early modern France, though there has been a notable lack of research into issues of physical access to Louis XIII and the functioning of his court. See, among others: R. Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France*, (Oxford, 1988); J.M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, royal service and the making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor, 1996); J. Duindam, *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court* (Amsterdam, 1995).

The Princes continued to send word across France of their decision to rebel, in order to enlist support. They chose as their slogan, ‘vires acquirit eundo’ (they shall gather momentum as they go) and as their banner the *soleil levant*, which symbolised the Dauphin, and the re-emergence of royal authority from behind the shadow of the Cardinal.¹⁴³ Most important of all, was the bid to enlist the King’s brother.

On 5 May, Modène and Guise despatched letters inviting the duc d’Orléans to join the rebellion as its nominal head. These letters were carried by a former member of Orléans’ household, the sieur de Vauselle,¹⁴⁴ but instead of going to Blois to fulfil his commission, Vauselle stopped at Paris to divulge the scheme to Richelieu. The Cardinal spotted an opportunity to test Gaston, while still using the letters to incriminate Guise. He therefore devised an elaborate scheme whereby Vauselle travelled to Blois to deliver the letters to Gaston, as per his original instructions. Gaston, having been apprised of Richelieu’s plan, took Vauselle captive and sent the letters to the King. Gaston, still following Richelieu’s script, then arranged for three of his guards to take Vauselle to Paris as a prisoner, but to allow him to escape three leagues from Blois (supposedly protecting Gaston from claims that he had betrayed a loyal servant). Vauselle then delivered himself to Chavigny, who placed him in the

¹⁴³ BN Français 15611, fo.166, Arnaud to Barillon, 3 July 1641. ‘Vires acquirit eundo’, which translates as ‘gathering strength as it goes’, is an oft-misused slogan lifted from the *Aeneid* where it refers to the spreading of rumours concerning the affair of Dido and Aeneas: Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. C. Day Lewis (Oxford, 1986), book iv, line 175. See also the untitled account of proceedings in Parlement on 5 July 1641, in C. de Bordeille, comte de Montrésor, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Sambix (2 vols.; Cologne, 1723), ii, 370-4, which mentions the *soleil levant* emblem on their banners. In 1631, the duc d’Orléans, then heir to the throne, had been described as the *soleil levant*: M. Gachard, *Histoire Diplomatique et Politique de Pierre-Paul Rubens* (Brussels, 1877), p.213, Rubens to Olivares, 1 Aug. 1631. Louis XIII was also represented as the *soleil levant* in visual propaganda during the time of Concini’s downfall, where the latter was symbolised by the moon descending into darkness. See the engraving reproduced in P. Érlanger, *Richelieu* (3 vols.; Paris, 1967-70) i, 96.

¹⁴⁴ Jean-Baptiste l’Hermite, sieur de Vauselle, a minor playwright and genealogist who had passed from the service of Orléans to that of Modène. His older brother was Tristan l’Hermite, the more renowned author, who had spent many years in Orléans’s service, and who had also become attached to Modène and Guise: *Oeuvres de Tristan l’Hermite*, ed. J. Serroy (5 vols.; Paris, 1999-ongoing), i, 21-4.

Château de Vincennes, the public story being that Vauselle had been re-captured. Vauselle was interrogated in the same fashion as the other prisoners involved in this affair, on 7 June.¹⁴⁵ This elaborate scheme did not fool everyone,¹⁴⁶ but it did serve Orléans' 'fantaisie' of remaining innocent in the eyes of the world, assuring Richelieu and the King of his fidelity, while simultaneously concealing Vauselle's treachery.¹⁴⁷

The extant correspondence relating to the Vauselle affair appears to show Orléans fully compliant with Richelieu's scheme, even revelling in the game of deception;¹⁴⁸ but we should be wary of taking his words at face value. While he did not throw in his lot with the rebels, the duke was sympathetic to Soissons' cause and remained aloof from Richelieu. Moreover, it seems that the virulent anti-Cardinalist, Montrésor, was regaining some of the influence he had held over Orléans in 1636, and was trying to engage him in the Sedan rebellion.¹⁴⁹ Additionally, the Princes at Sedan believed that Orléans had arrested Vauselle merely for appearances' sake, and were certain that he would still support them.¹⁵⁰ The general belief at Court was similar,

¹⁴⁵ There are many letters relating to this affair in the Paris archives. A reasonable account, which provides many of the key references can be found in Chardon, *Nouveaux Documents*, pp.97-112, though he unjustly condemns Vauselle. He was certainly a traitor to his fellow conspirators, but no one's blood was spilled as a result.

¹⁴⁶ Arnaud expressed strong suspicions about the affair: BN Français 15611, fo.121, 29 May 1641.

¹⁴⁷ On the steps taken to protect Gaston's reputation from further damage, see: Avenel, vi, 795, Richelieu to Chavigny, 20 May; AAE CP Portugal 1, fo.34, Chavigny to Richelieu, 26 May 1641.

¹⁴⁸ 'l'homme [Vauselle] est sauvé et toute la France croira que c'est à mon insu': Orléans to Goulas, late May 1641, quoted in Dethans, *Gaston d'Orléans*, p.256.

¹⁴⁹ N. Goulas, *Mémoires*, ed. C. Constant (3 vols.; Paris, 1879-1882), i, 349-50. Note that Montrésor does not mention this in his own memoirs, claiming instead to have been in self-imposed exile after Gaston's accommodation of 1637, until approximately 1643: C. de Bordeille, comte de Montrésor, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, iii, 217-27. Montrésor was much more active in the conspiracies of 1641 and 1642 than his memoirs suggest. Mazarin was, for example, told by Gaston that Montrésor had been involved in the Cinq-Mars conspiracy: AAE MD 288, Mazarin letter, 22 Jul. 1642. Montrésor later denied this claim but admitted in the process to having been shown the Spanish treaty by Gaston that spring: Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), ii, pp.50-9, 'Discours par Monsieur de Montrésor touchant sa prison'. In addition, Montrésor made attempts to visit Châteauneuf during his house arrest at Angoulême during the winter of 1641-1642, accompanied by de Thou and Bourdeilles: AAE MD 1476, fo.60, Lamont to Chavigny, 25 Nov. 1642.

¹⁵⁰ AAE MD 838, fo. 237v., Interrogation of Anne Gobert, 8 June 1641.

where it was rumoured that, in a bid to prevent Orléans' active participation in the rebellion, Richelieu was offering concessions regarding the possible return of his wife, who was then in Brussels.¹⁵¹ With the birth of the King's second son in 1640, the prospect of Orléans being reunited with his wife was more palatable.

Other messages were being sent from Sedan to enlist support within France, many of which were also intercepted.¹⁵² Clearly Richelieu was well-informed about the activities of the Princes, perhaps also through Vauselle, such that he was able to prevent the Princes from significantly broadening their support in advance of commencing their military campaign. The Princes' failure to obtain greater open support does not necessarily, therefore, reflect lack of sympathy across France, as some have suggested, but more likely it was due to the success that Richelieu achieved in the game of informational cat-and-mouse.

The Army of the Princes

Under the 30 April treaty, an army of 10,000 infantry and 4,500 cavalry was to be formed. The Sedan Princes were to levy 7,000 of the infantry and all of the cavalry, using Spanish money. The Cardinal-Infant was to provide the additional 3,000 infantry during the course of May, to consist of experienced veterans. Should the Princes manage to recruit the further 3,000 troops themselves, however, the Cardinal-Infante would be permitted to withdraw his troops. Piccolomini was then to

¹⁵¹ BN Italien 1818, p.26, Giustiniani to Doge, 2 June 1641. In April 1641, Marguerite had sent the baron de Watteville to see Richelieu. She was pressing particularly hard at this time to be given permission to return to France: AAE CP Pays-Bas Espagnols 14, fo.137, 'Instruction pour Monsieur le baron de Watteville par la Princesse Marguerite', 13 Apr. 1641; G. Morizet, 'La princesse Marguerite de Lorraine', *Annales de l'Est*, 17 (1899), 337-79.

¹⁵² BN Italien 1818, p.10, Giustiniani and Correr to Doge, 21 May 1641.

bring his army to join under Soissons' ultimate command, though its size and time of arrival were not stated. On forwarding a copy of the treaty to Philip IV, however, the Cardinal-Infante explained that the Emperor had agreed to provide approximately 10,000 troops.¹⁵³ In view of Châtillon's gathering army, General Beck was to arrive in early May, with at least 2,000 troops, in order temporarily to ensure Sedan's safety while the Princes' army was being constructed.¹⁵⁴

The recruitment process was severely hampered by lack of money. The funding due from the Spanish was to be paid in three instalments: one up-front, the second on 20 May, and a third to follow.¹⁵⁵ The actual amounts to be paid were, unusually, not precisely defined in the treaty. Instead, it was stipulated that the Princes would receive the same amount of money for each soldier they levied, as was being paid for each of the Spanish and Imperial troops levied to serve in Flanders that year. The appropriate rate was made clear during later talks as 40 *pattacons* per cavalryman and 8 per infantryman. The payments were delayed, however, due to the untimely bankruptcy of the lynchpin of the Spanish banking system in Antwerp, Antoine Piquinotti, which for most of May prevented Brussels from being able to cash

¹⁵³ AGRB T100 vol.229, fo.119, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 21 May 1641.

¹⁵⁴ BN N.a.f. 29, item 5, 'Articles accordés', 30 Apr. 1641, [un-numbered] articles three, four and nine. Saumières states that the treaty was ratified in Brussels in May and brought back to Sedan by the sieur de Beauvau, at which point it stipulated that the Spanish and Imperials would each provide 7,000 troops by the end of June: Saumières, *Mémoires*, pp.53-4. His numbers, however, seem highly dubious: not only is it highly unlikely that such a major redefinition of Brussels' obligations - an increase from 3,000 to 7,000 troops - would have been negotiated without the presence of Soissons or Bouillon, but such an increased commitment is not mentioned anywhere in the subsequent correspondence and would have been contrary to the Cardinal-Infante's desire to minimise his obligations with a view to basing the enterprise primarily on Imperial man-power. No copy of the 30th April treaty has yet been found in the Brussels archives.

¹⁵⁵ BN Na.f. 29, item 5, second article, though this may also have been subject to alterations during May negotiations in Brussels. It is, for example, stated slightly differently in BN Espagnol 144, fo.8, 'Instruction pour l'abbé de Mercy', 20 Sept. 1641, as three instalments due in May, June and July respectively.

any letters of credit sent from Madrid.¹⁵⁶ In addition, the Princes found it difficult to levy troops at the rate paid, and pressed for significant increases.¹⁵⁷

Salignac, Campion and the sieur de Beauvau¹⁵⁸ travelled to Brussels to press for receipt of the funds, as well as to liaise with the many Liègeois colonels who had arrived there to receive the Princes' commissions.¹⁵⁹ They were joined by Guise himself in late May. Meanwhile Madame de Chevreuse was making representations to both Brussels and Madrid on Soissons' behalf. She used her 'tout pouvoir' over the influential Sarmiento to persuade him to write to Olivares urging extra assistance in the project. Despite this, Campion complained on 3 June that, in order to press ahead with the commissioning of troops from Liège, he had no choice but to rely on Soissons' own money, supplemented by sums which he himself had borrowed.¹⁶⁰ The Paris ministry itself was well-aware of the financial problems faced by the Brussels government, and hoped that financial necessity would force the Sedan Princes to reconcile themselves with the King.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ BN Français 15611, fo.141v, Arnaud to Barillon, 16 June 1641. On the Piquinotti banking family and the Spanish asiento system, see, A. Dominguez Ortiz, *Politica y Hacienda de Felipe IV* (Madrid, 1960), pp. 92-101, 115-6.

¹⁵⁷ AGRB T100 vol.229, fo.192, Cardinal Infante to Philip IV, 3 June 1641. The issue is also discussed in a *consulta* drawn up by Roose, Malvezzi and Sarmiento in Brussels on 22 May, wherein they recommend granting the increase: BL Add 14000, fo.564.

¹⁵⁸ The identity of the sieur de Beauvau is unclear. The editor of the 1857 edition of Campion's *Mémoires*, suggests (p.357, n.2) that it was Henri, marquis de Beauvau, author of the *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Charles IV, duc de Lorraine et de Bar* (Cologne, 1689), but this seems unlikely given that he was in the service of the duc de Lorraine. The Beauvau family had many branches, with members in the service of both Lorraine and Bouillon, also boasting officers in the French royal armies and ecclesiastics such as the bishop of Nantes. The most likely candidate to have been representing Bouillon in Brussels was Pierre de Beauvau sieur de Villers-en-Argonne et de Marigny, as Arnaud names a 'Merigny Beavaux' as being part of Soissons' enterprise; BN Français 15611, fo.196v., Arnaud to Barillon, 28 July 1641. The same Pierre de Beauvau and his brother, Samuel, subsequently served in the King's armies under Turenne and were part of the Assembly of the Nobility in 1651.

¹⁵⁹ AGRB T100 vol.550, item 1, Salignac to Salamanca, 22 May 1641; Saumières, *Mémoires*, pp.48-50; Campion, *Lettres*, p.86, Campion to Soissons, 25 May 1641.

¹⁶⁰ Campion, *Lettres*, p.92, Campion to Soissons, 3 June 1641.

¹⁶¹ BN Italien 1818, p.45, Giustiniani to Doge, 5 June 1641.

Even when cash was finally received from the Spanish, it was extremely difficult to transport safely. One instalment was received in Luxembourg on 11 June by Soissons' secretary, Le Roy. This consisted of 68,000 *pattacons*¹⁶² loaded onto four carts. Getting this money to Sedan represented a major challenge, due to the presence of Châtillon's army, and the movements of forces under marquis de Sourdis in Luxembourg.¹⁶³ Le Roy did not arrive at Sedan until around 25 June, and the money was only distributed on 5 and 8 July, to reimburse various officers who had already levied troops out of personal funds or credit.¹⁶⁴ A further cash instalment was received directly by Guise in Antwerp in mid-June.¹⁶⁵ That the delay in receiving Spanish money was a severe worry for the Princes is without doubt,¹⁶⁶ but the fact that much levying activity took place without up-front payment, is a testament to the credit which the Princes' names carried.

Although offering a somewhat confusing picture, there are various extant documents enabling us to understand the composition of the rebel army, and hence the

¹⁶² AN 273 AP 178, Dossier 2, un-numbered item detailing the expenses incurred during Le Roy's mission, 3 July 1641. The *Pattacon* or *Patagon* was the chief currency in the Spanish Netherlands, introduced in 1612, but were often known as 'rijksdaalder' or 'Reichsthaler' coins as they matched the international currency unit of account, which bore that name, and were used for transfers via bills of exchange. Its value was set at 18 sols, and was worth approximately 0.90 of a French *livre*.

¹⁶³ Sourdis' Luxembourg excursion is recounted in *La Prise de Cinq Fort Places* (Paris, 1641).

¹⁶⁴ AN 273 AP 178, Dossier 2.

¹⁶⁵ BN Français 15611, fo.149v., Arnaud to Barillon, 23 June; also BN Cinq-Cents de Colbert 487, fo. 217, 'Instruction pour le sieur de Salignac', 18 July. As far as can be indirectly gleaned, the money received by Le Roy on 11 June was probably the third instalment, while that received by Guise in Antwerp around 15 June was the delayed second instalment. A first instalment had must have been received in May, as the consulta of Roose, Sarmiento and Malvezzi of 22 May, states that the Princes were pressing for the second instalment. This would also explain how Salignac was able to make a substantial round of cash disbursements for troop levies in Liège during the second week of June: BL Add 14000, fo.564, 'Copia de la consulta en que concurrieron el Presiden Rosse, Don Antonio Sarmiento y el Marques Virgilio Malvezzi', 22 May 1641; AN 273 AP 178, Dossier 3, various unnumbered receipts and accounts.

¹⁶⁶ The issue of delayed payment was central to the later complaints of Bouillon and Guise against the Spanish: BN Cinq-Cents de Colbert 487, fo. 217v., 'Instruction pour le sieur de Salignac', 18 July 1641; BN Espagnol 144, fo.8, 'Instruction pour l'abbé de Mercy', 20 Sept. 1641. Campion wrote to Bouillon from Brussels at the end of May to assuage his fears that Soissons did not have sufficient money to conduct the levies; Campion, *Lettres*, p.89.

nature of the support obtained by the Princes. The available estimates suggest that the Princes raised approximately 5,000 to 6,000 infantry and around 1,800 cavalry,¹⁶⁷ levied in various territories. It is unfortunately not possible to establish the proportions of the rebel army recruited from each territory, but its chief source was Liège, which was particularly associated with the provision of cavalry, and was easily accessible from Sedan. The Princes were given free rein to recruit there, despite its supposed neutrality in the Franco-Spanish conflict. The duc de Bouillon's close ties to the principality were probably influential in brokering this; Louis XIII and Richelieu themselves had approached Bouillon, as well as his brother, Turenne, for assistance with levies in Liège just a few years previously.¹⁶⁸ Some attempts were made to levy troops within France, though these were problematic; one of their agents was, for example, arrested trying to recruit in the town of Guise itself.¹⁶⁹ Bouillon also recruited from neutral Cologne, though further details on this aspect are lacking.¹⁷⁰ There were also significant contingents from Bouillon's own territories, including the garrison of Sedan, as well as a handful from the garrison of Maastricht of which Bouillon was governor.

¹⁶⁷ This number is a combination of the figures given by Ugarte and Bouillon, as well as the 3,000 additional Liègeois recruits brought by Guise shortly after 6 July: BL Add 14000, fo.572, Ugarte to Velez de Medrano, 11 July; AN R2 55, item 176, 'Relation de la bataille donné le 6 Juillet 1641'; BN Français 15611, fo.175v., Arnaud to Barillon, 14 July; BN Italien 1818, p.88, Giustiniani to Doge, 16 July.

¹⁶⁸ For recruitment in Liège in 1638, see AAE MD 257, Inventory of Richelieu's papers, fos. 89, 96, 110, 238. Bouillon had helped negotiate Liège's neutrality with the Prince-Elector of Cologne in 1640 and offered, in exchange for their assistance in 1641, to make the Liègeois exempt from all charges on the river Meuse. In 1641 he also renounced his rights to the Duchy of Bouillon in return for payment of 150,000 florins from the Liègeois, along with sole privilege to carry the title of duc de Bouillon: J. Bourelly, *Le Maréchal de Fabert* (2 vols.; Paris, 1885), i, 435; Lonchay and Cuvelier, *Correspondance*, iii, 395-6, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 24 Dec. 1641; AAE MD 287, fo.87, 'Table sommaire des lettres, mémoires et papiers d'Etat adressés ou remis cette année au Cardinal de Richelieu', summary of abbé de Mouzon's letter of 26 May 1641.

¹⁶⁹ BS FP 132, p.105, 'Memoire de feu mr le Cardinal de Richelieu pour servir contre Mr le comte de Soissons Mr le Duc de Bouillon et Guise'.

¹⁷⁰ AAE CP Pays-Bas Espagnols 14, fo.149, unsigned despatch from Brussels, 15 June 1641; also BN Français 15611, fo.149v., Arnaud to Barillon, 23 June 1641.

It is virtually impossible to clarify the origins of the majority of officers who served the Princes. There is an extant list of the names of the commanders of the various companies of their army, but it gives no further information.¹⁷¹ Some of the officers can be identified as being French, and represent the sole certified “indigenous” members of the rebellion at this early stage. The commanders of Soissons’ cavalry were the Sieur de Chavagnac and the baron de Mézières. It is unclear which Chavagnac this was, but it is almost certain he was a member of the same family that boasted Josué de Chavagnac, a Huguenot and persistent rebel, who had fought under the duc de Rohan against the Crown in the 1620s, as well as under Orléans at Castelnaudary in 1632. Many Chavagnacs were in the service of the Maison de Bouillon across the first half of the century.¹⁷² Charles de Béthizy, baron

¹⁷¹ H. Bourguignat (ed.), ‘Documents inédits sur la Bataille de La Marfée (1641)’, in *Revue d’Ardenne et d’Argonne*, 3 (1895), 77-81, re-edited as, *Documents inédits sur la Bataille de la Marfée (6 Juillet 1641)* (Sedan, 1913), pp.3-7. AN 273 AP 178 contains receipts for payments made in Brussels, Liège, Luxembourg and Sedan to various officers for levies in the Princes’ service, but this does not necessarily correlate to the location of the levies.

¹⁷² Josué de Chavagnac also took part in the 1616 rebellion of the Princes, and the Cinq-Mars conspiracy in 1642, and was perhaps the name most consistently associated with rebellion during the reign of Louis XIII. Antoine II de Chavagnac, of a cadet branch, was married to the daughter of the governor of Sedan, and was probably the Chavagnac mentioned as a captain in the town’s garrison. There are numerous references to Chavagnacs in the service of Bouillon and Turenne across the correspondence of the 1630s to 1650s: Bourguignat, *Documents inédits*; H. de La Tour d’Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne, *Lettres*, ed. S. d’Huart (Paris, 1971), pp.126, 131, 187, 192, 210, 289; J.L. Tulot (ed.), *Correspondances de Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour d’Auvergne et d’Eléonore de Bergh*, published online at URL: <http://jeanluc.tulot.pagesperso-orange.fr/Edenassau10.pdf> (31 December 2006), accessed 12 Apr. 2012, p.84, duc de Bouillon to Eléonore de Bergh, 14 July 1638.; Tulot (ed.), *Correspondance d’Elisabeth de Nassau*, p.59, Elisabeth of Nassau to duc de Bouillon, 27 Oct. 1636; *ibid.*, p.63, Charlotte de La Tour d’Auvergne to Elisabeth of Nassau, 31 Aug. 1637; *ibid.*, p.68, Elisabeth of Nassau to duc de Bouillon, 19 Jan. 1639. Accounts of the role of the Chavagnacs, as well as biographical entries relating to them, are often tainted by the use of Gaspard de Chavagnac’s memoirs, which were largely a work of fictionalisation by Courtilz de Sandras: J. Lombard, *Courttilz de Sandras et la crise du roman à la fin du grand siècle* (Paris, 1980), pp.287-94. However, Courtilz’s choice and exploitation of the Chavagnac name, serves to highlight their role as worthy of further investigation.

de Mézières, was Soissons' chamberlain and a long time servant, hailing from an influential family of Picardy.¹⁷³

Also in Soissons' service was Claude, baron du Bec, who levied troops and served as a colonel. Du Bec had taken refuge at Sedan to avoid being executed for *lese-majesté* in relation to the contentious rendition of La Capelle to the Spanish in 1636, and hailed from an illustrious family of Normandy.¹⁷⁴ In addition, Honorat-Benjamin, sieur de Beauregard, was captain of Soissons' guards, and was one of the radical influences upon him, who had assisted in drawing Soissons into the Amiens plot in 1636. He hailed from a family of Anjou.¹⁷⁵ Alexandre de Campion, was also commissioned to raise a company of troops in Soissons' name, and tried to enlist his younger brother Henri to do likewise, but Henri refused to commit on the grounds that he already had a charge in the regiment of Normandy, which he would not be able to sell at that point in the season.¹⁷⁶ The commanders of Soissons' various infantry

¹⁷³ Charles de Béthizy, seigneur de Mézières, Camp-Vermont and Ignaucourt. He had been at Sedan since at least 1637: Avenel, v, 817-8 (n.3).

¹⁷⁴ For du Bec's role in 1641 see AN 273 AP 178, Dossier 3, Extract from the registers of the Greffier du Baillage de Sedan, 6 Jul 1641. Claude was the son of René I du Bec, governor of La Capelle, and Jacqueline de Bueil, comtesse de Moret and a former mistress of Henri IV. In accounts of the 1630s, especially the surrender of La Capelle in 1636, Claude has been confused with his elder brother, René II, marquis de Vardes. René II had in fact fled to Flanders in 1631, and remained there for most of the 1630s, having been excluded from the pardon granted to d'Orléans and his followers in 1634; Avenel, IV, 632, Richelieu to Bouthiller, 18 Oct. 1634. It was Claude who surrendered the town in 1636 and was subsequently punished by Richelieu. He escaped this, however, by fleeing to Holland, before finding his way to Sedan and fighting for Soissons. In line with this interpretation, one finds that in contemporary documents, after 1633, Claude is consistently known as (the baron, or marquis) du Bec, while René II is referred to as (the marquis) de Vardes. The key sources are: Goulas, *Mémoires*, i, 224-5; E. Piette, 'Les minutes historiques d'un notaire de Vervins', *La Thiérache: bulletin de la société archéologique de Vervins*, 4 (1876), 172-199; BN Cinq-Cents de Colbert 149, fo.125, 'Restablisement de mr le marquis du Bec', 1643.

¹⁷⁵ Beauregard was seigneur de Fresne, and had been appointed captain of Soissons' guards in 1635. He appears in Nicolas de Campion's *Trois entretiens* under the pseudonym of 'Hedomene'. His son Charles-François de Beauregard, seigneur de la Lande, was attached to Jean-François de Paul Gondi, later Cardinal de Retz.

¹⁷⁶ H. de Campion, *Mémoires*, ed. M. Fumaroli (2nd ed.; Paris, 1990), pp.138-9. Henri did, however, leave the regiment of Normandy to come to Paris on his brother's encouragement, having not yet been informed of the nature of the proposal. Richelieu correctly assumed he was being drawn into Soissons' service.

companies are generally not named, but some of the names of the companies themselves relate to places inside France (such as Péronne and Boisverduin), suggesting that they originated from there. One identifiable commander, however, was Anne Pingard a long-time servant of the Soissons family as captain of the Chateau de Condé.¹⁷⁷

The identifiably French officers serving under Bouillon were Salignac, commanding a cavalry company, and Beauvau leading his guards, both of whom we have already encountered. The majority of his officers, however, were from his own territories. Some, such as lieutenant Connard or captain Bauda, had formerly been in royal service, but had now answered the call to serve Bouillon as head of the *maison de La Tour*.¹⁷⁸ The chief French officers under Guise were Modène, and Bridieu.¹⁷⁹

The picture which thus emerges is that of a group of secondary French nobility, who were loyal followers of Soissons, Bouillon and Guise, who probably also brought with them other French noblemen, their own clients and relatives. Of course, the original reasons why they became clients of these houses would tell us more about the origins of noble unrest during this time, but such analysis is outside the scope of the current study. The evidence available here suggests that these noblemen followed their masters in both royal service and rebellion; Champion, Saint-

¹⁷⁷ The Château de Condé stood in the territory of Condé-en-Brie held by the comtesse de Soissons: A. Longnon, 'Lettre sur l'origine du titre de Prince de Condé et sur la Principauté de Condé (suite et fin)', *Annuaire-bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France*, 8 (1870), 212-8.

¹⁷⁸ Connard had been in Turenne's regiment, while Bauda had been in that of Vallement: Bourguignat, *Documents inédits*, pp.4, 7; Turenne, *Lettres*, p.303, to Elisabeth of Nassau, 1 Oct. 1636; *ibid.*, p.306, to Elisabeth of Nassau, 26 Nov. 1636; *ibid.*, p.314, to Elisabeth of Nassau, 7 Apr. 1637; *ibid.*, p.315, to Elisabeth of Nassau, 12 May 1637; J. Villette, 'Deux Sedanais oubliés: Le colonel Esdras Bauda (1608-1673) et le capitaine de vaisseau Isaac Bauda (1633-1682)', *Revue historique ardennaise*, 9 (1902), 49-84.

¹⁷⁹ BN Français 22431, fo.127, Commission from duc de Guise for the baron de Modène, 10 May 1641.

Ybard and Beauregard, for example, served under Soissons during the 1635 and 1636 campaigns in Picardy, valiantly helping to impede the Spanish advance. When the time came to rebel, however, they served Soissons loyally once more.¹⁸⁰ The French nobility's attachment and loyalty to the heads of princely households was hence a significant factor in the political turbulence of this era.

On top of their own levies, and the troops due from the Habsburg powers, the Princes also had firm expectations of attracting troops from the royal armies. Bouillon expected to be able to enlist his younger brother Turenne,¹⁸¹ who would be followed by his regiment and others from his army, possibly including the comte d'Harcourt.¹⁸² There is ample evidence that Turenne took his duties to the *maison de La Tour* seriously and this had, for example, pulled him into his brother's rebellious

¹⁸⁰ The role of Campion and Beauregard in Soissons' rebellion between 1638 and 1641 can be gleaned from the current work. Saint-Ybard played a particularly prominent role in Soissons' acts of rebellion in 1636 and 1637: Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1838), pp.204-5; Henrard, *Marie de Médicis*, pp.578, 588, 591. For their services in defending France in 1635-1636, see: Campion, *Lettres*, p.14, to A.M.D.R., 6 Nov. 1635; *ibid.*, p.14, to A.M.D.R., 12 Dec. 1635; *ibid.*, p.20, to A.M.D.R., 2 July 1636; *ibid.*, p.21, to A.M.D.R., 9 July 1636; *ibid.*, p.23, to A.M.D.R., 17 July 1636; *ibid.*, p.27, to A.M.D.R., 5 Aug. 1636; *ibid.*, p.30, to A.M.D.R., 9 Aug. 1636.

¹⁸¹ Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne, was fast becoming one of France's leading generals.

¹⁸² AGRB T100 vol.550, unnumbered, Mercy to [Salamanca], 14 Aug. 1640; BL Add 14000, fo.547, 'Parecer que dio Don Antonio Sarmiento', 14 Feb. 1641; BN NAF 29, item 3, 'Points accordez avec le Sieur Duc de Bouillon', 10 Mar. 1641, article 7. Bouillon's influence over Turenne's regiment is evident: Turenne, *Lettres*, p.292, Turenne to Bouillon, 20 Mar. 1636; *ibid.*, p.298, Turenne to Elisabeth of Nassau, 28 May 1636. Henri de Guise-Lorraine, comte d'Harcourt, son of Charles I de Guise-Lorraine, duc d'Elbeuf. His elder brother, Charles II de Guise-Lorraine, duc d'Elbeuf, was an enemy of Richelieu and an exile in the service of Spain, while Henri remained a close client of the Cardinal.

activities in 1631.¹⁸³ Bouillon spoke similarly of expecting to enlist the regiment of one of his nephews.¹⁸⁴

Soissons also had many pledges of support from among acting army officers. These promises were by dint of the great credit Soissons had generated among the army of Champagne, and especially the noble volunteers who had congregated in response to the calling of the *ban et arrière ban* in 1635 and 1636.¹⁸⁵ In 1637, Soissons had claimed that a third of the King's army was devoted to him. Gassion was one of the officers in question and his support was also counted on in 1641, along with some 1,200 cavalry at his disposal.¹⁸⁶ In 1640, Bouillon wrote that, 'des Mareschaux de Camp avec troupes très considérable, nombre de Colonels et Capitaines de Cavallerie, ont promis de venir trouver Monsieur le Comte de Soissons, dès qu'il sera déclaré et montera a cheval'.¹⁸⁷ During 1640 the Princes also voiced

¹⁸³ In 1631 Bouillon had agreed for Sedan to be used as the gathering point for Gaston d'Orléans's army, before entering France in a bid to overthrow Richelieu's ministry. Turenne was sent by his elder brother to negotiate at Brussels with Orléans: Henrard, *Marie de Médicis*, pp.130-5. During the 1640s and 1650s, Turenne militated for his *maison's* primary objective of achieving a satisfactory settlement in return for Sedan. This included entry into Spanish service during the Fronde: Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects', p.374; H. de La Tour d'Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne, *Mémoires* (2 vols.; Paris, 1909), i, 142-4.

¹⁸⁴ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.265, 'Instruction pour le Sieur Secrétaire César de Chambley', duc de Bouillon, 22 July 1640; ARGB T100 vol.550, Mercy to [Salamanca], 14 Aug. 1640; BN N.a.f. 29, item 3, 'Points accordez avec le Sr Duc de Bouillon', article 7. The nephew Bouillon was referring to was probably the 20 year-old Henri-Charles de La Trémoille, son of his sister Marie and Henri de La Trémoille, duc de Thouars. Bouillon's next eldest nephew was the 16 year-old Jacques-Henri de Durfort, son of his sister Elisabeth and Guy-Aldance de Durfort. Both nephews followed Condé in rebellion during the Fronde.

¹⁸⁵ Campion, *Lettres*, p.33, Campion to M.D.R., 30 Aug. 1636; Montglat, *Mémoires*, pp.48-9; Chizay, *Mémoires*, p.267; R. Quazza, *Tommaso di Savoia-Carignano nelle campagne di Fiandra e di Francia 1635-1638* (Turin, 1941), pp.118-9, 124 and 152, n.98, quoting Saint-Maurice's despatch of 7 October; Marescot to Béthune, 13 Sept. 1636, quoted in O. Vigier, 'Une invasion en France sous Louis XIII', *Revue des questions historiques*, 12 (1894), 440-92, p.482, n.3.

¹⁸⁶ AGRB T100 vol.653, fo.252, 'Le parece que le Baron de Bec a donné sur les points proposez par l'Abbé de Mercy', n.d. [Jan./ Feb.1641]; on the claims surrounding Gassion see above p.153.

¹⁸⁷ AGRB T100 vol.652, fo.265, 'Instruction pour le Sieur Secrétaire César de Chambley', 22 July 1640.

hopes that members of La Meilleraie's army would join them due to being discontented at the conduct of the war by the ministers in Paris.¹⁸⁸

The presence of Châtillon's army in the vicinity of Sedan from early June 1641, while hampering their own activities, also presented an opportunity for the rebels to procure defections to their cause. In the middle of June, for example, Beaugard came to Châtillon's camp to meet with the marquis de Praslin.¹⁸⁹ Beaugard accused Praslin of having failed to honour a pledge made at Compiègne in 1636, to serve Soissons 'envers tous et contre tous', including the raising of Champagne in revolt. This was a 'manque de foy et de parole'. Praslin protested that his promise to Soissons had not extended to rebellion against his King. Beaugard seemingly intended to challenge Praslin to a duel, on the grounds of his dishonourable behaviour. In the end, Beaugard raised his pistol and fired two shots at the unready Praslin, before fleeing back to Sedan; in itself a dishonourable act for which he was chastised by Soissons.¹⁹⁰

Despite Praslin's resolution to remain with Châtillon's army, a captain-major in his regiment, the sieur de Chambord, dramatically defected to Sedan a few days later.¹⁹¹ This treasonous act grabbed the King's attention, and he instructed Châtillon

¹⁸⁸ AGRB T100 vol.550, unnumbered, 'Avisos de Francia', n.d. [1640], summarising information obtained from Spanish spies and servants of the duc de Bouillon.

¹⁸⁹ Roger de Choiseul, marquis de Praslin, as well as commanding a regiment in Châtillon's army, was also Louis XIII's former lieutenant-general in Champagne.

¹⁹⁰ BN Français 3765, fo.58v., Châtillon to Louis XIII, n.d. [June 1640]; BN Français 15611, fo.142v., Arnaud to Barillon, 16 June 1641; *ibid.*, fo.146, Arnaud to Barillon, 19 June 1641; N. de Brichenteau, marquis de Beauvais-Nangis, *Mémoires du marquis de Beauvais-Nangis* (Paris, 1862), pp.253-4. Praslin's original pledge at Compiègne in 1636 was part of the gathering of support in preparation for the assassination plot against Richelieu at Amiens.

¹⁹¹ Chambord commanded a company of light cavalry in Praslin's regiment.

to try Chambord for *lèse-majesté* in his council of war, along with other soldiers who had followed his lead. They were duly convicted.¹⁹²

Chambord's case was not isolated. Other "defections" from Châtillon's army are mentioned, though unquantified.¹⁹³ More intriguingly, however, Puységur mentions that there was a list in existence of those who had made promises to transfer their allegiances to the Princes once they had declared themselves. This was probably the basis for a coded Spanish despatch of 21 June reporting that the Princes had assurances that 'los principales cavos de la armada de Chatillon prometan de juntarse con ellos luego que los vean en campaña'.¹⁹⁴ Major conflicts of loyalty existed, which were expected to lead to a significant transfer of allegiances once the revolt was underway.

Harnessing the forces of popular revolt

As previously shown, the Princes had made significant contacts with, and had made great claims about, the popular revolts which had become persistent during Richelieu's ministry.¹⁹⁵

These claims were still being made in the early months of 1641. During the interrogations of suspects in relation to the plots against Mont-Olympe, Richelieu

¹⁹² BN Français 3766, fo.139, 'Abrégé' [of Châtillon's campaign], n.d.; BN Français 3765, fo.84, Louis XIII to Châtillon, 21 June 1641. Chambord's houses, one in Champagne and ten in Gizors, were ordered to be burnt down, a loss Soissons promised to make good by replacing them himself: BN Français 15611, fo.183v., Arnaud to Barillon, 17 July 1641.

¹⁹³ BN Français 15611, fo.123v., Arnaud to Barillon, 29 May 1641; *Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.5219, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 8 June 1641, reporting the transfer of allegiances of some German troops due to French failure to pay their wages.

¹⁹⁴ J. de Chastenet de Puységur, *Les Guerres du Règne de Louis XIII et la Minorité de Louis XIV* (2 vols.; Paris, 1883), i, 272; AGRB T100 vol.376, Malvezzi to Cardinal-Infante, 21 June 1641.

¹⁹⁵ See above pp.123-30.

received reports of assertions being made by the Princes that they had significant support in the provinces of Guyenne, Normandy and Languedoc.¹⁹⁶ One chronicle claimed that, for example, the people of the town of Bourges, in the Berry region, who had been struggling under the increasingly harsh fiscal régime, now saw the comte de Soissons as France's best hope of deliverance from those evils: 'le dict Prince estant seul capable de remettre les peuples en liberté opressez par la levée incroyable des deniers, des tailles, subsistances, emprunts, taxes d'aides, sol pour livre et avec infinités d'espèces de maltôtes qui ont rendu la ville de Bourges, sans considération de tous ces beaux privilèges, en une grand nécessité et les habitans dans une contrainte de ne pouvoir sortir, dans la crainte d'estre emprisonnez'.¹⁹⁷ Intriguingly, Le Large's expressions of a yearning for 'liberté' also echo some of the spirit of anti-tyrannical struggle which underpins much of the extant writings of the Princes and their supporters such as Montrésor and Campion, suggesting this response to Richelieu's rule was shared by lesser élites.¹⁹⁸ The factors binding the Sedan Princes with wider discontent perhaps encompassed ideological solidarities, as well as pragmatic considerations.

Another town experiencing hardship and renewed unrest in the wake of attempts to implement the *sol pour livre*, Montauban, even went so far as to send representatives to see Soissons so as to pledge their support.¹⁹⁹ In the south,

¹⁹⁶ BS FP132, p.117, 'Factions dans les provinces'.

¹⁹⁷ *Chroniques berrichonnes du XVIIe siècle: Journal des choses mémorables arrivées en la ville de Bourges et autres lieux de la province 1621-1694*, ed. H. Jongleux (Bourges, 1881), p.38.

¹⁹⁸ See above pp.56-68.

¹⁹⁹ AAE MD 839, fo.83, Carré to Richelieu, 19 July 1641. For a report of the unrest, see: BN Français 15611, fo.93v., Arnaud to Barillon, 28 Apr. 1641.

moreover, there were reports that some ‘qui faisant semblant de sarmer...pour service de sa majeste, s’estoient en effect armés pour le comte de Soissons’.²⁰⁰

Once a rebellion was triggered, much of France was likely to seize the opportunity to rebel, seeking a redress of its grievances, crippling the government in the same way that the revolts of Catalonia and Portugal were crippling Olivares’ Spain.²⁰¹ As Mathieu de Morgues wrote in April, ‘si quelque coing de la france commence a s’esmouvoir tout le reste suivra’.²⁰²

Official response

While the Princes were busy levying troops, and building alliances, Richelieu was preparing to bring legal proceedings against them. Substantial evidence had been gathered pertaining to the plots on Mont-Olympe in April, consisting chiefly of intercepted letters and information obtained from prisoners at Vincennes. By June, Pierre Séguier was working with these proofs to bring the case before Parlement.²⁰³ However the extent to which these proceedings would be pursued was not clear.

Richelieu’s anxieties about the nascent rebellion continued to grow. The ferment across Guyenne and Normandy, the factions at Court, and the military

²⁰⁰ AAE MD 1476, fo.54, Lamont to Chavigny, 3 May 1642.

²⁰¹ Siri, *Mercure*, i, 228. Such commentary on the potentially explosive situation in France was rife among the ministers in Brussels. See, for example: BL Add 14000, fo.543v., ‘Papel en que Don Miguel de Salamanca representa a su A. el señor Infante el estado de la materia secreta con los Principes que estan en Sedan’, 5 Jan. 1641; AGRB T100 vol.572, fo.58, memo by Chambley, n.d. [Feb. 1641].

²⁰² AMB CC 113, fo.188v., Morgues to Chifflet, 13 Apr. 1641.

²⁰³ The main sources for the interrogations and legal proceedings are: AAE MD 838 fos.237-9v.; AAE MD 839, fos.7-8, 10-12, 85; AAE MD 840, fos.71, 72, 90; AAE MD 841, fos.142-3; BS FP 132, pp.105-225; O. Talon, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujolat, vi, 76-80. There is also a memorandum by Séguier concerning the preparations: BN Français 18431, fo.418, ‘Minutte de lettre de monseigneur a Son Eminence’, n.d. [1641].

preparations at Sedan, along with the failure of the conspirators to respond to recent reconciliation offers, now meant that the forthcoming campaign season was likely to be derailed by civil war. As Siri wrote, ‘Il prévoyait qu’au premier succès qu’auroit le Comte, ils se rangeroient en foule autour de lui’.²⁰⁴

The wider European situation remained highly fragile. Intelligence had continued to suggest that the Prince of Orange secretly supported his nephew, Bouillon, despite protestations to the contrary when questioned by French representatives. The Cardinal was clearly frustrated that despite the evidence emerging from the Mont-Olympe affair, Orange seemed unwilling to accept that Bouillon was in league with the common enemy, and persisted in using the supposed lack of evidence as a pretext for inaction.²⁰⁵ This understandably cultivated Richelieu’s anxiety that Orange would put family first and come to Bouillon’s defence if necessary. Moreover, he still feared that Bouillon was attempting to sway his uncle into listening to Spanish overtures for a truce.²⁰⁶ So it was with some relief that the French agent, La Tuillerie, reported on 2 June that the Prince of Orange had written a letter his nephew ‘plaine de remontrances et de plaintes’. Bouillon’s appointments – the governorship of Maastricht and his cavalry regiment – were being refused inside the Dutch States.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Siri, *Mercure*, i, 238.

²⁰⁵ Père Carré reported rumours in London that the Prince of Orange was secretly favouring the Sedan Princes: AAE CP Angleterre 48, fo.331, 9 May 1641. Richelieu was greatly-concerned: Siri, *Mercure*, i, 238; Avenel, vi, 800, Richelieu to Chavigny, 30 May 1641.

²⁰⁶ BN Français 15611, fo.109v, Arnaud to Barillon, 19 May 1641; *ibid.*, fo.123, Arnaud to Barillon, 29 May 1641. Also, on the issue of a potential Dutch-Spanish truce, see above pp.140, 164 (n.117).

²⁰⁷ AAE MD 287, fos.137-137v., Summary of papers in Richelieu’s cabinet for 1641, letter of La Tuillerie, 2 June 1641. The same message was reinforced in his letter of 19 June 1641; *ibid.*, fo.137v.

The situation in the Empire was also a cause for deep concern, with news that Banér had died on 10 May, causing a hiatus in leadership of the depleted Swedish forces, upon which Richelieu was depending to tie down the Emperor's armies. Torstensson,²⁰⁸ Banér's replacement, had experienced considerable difficulty taking over command in the face of mutinies by his colonels. The Emperor was eager to grasp this opportunity to conclude a truce with the Swedes, and was encouraged by the re-emergence of discontent among the officers of Banér's army.²⁰⁹ To compensate for this, great efforts were being made by France to help maintain the strength of the confederate German army under Guébriant, though significant officer unrest was also threatening to reduce the effectiveness of this force as well.²¹⁰ Moreover, the 1638 Franco-Swedish alliance had expired in March, and a satisfactory basis for a renewal had yet to be reached.

Concerns also persisted surrounding financial matters. Proceedings in the Assembly of the Clergy at Mantes continued, such that funds essential to the war effort were as yet not agreed. By 27 May the majority of the assembly had come down in favour of granting the sum of 5.55 million *livres* to the King, but still the archbishops of Sens and Toulouse, refused to sign the deal. They were seconded by the bishops of Evreux, Maillezais, Bazas, and Toulon, all of whom walked out in order to terminate the sitting. These men wanted to reduce the sum yet further.

²⁰⁸ General Lennart Torstensson.

²⁰⁹ Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, pp.627-9.

²¹⁰ Jean-Baptiste Budes, Comte de Guébriant. BN Italien 1817, p.695, Correr and Giustiniani to Doge, 13 May 1641; BN Italien 1818, p.49, Giustiniani to Doge, 5 June 1641. For the problems of controlling this army around this time: Parrott, *Richelieu's Army*, pp.293-7.

On 3 June 1641 the assembly was addressed by the sieur d'Hémery,²¹¹ who attacked Sens and Toulouse, for their actions, 'tesmoignans un dessein ouvert de s'opposer au Bien de l'État et à la gloire, des armes du Roy'. The King, he announced, was instructing them to leave Mantes altogether and to retire to their dioceses, along with those bishops who had followed their exit on 27 May. *Lettres de cachet* were duly issued. The assembly protested to the King about this action, but to no avail, and thereafter offered little resistance, thanks to firm management by Richelieu's clients. As with their putative alliance with Parlement, the alliance of the Princes at Sedan with discontented clergymen had been dealt a major blow. The money granted to the Crown was not finally signed off, however, until 14 August, and the total sum obtained never fulfilled Richelieu's original expectations.²¹²

Nothing, however, troubled Richelieu more than his doubts about the King's personal support for him, particularly given the calls for his dismissal. The Cardinal was particularly disturbed by reports that during his (sham) illness, of the first week of May, Louis had spoken openly at court of conversations, which he had had with the deceased Superintendent of Finances, Claude de Bullion, back in 1640; during these the latter had tried to persuade Louis of the need to make peace, implying that Richelieu was counselling the continuation of war out of self-interest. Bullion had, according to Louis, suggested that, if he did conclude peace, it would be possible to raise significantly greater quantities of money for the King. According to the Venetian ambassador, Richelieu was not sure what to believe: either these conversations were real, and the King had kept them hidden from him for several

²¹¹ Michel Particelli, sieur d'Hémery, *intendant des finances*.

²¹² BN Dupuy 590, fos.164-7v., 'Relation de ce qui s'est passé à Mantes en l'Assemblée de Mrs du Clergé'; Griffet, iii, 323-6.

months (suggesting the emergence of moves from amongst his own ministers to oust Richelieu from government, and to sever the trust between him and the King), or that they were fictions devised to humiliate and agitate him at this time of stress.²¹³ It should be noted, however, that Bullion had a far greater independence of mind and stronger personal relationship with the King than the other members of Richelieu's ministry, so it would not have uncharacteristic for him to make a bid to outflank Richelieu.²¹⁴

With the backdrop of the problems at the Mantes assembly during May, Richelieu would have seen Louis' remarks as public expressions of his discontent at his minister's failure to bring an end to the costly war, now entering its seventh campaign season. Through the information extracted from the prisoners at Vincennes, Richelieu was well aware that Soissons, Bouillon and Guise were assuming the mantle of 'princes ligués et confédérés pour la paix universelle', as part of a bid to reconcile France with Spain, and bring peace to Europe, thus becoming 'arbitres de la chrestienté'.²¹⁵ How confident was he now that Louis, if pushed, would not ditch him in favour of their framework for peace and financial recovery?

In May, the legal proceedings against the duc de Vendôme over the case of the two hermits finally reached their conclusion. The judgement of Vendôme took place on 17 May 1641, during the same period as legal proceedings against the Princes at Sedan were being prepared, and it thus represented an opportunity to send further signals to them. The proceedings were interrupted, however, when the King was

²¹³ BN Italien 1817, p.678, Correr to Doge, 7 May; *ibid.*, p.691, Giustiniani to Doge 13 May 1641.

²¹⁴ An assessment of Bullion's role in government and character can be found in Ranum, *Councillors*, pp.143-65.

²¹⁵ BS FP 132, pp.119-21, undated and untitled memo by Richelieu concerning the Princes' dealings with the Spanish gleaned from interrogations of prisoners concerning the Mont-Olympe affair.

handed a letter from Richelieu asking him not to apply the death penalty, as it was a matter concerning his own personal safety rather than that of the King. After a lengthy deliberation with Séguier, the King announced his decision to suspend the judgement indefinitely, providing that Vendôme's conduct remained acceptable.²¹⁶

Richelieu's letter represented a blatant attempt to manipulate public opinion, so much so that it had even been predicted by some observers. The evidence against Vendôme was patently weak, so to have allowed the legal proceedings to run their full course would have done further damage to Richelieu's reputation. Richelieu's manoeuvre was clearly an attempt to assuage those critics who accused the Cardinal of waging an unjust agenda of persecution against the royal blood.²¹⁷ Moreover, Vendôme had influence in Normandy, and other parts of France, which might be used to dangerous effect in the general climate of peasant unrest and noble rebellion. The solution achieved on 17 May meant that Vendôme and his family would remain in suspense. They were not subject to further legal prosecution, but neither would they be permitted to return to court.

Those at Sedan were unlikely to have seen the events of 17 May as an inducement to settle with Richelieu. For Soissons, who had persistently fought to maintain his status vis-à-vis the Cardinal, and whose entourage was in thrall to the ethos of *gloire* and honour, such treatment of a person of royal blood could only further persuade him that there could be no *modus vivendi* in a France dominated by Richelieu.

²¹⁶ BN Français 15611, fo.160, Arnaud to Barillon, 17 May 1641; BN Dupuy 590, fos.130-2v., which is the basis of most subsequent accounts and includes a copy of Richelieu's letter.

²¹⁷ BN Italien 1817, p.402, Correr to Doge, 22 Jan 1641; *ibid.*, pp.682-4, Correr and Giustiniani to Doge, 7 May 1641.

On 8 June the King's declaration was registered in the Parlement of Dijon, exposing the Princes' conspiracies, which aimed to 'faire troubler le repos de notre État'. The text relayed at considerable length the broad outlines of conspiracy emanating from both Sedan and in England. All of their activities, it added, were nevertheless 'impuissans'. A number of open letters, variants on this declaration, were produced in the following days, all of which placed emphasis on the treasonable nature of the rebels' activities, while down-playing any sense of genuine threat to the King's interests.²¹⁸ By the middle of the month the proposal to declare Bouillon and Guise guilty of *lese-majesté* was under discussion at the King's council,²¹⁹ and on 5 July a warrant for their arrest was registered in Parlement.²²⁰

Although the ministers had been talking of Soissons as a criminal for months, he was omitted from these proceedings.²²¹ The intention was to try to separate him from his accomplices, through a combination of threats and offers of accommodation, with the aim of averting the possible rebellion. It was also a reflection of Soissons' privileged status; as a Prince of the Blood he was given greater leeway to settle his differences with the Crown. In any event, criminal proceedings against a member of the extended royal family were not to be undertaken lightly. A glance at the catalogue for the Dupuy collection in the Bibliothèque Nationale, suffices to demonstrate efforts made by Richelieu and Séguier to establish a legal basis on which to try a Prince of

²¹⁸ This is reproduced in Avenel, vi, pp.808-13. The other versions include: AAE MD 286, fo.265, Louis XIII to Princess Marie, 11 June; BL Add 20853, fo.115, 'Advis du Roy au Mareschal de Vitry sur les desseins du Comte de Soissons le 12 June'; *Lettre de Louis XIII aux magistrats d'Amiens, sur la découverte d'une traité conclu entre le comte de Soissons et Espagne*, 11 June, in *Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France*, 1er série, iii (Paris, 1856), pp.73-6.

²¹⁹ BN Italien 1818, Giustiniani to Doge, 18 June 1641, p.44.

²²⁰ *Arrest de la Cour de Parlement, contre les Princes unis & Confederez à Sedan. Avec deffenses à tous les Sujets du Roy, de quelque qualité qu'ils soient, de les suivre, ny favoriser* (Paris, 1641).

²²¹ BN Italien 1817, p.515, Correr to Doge, 5 Mar 1641.

the Blood for crimes against the state. There are volumes dated 1637 (MS 483-6), 1639 (MS 524), 1640 (MS 539) and 1641 (MS 552), all of which are the product of research conducted by Dupuy into high profile cases involving Princes of the Blood during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In his memoirs, Richelieu went to great lengths to demonstrate that they were not above the law, and had in fact been the subject of criminal proceedings on many previous occasions.²²² The issue was something of an obsession for him.

The extent of Richelieu's efforts in this regard only serve, however, to underline the elevated status of the Princes of the Blood, and the likely existence of many influential members of the public who would see such proceedings as an assault on the very principles of the social order. The *princes du sang* shared in the King's semi-divine status and, through the rigid rules of succession effectively formed a separate caste elevated above the upper echelons of the nobility.²²³

Châtillon's campaign

As the situation moved towards military confrontation with Sedan, Richelieu became reliant upon Châtillon's leadership of the Army of Champagne. Richelieu soon came to doubt Châtillon's handling of the campaign, however, though his own conflicting instructions were as much part of the problem as was Châtillon's tendency to act independently. On departure from Paris on 7 May, Châtillon's instructions were to wait for La Meilleraye to take Aire, before making any attempt on Sedan. In the

²²² Richelieu, *Mémoires*, xxvii, 177-9.

²²³ For a sense of the exultation of the *princes du sang* in the French social hierarchy see above p.92.

meantime he was to cut Sedan off from receiving supplies or recruits from Liège or Luxembourg. This was primarily to be achieved by taking the château de Bouillon, the key stronghold of the small duchy of Bouillon,²²⁴ which lay just to the northeast of Sedan. Sedan had two main gates: one on the French side, directly on the banks of the River Meuse; and one opening on the side facing Bouillon, with Luxembourg beyond. The latter was the natural entry point for support coming from Liège, Flanders, or the Empire. If the eastern route via Bouillon was blocked, arriving troops would have to cross into France so as to circle round to the other gate, a route which might well also be blocked by troops occupying the planes opposite Sedan.

Châtillon's orders swiftly became a bone of contention, however, when he showed no willingness to lay siege to the château de Bouillon, and instead sought authorisation to lay siege to Sedan itself. In response, Richelieu reiterated that Aire must fall before any siege of Sedan, and employed various stratagems to persuade Châtillon to move against Bouillon, but to no avail.²²⁵

Châtillon's underlying concern was that he did not have enough troops to lay siege to the château de Bouillon, whilst still being able to maintain his supply lines from attack, and prevent those in Sedan from making incursions into France (thus, by implication, blocking entry to the town from that direction). Richelieu, while criticising Châtillon's inertia, conceded that these were vital concerns. The solution, upon which Richelieu placed repeated emphasis, was the assistance due from the duc de Lorraine under the terms of the Treaty of St Germain.

²²⁴ The majority of the duchy and its castle was in the hands of the prince-bishop of Liège, though Bouillon possessed part of its southern territory and laid claim to the rest: Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects', p.2.

²²⁵ See, for example, AAE MD 1680, fo.97, Richelieu to Châtillon, 24 May 1641.

Châtillon thus resigned himself to waiting for the Lorrainer army, but Lorraine was stalling, and raised a series of complaints at Paris' treatment of him. To placate the duke, Richelieu went so far as to offer Lorraine overall command of the Army of Champagne, but to no avail.²²⁶ The result was inaction, and mutual frustration, while fruitless efforts were made to press the duc de Lorraine to fulfil his treaty obligations.²²⁷

In sharp contrast, confidence was now running high amongst the conspirators at Sedan. The retreat and death of Banér in May, resulting in disarray in the Swedish army, offered the hope of the entire collapse of the Swedish military effort. On 11 June, Piccolomini re-confirmed his commitment to joining their campaign, once he was clear of current matters in Germany. Piccolomini shared the Cardinal-Infante's view that a rebellion in France represented the best means to bring the war to a desirable end, and vowed to serve the House of Habsburg down to his last drop of blood.²²⁸ Encouraged by the prospect of Piccolomini's support, the Princes held a correspondingly dim view of Châtillon's army, which they saw as weak and unthreatening.²²⁹ They also knew that Lorraine, along with his experienced army, was in the process of reneging on the Treaty of St Germain. Virgilio Malvezzi, having been sent by the Cardinal-Infante to oversee the execution of his commitments under the 30th April treaty, had been negotiating terms for Lorraine's re-entry into Habsburg protection. The Duke was also under continual pressure from his relatives,

²²⁶ See Richelieu's letters to Châtillon in AAE MD 1680, fo.97 (24 May), fo.102 (26 May), and fo.183 (9 June 1641). Also see a memorandum of 8 June by Richelieu laying out the pros and cons of allowing Châtillon to lay siege to Sedan while the siege of Aire was on-going: AAE MD 1680, fo.172.

²²⁷ AAE MD 1680, fo.86, Châtillon to De Noyers, 20 May 1641.

²²⁸ *Documenta Bohemica*, vi, 405, Piccolomini to Malvezzi, 11 June 1641.

²²⁹ See the comments in the intercepted letters of Mercy and Bouillon in BN Français 3765, fos.80-81v. Châtillon himself had also repeatedly complained of the poor state of his army, see: AAE MD 1680, fo.75 (13 May 1641), fo.78 (15 May 1641), fo.87, (20 May 1641).

such as Guise and Madame de Chevreuse, as well as noble families of Lorraine, to reject French rule. At the end of June, he was reported to have declared his intention to join forces with the confederation of Princes at Sedan.²³⁰

By 22 June, an army of some 5,000 Imperial and Spanish troops was approaching Sedan under Lamboy and Gil de Haas.²³¹ Richelieu realised that the opportunity had now been lost for Châtillon to either take château Bouillon, or lay siege to Sedan. He therefore instructed Châtillon to focus solely on preventing the enemy from entering France, and to only engage the forces of Lamboy and Gil de Haas separately. If this was not possible he was to await reinforcements from Picardy, led by the King himself once Aire had fallen.²³² Richelieu was also compelled to write to La Meilleraye entreating him to hasten his efforts at Aire, so that his troops could be transferred to Champagne.²³³ The campaign was on a knife-edge; all would depend on Châtillon's ability to counter the advance of the rebel army.

²³⁰ Campion, *Lettres*, p.96, Campion to Soissons, 25 June 1641. There had been reports throughout June that Lorraine was considering this move; see, among many others, *Correspondance de Pauli-Stravius*, p.497, 8 June 1641; AAE MD 1680, fo.228, Sourdis to Richelieu, 23 June 1641, and fo.229, Châtillon to Richelieu, 23 June 1641. There are numerous documents pertaining to his talks with Malvezzi during this period, for example: BL Add 14004, fo.689, 'Consulta que hicieron a su A. Don Antonio Sarmiento, y el Marques Virgilio Malvezzi, sobre lo proposicion, que se ha hecho de parte del Señor Duque de Lorena de bolver a recevir la proteccion de su Magestad', 3 May 1641; AGRB T100 vol.376, item 25, 'Papel al Duque de Lorena', Malvezzi, n.d. [1641].

²³¹ Baron Guillaume Lamboy and Guillaume Gil de Haas were both generals in Imperial service. Lamboy's Imperial army had been agreed by the Emperor as support for the defence of Flanders for 1641. Having been in winter quarters at Juliers and Cleves, the Cardinal-Infante instructed him to take his army to support the Princes at Sedan: Vincart, *Relación de la Campaña de Flandes de 1641*, p.103.

²³² AAE MD 1680, fo.224, Richelieu to Châtillon, 22 June.

²³³ AAE MD 287, fo.16, Richelieu to La Meilleraye, 25 June.

La Guerre de Sedan

La Marfée

On 25 June Châtillon took the villages of Grand and Petit Torcy, just outside Sedan, where some of the Princes' troops were stationed. This action seems directly contrary to the spirit of Châtillon's essentially defensive instructions, though he justified it as a measure to restrict the rebels' activities along the frontier.²³⁴ Bouillon and Soissons, their cavalry forced to remain inside Sedan, now pressed Lamboy to approach Sedan, so as to protect them from Châtillon; but Lamboy had received orders to await the arrival of a contingent of Spanish troops and held back to the east. Eventually, after a face-to-face conference with Bouillon, Lamboy consented and on 3 July his army advanced.²³⁵ Châtillon immediately followed suit.

Last-ditch attempts were nevertheless being made to re-open negotiations between Paris and Sedan. It was reported that Soissons wanted to discuss the terms for a marriage to Madame de Combalet. Saumières claims that Soissons was only dissuaded from the path of reconciliation by the ever-resolute Bouillon, which concurs with earlier evidence that Soissons was highly reluctant to rebel,²³⁶ and was being pressed into action by Bouillon, Guise, and his own supporters.²³⁷

It was now that Soissons signed *Le Manifeste pour la justice des armes des Princes de la Paix*,²³⁸ which had been penned by the repatriated Mathieu de Morgues,

²³⁴ Montrésor, *Mémoires*, ii, 1, 'Relation de Monsieur le Maréchal de Châtillon'.

²³⁵ Saumières, *Mémoires*, pp.55-7.

²³⁶ On Soissons' cautious attitude see above pp.88-91.

²³⁷ Saumières, *Mémoires*, pp.58-65; AAE MD 1680, fo.245, Sourdis to Richelieu, 29 June; *ibid.*, fo.254, Sourdis to Richelieu, 4 July; Puységur, *Les Guerres*, i, 261-4. For the mooted of a marriage to Richelieu's niece, see: AAE MD 838, fo.258, Carré to Richelieu, 14 June.

²³⁸ *Le Manifeste pour la justice des armes des Princes de la Paix* [n.d., n.p.].

at his residence in Harlebecke, and brought to Sedan by Campion.²³⁹ It explained that Soissons' concern for the conservation of the State, as a Prince of the Blood, gave him no choice but to act against the usurpation of royal authority by the Cardinal. Although in many ways true to its type, the complaints made in the *Manifeste* were also well-tailored to the particular struggles of recent years. It detailed a range of ills, encapsulating the grievances of the nobility, the clergy, the poor, and the office holders, all of which stemmed from the war régime imposed by the Cardinal. It accused him of seeking to construct an oppressive hold over both church and state, as well as of maintaining the war, in order to sustain his tyranny. The rest of the royal family, it explained, was unable to speak out due to fear for their personal safety. Soissons had no choice, 'pour sauver le Roy et l'État pour avancer la paix et aussi pour exempter nos vies d'oppression d'inciter les Princes et Officiers de la Couronne, Seigneurs, Gentilhommes, Soldats et Bourgeois des villes de prendre les armes pour un peu de temps afin de les faire tomber bientôt des mains des Etrangers qui sont sur le point de ravager la France, Nous sommes assurez qu'ils ne desirent point sa ruine par vengeance, mais avec beaucoup de Justice'. He assured that, having obtained pledges of support from the Emperor and the King of Spain, he had also obtained 'seuretés' that they would put down their arms when 'une paix honorable et seure' was obtained, which he believed could not be firmly done as long as Richelieu had enough credit to break it 'comme il a fait le traicté de Ratisbonne'.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ AMB CC 113, fo.335, Morgues to Chifflet, 6 July 1641.

²⁴⁰ On 13 October 1630 French representatives – including Père Joseph – signed the Treaty of Ratisbonne with the Emperor, wherein France abandoned her Italian allies. Finding the treaty's terms unacceptable, and courting much controversy, Richelieu and the King subsequently disavowed the treaty: Chevalier, *Louis XIII*, pp.376-7.

By 5 July, Lamboy's army was only half-an-hour from Sedan. That afternoon Bouillon and Soissons rode out to greet him. As they talked, a despatch arrived from the Cardinal-Infant instructing Lamboy to take his army to Flanders, to assist with the relief of Aire. The dumbfounded Princes protested that they would be forced to reconcile with Richelieu immediately. A short while later, however, another order arrived, this time from Malvezzi – who was in close correspondence with Olivares – instructing Lamboy to remain at Sedan for a further two days. Malvezzi knew that Lamboy was vital to the survival of the Sedan project and hoped that Lorraine would take his troops to Aire instead. The Princes agreed with Lamboy that they would engage Châtillon's army the next day. On the same day, Richelieu urged Châtillon to sit tight; he would have reinforcements from Aire in five or six days. The following morning Lamboy deftly crossed the Meuse using a makeshift bridge formed of boats, after which Bouillon and Soissons' forces joined with his. Together they confronted Châtillon's army on the La Marfée heights overlooking Sedan.

On reaching the field of battle, Soissons gave confession, offering 'una protestacion a Dios...diziendo que no hazia la guerra a Su Rey sino al Cardenal Rochelieu que impidia la Paz de la Christianidad y sobre este pretexto queria Vivir y morir'.²⁴¹ What followed was a resounding victory for the army of the Princes and a severe embarrassment for the Royal Army. Châtillon only left the field with some 600 of his cavalry. Approximately 5,000 of Châtillon's troops were taken prisoner and around 1,000 killed; the remainder had probably fled.²⁴² Châtillon's standards,

²⁴¹ BL Add 14000, fo.572, Ugarte to Velez de Medrano, 11 July.

²⁴² AN R2 55, item 176, 'Relation de la bataille donné le 6 Juillet 1641'; Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), ii, 19-24, 'Autre Reation du Maréchal de Fabert'; BL Add 14000, fo.572, Ugarte to Velez de Medrano,

canon and baggage, include large sums of money for the payment of his troops, were also captured.

Explanations: defeat or lâcheté?

There are no easy explanations for Châtillon's defeat. The two armies were fairly evenly matched; Châtillon's comprised some 8,000 infantry and 2,400 cavalry, while the combined forces against him numbered around 8,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry.²⁴³ Both armies were a mixed bag of veterans, and a large percentage of new recruits. Châtillon was at no particular disadvantage when it came to the fighting quality of his army or its officers.²⁴⁴

The explanation for the battle's outcome thus lies within its course, though achieving a clear picture of this is fraught with difficulty. A relatively consistent version arises from the extant accounts by several royal officers who participated: Châtillon, Grémonville, the comte de Roussillon, Fabert, Sourdis, and Puysegur.²⁴⁵ All of these officers gathered at Rethel after the battle. It seems probable that they

11 July 1641; Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), ii, 352, 'Liste des Chefs, Officiers et Soldats de l'Armée Française...qui ont été tuez ou faits prisonniers'.

²⁴³ AN R2 55, item 176, 'Relation de la bataille donné le 6 Juillet 1641'; Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), ii, 19-24, 'Autre Relation du Maréchal de Fabert'; BL Add 14000, fo.572, Ugarte to Velez de Medrano, 11 July. Note that Guise and his 3,000 Liègeois recruits were absent on 6 July.

²⁴⁴ For the composition of Châtillon's army see: Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), ii, 354, 'État des Regimens, dont l'Armée du Maréchal de Châtillon étoit composée'; AAE MD 1680, fo.78, Châtillon to de Noyers, 16 May 1641. On the composition of Lamboy's army see: AGRB T100 vol.572, fo.160, 'Relacion de la gente Impereal que esta acargo del Baron de Lamboy'; AGRB T100 vol.376, Malvezzi to Cardinal-Infante, 13 June 1641. For the composition of the French Princes' troops see above pp.174-85.

²⁴⁵ The first four of these accounts are relatively well-known, and various copies exist in the archives. The best manuscript source is BN Dupuy 590, fos.196-202; 204-206v.; 206v.; 208-209v. respectively, all of which are reproduced in Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), ii, 1-24. For Sourdis' account, see BS FP 288, p.876, 'Discours sur la bataille donné pres la ville de Sedan', which should be supplemented by his letter to Richelieu of 7 July in AAE MD 1680, fo.257. See also: Puysegur, *Les Guerres*, i, 264-71.

conferred about what had taken place, which would help to explain the consistency of their accounts. Châtillon's version even contains passages paraphrasing that of Sourdis. While differing over many details, the six accounts share the following key elements: both armies arrived at the battlefield around the same time, but the royal army managed to obtain a better initial position; the opening exchanges went favourably for Châtillon's army, but somehow this turned to defeat due to the flight of most of his cavalry from the field, which in turn threw the infantry into disarray and left it exposed.

The royal officers, however, give varying explanations for the flight of the royal cavalry from the battlefield: for some, it was a matter of panic or terror; for others, it was a case of a treasonous unwillingness to fight, or *lâcheté* (Puységur, Châtillon and Roussillon). Châtillon described it in a subsequent letter as 'une lâcheté et peur Panique' which gripped the light-cavalry of his right flank, along with five infantry regiments, and which swiftly transformed a position of near-victory into one of total defeat. He called for the punishment of the officers of the relevant units, whom he offered to name, otherwise 'il est à craindre que la poltronnerie ne tourne en coustume parmy les François'.²⁴⁶

An alternative explanation is offered in some of the accounts from the opposing army. The Spanish paymaster at Sedan suggested that the battle's decisive action was a sudden attack in the flank of the royal army by Bouillon. This was explained at greater length by Bouillon in his own account of the battle, as well as in that of his valet, Barthélémy Aubertin, who also fought. This was also the version

²⁴⁶ Aubery, *Mémoires pour servir*, v, 129, Châtillon to De Noyers, 9 July 1641; *ibid.*, v, 135, De Noyers to Châtillon, 12 July 1641.

favoured by the Venetian ambassador, who wrote that, ‘e riportò Buglion tutta la gloria’.²⁴⁷ So the royal cavalry’s terror and panic, was at least in part a response to being suddenly hit in the flank by Bouillon’s charge. It would not be surprising if the royal officers, in their accounts, were unwilling to admit to having been outmanoeuvred or out-witted by their opponent, preferring instead to blame the cowardice of their troops. It is notable that, despite the antagonism between Châtillon and the ministry during the weeks preceding the battle, and in particular his failings as pointed out by Sourdis in his missives to Paris, none of the other royal officers seem to have attempted to turn the blame onto Châtillon, as might have been expected.²⁴⁸

It may be, however, that this capitulation en masse was a co-ordinated act of defection. The Princes had consistently claimed that they expected large-scale defections from the royal armies once they had commenced their campaign. It is no coincidence that the troops most heavily implicated in the debacle were Praslin’s German cavalry that had suffered defections in the weeks before the battle. The German cavalry had, moreover, fled in similar fashion at Thionville in 1639.²⁴⁹ Puységur, who also belonged to the Piedmont regiment – which was also under

²⁴⁷ BL Add 14000, fo.572, Ugarte to Velez de Medrano, 11 July; AN R2 55, item 176, ‘Relation de la bataille donné le 6 Juillet 1641’; B. Aubertin, ‘Discours sur la vie de Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour &c., Prince de Sedan, Et sur les Mémoires publiez par M. Langlade’, in *Mémoires de la vie de Théodore-Agrippa d’Aubigné* (2 vols.; Amsterdam, 1731), ii, 23-80, 36. Aubertin is not given as the author in the 1731 edition, but a manuscript of the same work does: AN R2 55, Items 220-1. Aubertin was a *valet de pied* of the duc de Bouillon and took a prisoner at La Marfée for which he received royal ransom money: AN 273 AP 178, Dossier 3, item 44, instruction from Bouillon to pay Aubertin. See also, BN Italien 1818, p.84, Giustiniani to Doge, 16 July 1641.

²⁴⁸ For the tactical ‘blame game’ that operated among the commanders of France’s armies during this era, largely as a response to the ministry’s heavy-handed methods of management, see Parrott, *Richelieu’s Army*, pp.491-504.

²⁴⁹ Boibergues, *Le Mémorial d’un Bourgeois de Domart*, p.420; BN Français 15611, fo.237v., Arnaud to Barillon, 28 Aug. 1641. After La Marfée attempts were made by the regimental leaders of the German cavalry to clear their name: *Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.5311, Degenfeld to Grotius, 9 Aug. 1641, concerning the printing of a written defence of their conduct. For Thionville see: Wilson, *Europe’s Tragedy*, p.661.

Praslin's command – spoke of his *amitié* with Soissons, under whom they had served in 1636.²⁵⁰ Thousands of the prisoners taken during the battle – totalling some 4,000 – were later said to have vowed that they would have followed Soissons had he but lived.²⁵¹ In his memoirs, the baron de Sirot describes that during the battle, ‘à l’arrivée du comte de Soissons, toute l’Infanterie Française jetta ses Armes, et la pluspart de la Cavalerie qui étoit étrangère’.²⁵² Was this a pre-planned manoeuvre to disguise a transfer of allegiances? Bouillon's flanking manoeuvre clearly surprised Châtillon's army, but their disbanding and surrender *en masse* tallies with the expectations of defection.

Rebellion curtailed

La Marfée was a resounding victory, which offered the prospect of a politically-decisive rebellion. Campion wrote, on the morning of the battle, that the defeat of Châtillon would open the road to Paris for the Princes,²⁵³ a notion which was oft repeated among contemporaries. In theory, the Princes could have reached Paris in four or five days without challenge; La Meilleraye's army was at the siege of Aire and the King was at Péronne with a small army. Extra guards were posted at the gates of Paris, while both the Swedish and Venetian ambassadors noted that the sympathies of the people of the city lay with Soissons.²⁵⁴ The prisoners taken at La Marfée, wrote

²⁵⁰ Puysegur, *Les Guerres*, i, 254.

²⁵¹ BL Add 14000, fo.572, Ugarte to Velez de Medrano, 11 July.

²⁵² C. de Létouf, baron de Sirot, *Mémoires* (2 vols.; Paris, 1683), ii, 2.

²⁵³ Campion, *Lettres*, p.99, [6] July 1641.

²⁵⁴ BN Français 15611, fo.180, Arnaud to Barillon, 14 July, reporting comments by De Noyers; Le Vassor, vi, 326; BN Italien 1818, p.88, Giustiniani to Doge, 16 July; *Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.5275, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 13 July 1641. Similar views were expressed by Père Carré: AAE MD 839, fo.83, Carré to Richelieu, 19 July 1641.

one of the Spanish agents, assured that Soissons, ‘era tan amado en francia que con este buen subceso eramos señores de todo el Pais de la Sampaña [Champagne] hasta las puertas de Paris’.²⁵⁵ Understandably, therefore, Richelieu suffered ‘inquiétudes étranges’ at the news of the defeat.²⁵⁶ The order was immediately sent for La Meilleraye to abandon the siege of Aire, so as to assist in quelling the rebellion. The King’s initial intention was to head straight for Paris. This being the case, the Cardinal-Infante would have had a significant recompense for his engagement with the rebels and Richelieu’s political future thrown into grave doubt.²⁵⁷

The significance of having routed Châtillon’s army, however, was greatly reduced; among the bodies left on the field was that of Soissons himself. The Princes of the Peace now found themselves in an unenviable position, despite having achieved a resounding victory. After Soissons’ death they seem to have given up on any idea of marching on Paris, or of raising Champagne. His status as a Prince of the Blood and as governor of Champagne, as well as his personal popularity, had been essential to the justification of the rebellion as a universal political cause and to hopes of achieving widespread support within France. La Meilleraye was convinced that, ‘luy seul estoit capable de former un parti pour apporter quelque trouble a l’estat’.²⁵⁸ The rebellion was now ‘un tronco senza capo’.²⁵⁹ The grief-stricken Campion explained

²⁵⁵ BL Add 14000, fo.572, Ugarte to Velez de Medrano, 11 July.

²⁵⁶ Words of the abbé de Remefort, reported in Chizay, *Mémoires*, p.292.

²⁵⁷ Siri, *Mercur*, i, 269.

²⁵⁸ AAE MD 1680, fo.291, La Meilleraye to Richelieu, 20 July 1641. For a similar opinions, see: BN Français 10761, fo.78, anonymous letter from Madrid, 4 Aug. 1641; AGRB T100 vol.230, fo.97, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV 16 Aug. 1641.

²⁵⁹ BN Italien 1818, p.83, Giustiniani to Doge, 16 July.

that, ‘L’intérêt de tous ceux à qui M. le Cardinal ne veut pas de bien étoit si engagé dans le sien que tant d’illustres malheureux perdent en lui toute leur espérance’.²⁶⁰

The cause of Soissons’ death has been the subject of persistent speculation and mystery. An oft-repeated explanation is that Soissons accidentally shot himself, while lifting his visor with a loaded pistol. The only source for this theory is the sometimes unreliable Saumières.²⁶¹ None of other extant accounts of the event, however, give reason to believe the self-harm theory, which should be definitively rejected.

Recent historians, who have studied the issue, have favoured the explanation offered by the royal officers. In their version, Soissons, along with his guards, was enveloped during a heroic rear-guard action by the regiments of gendarmes of the Queen and Monsieur, some 220 in number, during which Soissons was shot at very close range.²⁶² The weight of Bouillon’s own account can be added to this. He describes how Soissons advanced with his companies of guards and cuirassiers to help bolster the dragoons on the left wing of his army, which were under attack from the gendarmes of Monsieur and the Queen. The dragoons were soon ‘rompus’ and fell back onto Soissons and his two companies, who also ‘se rompirent’. In the resulting ‘désordre’, Soissons was approached by a lone French cavalier, whom Soissons’ guards did not recognise to be an enemy, and who shot the comte just below the eye, killing him instantaneously.²⁶³ Soissons’ killing was an act of war, within the chaos

²⁶⁰ Campion, *Lettres*, p.368, Campion to Chevreuse, 11 July 1641.

²⁶¹ Saumières, *Mémoires*, pp.71-2. His version was given early credence by Vittorio Siri: *Mercure*, i, 268.

²⁶² For the accounts by the royal officers see above p.201 (n.245). Their version of events has received the following recent endorsements: Hodson, ‘Sovereigns and Subjects’, p.341 (n.187); P. Congar, *Sedan et le Pays Sedanais* (Charleville-Mézières, 1989), p.314.

²⁶³ AN R2 55, item 176, ‘Relation de la bataille donné le 6 Juillet 1641’.

of the fracturing of the rebel army's left wing, carried out by a single French gendarme.

A Habsburg agent, Miguel de Ugarte, who witnessed Soissons' death, was swift to interpret it as a pre-meditated political assassination. Writing from Sedan to a minister in Brussels just 5 days after the battle, Ugarte described how the killer had ridden among Soissons' guards for around half an hour in anticipation of his deed, without being recognised as an enemy, before riding up to greet Soissons – pistol in hand – and firing a shot into his face. Soissons fell from his horse 'sin ablar palabra'. The supposed assassin was immediately killed, without thought being given to discover who he was or who had sent him.²⁶⁴ The actions of the lone French gendarme, who was not recognised as an enemy, were therefore decontextualised by Ugarte. Removed from the chaos of the breaking of the rebels' left flank by a rear-guard French action, the killing of Soissons was made to resemble a cold-blooded, and pre-planned, assassination. Ugarte twisted the truth, not through embellishment, so much as decontextualisation.²⁶⁵

The Spanish subsequently exploited Soissons' death to stir up public opinion. Within just a few weeks of the battle, an account in French was published in Brussels by Hubert Velpius, which presented a similar version of events to that of Ugarte. It was now embellished with invective fulminating over Richelieu's conspiracies against the King and the royal family, which were intended to 'partager le Royaume', and of

²⁶⁴ BL Add 14000, fo.572, Ugarte to Velez de Medrano, 11 July 1641.

²⁶⁵ Mercy also described Soissons' death, which he claimed to have witnessed, as an assassination. His account is highly unreliable, however, and was written around two decades after the event as part of a much larger work: BN Français 16391, fos.297-435, 'Mémoires sur la naissance et les actions de tous les grands Capitaines de nostre siècle', abbé de Mercy, 1670. The portion of the work dealing with La Marfée was edited in 1909: E. Longin, *Un Abbé d'Accey a la Bataille de La Marfée (6 juillet 1641)* (Lons-le-Saunier, 1909).

which Soissons' assassination was yet another reflection. It is probable that Mathieu de Morgues was responsible for this work, of which a copy had been obtained by Richelieu as early as 25 July. Furthermore, the *Manifeste pour la justice des armes des Princes de la Paix*, which Soissons had signed on 2 July, was finally published around the same time, with an addendum concerning his death. This certainly was the work of Morgues, and bears close resemblance to some of the sections in Velpius' publication, save that it accuses Richelieu of sending not just one but five assassins.²⁶⁶ Later works by subjects of the Habsburgs accusing Richelieu of assassinating the prince, do not bear much resemblance to Ugarte's original report, and generally indulge in facile invective.²⁶⁷ Of more significance perhaps, is that they helped to stimulate the rumours and uncertainties circulating within France, which ate away at Richelieu's political credibility.²⁶⁸

The Spanish now needed to decide on the best means to deploy their troops so as to gain the greatest military advantage, while Bouillon and Guise had to decide on how best to defend their own interests. On the night after the battle Bouillon and Lamboy debated their next moves. Lamboy favoured a march to Rethel, to prevent Châtillon's army from regrouping, before heading to assist the Cardinal-Infante to relieve Aire. Bouillon, however, preferred to take Donchery near Sedan, before moving against Mouzon and Mézières. Lamboy's plan still offered the hope of

²⁶⁶ *Relation de la Bataille gagnée a une lieüe pres de Sedan par les princes de la paix sur l'armée francoise commandée par le Mareschal de Chastillon le 6 jour du mois de Juillet 1641* (Brussels, chez Velpius, 1641); *Le Manifeste pour la justice des armes des Princes de la Paix* [n.d., n.p.].

²⁶⁷ *Manifiesto y justicia de las armas de los principes de la paz* (Madrid, 1641); J. Girardot de Noseroy, *Histoire de dix ans de la Franche-Comté de Bourgogne, 1632-1642* (Besançon, 1843), pp.256-8; M. de Novoa, *Historia de Felipe IV, Rey de España*, in *Collecion de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, lxxvii (Madrid, 1881), p.492.

²⁶⁸ Some Frenchmen clearly believed that Soissons had been assassinated: R. Arnaud d'Andilly and A. Arnauld, *Mémoires*, ed. R. Pouzet (Paris, 2008), pp.415-6; Chizay, *Mémoires*, pp.291-2.

bringing major military advantage for the Habsburgs and perhaps even Richelieu's downfall, as his entire campaign season would be reduced to tatters. There was even some suggestion of marching with Soissons' embalmed body carried at their head, so as to maintain his legitimising power, 'comme s'il avoit toujours vécu'.²⁶⁹ But it would also mean joining the Princes' army with that of the Cardinal-Infante, thus subsuming the rebellion directly into Spanish service.

Bouillon's plan was more cautious. It would give time for further support to arrive, under the pretext of continuing the rebellion, and enable him to defend his sovereign territories as a prelude to accommodation with the French King. Bouillon's plan prevailed. The army of the Princes therefore laid siege to Donchery, which took several days to fall. Although it was of little strategic value, Donchery contained large stores of provisions that had been stockpiled by Châtillon. Further reinforcements continued to arrive; some 3,000 to 4,500 Imperial troops reached Sedan in the week after the battle, while Guise brought six companies of newly-recruited cavalry from Liège.²⁷⁰ When the King entered Rheims on 13 July, appearing 'maigre et defait',²⁷¹ the Princes' position was far from hopeless, but any hopes of extending their rebellion deep into Champagne had faded.

The royal army desisted from progressing towards Sedan until it could be assured of military supremacy, while the Princes' army remained encamped near Sedan waiting to see what further support could be garnered either from the Habsburgs or Lorraine. They pressed for more assistance from Brussels, complaining

²⁶⁹ Longin, *Un Abbé d'Acey*, p.27.

²⁷⁰ BN Français 15611, fo.177v., Arnaud to Barillon, 14 July 1641; BN Français 3766, fo.39, Châtillon to de Noyers, 9 July 1641; H. Jadart, *Louis XIII et Richelieu à Reims du 13 au 26 juillet 1641* (Reims, 1885), p.35

²⁷¹ Jadart, *Louis XIII et Richelieu à Reims*, p.17.

of the failure to pay supplementary amounts agreed for their levies, as well as the failure to provide munitions or food supplies to their army. The Cardinal-Infante was exasperated that they continually demanded money – often for items not agreed in the April treaty – and that they were occupying significant military resources while attempting little with them. He promised that further money was on its way, but pressed harder each day for either Lorraine or Lamboy to come to his assistance at Aire. The hope of Malvezzi and the Princes was still that Lorraine would fulfil that role, thus leaving Lamboy to defend Sedan and keep their *parti* alive.

These frustrations ultimately led the Cardinal-Infante to a vital decision; irrespective of Lorraine's movements, Lamboy must come to Aire. He departed around 19 July, and Guise soon followed, giving rise ever since to the perception that Bouillon had been 'abandonné' by the Spanish.²⁷² The Cardinal-Infante, however, stressed that Lamboy must leave behind at least 3,000 infantry, which was the number of Spanish troops due to the Princes under the April treaty. Along with the Princes' own troops, a sizeable force therefore remained at Sedan and Brussels continued to provide money, albeit less than hoped for. If Bouillon wanted a larger army to support him purely for the purpose of defending Sedan, then the Army of Flanders was too stretched to allow for it and it would have to come in the form of Piccolomini's troops. The Cardinal-Infante's hopes had been pinned on a more ambitious project, which would engender civil strife inside France on a régime-threatening scale. Failing that, he had had hoped for a diversion preventing Châtillon's army from joining La Meilleraye, an objective which had already been

²⁷² Saumières, *Mémoires*, pp.73-81; Griffet, iii, 372; J. Bérenger, *Turenne* (Paris, 1987), pp.176-7; Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects', pp.342-4.

achieved through the rout at La Marfée.²⁷³ A further blow to Bouillon's hopes of defending Sedan against a royal siege was the defeat of the Imperials at Wolfenbüttel on 29 June, news of which reached France in mid-July.²⁷⁴ Piccolomini's assistance was now highly doubtful in the short term.

Even before Lamboy's departure and prior to the arrival of news of Wolfenbüttel, however, Bouillon had already secretly opened talks with Richelieu, through the intermediary of one of the officers captured at La Marfée, the comte de Puységur.²⁷⁵ Bouillon then sent Salignac to Brussels on 18 July citing what he saw as Spanish failures to live up to their commitments under the treaty, establishing his rightful basis for accommodating with the French King.²⁷⁶ Lamboy's departure post-dated these moves, and, as his own parting letter to Bouillon made clear, it was a response to the duke's intention to reconcile. All that remained for Bouillon was to settle on the best possible terms, while Lamboy was better occupied at Aire.

²⁷³ AGRB T100 vol.653, fo.230, 'Instruccion para el Marques Virgilio Malvezzi', 5 June 1641.

²⁷⁴ BN Italien 1818, p.99, Giustiniani to Doge, 23 July; BN Français 15611, fo.186v., Arnaud to Barillon, 21 July 1641; Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, pp.629-32.

²⁷⁵ The intermediary was a 'sr P.', a prisoner of war sent to negotiate with King and Cardinal at Rheims around 13 July: AAE MD 839, fo.194v., 'Lettre du Sr P. à Mr le Duc de Bouillon' [15 July 1641]. Puységur's memoirs enable us to identify him as the intermediary, though he does not describe himself as a prisoner, claiming that Châtillon sent him to Sedan a few days after La Marfée to negotiate the ransoms of other prisoners. There is some subterfuge in Puységur's account concerning his relationship with Soissons and his parti. His falsification of his reasons for being at Sedan soon after the battle may disguise a defection: Puységur, *Les Guerres*, i, 271-85.

²⁷⁶ AAE MD 839, fo.194v., 'Lettre du Sr P. a Mr le Duc de Bouillon'; BN Cinq-cents de Colbert 487, fo.217, 'Instruction pour le sieur de Salignac', 18 July. Bouillon's letter to Brussels was notably ambiguous. It was in part a justification of disengagement, but ended by listing those things that the Cardinal-Infant should immediately provide if he wished to maintain Bouillon in Spanish service.

Rewarding the rebels

Puységur met with Richelieu at Rheims around 17 July, expressing Bouillon's willingness to accommodate. Bouillon requested of Richelieu, however, that a joint letter be obtained from the duc de Longueville and the comtesse de Soissons, which would urge Bouillon to return to his duty to the King. Bouillon would therefore not be seen to have betrayed Soissons' cause and his honour would remain intact. Puységur notified Bouillon that his overtures had been received positively by Richelieu. Such was the pressure upon Richelieu at this time, with Aire hanging in the balance, that it was simply unthinkable to refuse accommodation in favour of a lengthy siege of Sedan.

The required letter from Longueville arrived at court on 25 July, which enabled negotiations to proceed with de Noyers and Richelieu, through the representation of La Croisette, La Vallière, and Chadirac.²⁷⁷

The end of July and early days of August were rich with possibilities for Bouillon, as representatives of the Habsburg powers – armed with generous counter-offers – arrived at Sedan to dissuade him from settling with the French King.²⁷⁸ Lamboy, moreover, had returned to the vicinity of Sedan with his 6,000 troops, having been unable to link up with the Cardinal-Infante's forces for the attempt to relieve Aire. Bouillon was thus in a very strong position to defend himself from a siege by the King's army, which was now at Rethel. The fact remained, however, that

²⁷⁷ La Vallière was an officer in Châtillon's army and a relative of Beauvau, who had been taken prisoner at La Marfée: BN Français 15611, fo.217v., Arnaud to Barillon, 18 Aug. 1641. Jean de Chadirac was one of Bouillon's most active agents.

²⁷⁸ BS FP 132, p.227, 'Relation particulière de ce qui s'est passé en l'accomodement de Monsieur le Duc de Bouillon a Mézières le 6 aoust 1641'; AGRB T100 vol.654, fo.70, Malvezzi to [Cardinal-Infante], 10 Aug. 1641; E. Longin, *Un Diplomate Franc-Comtois. François de Lisola: Sa vie, ses écrits, son testament (1613-1674)* (Dole, 1900), p.14.

without Soissons' leadership and with the proximity of the King's army, the prospect of launching an expansive campaign into France, or of obtaining régime-changing momentum, was gone. Bouillon's primary concern was therefore to assure Sedan and to obtain the best possible terms of accommodation. Whether he ever seriously entertained the notion of entering Imperial service is unknown, but it seems likely that he doubted the long-term resolve of either Brussels or Vienna to help him retain Sedan, more than he doubted the persistence of Richelieu's resolve to take Sedan from him should he reject French allegiances. When Richelieu broadly acquiesced to Bouillon's proposed terms of accommodation, his choice was made.

The terms eventually offered to Bouillon were as follows: Bouillon and Sedan were to return to the protection of Louis XIII; the city's garrison would once again be paid for out of the King's funds; and any arrears for the period since 1635 were to be made good.²⁷⁹ Bouillon would also receive a senior military command, which was later confirmed as that of the Army of Italy. Most of the troops levied by the Princes were accepted into the King's service, unless they opted to join the King of Spain's service instead.²⁸⁰ The ransoms of those prisoners taken at La Marfée were also to be paid by the King and Bouillon was to receive payment of 15,000 *livres* in return for the cannon he had seized.

Furthermore, all those who had followed the Princes in their rebellion were to be pardoned, with the exception of the baron du Bec, and the duc de Guise: the former

²⁷⁹ The final sum received for these arrears was 36,000 *livres*: Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects', p.346.

²⁸⁰ Some 3,000 infantry and 600 cavalry levied by the Princes entered French service: BN Italien 1818, p.116, Giustiniani to Doge, 9 Aug. 1641. Some of their troops did opt to enter Spanish service: BN Français 15611, fo.407v., Arnaud to Barillon, 16 Mar. 1642, relating that one of Soissons' banners had been captured in the defeat of the Imperial army at Kempen in January.

because of his earlier conviction in 1636, which pre-dated his entry into Soissons' service;²⁸¹ and the latter because he refused to be part of the treaty, preferring instead to remain in Spanish service. This meant that Chambord received a pardon for his crime, despite his eleventh-hour betrayal and conviction for *lese-majesté* just one month previously. Bouillon was not the only one to receive commands in the King's armies; Beauveau was to receive commissions to raise regiments for the King's service in return for 20,000 *livres*. Perhaps most significantly for Bouillon's subsequent standing, Soissons himself was posthumously re-habilitated, and it was agreed that no legal proceedings would be carried out against him or his *maison*. His body was to be allowed to return to France, where it would be interred in his family's ancestral tomb at Bourbon-Gaillon.²⁸²

These terms represented a resounding pay-back after what had been a significant, but calculated, gamble to rebel. If the acquisition of such benefits was one of the objectives of rebellion in early modern times, there can have been few more successful than this; 'il estoit impossible qu'il pust faire un traité plus avantageux que celuy qu'il a faict'.²⁸³ The potential benefits of rebellion, in terms of both reputation and material gains, had once again been demonstrated for all Richelieu's enemies to see.

²⁸¹ For du Bec's conviction in 1636, see above p.214 (n.281).

²⁸² For the negotiations and treaty of accommodation see, AAE MD 839, fos.122-134, 189-220. Further details of the deal, which do not feature in these documents, are reported in: BN Français 15611, letters of Arnaud to Barillon, fo.210v. (10 Aug.), fo.214v. (14 Aug.), and 217v. (18 Aug. 1641); Villette, 'Deux Sedanais oubliés', pp.52-3 (n.7). Legal proceedings against Guise therefore continued, leading to a death sentence in absentia on 6 September, which was carried out in the Place de Grève 5 days later, and the removal of the Guise arms from the door of the Hôtel de Guise: BS FP 132, p.252, 'Arrest contre mr de Guise condamné à avoir la teste tranchée'; Bouillé, *Histoire des ducs de Guise*, iv, 429, BN Cinq Cents de Colbert 149, fo.29, 'Procès verbal de ce qui se passa lors qu'on fut oster et jaunir les armes de l'hostel de Guise', 2 Oct. 1641.

²⁸³ BN Français 15611, fo.215, Arnaud to Barillon, 14 Aug. 1641.

Although a particularly successful case, this accommodation was not a lone example: Richelieu and Louis had often showed clemency towards princely rebels and their loyal followers. Indeed historians have tended to focus on the famous trials and executions of the reign, encouraged by Richelieu's magisterial propaganda and direction of the public eye, which has obscured the continued ability of princely agitators, throughout the reign, to obtain pardons. These were usually accompanied by generous terms of settlement for both themselves and their followers.²⁸⁴ This contrasts sharply with the persistent historiographical tendency to generalise that Richelieu and his King always severely punished any acts of rebellion by the French nobility.²⁸⁵

Having receiving a signed copy of the pardon from the King on 5 August, along with detailed terms and conditions signed by Richelieu, Bouillon travelled to the Court at Mézières on the 6th. Dressed in full mourning for Monsieur le Comte, and 'encore brillant de la gloire du gain d'une bataille', he publicly submitted.²⁸⁶ Malvezzi and the envoys of the Emperor left Sedan in disappointment the following day. The encounter at Mézières was a public performance of submission and accord,

²⁸⁴ A striking example is the deal awarded to Orléans to induce him to return from Flanders in 1634: see above p.11 (n.29). Likewise, in 1628, Soissons obtained a pardon when he opted to return from exile in Piedmont, having conspired to invade France at the head of a combined Lorraine-Savoy army. In 1626, moreover, it was against the backdrop of engagement in the opposition to the marriage of Orléans to Mademoiselle Montpensier, that Condé formed his lucrative alliance with Richelieu: K. Beguin, *Les Princes de Condé: Rebelles, Courtisans et Mécènes dans la France du Grand Siècle* (Paris, 1999), p.38; Chevalier, *Louis XIII*, pp.305-6.

²⁸⁵ The tendency has always been to focus on those who were punished and the voluminous propaganda of Richelieu in support of such punishment. See, for example: Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State*, pp.316-34; H. Fernandez-Lacôte, *Les Procès du Cardinal de Richelieu. Droit, Grâce et Politique sous Louis le Juste* (Paris, 2010). The focus on the policies of obedience has obscured the dogged persistence of disobedience and the awarding of royal pardons, however reluctantly they may have been given.

²⁸⁶ BS FP 132, p.227, 'Relation particulière de ce qui s'est passé en l'accomodement de Monsieur le Duc de Bouillon a Mézières le 6 aoust 1641'; BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la Régence', fo.106.

but Bouillon had greatly enhanced his reputation.²⁸⁷ As Arnaud described it, Bouillon ‘se peut venter d’estre le plus glorieux homme qui soit au monde car il a obtenu tout ce qu’il pouvoit desirer’.²⁸⁸

It was not just those at Sedan who now reconciled with the French King; in the south, the residual Croquants, under the leadership of the Greletty brothers finally submitted and were given their pardons in the autumn of 1641. Their hopes of combined front with the revolt of the Princes had now faded.²⁸⁹

Even in death, Soissons had achieved a certain crowning moment through rebellion, and several verses remain, which laud the *gloire* which he had acquired in the name of ‘le bien de la Paix’, battling against ‘une Eminence, Qui bat depuis dix ans en ruine la france’.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ BN Italien 1818, p.111, Giustiniani to Doge, 9 Aug. 1641.

²⁸⁸ BN Français 15611, fos.210v.-211, Arnaud to Barillon, 11 Aug. 1641.

²⁸⁹ Bercé, *Croquants*, ii, 458.

²⁹⁰ Campion, *Lettres*, p.254, ‘Sur la mort de Monsieur le Comte, tué en la Bataille de Sedan’; BN Français 23314, fo.45, ‘Sonnet sur la mort du Comte de Soissons’; I. de Benserade, *Les Oeuvres de Monsieur Benserade* (2 vols.; Paris, 1697), i, 352, ‘Sur la mort de Monsieur le Comte de Soissons’; *ibid.*, i, 353, ‘Epitaphe’.

Chapter Four - The subverted realm: conspiracy and counter-conspiracy (1641-1642)

*J'espère que tous ces grands exploits et avantages
feront un acheminement à la paix, à quoy la
disgrace ou la mort de Son Eminence ne
contribueroit pas peu*¹

The regency question and the search for *sûreté*

The minister who would be regent

The rebellion of the Princes of the Peace in the summer of 1641 had left an ambiguous legacy. The concerns over Richelieu's ever-increasing power - and how to contend with him in the event of a royal minority - were only increased by the demise of Soissons. The question of the elusive peace and the domestic fractiousness caused by the continuation of the war also remained. As a result, the autumn of 1641 saw the rapid re-emergence of a damaging struggle between Richelieu and factions attached to the royal family.

It had become clear by 1641 that if Richelieu wished to control the regency, he would have to do so in spite of the claims of Anne of Austria and Orléans. There is a spattering of evidence that he sought to ally with them, but the sincerity of his overtures is doubtful and nothing came of them.² Richelieu's chief buttress would

¹ AAE CP Pays-Bas Espagnols 14, fo.325, copy of intercepted letter from Brussels, 21 June 1642.

² AGS Est. Flandes 2157, 'Papel que el comendador Marteli presento en nombre de la Christianissima Reyna Madre', 6 June 1639. This claimed that Richelieu had dangled hopes before both Orléans and Anne of Austria that they each might become regent with his backing, but was in fact duping both. The Venetian ambassador held a more nuanced view; he saw that Richelieu was making overtures to

therefore have to be Condé, with whom he had cemented his alliance through the marriage of the duc d'Enghien and Mademoiselle de Maillé-Brézé in February. While direct material on Richelieu's plans for a future minority remains elusive, the indirect evidence strongly indicates that during the final two years of his ministry he sought to dictate the terms of the forthcoming regency, and to justify the appointment of himself as regent.

Madeleine Laurain-Portemer has demonstrated that Richelieu conducted 'une enquête dirigée' concerning the issue of regencies,³ employing Pierre Dupuy and Théodore Godefroy to research past instances. The project was in full swing by 1641 and, by October of that year, Dupuy had assembled a compendium on the subject.⁴ The papers of Godefroy and Dupuy indicate that Richelieu sought to justify the exclusion of the Queen from the regency on the grounds of the Salic Law. One of the fundamental laws of the realm, the Salic Law excluded women from succession to the throne, but also - Richelieu's team argued - from any position of power.⁵ The Cardinal also sought to demonstrate that the King could regulate the regency through

Orléans, Anne of Austria, as well as Parlement, so as to strengthen his position in a regency, but was sure that Richelieu sought the title of regent – or an equivalent – for himself. Correr also argued that Richelieu did not want to cause unnecessary controversy, and – since he already wielded absolute power – was content not to obtain an advance declaration from the King concerning his appointment as regent: BN Italien 1815, Correr to Doge, 3 May 1639; *ibid.*, p.135, Correr to Doge, 17 May 1639. See also: *Correspondance du nonce en France: Ranuccio Scotti (1639-1641)*, ed. P. Blet (Rome, 1965), p.276, Scotti to Barberini, 16 Mar. 1640; H. Reynald, 'Le Baron de Lisola: sa jeunesse, et sa première ambassade en Angleterre (1613-1645)', *Revue historique*, 27 (1885), 300-51, pp.309-10; N. Goulas, *Mémoires*, ed. C. Constant (3 vols.; Paris, 1879-1882), i, 378, 404-5; BN Italien 1816, p.416, Correr to Doge, 10 Apr. 1640; BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fo.110v.; F.-A. d'Estrées, *Mémoires sur la régence de Marie de Médicis et sur celle d'Anne d'Autriche*, ed. P. Bonnefon (Paris, 1910), pp.166-8.

³ M. Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines* (2 vols.; Paris, 1981-97), ii, 274-9.

⁴ This formed the basis for his *Traité de la majorité de nos rois et des régences du royaume*, of which manuscript copies were circulating by at least 1643, though it was not published until 1655. The 1655 version is presented as a treatise in support of Anne of Austria's regency: H. Lightman, 'Political Power and the Queen of France: Pierre Dupuy's treatise on regency governments', *Canadian Journal of History*, 21:3 (1986:Dec.), 299-312.

⁵ The same argument had been used against Marie de Médicis in the early 1630s by Le Bret: see above, p.21.

his testament, or a declaration, and that the best choice would be to assign sole responsibility for government to an ecclesiastic (such as Richelieu). He wished, moreover, to establish that no one, including Parlement, could alter or overturn a royal testament. After all it was Parlement who had appointed Marie de Médicis regent in 1610, and many legal men had written in support of female regencies to defend her position.⁶ Parlement had shown strong inclination to support those of royal blood; refusing in 1631, for example, to register the King's declaration against Orléans,⁷ and, at the start of 1641 certain *présidents* had been expelled for their attempt to bring Soissons' case before Parlement.⁸

By 1641 Richelieu had correspondingly begun to shift the tone of his propaganda, focusing more persistently on his own aggrandisement, not just as a servant of Louis XIII, but as a patriarchal figure capable of steering the great ship of state into a future shorn of the King's presence. Claude Deruet was commissioned to produce a cycle of paintings known as *The Four Elements* for the château de Richelieu between 1641 and 1642. These paintings were hung in the *Cabinet de la Reine*, clearly indicating whose consumption they were for. One of the, paintings, entitled 'Water', shows Anne, her sons and the King in a ship – symbolic of the ship of state – being welcomed by the Cardinal at the top of the steps to a temple.⁹ Other propaganda images of this era referred more directly to the regency; in 1641, for

⁶ Lightman, 'Political Power', pp.301-6.

⁷ L. Kadlec, *Quand le parlement de Paris s'oppose à l'Autorité Royale: L'affaire de la chambre de justice de l'Arsenal (14 juin 1631-mars 1632)* (Paris, 2007).

⁸ See above p.140.

⁹ D. Harai, 'Du Radeau des âmes à la nef de l'État: une lecture symbolique de l'ascension de Richelieu (1608-1642)', *Recherches vendéennes*, 16 (2009), 229-272; J. Rogister, 'A cardinal's messages', *Times Literary Supplement*, 2003:8 (22 Aug 2003).

example, an allegorical image was printed representing the King passing his sceptre to the Dauphin in Richelieu's presence.¹⁰

In addition to this, a spate of written propaganda appeared depicting Richelieu as a credible candidate for the regency. The baron d'Auteuil,¹¹ published his *Histoire des Ministres d'Etat* in 1642, which presented a series of accounts of French minister-favourites of medieval times. It was explicitly prefaced as a defence of Richelieu's ministry, but was dedicated to the King, 'car il n'y a personne qui sçache mieux établir quel est le vray prix d'un Ministre, qu'un Prince tout Glorieux qui luy communique une partie de son éclat, pour luy faire davantage meriter les admirations de l'Univers'.¹²

Auteuil accorded extensive coverage and praise to the ministry of the abbé de Suger, who acted as regent when Louis VII was on crusade between 1147 and 1149. Auteuil took great pains to argue that the 'Fidèle Ministre' and 'Heroïque Prelat', Suger, had been sole regent despite the claims of the various members of the extended royal family to the title, and that - because he was so universally respected - no one had disputed the King's decision to appoint him. As regent, Auteuil wrote, Suger was always treated as though the King himself were present, and was named 'le père de la patrie' upon the King's return to France.¹³ In his *Galerie des Hommes Illustres* in the Palais Cardinal in Paris, which was adorned with twenty-six portraits of great men, Richelieu's portrait hung opposite that of Suger. A biography of the great abbé, moreover, was translated in 1640 by Jean Baudouin, another known Richelieu

¹⁰ J. Lelong, *Bibliothèque Historique de la France* (4 vols.; Paris, 1775), iv, Appendice, p. 56.

¹¹ Charles Combault d'Auteuil.

¹² C. de Combault d'Auteuil, *Histoire des Ministres d'Etat, qui ont servi sous les Roys de France de la troisieme lignée* (Paris, 1642), 'Au Roy'.

¹³ Auteuil, *Ministres d'Etat*, pp.298-303, 311-2.

propagandist, and published under the title of *Le Ministre Fidelle*. It was Suger's example which Richelieu sought to hold up for the political nation to admire, as a means to persuade them to accept him for the forthcoming regency.¹⁴

Richelieu also sought to underline his suitability for high office, by reviving his claims to be descended from royalty. Pressing over-inflated claims concerning one's origins was habitual among the French nobility, but here, in the context of Richelieu's attempts to bolster his hold on political power, they were of much more consequence. André Duchesne's *Histoire généalogique de la maison du Plessis de Richelieu* of 1631, had named Robert de Dreux, son of Louis VI, as one of the Cardinal's ancestors. These claims were reiterated in 1641 in the *Epitome genealogico* by the Portuguese emissary to France, Manuel Fernandes de Villa Real. After a lengthy section detailing Richelieu's illustrious forebears, Villa Real concluded that, 'era bastante sua noblesa para posseer el lugar que dignamenta ocupa'.¹⁵ An alternative royal descent was put forward in another work by Auteuil, the *Discours abrégé de l'Artois* of 1640, which traced Richelieu's lineage via female descent to Louis VIII.¹⁶

Richelieu also encouraged the claims to the status of *princes du sang* of the House of Courtenay, through male descent from Pierre, younger brother of Robert de Dreux. Duchesne accompanied his genealogy of the du Plessis family with that of the

¹⁴ *Le Ministre Fidelle représenté sous Louis VI en la personne de Suger*, trans. and ed. J. Baudouin (Paris, 1640). This was a translation of a much earlier life of Suger by a monk named Guillaume. The following year, an extensive set of Suger's writings was edited for the first time by André Duchesne, another Richelieu propagandist, in volume IV of his *Historiae Francorum Scriptores* (Paris, 1641).

¹⁵ F.M. de Villa Real, *Epitome genealogico del eminentissimo cardenal duque de Richelieu* (Pamplona, 1641), p.25. A French translation of this work appeared in 1645.

¹⁶ C. Combault d'Auteuil, *Discours abrégé de l'Artois membre ancien de la Couronne de France* (Paris, 1640). Pierre Dupuy later noted that Richelieu had false genealogies of himself printed during his later years: Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions*, p.47.

House of Dreux, in which the Courtenays featured heavily and whose place in the royal line was recognised.¹⁷ The Courtenay claim placed them into the French succession after the Bourbons. During the reign of Louis XIII, the heirs-apparent of the Courtenays were attached successively to Condé and then to Richelieu in the hope of obtaining official recognition. Although this never came, their presence among Richelieu's clients bolstered the Cardinal's options for cementing his familial position and his claims to ministerial authority via a marriage alliance.¹⁸

A refuge for the royal family

For the Richelieu-Condé alliance to control the regency, Anne of Austria would have to be excluded. In order to do so, not only would it be necessary to establish the appropriateness of excluding her in law, but, in practical terms, she would also have to be separated from her children. Control over the King's person was the ultimate mandate for power in a minority, and Anne could not be prevented from wielding the lion's share of *de facto* authority if she still played a leading role in

¹⁷ A. Duchesne, *Histoire généalogique de la maison royale de Dreux* (Paris, 1631).

¹⁸ J. Du Bouchet, *Histoire généalogique de la maison royale de Courtenay* (1661), pp.267-8; A. Saunier-Séité, *Les Courtenay: destin d'une illustre famille bourguignonne* (Paris, 1998), pp.222-33. Sully and Mazarin both also forged close links to the Courtenay claimants, as a mechanism to social and political advancement. Sully married Anne de Courtenay in 1583 and supported the Courtenay campaign for recognition, though Henri IV was not forthcoming - partly out of suspicion of Sully's ambitions: *Les Mémoires de Messire Michel de Castelnau*, ed. J. Le Laboureur (3 vols.; Brussels, 1731), ii, 278, 634-5. Mazarin planned to marry one of his nieces to the then-styled Prince de Courtenay, and to recognise him as a Prince of the Blood, though he later changed his mind: R. Oresko, 'The marriages of the nieces of Cardinal Mazarin: public policy and private strategy in seventeenth-century Europe', in R. Babel (ed.), *Frankreich im europäischen Staatensystem der Frühen Neuzeit*, (Sigmaringen, 1995), 109-151, pp.140-141. Richelieu's genealogical embellishments, and his proximity to the Courtenays, did not go without comment. Morgues retorted to Duchesne's work almost immediately in 1631, and assumed that Richelieu intended to establish the Courtenays as Princes of the Blood: M. de Morgues, *Lettre de monsieur le cardinal de Lyon à monsieur le cardinal de Richelieu son frère*, pp.47-8, published in *Pièces curieuses en suite de celles du sieur de Saint Germain* (2 vols.; Antwerp, 1644), i.

caring for the Dauphin. There had been frequent threats to take the children away from Anne,¹⁹ which meant she lived in fear that one day these threats would become a reality. This was, of course, an extraordinarily sensitive issue for the wider public due to concerns for the safety of the future sovereign. In July 1641, for example, a group of German soldiers, on exiting a Parisian cabaret, had suggested to some locals that there might be a plot brewing to kidnap the princes while they were walking in the park at St Germain, when it was usual for them to be accompanied by only four guards. A violent brawl ‘en pleine rue’ erupted.²⁰

It is likely that the Queen had regarded Sedan, where her ally Soissons was rallying his supporters, as a potential refuge for herself and her sons. In May 1641, however, it became clear that military confrontation at Sedan was inevitable. Châtillon had left Paris on 7 May with instructions to lay siege to the city. If February 1641 had seen Richelieu making his intentions for the regency clear, and preventing Parlement from sabotaging those plans,²¹ then Châtillon’s subsequent campaign was intended to remove another potential spoiler – Soissons. Anne would therefore need a new place of refuge. In late May, while the confrontation with the Princes at Sedan was reaching boiling point, a message was relayed to Don Antonio Sarmiento in Brussels. It was a request, on behalf of Anne, asking that her brothers – the Cardinal Infante and King Philip IV – find a way to get her and her sons to a safe haven. The

¹⁹ H.-A. de Loménie, comte de Brienne, *Mémoires*, in Petitot and Monmerqué, xxxvi, 71-2.

²⁰ AAE MD 839, fo.83, Carré to Richelieu, 19 July 1641.

²¹ See above Chapter 3, p.5.

Queen of France, it was explained, was sure that Richelieu would try to take her children away from her.²²

Sarmiento was sworn to secrecy and treated Anne's request with the utmost care. He kept the message concealed from the Council of State in Brussels, and reported it directly to Olivares in Madrid. The council of state discussed the matter and the result was a letter from Philip IV of 19 June, opining that such an endeavour would be virtually impossible, but that if the Princes at Sedan wished to attempt it, the Cardinal-Infante was instructed to, 'examine bien la forma de la disposicion, y medios, que tienen para intentarlo, y assegurar la execucion'.²³

After the demise of Soissons at the battle La Marfée, and the reconciliation of Bouillon with Louis XIII in August, Sedan was no longer an option for Anne.²⁴ Alexandre de Campion wrote to Madame de Chevreuse in Brussels giving her the following assurances: 'n'ayez point de peur des lettres qui parloient de la personne du monde pour qui vous avez le plus de dévouement; M. de Bouillon et moi avons brûlé toutes celles qui étoient dans la cassette [of Soissons]...et j'ay rendu un tel service à tous les amis de feu M. le Comte qu'ils peuvent à présent dormir en sûreté'. This 'personne du monde' to whom Chevreuse had the most devotion was most likely

²² Sarmiento's letter to Olivares has not been preserved at Simancas, but it is summarised by the King on 19 June: BL Add 14000, fo.567, Philip IV to Cardinal-Infante, 19 June 1641.

²³ BL Add 14000, fo.567, Philip IV to Cardinal-Infante, 19 June 1641, which was then discussed within a ministerial junta in Brussels on 7 August: AGRB T100 vol.654, fo.48, 'Junta en que concurrieron el Presidente Roose y Don Antonio de Sarmiento'. This formed the basis for the Cardinal-Infante's response to his brother on the 16th: AGRB T100 vol.230, fo.97, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 16 Aug. 1641.

²⁴ The Cardinal-Infante still – somewhat optimistically – felt that a project to get Anne and her sons to safety might be arranged by Sarmiento, though he acknowledged the high degree of risk, and promised his brother that care would be taken to ensure the safety of, 'personas cuy conservacion y reputacion es tan sagrada': AGRB T100 vol.230, fo.97, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 16 Aug. 1641.

Anne.²⁵ As was now her well-honed habit, Anne hid her true feelings and maintained the façade of devotion to Richelieu's cause, by expressing the appropriate anger at the royal defeat at La Marfée and joy at the death of Soissons.²⁶

A ministry under pressure

Despite the fortuitous disintegration of the rebellion of the Princes of the Peace during the summer of 1641, Richelieu's ministry remained under intense pressure. The groundswell for peace within France was undiminished, as military frustrations continued. Another hugely expensive campaign had been conducted on the Flanders frontier centring on the capture of Aire. The town fell in July, to much rejoicing, but it was recaptured by the Spanish in December.²⁷ Other failures compounded the sense that the French war effort was inadequate: the routing of Châtillon at La Marfée in July, the failure of Sourdis' costly bid to take Tarragona - which he finally abandoned in September - and the disappointing lack of progress in Roussillon and Italy.²⁸ The war-effort was conspicuously failing to reap the rewards expected by either the King or his people.

The clergy were again protesting against financial impositions required to finance the war. The Bishop of Grenoble, 'deputed by the whole clergie of France, made a very eloquent speech to this Kinge to desire the Kinge the tax layed uppon

²⁵ A. de Campion, *Lettres* (Rouen, 1657), p.108, Campion to Chevreuse, 15 Aug. 1641. Victor Cousin also believed that 'la personne du monde' here referred to Anne of Austria: 'Des Carnets autographes du cardinal Mazarin, conservés à la bibliothèque impériale', part 13, *Journal des Savants* (Oct. 1855), 622-37, p.626 (n.1).

²⁶ AAE MD 839, fo.42, Brassac to Richelieu, 11 July 1641.

²⁷ Griffet, iii, 342-3.

²⁸ D.A. Parrott, *Richelieu's Army: War, Government and Society in France, 1624-1642* (Cambridge, 2001), pp.149-54.

the Clergie contrary to their liberties might bee taken off'. He was seconded by the Bishop of Senlis in November.²⁹ The clergy's opposition to these taxes was, as in the run up to the Assembly of Mantes,³⁰ being encouraged by the Papacy, and there were even rumours that the Pope planned to excommunicate any clergymen who paid them. These rumours were credible enough that a preventative *arrêt* was registered in Parlement to counteract the anticipated Papal Bull.³¹ Meanwhile the *sol pour livre* was still meeting with widespread and frequently violent opposition; 'so much disorder dayly breakes out upon the pressinge of paiement thereof'. The ability to finance the war was once more seriously in doubt.³²

While some diplomatic successes were enjoyed at this time, with a treaty signed between Louis XIII and the Catalans in September, and the switch of Monaco to French allegiance in November,³³ the failure to bring peace was still paramount. A despatch from the English ambassador in Paris, is illuminating on the situation. The King, he reported, 'dayly urgeth for a peace', and was once more making claims about private conversations with Bullion (presumably in 1640), wherein the latter had claimed he could make an advantageous peace. Louis had made similar public

²⁹ BL Add 12184, fo.6v., untitled note by Brown, n.d. [mid-Sept. 1641]. The text of a further speech by the Bishop of Grenoble can also be found in Brown's papers: BL Add 78243, 'Harangue faite au Roi par Mre Pierre Scarron Evesque et Prince de Grenoble, au nom des Trois Ordres de Daulphiné, prononcée a Valance le 25e Février de l'année Mil Six cens quarente deux'. Senlis' opposition is reported in BL Add 12184, fo.28, Brown to [Secretary of State], 5/15 Nov. 1641.

³⁰ On the Assembly of Mantes see above pp.165-6, 189.

³¹ On the clergy's opposition, see *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, ed. P.C. Molhuysen *et al*, published on-line at URL: <http://grotius.huygens.knaw.nl>. (2009), accessed 9 May 2012, no.5390, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 28 Sept. 1641; BL Add 12184, fo.7, Brown to [Secretary of State], 3/13 Sept. 1641; *ibid.*, fo.9, Brown to [Secretary of State], 16/20 Sept. 1641.

³² On the resistance to the *sol pour livre* and concerns for the financing of the war, see BL Add 12184, fo.11, Brown to [Secretary of State], 17/27 Sept. 1641; *ibid.*, fo.13, Brown to [Secretary of State], 24 Sept./4 Oct.; *ibid.*, fo.16, Brown to [Secretary of State], 1/11 Oct. 1641; *ibid.*, fo.22, Brown to [Secretary of State], 15/25 Oct. 1641; AAE MD 842, fo.43, unsigned memorandum concerning the establishment of the *sol pour livre* in the South, 17 Feb. 1642.

³³ This occurred in November 1641. For a brief account see: BN Français 15611, fo.326, Arnaud to Barillon, 27 Nov. 1641.

assertions in the spring, causing Richelieu great anxiety.³⁴ This time, however, Louis claimed that Bullion had actually made some drafts of a peace deal - now in the hands of Tubeuf³⁵ - which Louis had requested to be brought to him for examination.³⁶ The pressure on Richelieu to make peace over the coming winter was now both intense and continuous.

Agitation by Richelieu's exiled opponents, moreover, continued during the late summer and autumn. The duc de Guise, now based in Brussels,³⁷ was styling himself the new figurehead of the Princes of the Peace, and sought Habsburg support to continue the rebellion.³⁸ The Spanish Ambassador in London was instructed to encourage La Valette and Soubise to persist with their plans to stage a landing in Guyenne, which might be combined with the efforts of Guise.³⁹ François de Lisola, moreover, returned to London to make offers on behalf of the Emperor.⁴⁰ With the Cardinal-Infante now focusing his military efforts on re-taking Aire, however, there was little prospect of significant Habsburg resources being deployed to assist the French rebels. Although there was still great belief that stirring up domestic unrest in

³⁴ See above pp.190-1.

³⁵ Jacques Tubeuf, *intendant des finances*.

³⁶ BL Add 12184, fo.7, Brown to [Secretary of State], 3/13 Sept. 1641. Further pressure being placed on Richelieu concerning the peace is reported in BL Add 12184, fo.24, Brown to [Secretary of State], 22 Oct./1 Nov. 1641.

³⁷ Further attempts to reconcile Guise with Louis XIII had failed: BL Add 12184, fo.2, Brown to [Secretary of State], 27 Aug. 1641. A death sentence was subsequently rendered against Guise: BS FP 132, 'Arrest de mort donné par contumace en parlement contre le duc de Guize', 6 Sept. 1641.

³⁸ H. Lonchay and J. Cuvelier (eds.), *Correspondance de la Cour d'Espagne sur les affaires des Pays-Bas au XVIIe siècle* (6 vols.; Brussels, 1923-37), iii, 441, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 16 Aug. 1641; BN Espagnol 144, fo.8, 'Instruction pour l'abbé de Mercy et ordre de ce qu'il aurat a faire alant trouver Sa Majesté Imperiale de la Part du Duc de Guise', 20 Sep. 1641; AGRB T100 vol.654, fo.216, memorandum by Malvezzi concerning means to bring war into France, 4 Oct. 1641; *ibid.*, fo.229, 'Junta en que concurrieron el Presidente Roose, Don Antonio Sarmiento y el Marques Virgilio Malvezzi', 6 Oct. 1641.

³⁹ AGRB T100 vol.230, fo.87, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 16 Aug. 1641; *ibid.*, fo.113, Cardinal-Infante to Philip IV, 14 Sept. 1641.

⁴⁰ Reynald, 'Le Baron de Lisola', pp.320-35; AAE CP Angleterre 48, fo.447, La Ferté-Imbault to [Chavigny], 10 Oct. 1641.

France was the best means to end the destructive war,⁴¹ now that Sedan was no longer available as a stronghold - and there was no Prince of the Blood to lead the *parti* - there was no foundation for investing in their schemes.

The Roussillon voyage

*'Everyone judges that some great mystery is hidden
away under the conduct of this journey to
Catalonia'⁴²*

The contours of a ministerial coup d'état

In late November, or early December 1641, news emerged that the forthcoming campaign season was to have its primary focus on the Roussillon frontier. The King himself was to lead the effort, in which he was to be accompanied by both Anne of Austria and Gaston d'Orléans, while the Prince de Condé was to exercise temporary regency in Paris.

There were clear military reasons for shifting the primary focus of the French war effort towards Roussillon. The Flanders frontier had enjoyed the lion's share of resources for seven successive campaigns, but, despite the huge expenditure, little had been achieved.⁴³ Since 1640, moreover, the northern Iberian kingdom of Catalonia had been in revolt against the Spanish Crown, and the Catalans had appealed to the

⁴¹ AGRB T100 vol.654, Baron de Traun to Cardinal-Infante, 28 Sept. 1641, explaining that it was greatly desired by the princes, electors and states of the Holy Roman Empire that the confederation with Bouillon be revived.

⁴² BN Italien 1818, p.447, Giustiniani to Doge, 14 Feb. 1642. See also the similar comments in BL Add 12184, fo.52, Brown, Paris 14/24 Jan. 1642.

⁴³ Parrott, *Richelieu's Army*, pp.152-6. Also see above, Chapter 2.

French King for protection in their struggle. The Roussillon campaign was therefore designed to support the Catalans and to capitalise on Spain's domestic weaknesses.⁴⁴ There had, moreover, been significant French setbacks on the Roussillon border in recent weeks, especially since the failure of the siege of Tarragona.⁴⁵ Only a significant increase in resources could ensure progress.

Unlike the military rationale for prioritising Roussillon, however, the case for Louis to head the campaign in person was much less clear. The personal presence of the King in the field had sometimes been advantageous, chiefly in enabling senior commanders to bury their differences in order to focus on the task at hand. But there was little else to commend the King's attendance, and indeed it could be a barrier to sensible allocation of resources.⁴⁶ Set against the highly debatable advantages of Louis playing the part of the *roi de guerre*, was the fact that his health was declining yet further and it was likely to be an extremely physically demanding campaign. At the start of November Louis, then at St Germain, had announced his intention to head for nearby Picardie, to oversee the efforts to relieve Aire, but had cancelled the trip due to his health problems. There was then, 'a great consultation of Physitians...concerninge the Kinges sicknesse'. Although Louis' health recovered somewhat in late November, it worsened again in December. His condition continued to fluctuate dramatically between bouts of severe illness and periods of recovery, with another illness always just around the corner.⁴⁷ When news emerged that Louis was

⁴⁴ J.H. Elliott, *The Revolt of the Catalans* (Cambridge, 1963).

⁴⁵ BL Add 12184, fo.59, Brown to [Secretary of State], 4/14 Feb. 1642.

⁴⁶ For an analysis of France's progress in the war between 1635 and 1642, see Parrott, *Richelieu's Army*, pp.115-163. For an appreciation of the impact of Louis' presence on campaign, see *ibid.*, pp.136-7, 464.

⁴⁷ For Louis' health in November and December, see: P. Guillon, *La Mort de Louis XIII* (Paris, 1897), p.87; BL Add 12184, Brown despatches to [Secretary of State]: fo.27 (5/15 Nov. 1641), fo.29, (12/21

to go on campaign in Roussillon, therefore, there was great surprise and serious doubts were expressed concerning the motives of Richelieu for counselling such an arduous undertaking; the journey was so patently inappropriate for a man of failing health.⁴⁸ The King's first doctor, Bouvard, duly advised Louis against undertaking the voyage – a counsel which was encouraged by Cinq-Mars – but to no avail.⁴⁹

Thanks to the account given by Robert d'Aubery in his unpublished (and untapped) history of the regency, Richelieu's planning surrounding the Roussillon voyage can be understood with greater certainty.⁵⁰ Aubery explains that Richelieu wished to take the King far away from Paris so as to be the first to know of his death, in order to act swiftly. Taking Louis southwards would enable Richelieu to leverage his support in the provinces – especially Provence where he was assured of the support of its governor, the comte d'Alais. Orléans was to be instructed to

Nov. 1641), fo.32, (19/29 Nov. 1641), fo.38 (3/13 Dec. 1641), fo.42 (17/27 Dec. 1641); F.S.J.R. de Beauchamp, *Louis XIII d'après sa correspondance avec Richelieu* (Paris, 1902), p.420 (3 Nov. 1641), p.420 (7 Nov. 1641), p.422 (7 Dec. 1641), p.423 (19 Dec. 1641), p.423 (20 Dec. 1641).

⁴⁸ There were many comments on the oddity of a chronically ill King undertaking such an arduous journey: *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.5574, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 26 Jan. 1642; BL Add 12184, fo.47, Brown to [Secretary of State], 10 Jan. 1642; *ibid.*, fo.52, Brown to [Secretary of State], 14/24 Jan. 1642.

⁴⁹ BN Italien 1818, p.390, Giustinani to Doge, 24 Dec. 1641; BN Français 15611, fo.349, Arnaud to Barillon, 28 Dec. 1641; Guillon, *Mort*, p.87; P. Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions pour servir à justifier l'innocence de Messire François-Auguste de Thou*, in *Histoire de Jacques-Auguste de Thou*, xv (London, 1734), p.13; V. Siri, *Anecdotes du ministère du Cardinal de Richelieu et du règne de Louis XIII*, trans. G. de Valdory (2 vols.; Paris, 1717), ii, 103-4; L.-H. de Loménie, comte de Brienne, *Mémoires*, ed. F. Barrière (3 vols.; Paris, 1828), i, 265; Le Vassor, vi(i), 435-6.

⁵⁰ The Bibliothèque Nationale contains two drafts of a work titled 'Histoire de la régence de la reine Anne d'Autriche, ou Mémoires de M. Robert Aubery, seigneur de Sully (1642-1658)': BN Français 20858-61. This comprises two drafts compiled by Robert d'Aubery, seigneur de Jully, based to a large extent on papers left by his father, Robert d'Aubery, seigneur de Vatan, who played a prominent role in the Fronde. Aubery's account has not hitherto been used by historians, but carries much weight by dint of its sober tone, as well as its value as a source of insights seemingly sourced from well-placed contemporaries. This work reveals itself to have been compiled as a history of contemporary, or very recent events, through a combination of personal memory and additional information acquired from personal acquaintances who had first-hand knowledge of events. In relation to the Cinq-Mars affair, considering the nature of the information contained, and the subsequent careers of those few who would have been party to such sensitive information, it seems most likely that Aubery had at least some material sourced from Chavigny. This is not, however, the place to conduct a full analysis of Aubery's text.

accompany the King, to enable Richelieu to keep him under control. While he had put in appearances during some of the King's campaigns in Picardie,⁵¹ to ask Orléans to travel all the way to Roussillon without military purpose was highly unusual. According to Aubery, Richelieu also held a consultation with de Noyers, Chavigny, Bouthillier and Mazarin concerning the question of whether or not to bring Anne of Austria on the voyage, forcing her to leave her sons in safekeeping in the château de Vincennes. In all Richelieu's thinking on this matter, 'il n'estoit point mention du repos de l'estat'.⁵² Perhaps Anne had already heard the rumours of this plan when she presented Richelieu with a gift of a zibellino robe in early December 1641. Zibellini were seen as symbols of fertility, and were often, in smaller form, worn as charms to protect pregnant women. Anne was surely presenting it to the Cardinal as a reminder to her claims as mother to the Dauphin.⁵³

Richelieu was concerned, moreover, about the hostility of Paris – and its Parlement – towards him. Aubery does not expand on this point, but it is evident from the circumstances that the chief threat to the Cardinal's ambitions for the regency was a swift *fait accompli* arrangement between the Queen and Parlement, as had occurred in favour of Marie de Médicis' in 1610. Bringing Anne and Gaston on campaign would serve to keep them away from Parlement, which would likely support a candidacy of either one if they were able to speak in the minor King's name. In addition, Richelieu needed his only royal ally, Condé, to be in Paris to secure the

⁵¹ Orléans had, for example, accompanied the King - along with Mercoeur, Beaufort, and a host of other 'seigneurs' - in surveying the newly-taken Hesdin in late June and early July of 1639: Griffet, iii, 202.

⁵² BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fo.109.

⁵³ BN Italien 1818, p.361, Correr to Doge, 10 Dec. 1641. On the symbolic meanings of zibellinos see T. Sherrill, 'Fleas, Fur, and Fashion: Zibellini as Luxury Accessories of the Renaissance', *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, ed. R. Netherton and G.R. Owen-Crocker, ii (Woodbridge, 2006), 121-150.

Dauphin and to manage both Paris and its Parlement accordingly. Hence Condé was designated to remain in Paris ‘avec pleine puissance’.⁵⁴

Richelieu’s other allies, meanwhile, were to command France’s armies. More than ever, those whose allegiances were suspicious were excluded from military command. La Meilleraye would be lieutenant-general under the King in the Roussillon campaign, while Brézé was to lead the Catalan forces. In the north, Guiche and Harcourt were assigned to command armies in Picardie and Champagne, while Guébriant took charge of the Weimarians on the Rhine.⁵⁵ Bouillon was the only political anomaly and he was ‘marginalised’ with the command of the Army of Italy (a tactic which had been used to side-line difficult *grands* before, such as with the sending of the duc de La Valette on campaign in Spain in 1638).

It should also be noted that it was around this time, at the start of January 1642, that Richelieu obtained a written confirmation from the King of his commitment to more robust terms for a prospective peace with Spain, in the form of instructions for d’Avaux and Mazarin for the new peace conference. This, and an accompanying memorandum are notable by the fact that, unlike previous statements of what the French Crown would find acceptable terms, the concept of a balance of powers within the general peace settlement was abandoned. Richelieu and Louis had raised their expectations, and, in light of the recent defection of the Catalans, defended the right to intervene in defence of the rebellious subjects of other sovereigns. Any suggestion that Louis desist from supporting the Catalans, or the

⁵⁴ BN Français 15611, fo.361v., Arnaud to Barillon, 15 Jan. 1642.

⁵⁵ Le Vassor, vi, 435. Antoine III de Gramont, comte de Guiche, was married to one of Richelieu’s cousins, Françoise-Marguerite du Plessis de Chivré.

Portuguese, was rejected outright.⁵⁶ This appears to confirm plans for the continuation of the war that equated to a mandate for an indefinite extension of Richelieu's ministry, which would be employed to sustain his government during the regency.⁵⁷

Clearly Richelieu was at great pains to secure his position during a forthcoming regency government. Laurain-Portemer characterises his efforts as a, 'bataille pour la continuité', by 'un homme de devoir', whose sole purpose was to finish the work of 'restauration nationale' that he had commenced.⁵⁸ The anachronistic assumptions underlying this assessment are that the war was good for France and ought to be continued at all costs, and that to do so ought to be done according to the strategies dictated by Richelieu and his clients. Many contemporaries, however, saw the voyage as a thinly-veiled conspiracy against the royal family in order for Richelieu to achieve personal power as regent.⁵⁹ Some of the more extreme accusations went so far as to suggest that he was even trying to deliberately cut short the King's life, perhaps even to seize the throne himself, or to

⁵⁶ P. Sonnino, *Mazarin's Quest: The Congress of Westphalia and the Coming of the Fronde* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2008), pp.27-9, 186-7 (n.25).

⁵⁷ *Acta Pacis Westphalicae*, Series 1, vol.I, ed. F. Dickmann and K. Goronzy (Münster, 1962) pp.21-3; J.H. Elliot, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, 1984), p.148.

⁵⁸ Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 265-372.

⁵⁹ BN Italien 1818, p.453, Giustiniani to Doge, 21 Jan. 1642; AAE MD 1476, fo.54, Lamont to Chavigny, 3 May 1642; *Manifeste de Monsieur le duc de Bouillon à la Reyne Régente* (n.d., n.p) [1643]; Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions*, p.13; Brienne (jnr.), *Mémoires*, p.265; F. de Paule de Clermont, marquis de Montglat, *Mémoires*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, v, 127; BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fo.98v.; M. de Morgues, *Abrégé de la vie du Cardinal de Richelieu*, in *Diverses pièces pour la défense de la Royne Mère du Roy Très-Chrétien Louys XIII* (n.p., 1643), pp.957-65, p.961. Some early chroniclers added weight to this perception, describing Richelieu's plan as beyond doubt and widely known at the time: H.-P. de Limiers, *Histoire du règne de Louis XIV, roi de France et de Navarre* (2nd ed., 10 vols.; Amsterdam, 1718), i, 49; Le Vassor, vi(i), pp.433-4; Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 99-104. The first French historians to write of the regency contest - Limiers and Le Vassor - were both Huguenots exiled in Holland during the early eighteenth century. Their accounts formed part of the first critical appraisal of the Bourbon monarchy by French historians, a path rarely trodden by subsequent generations: P.K. Leffler, 'French Historians and the Challenge to Louis XIV's Absolutism', *French Historical Studies*, 14:1 (1985), 1-22.

facilitate Condé's ascent to it.⁶⁰ An unpublished piece of pro-Richelieu propaganda, 'Déffences du cardinal de Richelieu contre les calomnies dont on le charge', responded to some of the accusations and rumours concerning the Cardinal's designs against the royal family. In one section it even felt the need to deny that the Cardinal, 'veut attenter à la vie de la personne de la mère et des deux enfans...' with the intention of making himself King.⁶¹ While such thoughts may have lain hidden within the minds, or private councils, of Richelieu and Condé, that is where they shall always remain; no evidence exists to substantiate them. These accusations do reflect, however, the extent to which Richelieu's grip on power was seen as a threat to the constitutional make-up of the realm.

Richelieu's opponents believed that if he took control of the regency, the result would be a yet harsher régime that would threaten anyone not fully reconciled to the Richelieu-Condé faction or who protested against the incessant war. The public benefit of the doubt increasingly went against the Cardinal when it came to judgements concerning his motives and trustworthiness to head the government. It seemed that his desire to further strengthen his grip on government was taking precedence over all other concerns, fatally tarnishing his reputation and depleting his political capital. Allied with the controversial nature of the war itself, its galling impact on the people, and its protracted nature, it is hard to see that the Cardinal's

⁶⁰ Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 268, 282, who cites other sources for rumours that Richelieu had designs on the throne itself. Accusations were also launched against Richelieu by Marie de Médicis during - and by her adherents after - the Day of Dupes in 1630, that he sought to plot to make his niece Queen by marrying her to Louis XIII, or by marrying her to a Prince of the Blood whose succession to the throne he would then engineer: *Mémoires de M. de Chizay sur le Règne de Louis XIII*, ed. R. Lavollée (Paris, 1914), pp.193-5; M. de Morgues, *La vérité defendue* (n.p., 1635), pp.111-2.

⁶¹ BN Français 15644, fo.474, 'Déffences du Cardinal de Richelieu Contre les Calomnies dont on le charge'.

plans to secure the regency were intrinsically justifiable in anything like the way assumed by Laurain-Portemer.⁶²

The Royalist Alliance

In response to the further decline in the King's health and the plans for the Roussillon voyage, various actions were taken by Anne of Austria, Orléans and other adversaries of Richelieu to defend their position. Orléans and the Queen separately allied themselves with Cinq-Mars, recognising that he 'pouvoit leur estre utile' due to his high personal favour with the King.⁶³ Cinq-Mars subsequently operated as the lynchpin, while giving the *parti* a powerful influence over the King and a presence within his household. François de Thou was active as a go-between and representative of the Queen, while Fontrailles, Aubijoux and various others operated on Orléans' behalf.

Cinq-Mars warned Orléans that he was to be instructed to join the King on campaign, so as to enable Richelieu to 's'assurer de sa personne' in the event of the King's death; a euphemistic manner of suggesting he was to be arrested, or even assassinated. The official instruction to accompany the King on the journey was subsequently made to Orléans in December 1641, which he duly rejected. Continued

⁶² Laurain-Portemer was the first historian (since the eighteenth century) to give attention to Richelieu's designs on the regency. Françoise Hildesheimer has subsequently sought (unconvincingly) to deny Laurain-Portemer's interpretation of Richelieu's activities, denouncing them as 'exorbitant' and 'excessive': *Le Double Mort du roi Louis XIII* (Paris, 2007), p.23; "Le Roi veut demeurer le maître et pour ce faire, le parlement souffre". *Autour du coup de Majesté du 21 Février 1641', Recherches vendéennes*, 16 (2009), 215-228, p.225. Her position has shifted slightly, having previously seemed to accept Laurain-Portemer's case: *Richelieu* (Paris, 2004), pp.448-9, 469.

⁶³ L. de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon, *Parallèle des trois premiers rois Bourbons*, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. R. Dupuis, H. Comte and F. Bouvet, i (Paris, 1964), p.448.

pressure was placed on Orléans to comply, which he resisted by feigning illness.⁶⁴ Fearful of an imminent separation from her sons, Anne discussed the matter with the captain of the guards entrusted with the safety of the Princes at St Germain.⁶⁵ In view of the threat from Richelieu, he promised Anne that ‘pourveu qu’on eust une bonne place de seureté, qu’il y conduiroit la Reine et ces petits Princes’.⁶⁶ The vital necessity was to obtain an appropriate place of refuge.

In a night-time meeting with Cinq-Mars at St Germain in December, the duc de Bouillon consented to provide Sedan as safe-haven for the King’s family and for anyone else who would rally to their cause.⁶⁷ The model offered by Soissons’ revolt was to be followed once more – with Sedan as place of refuge to be defended against a military assault if necessary. In early January 1642, Anne was given formal notice that she was expected to follow her husband on the Roussillon campaign and leave her sons at Vincennes. She publicly demonstrated her unwillingness to comply with

⁶⁴ ‘Procès verbal de Monsieur le Chancelier’, 23 Oct. 1642, reproduced in C. de Bordeille, comte de Montrésor, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Sambix (2 vols.; Cologne, 1723), i, 270-283, mentioning that the conversation between Cinq-Mars and Orléans occurred around 11 November 1641, and that the invitation to Orléans, made via Chavigny, had occurred at some point prior to their further meeting on 13 January 1642.

⁶⁵ The sieur de Montigny.

⁶⁶ Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions*, p.55; AN K114, no.42-12, ‘Déclaration importante de Monseigneur le duc de Bouillon’, 10 Jan. 1643; BN Français 20859, ‘Histoire de la régence’, fo.123.

⁶⁷ BN Italien 1818, p.405, Giustiniani to Doge, 31 Dec. 1641, reporting Bouillon’s arrival at Court. Fontrailles states that on the night of his arrival Bouillon travelled to Saint-Germain to meet with Cinq-Mars: L. d’Astarac, vicomte de Fontrailles, *Relation faite par M. de Fontrailles des choses particulières de la cour arrivées pendant la faveur de M. de Cinq-Mars*, in Michaud and Poujoulat, iii, 250. For Bouillon’s consent to the use of Sedan as a refuge for the royal family, see AN K114, no.42-12, ‘Déclaration importante de Monseigneur le duc de Bouillon’, 10 Jan. 1643; *Manifeste de Monsieur le duc de Bouillon à la Reyne Régente* (n.p., n.d.) [1643]; J. de Langlade, baron de Saumières, *Mémoires de la Vie de Frédéric-Maurice de La Tour d’Auvergne, duc de Bouillon* (Paris, 1692), pp.127-8; Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions*, p.55.

the order, and tearfully managed to persuade Louis to grant her a reprieve until Easter.⁶⁸

If the primary objective was to ensure a safe retreat to Sedan, then troops would be needed to defend its fortifications in the event of a bid to lay siege. As one contemporary put it, ‘l’on ne pouvoit subsister à Sedan sans l’Espagne’.⁶⁹ Orléans, Anne of Austria, Bouillon, and Cinq-Mars therefore concluded that negotiations should be conducted with the King of Spain to acquire the requisite military and financial resources. The protection of the royal dynasty, and of the rights to authority of those who enjoyed consanguinity with the King, had – out of necessity – become inherently bound up with the practice of treason. Fontrailles and Aubijoux, both of whom were members of Orléans’ entourage, were to be sent to Madrid to negotiate a deal.

Further plans were made to pre-empt Richelieu’s designs by persuading Louis XIII to dismiss him, either by arrest or assassination. Rather than reacting to Richelieu’s manoeuvres by trying to arrange a retreat to Sedan and subsequent military action – which ‘demandoit trop de temps’ – there was a strong case for simpler and more decisive measures. Fontrailles in particular was a persistent advocate of assassinating Richelieu.⁷⁰ He was seconded by the captain of the King’s guards, the comte de Tréville, and it is probable that other members of the guards held

⁶⁸ BN Italien 1818, p.447, Correr to Doge, 14 Jan. 1642; *ibid.*, p.453, Giustiniani to Doge, 21 Jan. 1642; BL Add 12184, fo.50, Brown to [Secretary of State], 7/17 Jan. 1642.

⁶⁹ N. Goulas, *La Deffense de feu M. Goulas*, in *Mémoires et autres inédits de Nicolas Goulas*, ed. N. Hepp (Paris, 1995), p.245.

⁷⁰ BN Français 20859, ‘Histoire de la régence’, fo.111v. Fontrailles had already spoken to Cinq-Mars of the need to co-ordinate an assassination in the aftermath of La Marfée. He later proposed assassination in Orléans’ presence on at least two occasions; one in the late summer of 1641 and then again in January 1642: Fontrailles, *Relation*, pp.248-9; BN Français 20859, ‘Histoire de la régence’, fo. 106v.; Saumières, *Mémoires*, p.148.

similar views.⁷¹ The marquis de Barrières also offered to kill the Cardinal on behalf of the Queen, though she declined his offer.⁷² By the end of January, Cinq-Mars – encouraged by Fontrailles and Tréville – was plotting to assassinate Richelieu at Lyon, where the King and Cardinal would stay during the journey to Roussillon. Such was Louis' private (and often public) dissatisfaction with Richelieu, that Cinq-Mars, and probably Tréville, felt it appropriate to seek Louis' assent.⁷³ While we can be sure that Louis did not give unequivocal approval, it is also evident that he did not express unequivocal disapproval either.⁷⁴

The King's indeterminacy – or tacit approval – was enough to spur the conspirators on. Louis did not warn Richelieu of the plots forming against him, and neither did he place any sanctions upon Cinq-Mars, Tréville or the other participants. Louis' inaction speaks volumes of his irresolute hopes that Richelieu might be murdered, but without him being required to openly sanction it as he had in the removal of Concini 25 years previously.⁷⁵ Madame de Motteville's choice of words was therefore apt when she wrote that 'Le Roi étoit tacitement le chef' of the

⁷¹ Montglat, *Mémoires*, p.126. Des Essarts, who commanded a company of the guards under Tréville, was implicated in the 1643 plot to assassinate Mazarin: H. de Campion, *Mémoires*, ed. M. Fumaroli (2nd ed., Paris, 1990), p.162. It is likely, therefore, that he was party to the plans made by Cinq-Mars and Tréville in 1642.

⁷² Henri de Taillefer, marquis de Barrières, was the brother of mademoiselle de Saint-Louis, a maid of honour to Anne of Austria. On Barrières' offer to kill Richelieu, see Cousin, 'Carnets', part 7 (1855), pp.88-9.

⁷³ Louis later admitted that Cinq-Mars had proposed Richelieu's assassination to him: A. Aubery, *Mémoires pour l'Histoire du Cardinal duc de Richelieu* (5 vols.; Cologne, 1667), v, 366-7, Louis XIII to Séguier, n.d. [1642].

⁷⁴ Some commentators claim that Louis gave clear approval to the assassination plan: Chizay, *Mémoires*, pp.298-9; Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 289. Even if Louis approved the plan, he hesitated to implement it, such that any opportunities were lost. In effect, as the younger Brienne wrote, Louis desperately resented Richelieu's position, but lacked the strength to be rid of him: Brienne (jnr.), *Mémoires*, p.266.

⁷⁵ The assassination of Concini is examined in S. Kettering, *Power and reputation at the court of Louis XIII: the career of Charles d'Albert, Duc de Luynes (1578-1621)* (Manchester, 2008), Ch.3. Among Kettering's key findings is that Louis XIII had a much greater personal role in Concini's demise than previously thought, a fact which Richelieu was probably well-aware of.

conspiracy.⁷⁶ It is likely that the conversations of Cinq-Mars with Louis XIII concerning the excessive power of Richelieu, and the desire of Louis to be free of his domination, were couched in the ambiguous language of “removing” him from office and offers to ‘s’assurer de sa person’, which could be interpreted as simply references to a peaceful transition, forcing Richelieu to resign, or perhaps an arrest, either of which, however, could lead – if so engineered – to a physical confrontation culminating in a bloody dénouement such as that which befell Concini.⁷⁷

The backdrop to the negotiations of the royalist conspirators comprised the continued fluctuations and decline in Louis XIII’s health. At the end of December, Louis came to Paris to put pay to popular rumours that he was dead, but, 'As he confirmed it to y'e world that he was alive, so by his weaknesse and sickely aspect, he hath assured them that he is no way in health'.⁷⁸ In mid-January Louis again became very ill. The conflict between Bouvard and Richelieu over the King’s travel plans re-emerged. Richelieu was angered at the aged Bouvard, and tried to force him to retire, but Louis refused to accept his doctor’s request for permission to do so. Somehow Richelieu persuaded Louis to ignore Bouvard’s warnings; some commentators explain that he did so by talking to the King of the immense glory to be obtained through a successful campaign.⁷⁹ A great cloud of uncertainty hung about the court concerning

⁷⁶ F. de Motteville, *Mémoires*, in Petitot and Monmerqué, xxxvi, 400.

⁷⁷ Richelieu strongly suspected that Louis had approved his assassination, though he manipulated affairs so as to conceal this fact: Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), i, 191, Richelieu to Chavigny and de Noyers, 4 July 1642. Richelieu later, however, came round to the view that Louis had not given full backing: Avenel, vii, 101, Richelieu to de Noyers and Chavigny, 23 Aug. 1642. It seems likely that Richelieu exaggerated his suspicions of Louis in early July 1642 as part of his means to shock Louis into agreeing to the commencement of interrogations and legal proceedings against the conspirators.

⁷⁸ BL Add 12184, fo.44, Brown to [Secretary of State], 24 Dec. 1641/3 Jan. 1642; *ibid.*, fo.47, Brown to [Secretary of State] 10 Jan. 1641.

⁷⁹ BN Italien 1818, p.453, Giustiniani to Doge, 21 Jan. 1642; *ibid.*, p.462, Giustiniani to Doge, n.d. [last week of January 1642]; Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions*, p.13; Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 103-4. Other

the Roussillon voyage, with many private consultations between the King and Richelieu, which were assumed to concern the regency question.

At the start of February 1642, the King took his leave from the Queen. The revised agreement for Anne to head for Roussillon was formally reiterated. The Château de Vincennes was to be prepared to house the *enfants de France*, 'there to keepe in safety the young Princes during his absence', with Anne due to follow her husband on 1 April.⁸⁰ At Vincennes they would be in the care of Madame de Lansac, in a near-impregnable fortress governed by Chavigny, on the outskirts of a capital city under the stewardship of Condé. When, on Monday 3 February, Louis departed Fontainebleau to commence the long journey south, it was amidst a growing crescendo of controversy. So contentious was this voyage, that the Cardinal would go so far, during the following summer, as to draft a retrospective public declaration of the 'pure verité', to be made by the King in response to claims that the Cardinal had counselled the voyage 'à mauvais dessein'. This statement was to make it known that the discussion concerning the Roussillon campaign had been instigated by Louis, and to recount the sound counsel given by Richelieu advising the value of bringing the war into Philip IV's own country. Louis himself, it claimed, then proposed that he go in person, but Richelieu had suggested he consider the impact this would have on his health. The King, in this version, was adamant, preferring that risk to the chagrin of remaining arms folded at St Germain.⁸¹

evidence also suggests that Richelieu had fallen out with Bouvard, who he saw as part of the cabals against him: Avenel, vii, 110, Richelieu to Chavigny and de Noyers, 30 Aug. 1642.

⁸⁰ BL Add 12184, fo.55, Brown to [Secretary of State] 21/31 Jan. 1642; *ibid.*, fo.57, Brown to [Secretary of State], 28 Jan./7 Feb. 1642; BN Français 15611, fo.378, Arnaud to Barillon, 2 Feb. 1642.

⁸¹ AAE MD 843, fo.186, 'Déclaration du Roy sur son Voyage de Roussillon', n.d. [1642].

The Spanish negotiations

Two weeks after the King's departure from Fontainebleau, Fontrailles also headed south – in his case for Madrid – armed with a set of proposals for a treaty with the King of Spain. He crossed the Pyrenees via the Aspe valley and entered Spain. In Brussels, meanwhile, Sarmiento had received notice of the new conspiracy, probably via Madame de Chevreuse. On 3 February he wrote to inform Olivares of this news, which, he underlined, needed to be treated with the utmost secrecy; many people's lives might be put at risk through carelessness, 'y entre ellas una que es tan preciosa'. Sarmiento's letter briefly outlined the rise of Cinq-Mars, as a *créature* of Richelieu, and his subsequent turn against his mentor. A conspiracy was now being formed against the Cardinal, he explained, by Cinq-Mars in allegiance to the Queen. He also mentioned that the project was to be executed by Easter, which suggests the message Sarmiento had received post-dated the revised agreement that Anne would leave her sons and head south in April. Sarmiento's letter also explained that fear of Richelieu's designs on the regency was the chief motive for the conspiracy.⁸² He did not mention that the conspirators were sending an agent (Fontrailles) to Madrid to negotiate, but clearly someone closely involved in the conspiracy in France wished the Spanish to know that the Queen was sponsoring the project, and that it therefore merited Philip IV's consideration.

By the time Fontrailles arrived in Madrid at the start of March, Sarmiento's letter to Olivares had arrived, adding further credibility to his agency. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Fontrailles was immediately welcomed into the Count-Duke's carriage for a

⁸² AGS Est. Flandes 2057, item 25, Sarmiento to Olivares, 3 Feb. 1642. Received on 28 February, Sarmiento's letter was discussed in council a few days later: *ibid.*, item 24, 'Consejo de Estado', 2 Mar. 1642.

lengthy discussion. On 2 March the French conspirators' proposals were read out at an extraordinary Council of State. There were grave doubts expressed about Orléans' reliability, and it was agreed that Olivares should press Fontrailles for more information. The proposals mentioned, but did not name, two senior figures and a place of importance on France's border, which were promised to Monsieur. Furthermore, the item stressed as being the most vital demand of the conspirators was that the Spanish or Imperial forces push Guébriant's army across the Rhine, but it did not explain why.

A day or so later, Fontrailles and Olivares met again. Olivares spoke of how great Orléans' demands are, and how little faith could be placed in him based on his prior record. He used this to emphasise the need for Fontrailles to name the 'deux personnes de qualité' and the 'bonne place frontière'. Fontrailles had strict instructions not to name them until the treaty was signed. Eventually, Olivares promised that he would sign the treaty in the form presented by Fontrailles, provided that the names were given, to which Fontrailles consented. He gave the names of Bouillon and Cinq-Mars, meaning that Olivares would be able to make the direct link to Sarmiento's letter of 3 February explaining that Cinq-Mars and the Queen were operating in tandem to bring down Richelieu.⁸³ Olivares therefore knew, and was perhaps the only Spaniard who did, that the conspiracy comprised not only Orléans, but also Bouillon, Cinq-Mars and Anne of Austria. Olivares later received a letter directly from Chevreuse dated 5 April, which reiterated what Sarmiento had informed

⁸³ Fontrailles, *Relation*, pp.251-4; AGS Est. Flandes 2057, item 24, 'Consejo de Estado', 2 Mar. 1642. Fontrailles' visit to Spain is also recounted by Robert d'Aubery in his *Histoire de la régence* (BN Français 20859), but this is largely a paraphrase of the account given by Fontrailles himself, which must have been available to him in manuscript form.

him of – that within France everyone was chosing ‘los Partidos...para mantenerse, y...que Saint Mars seguira el de la Reyna’, and that the Queen was concerned to obtain sanctuary for herself and her sons on the French frontier.⁸⁴

The matter was discussed again by the Council on 5 March. Olivares reported that Fontrailles had divulged the names, but that he would continue to keep them secret, confirming that ‘la plaza que el imbiado declarava era de importancia y consecuencia en la françia y los personajes hombres grandes y de mucha autoridad’. He also suggested that the requirement to push the Weimarians across Rhine was in order to make way for troops to come from Germany in support of the rebels (who would, as he knew, be at Sedan), and suggested some Polish troops to help with this. The twenty five articles, which had been drafted with Fontrailles, were then discussed and agreed in a further council the following day.⁸⁵

The treaty was finally signed on 13 March in the form of twenty articles along with a separate document of five additional articles, to which we shall return.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ The 5 April letter from Chevreuse to Olivares is summarised in AGS Est. Flandes 2057, item 34, ‘Consejo de Estado’, 10 May 1642.

⁸⁵ AGS Est. Flandes 2057, item 26, ‘Consejo de Estado’, 5 Mar. 1642; *ibid.*, item 27, ‘Consejo de Estado’, 6 Mar. 1642.

⁸⁶ All existing historiography on the conspiracy assumes that the copies in the main French archives are a true reflection of what Fontrailles signed. All of them, however, are sourced from the copy redacted in the summer and later authenticated by Orléans at Villefranche on 29 August 1642, which may well have been manipulated or contain errors. The only historian thus far to seek a copy in the Spanish archives, was Capefigue who consulted Estado Francia K1420 – during its temporary residence in the Archives Nationales – but this only contains a copy of the five supplementary articles, which do not form part of the 20 articles of which the standard French copies are comprised: J.B.H.R. Capefigue, *Les Cardinaux Ministres: Le Cardinal de Richelieu* (Paris, 1865), pp.163-8. As such we cannot be certain of the wording of the original articles. There is no copy in Simancas, though the record of the council meeting of 6 March contains a relation of the proposals carried by Fontrailles, which closely-resembles the French copies of the treaty, as well as the supplementary articles: AGS Est. Flandes 2057, item 27. We can therefore be confident that the treaty did exist and was not a forgery, but it may well be that the wording of the document actually signed by Fontrailles in Madrid on 13 March was different to the text usually assumed to be the treaty signed that day. Letters in execution of the treaty, as well as instructions for Fontrailles’ assistance on his return journey, were also drawn up on 13 March: AGS

Orléans declared himself willing to take up arms in order to bring peace to Christendom, and to liberate the people of France from the ‘oppressions qu’ils souffrent depuis long-tems par une si sanglante guerre’. Philip IV was to provide 12,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, ‘des vieilles troupes’, as well as a sizeable pension for Orléans.⁸⁷ The treaty reads, therefore, like a proposal for a revolt and joint invasion of France, in quite similar terms to that which had been signed with Soissons, Bouillon and Guise the previous spring, and with similar objectives. The objective of general peace was again the mutual banner under which to unite with, and obtain the assistance of, the Habsburgs. The conspirators in 1642, just as in 1641, were making the appropriate “public” claims not just to justify their acts of resistance in terms of the *devoir de révolte*, but also so as to find common cause with the Spanish. In this sense, it was the Spanish who were being misled. We should not, however, read these treaties literally; both in 1641 and 1642 members of the extended royal family felt themselves threatened by Richelieu’s power, and saw no choice but to employ Spanish arms to defend their position. That they then framed their deals with the Spanish as acts of proactive revolt, should not be cause to ignore their defensive contexts.

The Lyon plot

While Fontrailles was in Spain, the King’s southward journey had continued. On 17 February, he arrived at Lyon, and Richelieu followed a few days later. The plan to

Est. Francia K1420, items 73, 74, and 78a-c. Note that a copy of the five additional articles is also to be found in Paris: AAE CP Espagne 22, fo.123.

⁸⁷ The treaty is reproduced in Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), ii, 176-86.

assassinate Richelieu was to be carried out during the 3 or 4 day window when both he and the King were scheduled to be present.⁸⁸ A clear picture of events is impossible to form, but somehow the plot did not reach the point of execution.⁸⁹ Cinq-Mars had encouraged many of his family's clients in the Auvergne to come to Lyon to 'luy rendre leurs debvoirs', which they did in their hundreds. Orléans and Bouillon had both been asked to come to Lyon, so as to authorise the deed, but neither turned up, and it is unclear whether they had given their consent at all. Cinq-Mars and his gentlemen nevertheless paraded the city's streets in a show of strength.⁹⁰ Decisively, however, Louis refused to give his assent to the plan. In a later statement, Louis admitted that Cinq-Mars had proposed assassinating the Cardinal while at Lyon and that he had refused to authorise it.⁹¹ Although the King's approval was not given, he again had direct evidence of the plots against the Cardinal and did nothing to warn his minister or to avert the conspiracies. Louis remained intentionally ambiguous – probably hoping that events would resolve themselves, such that he would not have to take responsibility for the Cardinal's fate.

⁸⁸ Approximately 19 to 22 February, per the dating provided in A. Pericaud, *Notes et Documents pour servir à l'Histoire de Lyon sous le Règne de Louis XIII 1610-1643* (Lyon, 1846), p.287, though the 21st was largely taken up with the King's review of his infantry on the place de Bellecour, and its somewhat chaotic departure on the Rhône.

⁸⁹ The few seemingly original sources on the Lyon plot are: Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), i, 191, Richelieu to Chavigny and de Noyers, 4 July 1642; *ibid.*, i, 197, Chavigny to Richelieu, 4 July 1642; *ibid.*, i, 219, 'Autre Déclaration de Monsieur, pour ce qui concerne son Eminence', 7 July 1642; Avenel, vii, 155, Richelieu memorandum entitled 'M. le Grand' [October] 1642; Montglat, *Mémoires*, p.127; Saumières, *Mémoires*, p.156; BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fo.117v.; AAE MD 288, fo.65, Memorandum of information obtained from Orléans during his voyage to Annecy, 22 July 1642. The best existing account is in Griffet, iii, 422-5, 447-8.

⁹⁰ BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fos.112, 117v.; Montglat, *Mémoires*, p.127.

⁹¹ Aubery, *Mémoires pour l'Histoire*, v, 366-7, Louis XIII to Séguier, n.d. [1642].

Faction-building

Cinq-Mars and his supporters also engaged in energetic faction-building. There are various testimonies to the increasing weight of Cinq-Mars' faction; as Arnaud reported: 'Mr le Grand fait des Amis. Sa Cour grossit.'⁹² It is virtually impossible to chart these efforts with precision, but various mentions attest to a significant effort. De Thou, alongside his cousins, the comte de Montrésor and the marquis Bourdeilles,⁹³ made multiple visits to the former Keeper of the Seals, the marquis de Châteauneuf,⁹⁴ over the winter months of 1641 and 1642. It is likely that they were attempting to obtain Châteauneuf's advice on the management of the regency project, and perhaps to enlist him as a future member of a replacement government.⁹⁵ The maréchal de Schomberg,⁹⁶ governor of Languedoc, had also allied himself with Cinq-Mars. In his memoirs, the sieur de Pontis reported overtures made to him by Cinq-Mars, offering to protect him from the 'tyran'.⁹⁷ There are also suggestions that the intendant for Languedoc, Choisy, had been offered a role in the new government.⁹⁸

Another major constituent of the royalist faction were members of the King's household, especially officers of the King's guards. Their opposition to Richelieu had resonance within circles of intense loyalty to the monarchy. The comte de Tréville, captain of Louis' musketeers *à cheval* was a long standing enemy of the Cardinal,

⁹² BN Français 15611, fo.407, Arnaud to Barillon, 12 Mar. 1642.

⁹³ François-Sicaire de Bourdeilles, had recently been installed as seneschal and governor of the Périgord, due to the death of his father. He was Montrésor's older brother and was closely involved in his sibling's conspiratorial activities. In 1637, for example, both were involved in trying to persuade the duc d'Épernon to join the rebellion of Orléans and Soissons: G. Girard, *Histoire de la vie du duc d'Espèrnon* (Paris, 1655), p.549.

⁹⁴ Charles de l'Aubespine, marquis de Châteauneuf, had been removed from his post for supposedly conspiring against Richelieu and was in confinement at Angoulême.

⁹⁵ AAE MD 1476, fo.60, Lamont to Chavigny, 25 Nov. 1642.

⁹⁶ Charles de Schomberg.

⁹⁷ B.-L. de Pontis, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1715), ii, 332.

⁹⁸ R.-L. de Voyer, marquis d'Argenson, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1825), pp.233-4.

who prided himself on his dedication to the King alone.⁹⁹ Several other officers were allied with Cinq-Mars and what they saw as the King's faction.¹⁰⁰ These officers often captained multiple companies of the guards, from within which they could count on loyal support.¹⁰¹

Moves were also made to build support among the discontented Huguenots in the Cevennes. Just before leaving Paris, around the start of February, Cinq-Mars had instructed one of his supporters, Josué de Chavagnac, to recruit four or five companies of Huguenot troops for the d'Effiat regiment. Chavagnac travelled to the Cevennes mountains and the Gévaudan where he frequented various towns, claiming at Marvejols, for example, to have a commission from the King to raise 5,000 troops. He was supported by local noblemen, such as those of the maison de Boyer and the sieur d'Antraigues, as well as his own relatives and other supporters of Cinq-Mars. Various Huguenot assemblies took place in the region, in which attempts were made by radical pastors to sow the seeds of a general rebellion.¹⁰²

Cinq-Mars' increasing faction also reflected his growing credit with the King. His ability to influence patronage decisions had been increasing to an extent not exercised by anyone other than Richelieu since the Day of Dupes. In December 1641, for example, Richelieu proposed a list of those to receive the benefices of Soissons

⁹⁹ Jean Arnaud de Peyrer, comte de Tréville: AAE MD 845, fo.3, Information from Bonnecasse to Richelieu, n.d. [January 1642].

¹⁰⁰ They were Tilladet, La Salle, des Essarts, Fourille and Beaupuis: Montglat, *Mémoires*, pp.126, 132; G.L., comte d'Estrades, *Ambassades et neegotiations de M. le Comte d'Estrades* (Amsterdam, 1718), p.66, Richelieu to Estrades, 13 May 1642; Avenel, vii, 110-3.

¹⁰¹ Fourille, for example, was captain of seven companies of guards in 1642: S. Lamoral Le Pippre de Noeufville, *Abrégé chronologique et historique de l'origine, du progrès et de l'état actuel de la Maison du Roi, et de toutes les troupes de France* (3 vols.; Liège, 1734-5), iii, 63.

¹⁰² BN Français 18431, fos.251-398, consisting of various documents relating to the investigation of Chavagnac's activities; AAE MD 845, fo.171, Bishop of Mende to Richelieu, 16 Aug. 1642; *ibid.*, fo.256, Bishop of Mende to Richelieu, 7 Nov. 1642; BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fo.113. Josué de Chavagnac was the most persistent rebel of the reign: see above p.179.

and Guise, the one deceased, the other having been found guilty of lèse-majesté. The list was rejected by Louis, because it did not contain the names Tréville or Fourille, a sure sign of the growing influence of Cinq-Mars' faction.¹⁰³ At the end of March 1642, moreover, Schomberg was reinstated as governor of Languedoc through Cinq-Mars' influence.¹⁰⁴ When Collioure fell to the King's armies in April, both Cinq-Mars and Richelieu claimed its governorship for their allies, but Cinq-Mars won out.¹⁰⁵ Tilladet also hoped that Cinq-Mars would obtain the governorship of Perpignan for him, which probably seemed a safe bet at the time.¹⁰⁶

Cinq-Mars had also now obtained permission to participate again in the King's council. The English ambassador gives a fascinating explanation as to how this happened; Cinq-Mars, he writes, argued, 'that in case the Card'l dye, he [Louis] wil be to seeke of one to manage his affaires, unlesse in hyme [Cinq-Mars] he breed one up to it. The King approved very well of his motion, and at Montargis brought him into his secret Counsel whereat the Cardinal was much displeased, and is observed to be very sad and much troubled, whilst Monsr le Grand on the other side seemes to be very cheerefull and resolute, and hath of late carried some businesses in despite of Monsr le Cardl.'¹⁰⁷ Cinq-Mars had effectively been designated by the King as his intended successor to Richelieu, and was beginning to transfer the conduct of at least some of his affairs to the rising star.

¹⁰³ BN Français 15611, fo.335, Arnaud to Barillon, 7 Dec. 1641.

¹⁰⁴ AAE MD 842, fo.122, Liancourt to Chavigny, 31 Mar. 1642; BL Add 12184, fo.74, Brown to [Secretary of State], 4 Apr. 1642.

¹⁰⁵ The governorship went to the sieur de Pontis: Pontis, *Mémoires*, ii, 337; Le Vassor, vi(i), 470-1.

¹⁰⁶ BN Français 15611, fo.491v., Arnaud to Barillon, 3 Aug. 1642. Richelieu's preference for the post was Abraham de Fabert: Bourelly, *Fabert*, i, 186-9.

¹⁰⁷ BL Add 12184, fo.59, Brown to [Secretary of State], 4/14 Feb. 1642. For further mentions of Cinq-Mars attendance of the King's council, see: *ibid.*, letters of Brown to [Secretary of State], fo.61 (11/21 Feb. 1642), fo.63 (18/28 Feb. 1642), fo.65 (7 Mar. 1642), fo.67 (4/14 Mar.).

To some extent we can measure the extent of the factional divisions of 1642 through the observations of France's allies, or potential allies. They were aware of the calamitous rift in the country's internal affairs, with rumours of Richelieu's imminent downfall beginning to spread. This raised the question of whether or not they could work with a government so endemically prone to domestic opposition, opposition which was rumoured to be favoured by the King himself. Prince Thomas of Savoy, for example, was aware of the Cinq-Mars conspiracy. The fact that he knew of it perhaps explains why he continued to refuse to come to terms with Richelieu's France, preferring to continue the civil war against his sister-in-law for control of Savoy. Jean-Jacques Chifflet, a medical man, repeatedly wrote to Prince Thomas from Brussels concerning Louis XIII's ill-health, which he believed would imminently result in his death. Prince Thomas was more cautious and did not want to bank on the event – 'c'est à Dieu par après à faire des miracles' – he wrote.¹⁰⁸ By late March, however, Prince Thomas had learnt of 'le dessein de Monsieur le Grand', from which, 'on peût en esperer des grandes nouveautes'.¹⁰⁹

There were similar issues for the Dutch Estates. Richelieu had been concerned for a long time about the attempts of the Spanish to negotiate a truce with the Dutch, which had in recent years been precipitated by the intervention of

¹⁰⁸ AMB CC 24, letters of Prince Thomas to Chifflet, fo.642 (20 Jan.), fo.652 (19 Feb.), fo.660 (31 Mar.) and fo.662 (31 Mar. 1642). Jean-Jacques Chifflet was the Cardinal-Infante's doctor.

¹⁰⁹ AMB CC 24, fo.660, Prince Thomas to Chifflet, 31 Mar. 1642. Chifflet had informed Prince Thomas of the Cinq-Mars conspiracy. Chifflet's clients in Brussels included many senior generals and ministers. He also acted as a conduit for sensitive correspondence, such as that between the Princesse de Phalsbourg, and Prince Thomas. It is not surprising, therefore, that he was well-informed concerning the Cinq-Mars affair: AMB CC 24, fos.738-932 and 552-640 respectively, for correspondence exchanging political and military news, as well as the passing of Phalsbourg's letters.

Bouillon, nephew of the Prince of Orange.¹¹⁰ Bouillon had informed the Spanish that Orange would sign a truce, but that the only real stumbling block was his belief that Spanish theologians advised their monarch that it was not necessary to keep treaty commitments made to a heretic power. A deal with the Spanish would therefore require other powers to enter the treaty, in order to give the Dutch assurances from Spanish double-dealing.¹¹¹ In January 1642, Richelieu was notified that the Prince of Orange was receiving letters from Don Antonio Sarmiento, concerning a potential truce.¹¹² In May, the comte d'Estrades conveyed Orange's concerns about the Cinq-Mars affair. The Spanish had made him aware of the divisions at Louis XIII's court in order to persuade him to sever his ties with France. Orange was seeking reassurance from Richelieu on the matter of the, 'mésintelligence entre Monseigneur et Monsieur le Grand'. His concerns about the situation in France were leading him to listen favourably to Spain's diplomats.¹¹³ Richelieu responded to Orange with a frank outline of the court conspiracy against him (though showing no knowledge of their Spanish negotiations). The response from Orange, via Estrades, was a seemingly wholehearted commitment not just to the French alliance, but to Richelieu's leadership: 'si le cardinal n'avoit en main les affaires de la France, il accepteroit les offres que luy faisoit le roy d'Espagne et s'accomoderoit avec cette couronne'.¹¹⁴ However, by stressing how pivotal Richelieu was, this letter also

¹¹⁰ see above pp.140, 164 (n.117).

¹¹¹ BL Add 14005, fo.248, 'Copia de Capitulo de Carta de Su Magestad a su A. sobre loque escribio Don Antonio Sarmiento le avia dicho el Duque de Bullon', 19 June 1641.

¹¹² AAE CP Angleterre 49, fo.10, La Ferté-Imbault to [Chavigny], 16 Jan. 1642.

¹¹³ AAE MD 842, fo.223, Estrades to Chavigny, 8 May 1642. See also the retrospective comments in AAE MD 843, fo.258, Chavigny to Richelieu, 21 Aug. 1642; BN Italien 1819, p.412, Giustiniani to Doge, 25 Nov. 1642.

¹¹⁴ *Ambassades*, p.70., Estrades to Chavigny, 10 June 1642. See also Avenel, vi, 917-8 (n.2).

implied that, should Orange come to believe that Richelieu's position was under serious threat, his commitment to the alliance would waver.

The Fall of Richelieu

Ill health and separation

After its stay at Lyon, the court continued its journey southwards. On 18 March, while at Narbonne, Richelieu fell ill, suffering a bout of fever, followed by the formation of an abscess on his right arm.¹¹⁵ He remained at Narbonne, where he became increasingly unwell, and was bed-ridden with a 'dangereuse maladie'. On 5 April, de Noyers described in a letter to de Brézé how they had moved the Cardinal to a chair to ease the discomfort from the 'grandes inflammations' caused by having been lying down for so long. While this had led to an improvement in his condition, he was clearly very ill and his health continued to fluctuate.¹¹⁶

Anne of Austria once more received instructions from the King to leave her children in Lansac's care and to depart St Germain for Fontainebleau, where she would await her husband's return from Roussillon.¹¹⁷ Anne sent her almoner to court to obtain a reprieve, but he failed. She nevertheless stubbornly refused to depart and soon became ill (or at least claimed to be). Anne was well aware of Richelieu's health problems and sensibly bided her time.¹¹⁸ For his part, Orléans was under

¹¹⁵ M. Topin, *Louis XIII et Richelieu* (Paris, 1876), p.382.

¹¹⁶ BL Eg 1689, fo.69, de Noyers to Brézé, 5 Apr. 1642; *ibid.*, fo.71, de Noyers to Brézé, 18 Apr. 1642.

¹¹⁷ BN Français 15611, fo.437, Arnaud to Barillon, 30 Apr. 1642.

¹¹⁸ BN Français 15611, fo.439, Arnaud to Barillon, 4 May; *ibid.*, fo.448, Arnaud to Barillon, 21 May; *ibid.*, fo.449v., Arnaud to Barillon, 25 May 1642; AAE MD 845, fo.52, Brassac to [Richelieu], 7 Apr.; *ibid.*, fo.68, Brassac to [Richelieu], 3 May 1642.

continued pressure to join the King at Perpignan, but he (probably faking it) found himself unable to travel due to recurrent gout.

Fontrailles now returned from Spain, and achieved a rendezvous with Cinq-Mars, with the results of his Madrid meetings. A gentleman was despatched to notify Orléans at Blois of the outcome of Fontrailles' mission, but was also instructed to inform the prince that Richelieu's health was in such a terrible state that there would be no need to ratify the treaty. The messenger was then to seek out Bouillon in Piedmont to convey the same news. Meanwhile Cinq-Mars sent a copy of the treaty to Marie de Gonzague, who in turn either passed a copy on to Anne of Austria, or at least made her aware of its existence.¹¹⁹

On the 21 April, Louis left Richelieu behind at Narbonne, accompanied by Cinq-Mars, heading for the army preparing to lay siege to Perpignan. Richelieu's ill health now offered the prospect of achieving by natural causes the deliverance that the Royalist *parti* sought. In the last week of April, Richelieu's health improved, and, while it was certain, 'that Cardinal Richelieu hath bene in great danger', he was now recovering.¹²⁰ The King remained at Perpignan, where the siege had commenced, while Richelieu lingered at Narbonne. At the end of the month, however, Richelieu relapsed into a yet more severe illness. The battle for influence over the King now seemed to have taken a decisive turn in Cinq-Mars' favour. Schomberg, through Cinq-Mars' support, was appointed to command the King's Quarter in the camp at Perpignan, trumping La Meilleraye, who was Richelieu's choice. In addition, Cinq-Mars obtained the annulment of the recent *arrêt* which had given precedence to

¹¹⁹ BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fos.118v-119.

¹²⁰ BL Add 12184, fo.80, Brown to [Secretary of State], 15/25 Apr. 1642.

Cardinals over Princes of the Blood, by which means he hoped to curry favour with the duc d'Enghien who had been in contention with cardinal Mazarin.¹²¹ Such a decision had implications for Richelieu's own claims to precedence within the King's Council as well. Moreover, there were reported differences concerning a peace proposal made by the Papal Nuncio, which Louis 'a extremement approuvé', and after which, 'on la fait voir à Mr le Cardinal qui l'a trouvé tres mauvais'.¹²²

Mazarin and Chavigny entreated Louis, on Richelieu's behalf, to return to Narbonne, but he refused. Cinq-Mars was encouraging the King to remain at Perpignan, as a deliberate ploy to keep him apart from Richelieu.¹²³ Brown outlined the situation: it is certain, he wrote, that Richelieu, 'is in a very weake condition, no businesse at all is mov'd to him, and no body comes to him, but those who are necessary instruments of his health. His soares are said to be very virulent, he hath lately had some fitts of a feaver, and he is likewise said to be very unquiet in his mind. His frends heere [Paris] publish great assurances of his speedy recovery, but their actions manifest y'e contrary; The Chancellor and Mons'r le Surintendant do not of late hold Counsell des Parties nor des Finances, such are their Feares Unquietnes, and Apprehensions; the Dutchesse of Aiguillon hath secretly conveyed away her jewells and best movable, to like to which is said to be done in some of Card' Richelieu's

¹²¹ BL Add 12184, fo.84, Brown to [Secretary of State], 29 Apr./9 May 1642. There are various references to the close co-operation of Schomberg and Cinq-Mars at this time, see, for example, BN Français 15611, letters from Arnaud to Barillon, fo.442 (11 May), fo.446v. (18 May), fo.448 (21 May 1642) respectively. On the precedence issues between cardinals and Princes of the Blood, raised by the reluctance of Enghien to cede to Mazarin, see H. d'Orléans, duc d'Aumale, *Histoire des Princes de Condé, pendant les XVI et XVII siècles* (6 vols.; Paris, 1863-96), iii, 654, Enghien to Condé, 20 Apr., and *ibid.*, iii, 655, Enghien to Condé, 24 Apr. 1642. Cinq-Mars tried to engage Enghien in the conspiracies: BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fo.118.

¹²² BN Français 15611, fo.437, Arnaud to Barillon, 30 Apr. 1642.

¹²³ BN Français 15611, fo.448, Arnaud to Barillon, 21 May 1642; BN Italien 1819, p.102, Giustiniani to Doge, n.d. [1 May 1642]; *ibid.*, p.112, Giustiniani to Doge, 18 May 1642.

houses, and much appearance there is of a great change in this State, to be caused either by his death or long sicknesse.'¹²⁴ Richelieu's doctors were unanimous in their view that Richelieu needed to leave Narbonne where the air was poor, but he was simply too ill to be moved. The best-informed in Paris 'are of opinion he cannot recover', commented Brown.¹²⁵

Clear understanding of the activities of both factions becomes yet more elusive at this time. During May, Cinq-Mars was trying either to co-ordinate the assassination of the Cardinal, or to persuade Louis to have him arrested. Various later references to the plot exist, yet no direct evidence remains.¹²⁶ Some of Chavagnac's new Huguenot recruits were brought to Narbonne at the start of May to support these plots, and were subsequently stationed at nearby St. Hyppolyte for two to three weeks.¹²⁷ Cinq-Mars was also bolstered by his growing support within the army camp at Perpignan, particularly among a group of officers known as his 'vingt-deux'.¹²⁸ The army was now divided into two factions, one taking the name of *Royalistes* and the other known as the *Cardinalistes*.¹²⁹ It is probable that the King – who was increasingly ill himself – was reluctant to authorise Cinq-Mars' plans, given

¹²⁴ BL Add 12184, fo.88, Brown to [Secretary of State], 13/23 May 1642.

¹²⁵ BL Add 12184, fo.90, Brown to [Secretary of State], 20/30 May 1642.

¹²⁶ A.G. d'Artigny, *Nouveaux mémoires d'histoire de critique et de littérature* (4 vols.; Paris, 1751), iv, 57-88, interrogation of de Thou by Chazé, 6 July 1642; *ibid.*, iv, 84-98, interrogation of Cinq-Mars by Chazé, 20 July 1642; Griffet, iii, 447-8; Chizay, *Mémoires*, p.299; Avenel, vii, 155, Richelieu memorandum 'M. le Grand', [Oct.] 1642. At the end of May, Madame d'Aiguillon forwarded an anonymous note warning Richelieu to 'prendre garde à sa personne', because his enemies were employing all their efforts to persuade the King to have him arrested: AAE MD 842, fo.323, Aiguillon to Richelieu, 31 May 1642.

¹²⁷ BN Français 18431, fo.391, 'Memoire du Sr Salze habitant du Vigan' [Sept. 1642]; Avenel, vii, 155-162, 'Mémoire contre Cinq-Mars' [September/October 1642].

¹²⁸ Griffet, iii, 446-7. One of the common subjects of the early interrogations of the conspirators was the so-called 'vingt-deux' of Cinq-Mars: Artigny, *Nouveaux mémoires d'histoire*, iv, 57-88, interrogation of de Thou by Chazé, 6 July 1642; *ibid.*, iv, 84-98, interrogation of Cinq-Mars by Chazé, 20 July 1642.

¹²⁹ Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 143-6; Avenel, vi, 924, Richelieu to Louis XIII, 27 May 1642, and note 1.

the imminent likelihood that nature would rid him of the Cardinal in the coming days. On 23 May the Cardinal dictated his testament, though he was unable to sign it.¹³⁰

The Cardinal had, however, been tipped off about the plots against his life,¹³¹ and was now aware that his enemies had entered negotiations with the Spanish.¹³² Richelieu needed to find safety. The outcome was a rushed departure from Narbonne in torrential rain, heading away from the King and his enemies. The move was justified as a means to reach a place with better air,¹³³ but the suddenness of his going away, amidst such poor weather, betrayed the fear and (at least temporary) sense of defeat. Robert d'Aubery vividly depicts his departure: 'On fit des manières de ponts pour le dessendre, des machines pour le porter, on rompit des maisons, et couché dans un brancar, porté par huit suisses qui se relayoient, entourré de ses gardes il partit sans qu'on sçeut où il alloit comme déroband sa marche, le silence de laquelle et la tristesse à quoy une grande plui contribuoit tenoit du convoy funèbre...Il ne fut point question d'entrées ny de harangues tout sentit sa fuite'. Richelieu's flight from Narbonne was believed to be either a journey into political exile, or the resignation of

¹³⁰ Topin, *Louis XIII*, p.383; Chizay, *Mémoires*, p.299.

¹³¹ Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 292-3.

¹³² Richelieu was tipped off about the Spanish negotiations by Louis de Béthune, comte de Charost. Charost's elder brother Hippolyte, comte de Béthune, was attached to the duc d'Orléans who had confided in him about the treaty: BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fos.119-120v.

¹³³ Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 292-3; Topin, *Louis XIII*, p.383. When Richelieu's journey continued further than expected, many suggested it was still for medical reasons and that he was headed for Tarascon where he could take the waters (while being received by his close ally the comte d'Alais, governor of Provence): Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 151; Brienne (jnr.), *Mémoires*, pp.263-4.

a dying man, whose mental faculties were being eroded by ill-health.¹³⁴ Cinq-Mars and de Thou were now expected to form a new government.¹³⁵

The Cardinal seeks to re-assert his position

The appearances of Richelieu's departure were, however, deceptive. The flight from Narbonne was both intended as a means to reach temporary safety, as well as the beginning of a bid to re-assert his control of the state. Before departing Narbonne, Richelieu penned a memorandum for Chavigny to take to Perpignan, outlining the necessary steps to undo the conspiracies against him, of which leaving Narbonne was one. Chavigny, in tandem with de Noyers were to press the King to distance troublemakers such as de Thou and Chavagnac from court, and to insist that the King must give public assurances of his satisfaction with Richelieu.¹³⁶ The tone of Richelieu's memorandum, although darkly paranoid, was not that of a man resigned to defeat, but that of someone set on defending his position to the last. The public assurances of the King did not follow. Richelieu and his faction were nevertheless making preparations to preserve themselves by force.

The duc d'Espenan had offered Richelieu the stronghold of Leucate, of which he was governor, and he was also assured of the comte d'Alais, governor of Provence, as well as the comte de Sault, Soissons' recent replacement as governor of nearby

¹³⁴ BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fos.124v.-5; Pontis, *Mémoires*, ii, 338; BN Italien 1819, p.133, Giustiniani to Doge, 2 June 1642; Chizay, *Mémoires*, p.299; BL Add 12184, fo.92, Brown to [Secretary of State], 27 May/6 June 1642; *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.5741, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 7 June 1642.

¹³⁵ BN Italien 1819, p.144, Giustiniani to Doge, 9 June 1642.

¹³⁶ Avenel, vi, 921, 'Mémoire de M. le Cardinal', n.d. [end May 1642].

Dauphiné.¹³⁷ Enghien had been sounding out army officers at Perpignan, where command was shared between La Meilleraye and Schomberg. Enghien was persuading them to obey the orders of La Meilleraye alone, as Schomberg's loyalty to Richelieu was uncertain. Not only was Enghien preaching disobedience to one of the King's mandated commanders, but he had also been instructed by Richelieu to 'le suivre et d'engager sous main de mes amis', though to do nothing openly. Enghien's friends in the region now assembled around Richelieu, so as to escort him, and he had already amassed some 800 cavalry.¹³⁸ Despite the King's attachment to his enemies, therefore, Richelieu and his faction planned to stand their ground. This phase of the factional clash closely-resembled the beginnings of a civil war.¹³⁹

Richelieu's chief concern now seems to have been that Cinq-Mars was planning to take the King back to Paris,¹⁴⁰ and that there might be dangerous repercussions should they reach the capital before Richelieu. The Cardinal's intention, therefore, was to extend his journey all the way to Paris. If this was the

¹³⁷ François de Bonne, comte de Sault, son of the recently-deceased maréchal de Créqui who had been the King's lieutenant in Dauphiné for many years: Siri, *Anecdotes*, iii, 151. Chavigny had visited the comte d'Alais in March to further various matters on his behalf, explaining that, 'nous ne saurions jamais obliger personne qui ai plus de reconnaissance': *Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents formed by Alfred Morrison*, 2nd Series, i (Printed for Private Circulation, 1893), p.189, Chavigny to Bouthillier, 6 Mar. 1642. In addition to Provence and Dauphiné, Richelieu also had the allegiance of Condé as governor of Bourgogne, Berry and Bourbonnais, and temporarily of Paris and the Île de France. Condé now brought with him the governor of Normandy, the duc de Longueville, who had recently allied with Condé through marriage to his daughter.

¹³⁸ Aumale, *Histoire des Princes de Condé*, iii, 467-8; *ibid.*, iii, 658, Enghien to Condé, 4 June 1642; *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.5777, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 5 July 1642.

¹³⁹ Richelieu's actions are comparable to Nicolas Fouquet's contingency plan, which he drew up for his friends and family to employ as a blueprint for the commencement of rebellion in the event of his arrest: D. Dessert, *Fouquet* (Paris, 1987), pp.354-62. This document was later used to incriminate Fouquet, but it serves to demonstrate, as does the rebellious behaviour of Chavigny and Séguier during the Fronde, that so-called royal ministers could be just as troublesome - and willing to fight for their patrimonial interests - as the *grands*.

¹⁴⁰ Grimaldi, the Papal Nuncio, reported a few days later, and again on 8 June, the rumours that Cinq-Mars and Louis were to head back to Paris, whereupon Cinq-Mars could assure himself of the Queen's support to establish control; both despatches are quoted in P. Chevallier, *Louis XIII, roi cornélien* (Paris, 1979), p.594, and Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 290-1.

case, it was a bold and assertive move to do so without the King's authorisation; his pretext for leaving Narbonne – as approved by the King – was purely to seek better air. Richelieu had no instructions to head for Paris, or to gather troops through Enghien. Rather than heading for exile, it seems that Richelieu – in tandem with Condé – was hoping to establish control of Paris, and force Louis to discard Cinq-Mars upon arrival. The semblance, which Richelieu had always strived to maintain, of being a loyal and humble royal servant who was always ready to resign should his master wish it, is comprehensively shattered through these exchanges.

The possibility of a peaceful re-establishment for Richelieu, however, soon came in the form of the dramatic defeat inflicted upon the army of the comte de Guiche at Honnecourt, on 26 May, by the Army of Flanders commanded by Don Francisco de Melo,¹⁴¹ news of which was brought to Louis at Perpignan around 3 June. The Cardinal and his adherents exploited this news to their political advantage. De Noyers was sent to Perpignan to present the bleakest-possible version of the extent of Guiche's losses, of the threat of a Spanish invasion of Champagne and of the panic in Paris. He explained to the King that this threat could not be remedied, 'que par le Cardinal maistre des places avec un nombre de créatures qui ne pouvoient luy manquer'.¹⁴² Louis immediately wrote to the Cardinal assuring him that 'je vous ayme plus que jamais' and 'je veux bien que tous le monde sache'.¹⁴³ A change of government seemed liable to call into question the reliability of the very men in whose hands northern France's defences were placed.

¹⁴¹ Melo had been appointed interim governor of the Spanish Netherlands after the death of the Cardinal-Infante in November 1641 and had assumed personal command of the Army of Flanders to good effect.

¹⁴² BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fo.126.

¹⁴³ Topin, *Louis XIII*, p.384, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 3 June 1642.

But Honnecourt did not bring about the full and immediate rehabilitation of the Cardinal. In a letter to de Noyers of the following day, concerning measures to be taken in response to the defeat, Richelieu wrote that, 'En estat ou je suis je ne decide point cette affaire, ny aucun autre', though adding with a measure of irony that 'Si j'estois sain il me semble que je ne serois tout à faict inutile. Faut vouloir ce qu'il plaist à Dieu'.¹⁴⁴ Richelieu continued his journey away from the King and towards Paris, though most observers still believed he was heading into exile.

Richelieu survives

Discoveries

Richelieu's endeavours to defend his position also extended to seeking out proof of the Royalist *parti's* dealings with the Spanish, about which he had already been tipped off by Charost. His best means of leverage was in offering Anne of Austria the continued custody of her sons.

Anne, in increasing desperation, had implored Richelieu to help obtain the revocation of the order to leave her children. On 16 May she had told Le Gras that she was sending an urgent message to the Cardinal to say that, 'je vous écris ce mot pour vous prier, et conjurer d'avoir pitié de moy, de me prendre sous votre protection, et dans votre conduite avec mes enfants, et tout le Royaume [...] Après ce temoignage il n'en faut plus rechercher'.¹⁴⁵ The link between the custody of her

¹⁴⁴ Avenel, vi, 925, Richelieu to de Noyers, 4 June 1642.

¹⁴⁵ AAE CP Cologne 1, fo.211, Pere Carré to Richelieu, 22 May 1642.

children and the regency was clear. She was visited at Saint-Germain by Aiguillon and Condé, to persuade her to leave her children behind and head for Fontainebleau.¹⁴⁶ Richelieu now employed Bouthillier, then in Paris, to threaten the Queen by claiming that the conspiracy – and the fact of her involvement in it – had been discovered and that her only hope was to divulge her knowledge of it. Brassac and Le Gras were given similar instructions. It was under this extreme pressure that Anne informed Bouthillier that Marie de Gonzague had a copy of a clandestine treaty with the King of Spain.¹⁴⁷ After a delay of several days, Gonzague reluctantly submitted her copy to Bouthillier, which Richelieu received at Arles on the evening of 9 June.¹⁴⁸

Robert d'Aubery recounts that Richelieu was unsure as to whether or not the King would give credence to the unsigned copy of the treaty which he had obtained, but was fortuitously able to corroborate it with a recently-intercepted Spanish despatch. The Archives des Affaires Étrangères holds a copy of a covering letter, dated 1 June, from Laurens Berthemet¹⁴⁹ to Chavigny concerning an interception from the Spanish courier, who still traversed France even in war, and which needed to be deciphered. Although the despatch in question is no longer in the file, it was probably the same which, according to Aubery, was a letter from Olivares to de Melo

¹⁴⁶ BN Français 15611, p.447, Arnaud to Barillon, 1 Feb. 1642; C. Dulong, *Anne d'Autriche* (Paris, 1980), p.180.

¹⁴⁷ BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fos.123-124.

¹⁴⁸ It is probable that Gonzague engineered the delay – which Aubery gives as 6 days – so as to warn Cinq-Mars that his plot was discovered: BN Français 20859, 'Histoire de la régence', fos.121v., 124. This also explains why Gonzague seemed to know of Cinq-Mars' arrest before anyone else in Paris: *Les Historiettes de Tallement des Réaux* (Paris, 1977), iii, 186.

¹⁴⁹ Berthemet was *maître des couriers étrangers* in Paris. His role was to ensure the relay of correspondence with foreign governments, which included monitoring the Spanish courier, as well as facilitating Richelieu's correspondence with agents in Madrid, such as Pujols.

mentioning the treaty.¹⁵⁰ On the morning of 12 June, therefore, Chavigny and de Noyers presented the King with the two documents together, through which they persuaded him to issue arrest warrants for Cinq-Mars and his associates.

Arrests and investigations

De Thou and Chavagnac were detained on 12 June.¹⁵¹ Arrest warrants were also issued for other accomplices, most of whom escaped: Fontrailles, Montrésor, Brion, Aubijoux, Montmort, and d'Ozonville. Cinq-Mars was tipped-off – we do not know who by – and took refuge somewhere in Narbonne, but the town gates were closed and the next day he was captured. He was then subjected to a rigorous beating, ‘de sorte qu’il en vomit le sang’.¹⁵² Bouillon, then in charge of the army in Piedmont, was arrested at Casale on the 23rd.¹⁵³ The King was profoundly troubled by the predicament of his favourite, and for some days he was suspicious that Cinq-Mars’

¹⁵⁰ BN Français 20859, ‘Histoire de la régence’, fo.126v.; AAE MD 844, fo.209, Berthemet to Chavigny, 1 June 1642. Unfortunately the document forwarded by Berthemet is not in the Brussels or Simancas archives either. D.-L.-M. Avenel suggests Berthemet had intercepted the treaty itself, but this is questionable as Richelieu subsequently went to great lengths to get Orléans to certify a copy of the treaty, suggesting that he never possessed an original: D.-L.-M. Avenel, ‘Richelieu, Louis XIII et Cinq-Mars. Rôle du Cardinal dans la conspiration de Cinq-Mars; découverte du traité de Madrid’, *Revue des Questions Historiques*, 4 (1868), 92-180.

¹⁵¹ Châteaugay, ‘scudiere e confidente’ of Cinq-Mars, was arrested at the same time as de Thou and Chavagnac: BN Arsenal Français 5416, p.1963, unsigned letter in Italian, 16 June 1642. Jean de Laizer, seigneur de Châteaugay, was captain of the regiment d’Effiat, and an *Écuyer de la Grand Écurie du Roi*. Some of Cinq-Mars’ other domestics were also arrested on 12 and 13 June: *ibid.*, p.1967, unsigned letter from Narbonne, 16 June 1642.

¹⁵² There are conflicting accounts of Cinq-Mars’ arrest. Avenel (viii, 174-5) discusses some of the issues, to which should be added consideration of the following accounts: BN Arsenal Français 5416, p.1963, unsigned letter in Italian, 16 June 1642; ‘Lettres de Vineuil sur la conspiration de Cinq-Mars’, in *Variétés historiques et littéraires*, ed. É. Fournier (Paris, 1857), viii, 119-129, p.125, Vineuil to Humières, [19] June 1642; *Oeuvres de Voiture*, ed. A. Ubicini (Paris, 1855), i, 38, Voiture to M. le Président des Maisons, end of June 1642. Voiture’s letter contains the description of Cinq-Mars’ assault as reported to him by an eye witness.

¹⁵³ Bouillon’s attempts to evade capture, and his ultimate arrest, are recounted and discussed in detail in Le Vassor, vi(ii), 588-94.

name had been falsely inserted into the copy of the treaty shown to him on the 12th. Louis remained to be convinced of the truth of Richelieu's accusations.¹⁵⁴

Over the coming weeks, the prisoners unanimously denied any wrong-doing and claimed that they had acted under the King's instructions. The rumours reported by many of the ambassadors were that Louis had approved the actions of both Cinq-Mars and de Thou.¹⁵⁵ Some reported that Louis had sanctioned their plots to assassinate or arrest Richelieu, while others spoke (erroneously) of Louis' support for overtures by de Thou to negotiate peace with the Spanish Monarchy.¹⁵⁶

Richelieu was himself concerned to establish the extent of Louis' complicity, and was clearly frustrated by the prisoners' responses to early rounds of questioning. On 30 June Louis gave the Cardinal full powers to act on his behalf, and signed a commission to the Lieutenant in the *bailliage* of Gévaudan to investigate Chavagnac's activities in the surrounding areas.¹⁵⁷ Louis was reluctant, however, to sanction the commencement of formal interrogations and legal proceedings, perhaps due to fear of the extent of his own engagement being exposed. In order to persuade him, the Cardinal employed the marquis de Mortemart,¹⁵⁸ who had been privy to the plots, to talk to Louis of the nature of the schemes against Richelieu's life at Lyons, and

¹⁵⁴ AAE MD 844, fo.253, de Noyers to Richelieu, 15 June 1642.

¹⁵⁵ BN Italien 1819, p.212, 1 Aug. 1642; *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.5768, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 28 June 1642; *ibid.*, no. 5786, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 12 July 1642.

¹⁵⁶ There is nothing to substantiate the rumours that the Spanish negotiations were instructed by Louis; in fact they are contradicted by the manner in which the negotiations were conducted via Fontrailles, carrying letters of credence from Orléans, as well as the content of the treaty itself.

¹⁵⁷ AAE MD 843, fo.30, Louis XIII to Richelieu, 30 June 1642; BN Français 18431, fo.398, 'Commission du Roi au Lieutenant Principal au Bailliage de Gevaudan, pour informer contre le Sr de Chavagnac', 30 June 1642.

¹⁵⁸ Gabriel de Rochechouart, marquis de Mortemart, was a *gentilhomme de la chambre du Roi* and a lifelong friend of the King.

especially the claims of Cinq-Mars that Louis had sanctioned them.¹⁵⁹ Louis was indignant about this, and immediately approved that proceedings be pushed as far as possible against Cinq-Mars. Given that we know that Cinq-Mars had spoken to Louis to obtain his approval for the plot, his dramatic response to Mortemart's discourse reflects his own predicament; his complicity was known to the Cardinal, upon whom he had once more been forced to place complete reliance. In addition, Richelieu ensured that claims were made that Cinq-Mars had wished Louis dead during his illness, and urged Louis to consider the damaging effects that the on-going uncertainties were inflicting upon the siege of Perpignan.¹⁶⁰ It was in response to this pressure that Louis finally permitted the commencement of the legal proceedings, to be conducted by the commissioners selected by Richelieu. The first formal interrogations were conducted two days later.

Francisco de Melo and Sedan

Melo's campaign was also inherently linked to the factions at the French court. Olivares had sent him a copy of the 13th March treaty with Fontrailles, of which he acknowledged receipt on 27 April.¹⁶¹ It was his task to ensure execution of the treaty on behalf of the King of Spain. A few days after defeating Guiche at Honnecourt, Melo turned away from the French frontier towards Guébriant and the Weimarian army, in fulfilment of the treaty's primary stipulation to push them back across the

¹⁵⁹ Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), i, 178, Chavigny to Richelieu, 1 July; *ibid.*, i, 189, Chavigny to Richelieu, 3 July; *ibid.*, i, 191, Richelieu to de Noyers and Chavigny, 4 July; *ibid.*, i, 197, Chavigny to Richelieu, 4 July 1642.

¹⁶⁰ Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), i, 186, de Noyers to Richelieu, 1 July; Avenel, vii, 6, Richelieu to Louis XIII, 4 July 1642.

¹⁶¹ AGS Est. Flandes 2057, item 60, minutes of council of state, 27 May 1642.

Rhine. Some commentators have suggested that this manoeuvre saved France from an imminent invasion of Champagne,¹⁶² which would have posed a major threat to Richelieu's ministry. Melo, however, did take a few days to seek an immediate advantage from Honnecourt, but found that Harcourt's army barred his way and 'les a absolument empechés de pouvoir rien faire contre la France'.¹⁶³ Rather than tackle Harcourt, therefore, Melo decided to pursue his obligations under the treaty with the French malcontents.

During June an Imperial army under Field Marshal Hatzfeld, operating in tandem with Melo's forces, pushed Guébriant's army back. Melo was, moreover, reinforced by additional troops led by the comte de Fontaine, forming a formidable force some 25,000 strong. With the Imperials now preventing any moves by Guébriant to re-enter France, Melo turned back towards the French border, where Guiche and Harcourt had taken to bickering.¹⁶⁴ Melo wished to 'voir si ceux du Traité de Monsieur vaudront remuer', with the hope of inciting, 'una verdadera y real

¹⁶² The connection was made by contemporaries between the treaty's clause concerning the Weimarian army and Melo's failure to capitalise on Honnecourt: AAE MD 288, fo.65, Memorandum of information obtained from Orléans during his voyage to Annecy, 22 July 1642, which comments that, 'Il est encores a remarquer que le traité port que devant que les conjurés en france puissent estre obligés à agir, ilz prétendoient qu'on eust chassé Mr de Guébriant au dela du Rhin. Et au mesme temps ce qui est du tout considérable, que Melos eût gagné une bataille, en suite de laquelle il [est peü entrer] en france avec avantage, il quitte ce dessein pour aller audit sieur de Guébriant selon que le traité le portoit.'. Among modern commentators Laurain-Portemer in particular has stressed the decisive influence of the secret treaty on Melo's decision not to march on the road to Paris which she assumes was wide open after Honnecourt: Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 293-4.

¹⁶³ AAE CP Pays Bas Espagnols 14, fo.303, Melo to Philip IV, 4 June 1642; AAE MD 844, fo.209, Berthemet to Chavigny, 1 June; AAE MD 1681, fo.295, Guiche to de Noyers, 3 June 1642; Chizay, *Mémoires*, p.296; J.A. Vincart, *Relacion de los progressos de las armas de S.M. Cathólica...del año 1642*, in *Coleccion de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, 59 (Madrid, 1873), 115-204, pp.170-1.

¹⁶⁴ AAE CP Pays-Bas Espagnols 14, fo.325, de Vic to Brown, 21 June 1642; AAE CP Cologne 1, fo.215, Carré to Richelieu, 15 June 1642; J. Le Laboureur, *Histoire du mareschal de Guébriant* (Paris, 1676), pp.494-7; *Collection of Autograph Letters*, i, 284, Condé to Chavigny, 16 June 1642.

rebolucion en francia'.¹⁶⁵ He had clearly been informed by Olivares that Sedan was the place of *sûreté* alluded to in the treaty, and tried to make contact with madame de Bouillon. As ever Spain hoped to gain control of the city and its fortress.

Richelieu, however, was already taking measures to prevent a Spanish capture of Sedan. Guiche was instructed to monitor the frontier places of Champagne, 'pour éviter les intelligences du dedans', to review the strongholds of the Meuse, especially Sedan, and to contact madame de Bouillon.¹⁶⁶ When Melo got in touch with Bouillon's wife and mother, they were thus already under surveillance by de Guiche, and well-aware that the duke was being held captive for his part in the conspiracy.¹⁶⁷ Melo tried in vain to persuade the duchess to place Sedan under Spanish protection, offering 3,000 troops and 400,000 livres. Moreover he offered to deliver all French prisoners to Sedan as leverage to negotiate the duke's release. The duchess rebuffed Melo's overtures, and refused to negotiate further.¹⁶⁸

Legal proceedings

What commenced in the first weeks of July 1642 was primarily an exercise in concealing and transforming the truth for public consumption and political exploitation. The sanctity of royal blood dictated that the sponsors of the Cinq-Mars conspiracy were untouchable: the Queen, Orléans, and the King himself. The blame

¹⁶⁵ AAE CP Pays-Bas Espagnols 14, fo.329, 'Papier de Melo', n.d. [25 June]; *ibid.*, fo.338, Melo to Olivares, 25 June 1642.

¹⁶⁶ AAE MD 1681, fo.310, Guiche [to Richelieu], 21 June 1642.

¹⁶⁷ AAE MD 1681, fo.338, Guiche to de Noyers, 18 July 1642.

¹⁶⁸ AAE MD 288, fo.259, 'Mémoire d'Estrades', n.d. [1642], outlining the offers made by Melo to Bouillon's wife and mother; *La Grande Entreprise des Espagnols Faillie, sur la Ville de Sedan, et pays de Champagne* (Paris, 1642).

for the entire conspiracy was therefore pinned squarely onto Cinq-Mars and de Thou. Richelieu put together a trusted team to handle the case,¹⁶⁹ to ensure that the documented interrogations retained no trace of either the underlying concerns surrounding the regency, or the problematic relationship between the King and the Cardinal. Richelieu's letter to Chavigny and de Noyers of 4 July 1642 is highly revealing as to his approach to the proceedings. The interrogation of Cinq-Mars needed to be carried out by someone trustworthy and 'habile pour rendre l'affaire authentique', because it was a certainty that 'le perfide [Cinq-Mars] dira beaucoup de choses à taire'. Richelieu suggested monsieur de Chazé for the job, and wrote that he wanted to see Chazé in person in order to give him his questions, 'toutes digérées'.¹⁷⁰ The interrogations and legal proceedings would be carefully constructed to ensure the right outcome, and anything politically unpalatable could be avoided or edited out later.

The manipulation is particularly visible in relation to the evidence given by Orléans and Bouillon. An initial declaration was signed by Orléans on 7 July at Aigueperse, in which he minimised his own culpability and pinned the blame on Cinq-Mars, giving little attention to the conspiracy's origins.¹⁷¹ A later memorandum exists, however, of information Orléans had provided concerning claims made by Cinq-Mars. This spoke of the King's dissatisfaction and his desire to be rid of the

¹⁶⁹ The team included Laubardement, Lauzon, and Chazé; men who had been the architects of pivotal political cases, such as those of Marillac, Grandier, St-Cyran, most of which were seen as gross miscarriages of justice by the Cardinal's critics.

¹⁷⁰ Avenel, vii, 7, Richelieu to Chavigny and de Noyers, 4 July 1642.

¹⁷¹ AAE CP Espagne 22, fo.236, 'Déclaration de Monsieur touchant la traité d'Espagne', 7 July 1642; Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), i, 219-21, 'Autre Déclaration de Monsieur sur le fait particulier de Son Eminence', 7 July 1642.

Cardinal, as well as of the latter's attempts to discredit Cinq-Mars.¹⁷² However, in Orléans formal, and final, declaration, on 29 August, there is no mention of such issues, and the full blame is placed upon Cinq-Mars for the Spanish treaty, as well as for inveigling Orléans through lies and deceit.¹⁷³ Dupuy later claims in his *Justification de F.A. de Thou* that this declaration was fabricated in a private meeting with Séguier, during which, 'ils fabriquent ensemble cette déclaration', and was not 'faite librement'. According to Dupuy, Orléans wrote a short while later to deny the statement, but this letter was suppressed.¹⁷⁴

The duc de Bouillon, meanwhile, was paid a visit by Cardinal Mazarin. Richelieu had instructed the young Cardinal on how to get the duc to talk, largely by threatening punishment and confiscation of his possessions (Sedan included).¹⁷⁵ The result was a memorandum dated 12 August of information provided by Bouillon. This then formed the basis for a fuller declaration signed on 31 August. There were, however, vital differences between these documents, pertaining to an early discussion with Cinq-Mars at Saint-Germain during the winter of 1641-1642. In Bouillon's 12 August statement, Cinq-Mars explains that the King's voyage to Roussillon was designed to distance him from Queen, to remove her children from her care, and generally to, 'oster tous les obstacles que Monseigneur le Cardinal pourroit avoir a la

¹⁷² AAE MD 843, fo.238, untitled and anonymous memoir of Orléans' conversations with Cinq-Mars, n.d. [mid-August 1642]. There is also a note of statements made by Orléans during his voyage to Annecy, though it is not particularly informative: AAE MD 288, fo.65, 22 July 1642.

¹⁷³ Montrésor, *Mémoires*, (1723), i, 270-83, 'Procès Verbal de Monsieur le Chancelier et autres Commissaires pour voir Monsieur et recevoir sa Declaration à Villefranche', 29 Aug. 1642. It was on this day that Orléans finally provided and authenticated a copy of the treaty and counter-letter.

¹⁷⁴ Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions*, p.10.

¹⁷⁵ AAE MD 843, fo.182, 'Mémoire de M. le Cardinal de Richelieu pour M. le Cardinal de Mazarin', n.d. [Aug. 1642].

Régence'. These comments are absent from the statement of 31 August.¹⁷⁶ Bouillon was either persuaded to omit them, or they were expunged without his knowledge.

In subsequent years Bouillon reiterated that the conspiracy's central concern was the regency, most notably in an unpublished statement verified by royal notaries in January 1643. In fact he explained both the 1641 rebellion and his engagement in the Cinq-Mars conspiracy as being for the protection of the royal family from 'une subversion d'état' by Richelieu. He had acted to protect the royal dynasty, by offering safe haven to Soissons, the Queen, her sons, and Orléans, and was making efforts on behalf of his brother to get satisfaction from the Queen and Mazarin.¹⁷⁷

A much more reductive account of the conspiracy's origins had therefore been carefully constructed by Richelieu's team through the management of the evidence given by both Orléans and Bouillon, in which Cinq-Mars' personal ambitions were presented as the sole causal explanation. It is noticeable, however, that the depositions of these two *grands* disagree on various other aspects, especially when it came to blaming each other for the decision to treat with the Habsburgs.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Fo.219v. of 12 August memorandum, compared to pp.128-9 of 31 August interrogation: AAE MD 843, fos.218-27, 'Mémoire pour Mr. le Cardinal de Mazarin par M. de Bouillon', 12 Aug. 1642; Artigny, *Nouveaux mémoires d'histoire*, iv, 120-44, 'Interrogatoire de M. le Duc de Bouillon', 31 Aug. 1642, pp.128-9. There are other significant differences between the two statements: that of the 12th talks of the King's 'grande mescontentement' against Richelieu, who was 'ruiné' in his favour (fo.220), but the statement of the 31st omits these and moves swiftly on to the subject of the Spanish treaty (pp.129-30).

¹⁷⁷ AN K114, no.42-12, 'Déclaration importante de Monseigneur le duc de Bouillon', 10 Jan. 1643; *Manifeste de Monsieur le duc de Bouillon à la Reyne Régente* (n.p., n.d.) [1643]; BN Dupuy 625, fo.171v., Bouillon to Orléans, 4 Apr. 1644.; B. Aubertin, *Discours sur la vie de Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour &c., Prince de Sedan, Et sur les Mémoires publiez par M. Langlade*, in *Mémoires de la vie de Théodore-Agrippa d'Aubigné* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1731), ii, 'Avant-Propos'. Turenne, moreover, sustained the same basic principle in a letter to his sister in 1643 and was aggrieved at his elder brother's subsequent treatment: V. Cousin, 'Les Origines de la Fronde', in J. Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire (ed.), *Victor Cousin, sa vie et sa correspondance* (Paris, 1895), ii, 589-657, p.634.

¹⁷⁸ Bouillon, for example, persistently claimed that the Spanish treaty had been proposed and drawn up by Orléans, and that he had refused any such engagements: Saumières *Mémoires*, pp.116-9, 131-6,

On 27 August, the formal legal proceedings commenced. As well as the declarations of Orléans and Bouillon, a plethora of supporting materials – though many of them depositions of dubious value – had been collected.¹⁷⁹ Subsequent interrogations and confrontations involving Cinq-Mars and de Thou, in which they finally began to “talk”, saw them contesting much of what Orléans and Bouillon had stated. They both concurred, crucially, that the Spanish treaty itself had been largely proposed, and drawn up by, Orléans and Bouillon (who after all were the experienced men in such matters). Even Richelieu did not believe Bouillon’s denials of responsibility, but it was by this point rather futile for the two scapegoats to protest. On 12 September both men were sentenced to death,¹⁸⁰ The next day, in a piece of pre-arranged melodrama to save his blushes, Bouillon offered Sedan in return for his life, which was duly granted.¹⁸¹ Meanwhile Cinq-Mars and de Thou were being executed at Lyon.

This gruesome piece of political theatre was, however, for domestic as well as international public consumption. The Prince of Orange, for example, was offended by suggestions by Louis that Bouillon had corrupted Cinq-Mars, and was threatening to listen to Spanish offers of a truce unless Cinq-Mars was recast as the

154-5; BN Dupuy 625, fo.171v., Bouillon to Orléans, 6 Apr. 1644. Fontrailles – an adherent of Orléans – gives a radically different view; that Bouillon was only willing to offer Sedan as a royal refuge if a Spanish army was obtained to defend it, which is more convincing given what we know of Bouillon’s persistent policy of seeking Spanish support both before and after 1642: Fontrailles, *Relation*, pp.251-2; S. Hodson, ‘Sovereigns and Subjects: The princes of Sedan and the dukes of Bouillon in early modern France, c.1450-1652’, DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2000, pp.364-7, 374.

¹⁷⁹ A large quantity of these documents have been edited: Artigny, *Nouveaux mémoires d’histoire*, iv, pp.49-278; ‘Procez de MM. de Cinq-Mars et de Thou, 1642’, in F. d’Anjou (ed.), *Archives Curieuses de l’Histoire de France*, 2e série, v (Paris, 1838), pp.283-308; ‘Documents relatifs au procès de Cinq-Mars’, *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire de France*, 2e série, iii (1863), 319-22.

¹⁸⁰ Cinq-Mars made an 11th hour denunciation of de Thou, but only after he had been duped by Laubardement, who had falsely promised him his life if he did so: Dupuy, *Mémoires et instructions*, p.39.

¹⁸¹ BN Dupuy 625, fo.146v., Bouillon to Richelieu, 13 Sept. 1642.

malign influence in the conspiracy. Louis also needed to assure the wider European audience that he had never harboured intentions to remove Richelieu from office (and therefore would not do so in future).¹⁸²

In addition to the investigation of the crime of the Spanish treason, a secretive investigation was conducted into the attempts to raise the Huguenots by Chavagnac and his clients. This was supervised by the Bishop of Mende,¹⁸³ who Richelieu instructed to ‘ne pas faire du bruit’. The Château de Chavagnac was razed to the ground, and information into his conduct was gathered from many witnesses. Details emerged of Huguenot assemblies, and of the sending of an envoy to agitate among the Huguenots of the Auvergne. Arrests of some of these activists were made.¹⁸⁴ It is unclear, however, what the results of these arrests were. Chavagnac, who was not included in the main trial, which focused on the Spanish treaty, was instead transferred to Grenoble to be tried by the Parlement of Toulouse, and was released the following year. It is likely that Richelieu simply did not want to raise the profile of the threat of religious division by making a public example of Chavagnac, despite the fact that he was the most persistent of all conspirators during his ministry and had already been condemned in 1628 and 1633;¹⁸⁵ ‘on dit qu’il ne s’est point fait de party de Son temps dont il n’ait pas esté’.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² *Ambassades*, p.79, Estrades to Prince of Orange, 4 Sept. 1642.

¹⁸³ Silvestre de Crusy de Marcillac.

¹⁸⁴ AAE MD 845, fo.171, Bishop of Mende to Richelieu, 16 Aug. 1642; *ibid.*, fo.246, Bishop of Mende to Richelieu, 7 Nov. 1642; BN Français 18431, fos.251-388, documents pertaining to the investigation of Chavagnac’s activities.

¹⁸⁵ BN Français 18431, fo.389, ‘Jugement de mort contre le Sieur de Chavagnac pour avoir suivi le parti du Duc de Rohan en 1628’; Dupuy 625, fo.103v., List of those condemned by sentence de contumace by Laffemas as *Intendant de Justice de Champagne*, 23 March 1633. Siri claims that Chavagnac was found to be innocent of any wrong-doing in the Cinq-Mars affair, claiming to have been told by Cinq-Mars that he was acting under the King’s orders and apparently showed his interrogators a note in the King’s hand: Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 211-3. None of this, however, is

The prince facile and the père de la patrie: the final months

Despite the successful prosecution of the trial, Richelieu's rehabilitation after June 1642 was a hollow process, and his relationship with the King was never truly repaired. Never again would Richelieu place enough trust in his King to enter his lodgings unprotected, and he would hound him to the end of his days to send away any who he felt had been part of the Cinq-Mars faction, or who he suspected of forming new cabals. The degree of paranoia from which Richelieu suffered, especially concerning the threat of assassination, was immense.

At the start of the year he had learnt how the captain of the King's guards wished to see him dead, 'en luy donnant un coup de pistolet dans la teste'.¹⁸⁷ Richelieu was aware from the late spring onwards that several officers of the King's guards - Tréville, Tilladet, Essarts, Fourille, and Beaupuis - were all part of Cinq-Mars' faction and involved in the plans to assassinate him. It should be remembered that the companies of guardsmen they commanded were loyal clients and relatives, whom they had recruited and trained.¹⁸⁸ Richelieu was now under greatest threat when visiting the King's residences. He was not permitted to enter the King's residences with his own guards, so that when visiting he was subject to the protection of those very men who had plotted to kill him.

substantiated by the documents in BN Français 18431. On Richelieu's policies towards the Huguenots see M. Prestwich, 'The Huguenots under Richelieu and Mazarin, 1629-41: A Golden Age?', *The Huguenots in Britain and their French Background, 1550-1800*, ed. I. Scouloudi (London, 1987), 175-197.

¹⁸⁶ BN Français 15611, Arnaud to Barillon, 22 June 1642.

¹⁸⁷ AAE MD 845, fo.3, Bonnecasse to Richelieu, n.d. [Jan. 1642].

¹⁸⁸ Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 297, citing a Morette despatch of 21 May; Montglat, *Mémoires*, p.126; BN Clairambault 385, 'Recit des Nouvelles de la Cour' [mid-June 1642].

The matter was worsened by the on-going legal proceedings and investigations, which continued to produce new information concerning the cabals against Richelieu. Several months after the Cinq-Mars conspiracy, therefore, Richelieu was still only becoming aware of the engagement of some of those from within the King's household who had been involved.¹⁸⁹ He was certain that 'la caballe n'est pas morte'.¹⁹⁰ Throughout the second half of 1642, therefore, Richelieu fulminated obsessively about the threat to his life from known enemies at court.¹⁹¹

Richelieu now refused to enter the King's lodgings, even at Saint-Germain.¹⁹² The Cardinal asked that his guards be allowed armed before the King when he came to visit, and to keep his guards with him when he visited the King. But Louis was angered by these suggestions. Richelieu took extreme steps to protect himself against the King and those around him. Ormesson relates anecdotal evidence on this in his journal for 11 June 1643, that 'M. le Gras nous dit encore que le cardinal de Richelieu estoit venu à tel point, lorsqu'il mourut, qu'il ne vouloit plus voir le roy que le plus fort, et avoit, dans sa maison, trois caves capables de tenir près de trois mille hommes.',¹⁹³ and for Sunday 4 June 1645, reporting an after-dinner walk with Bautru and d'Hémery, both of whom had served Richelieu, during which they said that, 'au retour de Perpignan, [Richelieu] avoit résolu de ne plus voir le roy, faisoit un régiment de deux mille Escossais et se fortifioit contre le roy'.¹⁹⁴ Richelieu had a company of infantry permanently installed in front of his lodgings, but his guards

¹⁸⁹ See, for example: Avenel, vii, 126, Richelieu to Chavigny and de Noyers, 15 Sept. 1642.

¹⁹⁰ Avenel, vii, 110, Richelieu to Chavigny and de Noyers, 30 Aug. 1642, concerning Louis' chief doctor, Bouvard, whose daughter had just married one of Richelieu's parlementaire critics, Jacques Ribier.

¹⁹¹ BN Italien 1819, p.372, Giustiniani to Doge, 4 Nov. 1642.

¹⁹² Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 276-7; Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 297.

¹⁹³ O. Lefèvre d'Ormesson, *Journal*, ed. P.A. Chéruel (2 vols.; Paris, 1860-1), i, 67.

¹⁹⁴ Ormesson, *Journal*, i, 285-6.

were required to lay down their arms when the King arrived, ‘parce qu’il n’appartient à qui que ce soit d’être armé en présence de son souverain’. As Montglat recounts, however, when the King came to see Richelieu at Rueil after their return from Perpignan, Richelieu commanded that his guards, rather than disarming in the King’s presence, retain their weapons under their cassiques, ‘tant il craignait quelque entreprise contre sa personne...il ne pouvoit s’assurer du Roi, et qu’il étoit en perpétuelle appréhension que quelqu’un ne lui persuadât de se défaire de lui’.¹⁹⁵

During the late summer and autumn, Richelieu repeatedly pressed Louis to dismiss Tréville and the other suspect officers of the guards. One of the main arguments he made was that it was public knowledge that the King’s guards were hostile to Richelieu and, while they remained in their posts, everyone would believe that, ‘la caballe demeureroit en pied’. This in turn would have damaging effects in international diplomacy, as well as domestic politics. Richelieu seemed, while this situation lasted, unsure of his own position, or at least he wished the King to believe so.¹⁹⁶ The lengthy process of persuading Louis to part with Tréville *et al*, is described by Montglat. Efforts were made on Richelieu’s behalf by de Noyers, Chavigny and Mazarin. Louis finally submitted in late November 1642 with great displeasure, ‘jusqu’à en répandre des larmes’.¹⁹⁷

Little pretence remained that these decisions were the King’s to make, but were instead the Cardinal’s to ‘extort’.¹⁹⁸ Richelieu’s assessment of his monarch by this time was somewhat derisory, and, in yet another of his memorandums

¹⁹⁵ Montglat, *Mémoires*, p.132.

¹⁹⁶ Avenel, vii, 110, Richelieu to Chavigny and de Noyers, 30 Aug. 1642.

¹⁹⁷ Montglat, *Mémoires*, pp.132-3; Siri, *Anecdotes*, ii, 276-85; BN Baluze 146, fo.61, ‘Mémoire donnée à M. le Cardinal Mazarin par M. le Cardinal de Richelieu le 23 Novembre 1642 pour en parler au Roy’.

¹⁹⁸ *The Correspondence of Hugo Grotius*, no.5987, Grotius to Oxenstierna, 6 Dec. 1642.

fulminating about the Cinq-Mars conspiracy, he wrote that, ‘Jamais ceux qui sont chargés de l’administration d’un Estat n’auront seureté auprès d’une prince facile, lorsqu’il aura des favoris.’¹⁹⁹ Richelieu had, however, demanded more than just the dismissal of the residual Cinq-Mars sympathisers. He had insisted that, if Louis wished to retain his services, he must make certain promises: to have no more personal favourites, to confide in no one outside of his council, to inform his *créatures* of anything said against them, and to punish any who say such things against his *créatures*, to keep secret everything discussed in council, to command his council to freely say to him what they believe to be in his best interests, and to ‘nettoyer de temps en temps la court des esprits mal intentionnez’. Never again, Richelieu explained, must there be any grounds to suspect that a change of government might occur in France.²⁰⁰

In mid-November, moreover, Richelieu added to the list of promises he required from his sovereign, by demanding that he confirm – in writing – the terms on which he was willing to accept peace with the Habsburgs. The Cardinal also wanted Louis to certify that the principal obstacle to peace between France and Spain was not Richelieu’s obstinacy, but the unreasonable demands of the Spanish.²⁰¹ At the start of the year Mazarin and d’Avaux had been issued with instructions for a robust stance at the negotiating table, which – due to the increased level of French ambition – equated to a mandate for the long-term continuation of both Richelieu’s ministry and the

¹⁹⁹ Avenel, vii, 155-162, ‘Mémoire contre Cinq-Mars’, [Sept./Oct.] 1642.

²⁰⁰ Avenel, vii, 163, ‘Mémoire du Cardinal contre M. de Cinq-Mars pour le Roy’, 27 Oct. 1642.

²⁰¹ Avenel, vii, 173-8, ‘Autre mémoire du feu Cardinal de Richelieu contre ledit Cinq-Mars’, n.d. [13/14 Nov. 1642].

war.²⁰² After the Cinq-Mars debacle, however, Louis' lack of commitment to those peace terms had been exposed. Richelieu was now seeking the reinforcement of his mandate for prolonged war, a mandate which could be employed by Richelieu during the regency. On the back of Richelieu's memorandum, Louis limply made all of the promises demanded and – going yet further than the peace terms outlined in January – stated that he would have no talk of surrendering Lorraine, Arras, Hesdin, Bapaume, Perpignan, Roussillon, Breisach, his acquisitions in Alsace, or Pignerol.²⁰³ Everything was to be retained. Now it was evident that as long as Richelieu lived, a military-diplomatic strategy would be pursued which many understood as perpetual war, and the tyrannical domination of the Cardinal.

It was around this time that Guillaume Boyer des Roches' *La Politique du Temps* was published.²⁰⁴ Although dedicated to Chavigny, it carried an opening epistle to the King, and described the Cardinal as the 'Père de la Patrie'.²⁰⁵ Boyer des Roches' work issued a lengthy warning against the dangers of régime change, and was peppered with allusions to the Cinq-Mars conspiracy. The Prince, he explained, must have 'constance' and 'fermeté', and must not be seen to show a lack of warmth towards his ministers.²⁰⁶ Those who had long experience of the management of his affairs must be kept in office, as they will govern better. The King must ignore the grumblings of the malcontent and ambitious *Grands* who seek only the advancement

²⁰² See above pp.232-3.

²⁰³ Avenel, vii, 173-8, 'Autre mémoire du feu Cardinal de Richelieu contre ledit Cinq-Mars', n.d. [13/14 Nov. 1642].

²⁰⁴ G. Boyer des Roches, *La Politique du Temps* (Paris, 1642). The timing of its publication is made clear in its sub-title: 'Pour l'heureux retour de Sa Majesté et de Monseigneur l'Eminentissime Cardinal Duc, après la prise de Perpignan'.

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 'Préface'.

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, pp.55-64.

of their own *maisons*.²⁰⁷ But what followed was no attack on the self-interested, but a defence of the idea that all in government, and the state, can only be bound together by interest. The Minister should bind to the state those who he knows have the most concern for its well-being, often his own ‘parents’, through patronage, and, in order to do this effectively he should control everything.²⁰⁸ France can only be powerful if all seigneurs are united under this single ‘chef’, and thus ‘un Ministre dans un État devroit luy seul avoir toutes les charges et tous les emplois du Royaume’.²⁰⁹ But he goes further, appropriating for the minister the mystical qualities usually associated with the sovereign: ‘cet ordre est nécessaire à la Monarchie, d’estre régie d’un seul esprit, comme d’une ame qui anime et unit toutes ses parties’.²¹⁰ Boyer de Roches’ work serves as a remarkably autocratic and acquisitive vision of the ministry’s role at the end of the reign.

A few weeks later a declaration was drawn up barring Orléans from any political role either current or in the future, with reference to his repeated engagement in rebellion and conspiracy. He was to be excluded from the regency.²¹¹ The Queen, meanwhile, was reported by some observers to be on better terms with the Cardinal, but the evidence is mixed.²¹² Having assisted Richelieu in obtaining a copy of the conspirators’ treaty with the Spanish, Anne had been permitted to retain custody of

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, pp.64-9.

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*, pp.80-3.

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*, pp.85-6.

²¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.87.

²¹¹ Montrésor, *Mémoires* (1723), iii, 192, ‘Déclaration du Roy contre Monsieur le duc d’Orléans’, 1 Dec. 1642. See also: BN Français 15621, fo.236, ‘Copie de la descharge escrite de la main du Roy des lettres patentes portant sa volonté touchant la régence qu’il ordonnent apres son decez’, 30 Nov. 1642, which is a note explaining that the forthcoming declaration against Orléans was drawn up by Séguier at the King’s request.

²¹² Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines*, ii, 310; BL Add 12184, fo.122, Brown to [Secretary of State], 27 Oct./7 Nov. 1642.

her sons and Richelieu had been re-established as chief minister,²¹³ but there is no evidence of any subsequent understanding having been struck between them concerning the regency. It is probable that Anne had come to accept the inevitability of Richelieu as *premier ministre* under her nominal regency, but it is unclear whether he was willing – after years of sowing mistrust between the royal couple – to reciprocate by persuading the King to sign a declaration confirming Anne’s role. The document itself has not yet come to light, but it was reported that the King had obtained Anne’s agreement to the appointment of Richelieu as tutor to their children through a testamentary declaration, thus ensuring ‘il stabilimento de sua fortuna’.²¹⁴

²¹³ ‘Lettres de Vineuil’, p.120, Vineuil to Humières, 14 June 1642; BN Français 15611, fo.460, Arnaud to Barillon, 15 June 1642.

²¹⁴ BN Italien 1819, p.223, Giustiniani to Doge, 1 Aug. 1642.

Epilogue

*‘Enfin la France a ce bon-heur d’avoir un Roy
sans Superieur; une Reine sans Tyran; un Frère du
Roy sans Rival; des Princes sans compaignon; des
Prelats sans impieté; une Justice sans corruption;
une Noblesse sans lâcheté; un peuple sans
oppression.’¹*

The Hydra of Conspiracy

In the summer of 1642, while the aftermath of the Cinq-Mars conspiracy was being played out inside France, conferences were held in London comprising a large group of French exiles and malcontents: the ducs de La Valette, Soubise, and Vendôme; deputies representing unnamed French cities; and the abbé de Mercy who was passing through on his way from Flanders to Madrid to make representations on behalf of Madame de Chevreuse. Fontrailles, Montrésor, and Aubijoux, all of whom were attached to Orléans, had recently arrived from France and also became involved in the talks. The duc de Beaufort was soon to follow, accompanied by the Campion brothers.² The result of their discussions was a project ‘por el bien de la paz universal’, of which the duc de Vendôme was to take overall command, though that honour was reserved for the duc d’Orléans should he chose to join at a later date

While their scheme resembled many that had come before, it displayed a significant new level of sophistication and placement of emphasis, reflecting the impact of exile in an increasingly turbulent London upon their political thinking.

¹ *Le Marechal d’Ornano Martyr d’Estat* (s.l., 1643), p.45, attributed to Paul Hay du Châtelet, a former pro-Richelieu propagandist.

² H. Campion, *Mémoires*, ed. M. Fumaroli (2nd ed., Paris, 1990), pp.159-60. He also mentions the presence in England of Varicarville and La Vieuville.

Habsburg support was once more to be obtained in order to form a military corps. So as to avoid alienating their popular support, the new *parti* stressed the importance of making clear to the people of France that the purpose of seeking an alliance with the Habsburgs was directly linked ‘al bien...de su Patria y no a su ruyna’. Rather than appearing to give themselves to foreign powers, the exiles must make it clear that they were joining with the Habsburgs for the purpose of bringing peace. The civic-humanist concept of ‘patria’ was frequently evoked.³

La Valette then headed to Cologne to negotiate with representatives of Ferdinand III concerning a new bid to seize Metz. Mercy travelled to Madrid, where he presented the group’s broader plans to bring down Richelieu by force of a combination of indigenous rebellion and foreign invasion. Despite some sceptical voices in his council, Philip IV endorsed the negotiation of a treaty via Francisco de Melo, interim governor of the Spanish Netherlands. Philip also approved the negotiation of a separate deal with the Huguenots through his ambassador in London.⁴ At Cologne, La Valette agreed a deal with the Emperor’s delegates, who offered him the title of Prince of the Empire, along with 4,000 infantry, 1,000 cavalry, and funds to levy the same number of troops again. He was also offered the support of the bulk of the Army of Flanders by Melo, who was buoyant after recent successes, having retaken Aire at the end of 1641 and enjoyed a successful 1642 campaign which had

³ AGS Est. Inglaterra 2522, ‘Articulos y [anotaciones] del intencion y desseo que tiene los señores y Principes de Francia que per el buen general de la Paz universal se podran aliar y juntar con la Augustissima Casa de Austria’; *ibid.*, ‘Resulta de la Junta que tuvieron en Inglaterra’; *ibid.*, ‘Memoria de lo primero que el sr Abad de Mercy ha de reportar a los señores Ministros de Su Magestad Cattolica de parte de los Principes y señores de Francia’.

⁴ AGS Est. Inglaterra 2522, ‘Resolucion de Su Magestad’, n.d. [1642]; *ibid.*, ‘Consejo de Estado’, 9 Sept. 1642; AGS Est. Flandes 2249, Philip IV to [Olivares], 2 Oct. 1642; Lonchay and Cuvelier, iii, 464, Philip IV to de Melo, 8 Oct. 1642; BN Français 16391, fos.297-435, ‘Mémoires sur la naissance et les actions de tous les grands Capitaines de nostre siècle’, abbé de Mercy, 1670, fos.322-3v.

included routing Guiche's army at Honnecourt. Both the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs evidently continued to regard these projects as useful mechanisms to obtain tactical advantages, as well as a means to bring the war to a satisfactory end.

By the beginning of December 1642 everything was in place for the execution of La Valette's project; the Imperial troops had amassed in the Bishopric of Trèves. As they were awaiting the order to cross the border,⁵ however, the news arrived that Richelieu had passed away on 4 December. After surviving countless plots against his life, Richelieu had died – of natural causes – in his bed. La Valette and his lieutenants laid down their arms; choosing to seek reconciliation with the new French régime, rather than wage war against a minor king.

A collective sigh of relief

There was an intense outpouring of vitriol after Richelieu's death. Satirical couplets, pamphlets and songs rapidly began to circulate in Paris. It was 'une catharsis collective'.⁶ Works such as *Le Marechal d'Ornano Martyr d'Estat*, sought to recast those who had fallen foul of Richelieu as political heroes and none more so than Orléans who, 'pour avoir voulu ruiner la tyrannie d'un Favory, a esté déclaré criminel d'Estat, et qu'il a failly à perir, pour avoir voulu sauver le Prince et la Monarchie'.⁷ It was publically acknowledged that Richelieu had manipulated and

⁵ E. Longin, *Un Diplome Franc-Comtois. François de Lisola: Sa vie, ses écrits, son testament (1613-1674)* (Dole, 1900), pp.14-7.

⁶ G. Ferretti, 'Élites et peuples à Paris, 1642-1650. La naissance de l'historiographie sur Richelieu', *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, 1 (1997), 103-130; G. Ferretti, 'Littérature clandestine et lute politique. L'héritage de Richelieu au temps de Mazarin (1642-1661)', in L. Bély and I. Richefort (eds.), *L'Europe des traités de Westphalie. Esprit de la diplomatie et diplomatie de l'esprit* (Paris, 2000), pp.469-485.

⁷ *Le Marechal d'Ornano*, p.48.

‘enslaved’ the King.⁸ Even works sponsored by those formerly of Richelieu’s faction acknowledged the unjustified degree of ‘intérêt’ of the former minister and his suppression of free speech. One work accepted that under such circumstances it had been a justifiable necessity, ‘de se déffendre de luy, et de se metre à couvert de sa cruauté; soit par une lasche et abjecte sousmission, ou par une aversion, qui porte les Sujets aux conjurations, et aux resolutions les plus désesperées’.⁹

After Richelieu’s demise it was necessary to review the prisoners in the Bastille to establish who they were and what their supposed crimes had been. Each was interviewed in turn, revealing that none had been put on trial or had any formal charges made against them; few of them had even been interrogated. Many of them made terrible accusations against the governor of the Bastille, du Tremblay,¹⁰ and his brother, Père Joseph,¹¹ who had been one of the Cardinal’s closest collaborators. The sieur de Plainville,¹² for example, who had been arrested in late 1636, claimed that Richelieu had tried to blackmail him into giving false testimony against Madame de Chevreuse. Plainville had refused to co-operate and resigned himself to indefinite incarceration. Other prisoners spoke of being arrested in the middle of the night for no known reason, other than to enable du Tremblay and Père Joseph to seize their offices or benefices for personal enrichment.¹³

⁸ See also BN Dupuy 625, fo.112, ‘Advis d’un Docteur de la Sorbonne Sur la mort de Monsieur le Cardinal à un Gentilhomme’.

⁹ *Le Guerrier Prudent et Polytique* (Paris, 1643), dedicated to the comte d’Harcourt.

¹⁰ Charles Le Clerc, marquis du Tremblay, was Père Joseph’s younger brother. He was appointed governor of the Bastille in 1625.

¹¹ François Le Clerc, sieur du Tremblay, better known as Père Joseph. He was Richelieu’s closest advisor and likely successor up until his death in 1638: B. Pierre, *Le Père Joseph: L’Éminence grise de Richelieu* (Paris, 2007).

¹² René Regnier, sieur de Plainville.

¹³ BN Français 16539, fos.614-73, consisting of a set of records of these interviews and related documents. See, in particular: fo.628, ‘Mémoire d’une petite partie des mauvais traictements qu’ont

During the spring of 1643, as Louis XIII's health appeared to be in terminal decline, Anne of Austria struck a working deal with Cardinal Mazarin to ensure that her husband would designate her as regent. This was on the understanding that the limiting regency council would be dispensed with, through the intervention of Parlement shortly after Louis' death, which finally occurred on 14 May.¹⁴ The effective exercise of sovereign power by Anne was thus ensured. In return for helping to persuade Louis to appoint Anne as regent, Mazarin was rewarded with the role of *premier ministre*. The regency was still, however, able to satisfactorily accommodate both the Prince de Condé and the duc d'Orléans,¹⁵ despite their acrimonious history, thus ensuring that the adult Princes of the Blood – the natural figureheads of rebellion – were kept in line for longer than had been managed for decades. Such an arrangement could not have been brokered under Richelieu's ministry. Attempts had been made to reconcile Richelieu with Orléans or the Queen during his final years, but they did not lead to any alliances being forged. The statesmanlike concord of Regent and Minister in 1643, contrasts to the excessive aspirations of Richelieu to the role of Minister-Regent between 1638 and 1642.

Opposition did remain a potent factor in 1643, but there was minimal threat of armed noble rebellion. Popular unrest again reared its head in the provinces of the south-west, which was in large part the result of agitations in recent years by

receu les prisonniers de la bastille et le subject de leurs detentions donné par Scannevelle', 23 May 1643; fo.643, 'Mémoire de la Terrade pour estre présenté à la Royne', n.d.; fo.665v., interrogation of the sieur de Plainville, n.d.

¹⁴ V. Cousin, 'Des Carnets autographes du cardinal Mazarin, conservés à la bibliothèque impériale', *Journal des Savants* (1854), part II, 521-47, pp.526-7; S. Bertièrre, *Mazarin: Le maître du jeu* (Paris, 2007), pp.242-51.

¹⁵ Orléans was appointed *lieutenant général* and *chef de conseil de guerre*. Condé was *grand maître* of the King's household and his son had command of an army: F. Hildesheimer, *Le Double Mort du roi Louis XIII* (Paris, 2007), pp.171-2, 224.

Huguenot nobles linked to Soubise.¹⁶ At Court, the infamous *Cabale des Importants* was formed from a group of returned exiles who had not obtained satisfactory position within the regency and who were frustrated at the choice of Mazarin as head of Anne's government. Its leaders were Beaufort, Vendôme, and Chevreuse, while its lieutenants were those who had agitated most energetically against Richelieu: Saint-Ybard, Montrésor, Fontrailles, and Campion.¹⁷ No concrete plans for rebellion were made, in large part because the Spanish themselves saw the death of Richelieu as an opportunity for a diplomatic settlement with France in which fomenting domestic unrest played no part. The Spanish confined themselves to encouraging Chevreuse to persuade the Queen to accept a separate peace.¹⁸ Vienna took a similar stance.¹⁹

As Anne had been such a persistent sponsor of the opposition during Richelieu's final years, the decisions she made in 1643 are a matter of great significance. Anne could, like Marie de Médicis in 1610,²⁰ have sued for an immediate peace deal with Spain. Madrid expected her to be amenable to the idea and responded to Louis XIII's death by sending Don Diego Saavedra Fajardo to

¹⁶ See above pp.133-4.

¹⁷ M. Serville, 'Les Campion et la Cabale des Importants', 1, *Vives Lettres* (1996), 75-99; J.M. Constant, 'Langue de bois et lutte pour le pouvoir. La Cabale des Importants de 1643', in B. Barbiche, J.-P. Poussou, and A. Tallon (eds.): *Pouvoirs, contestations et comportements dans l'Europe moderne* (Paris, 2005), 631-644; V. Cousin, *Madame de Chevreuse* (Paris, 1868), pp.197-288. During the conspiracies of the *Importants* at court, Bouillon was stirring things up in the Auvergne with assemblies of the nobility: V. Cousin 'Les Origines du Fronde' in J. Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire (ed.), *M. Victor Cousin: Sa vie et sa correspondance*, ii, (Paris, 1895), 583-663, p.634.

¹⁸ H. Lonchay, *La Rivalité de la France et de l'Espagne aux Pays-Bas (1635-1700)* (Brussels, 1896), pp.143-6; BL Add 28452, fo.233, 'Del marques Virgilio Malvezzi a Don francisco de Melo Governador de los Estados de Flandes, aconsejandole loque deva obrar en la Campaña del año de 1643', 11 May 1643; AGS Est. Francia K1420, no.104, 'Mémoire d'Antonio Sarmiento pour le Roi', 14 Sept. 1643.

¹⁹ Longin, *Un Diplomate Franc-Comtois*, p.18. Vienna's agent, Lisola, corresponded with the *Importants* to encourage them to bring peace.

²⁰ In 1610 Henri IV had been preparing for military intervention against Imperial encroachments in Cleves and Juliers, which had arisen out of a succession dispute. Upon becoming regent, Marie de Médicis opted instead for peace: Le Vassor, i, 8-25. Popular hopes that Anne would do likewise were expressed publicly in 1643: *Les Espérances de la France sous la Régence de la Reyne Mère du Roy Louis XIV* (Paris, 1643).

sound her out.²¹ Any such hopes were dashed, however, when he was refused access to Anne, who had been persuaded by Mazarin that war must continue. In her biography, Kleinman demonstrates in some depth the means by which Mazarin persuaded Anne during the summer months of 1643 to accept his advice on the conduct of the war.²² The fact that Mazarin was counselling continued war in 1643 supports recent historiography offering more pessimistic assessments of the degree of military success achieved under Richelieu. A memorandum by Mazarin from October 1642 offers an insight into his interpretation of the state of military progress: recent victories, he stated, had only succeeded in reinforcing France's frontiers, but had not sufficiently undermined Spanish strength. To achieve the peace terms sought by Richelieu and Louis XIII, war would have to continue vigorously for the foreseeable future.²³

As well as Mazarin's powers of persuasion it is also important to consider the contrast between his position in 1643 and that of Richelieu before his demise. New understanding of Anne's role during the final years of Richelieu's ministry, suggests her recent acts of opposition had centred more around fear of Richelieu, than they had around the issue of the war. Richelieu's personal power at the point of his death was immense. He and his clients exerted a near-monopoly over the governorships of France's provinces, the governorships of her strongholds, as well as controlling her vast resources – be they military, fiscal, religious or political. He had, moreover, used his influence to seek to control the regency and had threatened Anne's relationship

²¹ J.C. Dowling, *Diego de Saavedra Fajardo* (Boston, 1977), pp.116-8.

²² R.A. Kleinman, *Anne of Austria* (Columbus, 1985), pp.147-73. Kleinman also accepts the possibility that Anne's convictions were the result of having fallen in love with Mazarin.

²³ M. Laurain-Portemer, *Études Mazarines* (2 vols.; Paris, 1981-97) ii, 717-8, based on a memorandum of 18 October 1642. This pertinent find by Laurain-Portemer makes it all the more bewildering that she should conclude that both Richelieu and Mazarin 'sont animés du même désir de paix': *ibid.*, p.715.

with her own children. Mazarin, by contrast, had none of these attributes in 1643. He was a foreigner, relatively newly arrived in France, with no independent power base or followers of his own; just a few ministerial allies and friends. Neither was he attached to Orléans or Condé, or any of the other *grands*. Mazarin depended entirely on Anne and this made him both more trustworthy and easier to dismiss should she wish to later on. There are some early indications that Anne ultimately favoured Châteauneuf for the post of *premier ministre*, but felt it better to keep Mazarin in post for the time being so as to avoid an abrupt change with her husbands' government. Additionally, some of Anne's oldest friends counselled her to accept Mazarin's leadership, not because they now supported war, but because they felt him to be the person most capable of negotiating a peace for France.²⁴ Appointing him – the experienced diplomat – represented a step towards peace. Mazarin's skill was then in persuading Anne to support more ambitious terms for a prospective peace deal, which would necessitate continued war.

Faced with the entrenchment of Mazarin's authority and the refusal to sue for a separate – and therefore immediate – peace, the *Importants* plotted against Mazarin's life. Multiple assassination plots were hatched, involving some of the same royal guards who had conspired against Richelieu in 1642, but they do not appear to have come close to fruition. Mazarin was tipped off and the *parti* was once more scattered. Beaufort was imprisoned in Vincennes, while most of the other participants were exiled.²⁵

²⁴ Cousin, 'Des Carnets' (1854), part II, 521-47; Hildesheimer, *Double Mort*, pp.163-4.

²⁵ Serville, 'Les Campion et la Cabale des Importants'. Bouillon was offered the general command of the Papal armies and so headed to Italy, where he conspired with Spanish representatives once more:

The Coming of the Fronde

As the 1640s advanced, however, the same group of experienced conspirators continued to pursue the goal of peace and the re-balancing of the monarchy.²⁶ The persistence of a regency government incorporating the Queen, Condé and Orléans meant that sponsorship of the conspiracies devolved on the less-influential *maison de Vendôme*, while former conspiratorial clients of Orléans – such as Fontrailles and Aubijoux – found themselves endowed with prestigious offices.²⁷ The Habsburgs did not pick up the slack. After Richelieu's death, they had abandoned the policy of fomenting discord in favour of diplomatic initiatives towards peace with what they expected to be a more pliant régime in Paris, accompanied by increased efforts to persuade the Dutch states to sign a truce.²⁸

It is, however, no coincidence that the eventual conclusion of a separate Spanish peace with the Dutch states in early 1648, which isolated France in the on-going war and spelled political disaster for Mazarin, was partly the product of the continued diplomatic efforts of the *Importants*. Chevreuse, Saint-Ybal, Mercy, and others, had energetically promoted the cause of peace with Spain among the Dutch states.²⁹ The rapidity of the breakdown into civil war in France in 1648 and 1649, moreover, was a result of the efforts of the *Importants*. They had finally persuaded

Cousin, 'Origines de la Fronde', pp.635-6; P. Duval, *Relation du voyage fait à Rome par M. le duc de Bouillon, prince souverain de Sedan* (Paris, 1656); AN 273 AP 178, 'Traité avec l'Espagne' [1643/1644].

²⁶ Cousin, *Chevreuse*, pp.279-309; S. Hodson, 'Sovereigns and Subjects: The princes of Sedan and the dukes of Bouillon in early modern France, c.1450-1652', DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2000, pp.359-67; Lonchay, *Rivalité*, pp.142-5; Cousin, 'Origines de la Fronde'.

²⁷ C.E.J. Caldicott, 'Le Gouvernement de Gaston d'Orléans en Languedoc (1644-1660) et la carrière de Molière', *Dix-septième siècle*, 116 (1977), 17-42.

²⁸ Lonchay, *Rivalité*, pp.135-44; AAE CP Espagne 22, fo.340, anonymous despatch from Madrid reporting the views of Olivares, 29 Dec. 1642.

²⁹ See, for example, BN Espagnol 144, fo.12, 'Instrucción de lo que el señor Abbad de Merçi ha de executar por el servicio de su Magestad en la jornada que hace a Holanda', [1645].

the Spanish to once more foster rebellion inside France and had prepared a detailed plan for widespread rebellion, having obtained many promises of support. When the Fronde started, the *Importants* were already in the process of persuading the likes of Condé, mademoiselle de Longueville and Conti to become the princely heads of the rebellion, as they ultimately did. The combination of pre-prepared revolt and foreign catalyst had a potent effect.³⁰

The question, of why Spain subsequently failed to capitalise on the continuing domestic frailties of the French monarchy during the Fronde remains to be convincingly addressed. The prevailing view is that the Army of Flanders was simply too weak by then to launch a convincing offensive against France, though this remains to be investigated systematically and largely rests on assumptions concerning the dramatic impact of earlier campaigns and battles, such as Rocroi, which may no longer hold true.³¹

While it is entirely reasonable to state that the pragmatic, conservative Richelieu was not necessarily opposed to the nobility or the *grands*, but sought to work with them and to enhance his social standing as a nobleman himself, his ministry nevertheless became increasingly factional over time. Indeed it was partly

³⁰ The recipe for rebellion inside France in 1648 was very similar to that which had first been drawn up to counter Richelieu, but more detailed and explicit about names: AGS Est. Flandes 2069, no.19, 'Copia de lo que el Conde de Saintibal referio al Sr Achiduque' [1648], which presents their plans at great length. When negotiating with the French malcontents in 1650, moreover, the conde de Fuensaldaña considered the merits of the 1641 treaty with Soissons and Bouillon as a prototype for a new treaty with Turenne and the duchesse de Longueville: AAE MD Espagne 276, fo.63, memorandum by Fuensaldaña, 21 Mar. 1650.

³¹ See, for example: F. González de León, *The Road to Rocroi: Class, culture and command in the Spanish Army of Flanders, 1567-1659* (Leiden, 2009); J.I. Israel, 'Olivares, the Cardinal-Infante and Spain's strategy in the Low Countries: The Road to Rocroi, 1635-1643', in *Conflicts of Empires: Spain, the Low Countries and the struggle for World supremacy, 1585-1713* (London, 1997), 63-91.

the dynastic questions of his relationship with the other *grands*, the competition to ally with him, or the refusal to accept him, as well as the rivalries between the Princes of the Blood, which largely dictated the factional divisions in French politics. Ideology lingered in second place to these concerns. Richelieu was increasingly aggressive towards his enemies among the *grands* and gave free reign to Condé's ambitions, to the detriment of the war effort and the best interests of the ruling dynasty.

The war effort itself was highly disappointing and evoked widespread criticism. The stark contrast between the claims of Richelieu's propaganda and the dismal realities of the ministry, and its impact on the people of France, was there for all to see. This created widespread sympathy for the noble opposition to the Cardinal. The support of the Habsburgs for his opponents gave them a degree of military threat that they would otherwise have lacked. The concerted opposition that had then emerged by 1641 could be compared to the aristocratic revolt that was simultaneously ushering in a civil war across the channel.³² Political conspiracy, factional conflict, popular discontent and cogent criticism had become endemic by the time of Richelieu's demise and the final two years of his ministry witnessed the beginnings of a civil war, such as that which would tear France apart from 1648 to 1654.

Noble conspiracy had not been without its risks under Richelieu and some had paid the ultimate price, though relatively few noblemen were punished by death considering how many conspired over course of the reign.³³ Most of those who

³² J. Adamson, *The Noble Revolt* (London, 2009).

³³ An oft-cited document drawn up by Pierre Dupuy, lists those executed and punished under Richelieu, but let us not forget that many were pardoned and richely-rewarded as part of the reconciliations of

pursued the path of rebellion did so as a calculated risk and emerged to play prominent roles in the service of their King, as well as in opposition to his ministers, over the coming decades. Treason had been more productive than counter-productive. Richelieu's ministry was not the defeat of the nobility, or the *grands*, but the elevation of one noble faction at the expense of all others; a situation which became increasingly divisive and untenable as the ministry progressed. Unity was still a distant dream. While he struggled to undo the power of some *grands* he significantly increased that of others and forged a new grandee lineage from his own *maison*.³⁴ If it was an attempt to instil obedience to the state, then it was both misguided and counter-productive. There was no redefinition of the relationship between the *grands* and the monarchy. The sanctity of royal blood was, more than ever, instilled at the heart of the *raison d'être* of the state itself. The inherent political power of the *princes du sang royal*, or of the Queen Mother, could not be undone, no matter how ambitious the minister's rhetoric.

The transition to peace and the personal rule of Louis XIV after 1661 marked an end to the disruptive experiment with ministerial monopolisation of power.³⁵ Relative calm now descended on French internal affairs. The next 30 years saw an outpouring of memoirs published about the era of the Cardinal-Ministers. These writers sought not to deny their treasonous dealings with the Spanish, but to manage perceptions of it as the product of a time that was out of joint but which had now

1628, 1630, 1634, 1637, 1641, or the post-Richelieu thaw of 1643: BN Dupuy 625, fos.94-f111v., untitled, n.d.. See also D. Gallet-Guerne, 'Une conséquence des troubles féodaux sous Louis XIII : les confiscations royales de 1629 à 1641', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 127:2 (1969), 329 – 54.

³⁴ This interpretation is similar to that of C. Jouhaud, 'Politiques de princes: les Condé (1630-1652)', in P. Contamine (ed.), *L'Etat et les Aristocraties (France, Angleterre, Ecosse) XIIIe-XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1989), 335-355.

³⁵ J. Bérenger, 'Pour une enquête européenne: le problème du ministériat au XVIIe siècle', *Annales*, 29 (1974), 166-92.

ended. Although minimising their engagements with the Habsburgs, the memoirs of La Rochefoucauld, Fontrailles, Montrésor, Saumières (Bouillon), and Martignac (Orléans),³⁶ were all remarkably honest about what they done. Where they offer justifications for treason they are in terms of practicality: either that alliance with Spain was a necessity of legitimate political action, or, when taking the opposite view, that such alliance was an ineffective mode of action. The least apologetic was Montrésor, but his memoirs were posthumous. Either way, the ends had still justified the means, and the dividing point between legitimate and illegitimate means was still theoretically debatable, even during the Sun King's rule.

Factional conspiracy, with revolt as its extreme form, continued to be a relevant mode of political action throughout the *ancien régime*, and was central to its political culture.³⁷ As a co-operative enterprise with the élites, the *ancien régime*, continued to provide a framework for assertive noble action, but became more successful at managing itself without the kind of imbalances that lead to rebellion. Nevertheless, occasional rebellions and noble conspiracies were a consistent feature. The ministry of Cardinal Fleury between 1726 and 1743 became the focus of several noble conspiracies, though Fleury's assiduous efforts to balance the noble factions did much to prevent major unrest.³⁸ Between 1755 and 1757, moreover, the Prince de

³⁶ E. Algay de Martignac, *Mémoires de Gaston, duc d'Orléans*, in Petitot and Monmerqué, xxxi. La Rochefoucauld's memoirs first appeared in 1662, Montrésor's in 1663, Fontrailles' in 1663, Martignac's in 1685 and Saumières' in 1692. Retz's memoirs did not appear until the regency in 1718.

³⁷ P. Campbell, 'Conspiracy and Political Practice from the ancien régime to the French Revolution', in J. Swann and B. Coward (eds.), *Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory in Early Modern Europe: from the Waldensians to the French Revolution* (Aldershot, 2004), 197-212. Some startling statistics for the persistence of rebellion between 1661 and 1789 are cited in M. De Waele, 'Conflict Resolution under the First Bourbons'

in A. Forrestal and E. Nelson (eds.), *Politics and Religion in Early Bourbon France* (Basingstoke, 2009), 132-153.

³⁸ P. Campbell, *Power and Politics in Old Regime France 1720-1745* (London, 1996), pp.131-73.

Conti plotted to raise the Huguenots in rebellion and to bring an English force in support.³⁹ The early phases of the Revolution itself are now understood to have been a Fronde-style breakdown of order, in which noble conspiracy played a significant part.⁴⁰

The French nobility had not immolated itself on the altar of state as sacrificial lambs in ceremonies conducted by the politically-empowered prelates Richelieu and Mazarin, but had successfully maintained a voice of opposition in the face of factional monopoly, as well as the waging of an immensely costly and ineffective 25-year war, which had threatened to irreparably alter the make-up of the monarchy. The persistence of the nobiliaire contribution to the reign of Louis XIV is partly a mark of this success. In this sense, the Spanish factor had played a vital role in the formation of the *ancien régime* based on compromise and mutually-reinforcing interests. Peace with Spain combined with skilful personal rule, to make revolt a temporarily redundant tool after 1661. The idea, therefore, that a cultural shift in noble values was causally responsible for the really quite abrupt decline in noble revolt after 1661 is far from convincing.⁴¹

Spanish interventionism in French affairs, nevertheless, remained a concern under Louis XIV, but a much less threatening one now that sound government had

³⁹ J.D. Woodbridge, *Revolt in Pre-Revolutionary France: The Prince of Conti's conspiracy against Louis XV, 1755-1757* (Baltimore, 1995). This was Louis François de Bourbon, 6th Prince de Conti.

⁴⁰ Campbell, *Power and Politics*, pp.1, 34-5; W. Doyle, 'Reflections on the Classic Interpretation of the French Revolution', in *Offices, Nobles and Revolutionaries: essays in eighteenth century France* (London, 1995), 173-9.

⁴¹ M. Bannister, *Condé in Context: Ideological change in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford, 2000); M. Bannister, 'Crescit ut aspicitur Condé and the Reinterpretation of Heroism, 1650-1662', *Ethics and Politics in Seventeenth Century France* (Exeter, 1996), 119-128.

been restored.⁴² Conspirators such as Roux de Marsilly, the Chevalier de Rohan, or the comte de Saint-Aunais, all had close dealings with the Spanish Monarchy, but posed much less of a danger to the French régime under the post-1661 settlements.⁴³ The more reasoned mode of rule enabled political critics to find a voice and a role, while political views – pressing for peace, reform and greater noble participation in government – which, in the 1620s and 1630s had been met by fierce repression, were now expressed relatively freely by members of the aristocratic Burgundy Circle.⁴⁴ This more tolerant attitude was one of the many trappings of secure and successful government.

⁴² Though former anti-Richelieu agitators continued to entice the Habsburgs with suggestions that fomenting discord might reverse the new French ascendancy: BN Français 16391, fos.297-435, 'Mémoires sur la naissance et les actions de tous les grands Capitaines de nostre siècle', abbé de Mercy, 1670, fos.434v.-5.

⁴³ On Roux de Marsilly, see *Archives de la Bastille: documents inédits*, ed. F. Ravaisson, (19 vols.; Paris, 1866-1904), vii, 309-332. On the Chevalier de Rohan, see E. Seuran and S. Seuran, *Le prince infortuné, ou le rêve d'une république au temps du Roi-Soleil* (Paris, 2004). On Henry Bourcier de Barry, sieur de Saint-Aunais' activities see *Archives de la Bastille*, ii, 309-38.

⁴⁴ L. Rothkrug, *Opposition to Louis XIV* (Princeton, 1965), p.257; N.O. Keohane, *Philosophy and the State in France: The Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 332-57.

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