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Magistrates and Municipal Politics:
The Bordeaux *parlementaires* during the Reign of Louis XIV

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An abstract of
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University
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Abstract

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By Douglas C. Powell

Historians of early modern France have long debated the role of the king's sovereign magistrates in local and royal politics. Some have portrayed these powerful judges as a provincial defense against the monarchy's absolutist tendencies, while others have argued in favor of a more collaborative relationship between the robe nobility and king. This long-term study of the Bordeaux *parlementaires* contends that neither of these models accurately reflects the attitudes and experiences of these individuals during the reign of Louis XIV. It demonstrates that far from protecting their fellow citizens from the growing demands of the crown, the *parlementaires* were largely ambivalent toward the needs of the Bordelais. Moreover, they were equally unsure of their relationship with their sovereign who could often be abusive and exploitative.

The reign of Louis XIV represented considerable change to the political, social, and economic structures of French society. Beginning with the instability of the Fronde and ending with a dramatic expansion of venal office holding, Louis's reign compelled the Bordeaux *parlementaires* to articulate and defend their own understanding of their power and authority. Throughout this challenging period, the magistrates were primarily concerned with maintaining their own conception of order, stability, and hierarchy, all of which they understood could be threatened by those above and below them in French society. From this perspective, we can begin to reconcile the often inconsistent behavior of these magistrates, and more importantly, we can posit framework for understanding the oppositional politics of the eighteenth century.

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Acknowledgements

Like many Ph.D. students, I came home from doing research in France with the expectation that I would soon have my dissertation written. I had not the slightest premonition of the immense challenge that lay in front of me, and I fully expected my thesis to emerge quickly from the thousands of pages of notes I had taken over countless hours in the archives. When that scenario did not materialize, I began the long and demanding process of analyzing my research to discover what contributions I could make to the considerable scholarship that already existed on the French *parlementaires*. It is my hope that the reader finds value in them.

This project would never have been possible without the generous financial support of Emory University's James T. Laney Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. The Department of History provided much needed stipends for 2000-2003, as well as funds to survey the archives in 2002. I am especially grateful to Blair Rogers Major and J. Russell Major as the 2004 recipient of the J. Russell Major and Blair Rogers Major dissertation award. These funds made my extended stay in France possible. Thank you all.

I have benefited over the years from the insights of excellent historians at Villanova University and Emory University. At Villanova, Alexander Varias renewed my interest in French history and Emmet McLaughlin raised questions that I am still trying to answer. I am particularly grateful to the outstanding faculty at Emory, including

William Beik, Judith Miller, James Melton, Thomas Burns, Kathryn Amdur, Walter Adamson and Philippe Rosenberg.

The members of my dissertation committee have all facilitated the development of this study in their own way. I am thankful to James Melton for his expertise, insights, and strong encouragement. Judith Miller provided a much needed new perspective on the material and her penetrating analysis has strengthened this dissertation in countless ways. Judith has been the model of a scholar, teacher and friend throughout this process. And yet, without the support, encouragement, and friendship of my advisor, Bill Beik, this project would not have been possible. His vast knowledge of early modern elites and urban revolt was invaluable to me as I probed my sources and polished my argument. Bill is a remarkable man whose humanity came through at every stage of this process, and I will always be grateful for the opportunity he has given me. Finally, I would like to thank Millie Beik who warmly opened her home to Bill's graduate students and made us feel like part of the family when many of us were far away from our own.

I am also grateful to the French archivists who, without exception, gave me a warm welcome and did so much to facilitate my research. I spent a great deal of time in the Bibliothèque and Archives Municipales of Bordeaux and the staff of these institutions exceeded all my expectations in their friendliness and cooperation. I also had the opportunity to briefly visit the archives at the Château de Chantilly, and the staff there helped me make the most of my limited time.

Friends and family have provided moral support and encouragement throughout. My mother, Elaine, has taught me the value of hard work through her selfless devotion to her children and grandchildren and the countless ways she has set an example for us all to

follow. My late grandmother Wanda was always a model of strength, resilience, and compassion who has served to elevate my own standards and expectations. The friendship and warmth with which Vincent Cariou and the Cariou family brought me into their home and exposed me to all things French created a zeal for their country's culture and history that endures to this day.

I reserved my greatest debt of gratitude to my wife, Holly, and daughter, Hannah, whose love and encouragement have helped me persevere through this process. I have put them both through a lot these past few years as I tried to carve out writing time from our busy schedules and put off countless projects and goals that we had set for our family. I will always look for ways to express my love and appreciation to you both. This is dedicated to you.

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List of Abbreviations

AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale (Richelieu)
AM	Archives municipals, Bordeaux
BM	Bibliothèque municipal, Bordeaux
AD	Archives Départementales de la Gironde
AC	Archives de Chatilly

Introduction

In this nearly general subservience of all stations, an Order as old as the magistrature, as noble as Virtue, as necessary as Justice, is distinguished by a singular character; and alone among all the states, it abides in the happy and peaceful possession of its independence. Enjoying freedom without being useless to the fatherland, it devotes itself to the Public without being its slave; and condemning the indifference of the philosopher, who seeks independence in inactivity, it pities the misfortune of those who only go into public service because they have lost their freedom.... Happy to be in a state where making one's fortune and fulfilling one's duty are but one and the same thing; where merit and glory are inseparable, where a man, as the sole author of his elevation, holds all other men in a state of dependence on his lumières, and forces them to pay homage to the unique superiority of his genius! All those distinctions founded merely on the accident of birth, those great names that flatter the pride of common men, and dazzle even the learned, become useless supports in a profession whose virtue creates its nobility, and in which men are esteemed not be what their fathers have done, but by what they themselves have done.... Merit... is the only good that can never be bought, and the public, always free in its suffrage, never sells glory – it gives it. It is not an obligatory tribute paid to Fortune out of propriety or necessity: it is a voluntary homage, a natural deference that men show toward virtue.... All your days are marked by the duties you perform for society. All your occupations are exercises in rectitude and integrity, justice and religion. The Fatherland profits from the fruit of your repose. The Public, aware of the value of your time, dispenses you from the duties it requires of other men....¹

In the summer of 1648 the people of Bordeaux and its Parlement, the most powerful political institution in the province, took their first steps down a long road toward rebellion against the French crown. The decision to revolt was based on a number of factors and launched a difficult period in the court's history. We should ask, however, how it is possible that royal officials who owed their power and status to the king could

¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, trans. Laurretta C. Clough (Stanford, 1996), p. 381. This quote comes from a famous speech Chancellor d'Aguesseau gave in 1693 on the "independence of the avocat."

justify opposition and rebellion against that authority. This would seem self-defeating and counterproductive, and to solve this apparent contradiction we need to look closer at the hierarchical nature of Old Regime society. The Bordeaux Parlement, like the other sovereign courts of France, occupied a unique economic, social, cultural, and political position in the kingdom, a position that had evolved over centuries of interaction with its local community and the crown in Paris. On the eve of the Fronde these relationships were suffering the strains of more than a decade of war and hardship. The country's involvement in the wars of Louis XIV would further alter this delicate web of associations. The economic demands of these conflicts were felt to a greater or lesser extent across the spectrum of French society, including the *parlementaires* who were subject to manipulations of their venal offices. The cumulative effect of these pressures resulted in subtle changes to the *parlementaires*' perceptions of their community and the crown they represented in Paris.

In order to understand the magistrates' place in the social, cultural, and political world they inhabited, we will examine the attitudes and behavior of the Bordeaux *parlementaires* from the Fronde to the end of Louis XIV's reign. In examining these issues over time and taking a provincial perspective on questions of economic and political power in the Old Regime, this project places itself in the tradition of earlier studies that have examined the practice of royal absolutism outside of Paris. The focus of this project, however, will be the relationship between the mental and physical worlds of the *parlementaires* – how they perceived themselves and the world around them and how these perceptions influenced their actions. How did they understand their rights and responsibilities and what can this tell us about the Parlement's behavior? In this context,

it is essential that we scrutinize the relationship between the *parlementaires* and both the elite in Paris and the community in which they served.

Today's French state is highly centralized and bureaucratic and the result of decades, or even centuries, of incremental growth. As many contemporary observers have noticed, more is expected of the state in France than in other western countries and the bureaucrats themselves often resemble a closed caste born of the country's elite *Grandes Écoles*. The French accept the power and invasiveness of the state because they view its mission as universal and positive, and they are convinced of their own influence within the political processes. Given the rapid growth of the monarchy's power during the seventeenth century, many have looked to Louis XIV's reign to find the origins of this entrenched bureaucracy. While the early twentieth-century historian Ernest Lavisse located this growth in the personality of Louis XIV, whom he credited as the architect of French absolutism, others have noted changes in the bureaucracy itself. According to the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, we can trace the heritage of the famed technocrats of modern France back to the robe nobility of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As he argued, "the noblesse de robe, of which contemporary technocrats are the structural heirs (and sometimes the descendants), is a body that created itself by creating the state, a body that, in order to build itself, had to build the state, that is, among other things, an entire political philosophy of 'public service' as service to the state, or to the 'public' – and not simply to the king, as with the former nobility – and of this service as a 'disinterested' activity, directed toward a universal end."² Bourdieu continues, "in struggling for the recognition of their *corps*, which they are spontaneously led to see as universal, parliamentarians, from the sixteenth-century jurists who laid the foundations of modern

² Bourdieu, p. 379.

political philosophy to those who, throughout the eighteenth century, developed a number of notions that would lead to the French Revolution, by way of the Girondins, made a critical contribution to the construction of the official perception of public service as disinterested devotion to the general interest.”³ For Bourdieu, the *parlementaires* of Louis XIV’s time were not simply multiplying in number; they were constructing a new conception of their role in society. They were, along with other members of the growing bureaucracy, beginning to view their responsibilities differently; instead of conceiving of their authority in monarchical terms, the *parlementaires* were articulating a broader, independent basis for their actions. This process involved a “collective conversion of minds and a full-scale inventive effort located in the realm of perceptions no less than in organization.”⁴ The disinterested nature of this new conception of *robin* authority provided the basis for its popular acceptance and the justification for the growth and expansion of the magistracy.

Writing on the *parlementaires* of Paris during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Françoise Autrand has argued in favor of conception of robe noble public service and its importance to the modern French bureaucracy. According to Autrand,

originating in chivalrous families or sons of those raised to the peerage but all men of law rather than men of war, the parliamentarians formed a new nobility. But are we justified in speaking of a new nobility because members of the Parlement wielded the pen rather than the sword, wore lined hoods rather than helmets and, in place of armor, put on the royal red coat? Are we justified in completely assimilating nobility and knighthood? In fact, from its very origins, nobility contains a notion that makes it possible for it to include within its ranks the parliamentary *corps*: the idea of public service. Whether old or new, noblemen ‘faithfully and constantly serve’ the king, carrying out ‘the service that noblemen must perform for him and for the public good.’ Nowhere outside of the Parlement, especially since the early part of the fifteenth century, was this

³ Bourdieu, *The State Nobility*, pg. 379.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 380.

aspect of nobility more fully emphasized. ‘To live nobly’ was ‘to serve the king’, ‘in his wars’ or otherwise. If public service is the hereditary vocation of the nobility, service to the state is the soul of the parliamentary body.

By this interpretation, service to the state and the ideal of public service were the foundations of modern notions of the state and its function in society. As Autrand goes on to say, “the birth of the first great *corps* of the State is not without links to the past and future.... Forerunners to [modern] servants of the State and creators of state service, they [the *parlementaires*] build the foundations on which the State has forever been built.”⁵ Although Autrand studied the *parlementaires* of Paris in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, one would expect to find an even more developed commitment to public service and the public good in the centuries to come.

On the surface, this interpretation seems to offer valuable insights into the robe nobility’s growing importance throughout the early modern period, but it also makes claims about the *mentalité* of the *parlementaires* that deserve to be evaluated. Were the *parlementaires* evolving from a self-interested, closed caste of hierarchically-minded royal officials into a universal bureaucracy with a new, civic oriented conception of the state? Was revolt and opposition by the magistrates a civic activity in defense of local communities beset by royal demands, or were the magistrates motivated by an alternative conception of their rights and responsibilities?

While Roland Mousnier might refute Bourdieu’s conclusions about the ultimate significance of these changes, he has argued in favor of a similar conception of the robe nobility’s civic function. In his writings on the Fronde, Roland Mousnier maintained that seigneurs (and this would include most *parlementaires*) often defended their peasants

⁵ Françoise Autrand, *Naissance d’un Grand Corps de L’Etat: Les gens du Parlement de Paris, 1345-1454* (Paris, 1881), p. 267.

from higher royal taxes, since higher levies made it more difficult for the peasantry to pay their seigneurial dues. According to Mousnier, “inhabitants regarded the province as their ‘fatherland’ and the members of the provincial estates as their protectors and the ‘fathers of the country.’” As he continues,

all of these magistrates (sovereign magistrates) had the same conception of their duties: they owed the king fidelity, that is to say, obedience. But they also owed respect to the dignity of their offices, that is to say, respect for justice, equity, moral and positive laws, and for a kind of constitutional balance between the king and his subjects. Thus they owed the people in their jurisdictions protection against the absolute power of the king. These last two obligations often caused them to delay the execution of royal orders which did not seem to them to meet the conditions of equity and justice and to request new ones. They also felt obliged to respect legal forms, which constituted protection for the king’s subjects.⁶

When royal edicts arrived in the provinces, it was the duty of the *parlementaires* and other local magistrates to evaluate their impact on the welfare of the community and to resist if they were harmful to the city or province. According to Mousnier, the fiscal and political demands of the crown led to provincial revolts that cut vertically through the hierarchy of society and united divergent social groups. To be sure, Mousnier acknowledges that the crown threatened the material interests and social influence of the *parlementaires*, but open rebellion was only possible when broader issues of community welfare were at stake.

Like Mousnier, Yves-Marie Bercé has maintained that provincial revolts should be understood as a broad-based reaction to new fiscal and political pressures coming from the monarchy in the seventeenth century. According to Bercé, these revolts generated opposition that linked elites and peasants alike in a common struggle against the king. In this reading of the revolts, deep emotional and physical bonds connected

⁶ Roland Mousnier, “The Fronde” in *Preconditions of Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Robert Forster and Jack P. Greene (Baltimore, 1970), pp. 142-149. Mousnier was Yves-Marie Bercé’s mentor.

community members to a collective sense of their own destiny, and these attachments were more important than the class interests or social barriers that divided them. The judicial elite of the parlements and other courts often acted as a buffer or obstacle to the fiscal and political demands of the crown and their efforts slowed the growth of the absolutist state.⁷

William Beik (who studied many of these same revolts) has aptly demonstrated, however, that class and corporate interests often influenced the actions of the provincial elite, and social solidarity could be elusive in a society that was predicated on a strict hierarchy. According to Beik, rioting crowds in early modern France can be thought of as participating “in a dialogue about the management of their city,” and their revolts were a way of vocalizing their dissatisfaction.⁸ Implicit in the act of rebellion was a critique of the community’s purported leaders who had failed to provide minimum standards of decency or to oppose royal burdens that were seen as especially onerous. Thus, popular revolts were not reflexive reactions against outsiders, but an “assertion of a set of values about acceptable government behavior.”⁹ According to Beik, popular and *parlementaires* agitation often coincided because both groups were responding to similar circumstances

⁷ Yves-Marie Bercé, *Histoire des Croquants: étude des soulèvements populaires au XVIIe siècle dans le sud-ouest de la France* 2 vols. (Geneva, 1974); *History of Peasant Revolts: the Social Origins of Rebellion in Early Modern France*, tr. Amanda Whitmore. (Ithaca, 1990); see also Jonathan Dewald, “Magistracy and Political Opposition At Rouen: A Social Context,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 5 (1975), 66-78. Dewald makes a similar argument about the *parlementaires* of Rouen from the religious wars forward. According to Dewald, “from the 1580s on, the court increasingly became instead a center of “country” opposition, and its role tended to become that of representing the province to the crown.” This opposition was sparked by the fiscal demands of the absolutist monarchy, and it led the magistrates to increasingly “see their offices as existing independently of service to the crown or state.” This independence from the king “did not encourage discontent, but it provided a political structure within which the magistrates could loudly, even violently, express their discontents. It substantially muted the paradox of a revolt of royal servants.” While it is clear that parliamentary opposition was an important feature of Old Regime political life, we will want to examine more closely how the *parlementaires* understood that opposition and its goals. pp. 76-8.

⁸ William Beik, *Urban protest in seventeenth-century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Oxford, 1997), p. 51.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

(i.e. increasing fiscal and political pressure from the monarchy), but there was no intrinsic sympathies uniting the two. The *parlementaires* owed their wealth and privilege to a social hierarchy that was closely connected to the fortunes of the monarchy, and they were not eager to foment popular unrest that could destabilize that hierarchy.¹⁰

Both Mousnier and Bercé evoke a powerful sense of community in their interpretations of seventeenth-century society, and it is clear that the *parlementaires* were intimately connected to the social, cultural, and economic life of the city and surrounding countryside. Beyond their judicial responsibilities, most magistrates owned vast estates that were at the center of the local economy. They employed thousands of peasants and the goods they produced formed the basis of Bordeaux's vibrant and profitable trade. The meaning of community was certainly more complicated than these historians have acknowledged, however, and it was clearly influenced by issues such as class and social status.¹¹ The parlements were royal courts whose authority came directly from the king, and it was their responsibility to ensure that the king's will was executed throughout France. It was also their duty to suppress any popular opposition that might arise in the process. The framework constructed by Bercé and Mousnier does not provide a means for understanding conflict within the community, which was evident especially in moments of unrest such as the Fronde. When revolts broke out, social distinctions and

¹⁰ William H. Beik, "Magistrates and Popular Uprisings in France before the Fronde: The Case of Toulouse," *Journal of Modern History* 46 (December, 1974), pp. 601-606. This article addresses the relationship between the Parlement, crown and community, which is one of the central issues that will be examined in this study, and one of the objectives will be to test Beik's findings through the detailed study of another parlement.

¹¹ William Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux and the End of the Old Regime, 1771-1790* (London, 1974). Doyle's study of the Parlement in the eighteenth century provides a strong account of the *parlementaires'* activities as landowners. As Doyle demonstrates, much of the wealth of the *parlementaires* was invested in the surrounding countryside, and their estates supplied much of the wine that was exported from Bordeaux. Indeed, the court's annual recess was always scheduled for September and October so that magistrates could return to their estates to oversee the grape harvest.

divergent agendas often led to friction and violence as various segments of society attempted to remedy their own perceived injustices. Rather than trying to make the actions of the sovereign magistrates conform to some fixed image of Old Regime society, this study seeks to explain the contradiction and ambiguity that often typified the thinking and behavior of the *parlementaires*.

While Mousnier and Bercé might dispute whether Louis XIV's monarchy represented a drift toward the modern bureaucracy, they share a similar conception of the dynamics at work in seventeenth-century society. Whether we call it provincialism or devotion to the general interest, both Mousnier and Bourdieu have argued that the *parlementaires* of the seventeenth century articulated a separate conception of their power and authority that stood apart from the monarchy's. For Mousnier, the robe nobility slowed the growth of the central state while Bourdieu saw them as the ultimate architects of a new public power. They point the *parlementaires* in different directions regarding the evolution of the state, but they both ground the authority of the magistrates in a civic context, and thus, we should understand provincial revolt as moral judgment against the offending parties.

Bourdieu's contention that the seventeenth-century *parlementaires* provided the intellectual and material foundation for the modern French state is provocative and intriguing, and it points us toward a central question about the *parlementaires'* *mentalité*. Were the *parlementaires* of the seventeenth century forerunners to future generations of civic-minded jurists, or did they conceive of their role in society in more traditional ways? How do we account for the relatively minor changes that were made to the provincial structures of political power? If the *parlementaires* were increasingly imbued

with modern conceptions of public service, how do we make sense of their evident ambivalence to the needs of their fellow citizens in times of distress?

In order to understand how the *parlementaires* viewed the world around them we need to probe the rights and responsibilities they accepted and defended. Firstly, the *parlementaires* occupied an elevated and privileged position in Bordelais society and they had a developed sense of their own interests. All of the decisions taken by the magistrates either explicitly or implicitly took account of these interests in an effort to protect or augment their personal and corporate social, political, and economic position. The *parlementaires*, however, were deeply embedded in Bordelais society and their fellow citizens often expected the court to defend their interests, which were consistently material in nature, against the crown and in times of distress. For their part, the *parlementaires* acknowledged their leadership responsibilities and often took the initiative when the circumstances demanded. Finally, the *parlementaires* represented the king's justice in Guyenne and their authority came directly from the crown. Despite their occasional confrontations with the monarchy, the *parlementaires* recognized that they were largely dependent on the crown for their political and judicial authority, and they needed to carefully weigh any attack on the crown against the potential damage that would be done to their own status. The Parlement, crown, and community all placed demands on each other, and it was in the negotiation of these demands that the significance of the court's actions can be understood.

The picture that emerges is that of a group of jurists whose loyalties were not one dimensional or unchanging and were almost always dependent on circumstances. At certain moments the *parlementaires* were seen by the people of Bordeaux as protectors of

provincial liberties, while at other times they were the target of popular violence and anger. These divergent attitudes did not represent conflicting views of the *parlementaires* but specific reactions to the circumstances faced by the Parlement and city. How this worked in practice was especially evident during the Fronde when the Parlement was initially a catalyst for the city's revolt but then became a target of popular anger as the situation deteriorated and the *parlementaires* reconciled themselves with the regency. The *parlementaires* did recognize certain obligations to the people of Bordeaux, and they frequently found themselves in conflict with other municipal authorities over responsibility for the city's commerce, health, and general policing. These struggles, however, reflected the confused nature of municipal political power in the Old Regime more than any deeply felt concern for the community itself. As the following chapters will show, the *parlementaires* were deeply ambivalent about their ties to the Bordelais, and this ambivalence manifested itself in moments of civil unrest and dislocation. The creation of vertical lines of provincial revolt represented a momentary convergence of interests and not deep cultural bonds built through centuries of custom and practice.

Certain factors influenced how the *parlementaires* approached their varied, sometimes competing interests. Perhaps most importantly, the court's internal makeup and politics often dictated its direction when confronted with difficult decisions or sudden crises. Thus, the quality and loyalty of the Parlement's leadership, along with the nature of its internal divisions, often influenced how the court reacted to demands placed on it either from the population below or from the crown above. As studies by Sharon Kettering and others have illustrated, internal divisions and rivalries within a parlement made it difficult for the court to unite behind a specific policy or decision, and this made

revolt by more aggressive and energetic *parlementaires* possible.¹² Seventeenth-century politics were not guided by universal ideals but represented a deeply personal process in which the agents themselves played a leading role. This study confirms the relevance of Kettering's findings for Bordeaux, but it proposes to take a broader look at the motivations of the *parlementaires* as they struggled to navigate challenges that were not personal in nature.

When analyzing *parlementaire* perceptions and actions, it is clear that some moments lend themselves more readily than others to this sort of analysis. For example, moments of crisis in Bordeaux often led to an open dialogue between the Parlement, crown, and city about what each expected of the others. In these cases, it is relatively easy to explain the magistrates' motivations and decisions in light of the circumstances they confronted. In moments of relative peace, however, this dialogue was rarely explicit and we often have only fragments of the overall picture.

There exists a gap between the many studies of Louis XIV's early reign when he was at the height of his power and the work of eighteenth-century historians, and it will be important to try and reconcile these often divergent interpretations of the *parlementaires*. In the last thirty years scholars of absolutism have articulated a compelling portrait of Louis's authority as conciliatory and reciprocal in its relationship to provincial elites. In this view, the French monarchy relied on the provincial elite to govern a country that was too large and diversified to be administered by direct means, and in return the provincial elites made political and economic gains as resources were channeled back to them by the crown. While compelling, much of this scholarship focuses on the first half of Louis's reign and leaves the reader to speculate on the later

¹² Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York, 1986)

period. It is true that Louis set the tone for his reign in these early decades and elements of his political stagecraft remained constant throughout, but the domestic and international situations were starkly different. The relatively short and successful wars of the early years were replaced by long and costly conflicts in the second half, while the court itself became increasingly rigid in its rituals and form following the move to Versailles. The demands placed on everyone in the country, including the *parlementaires*, grew as France struggled against the continent-wide coalitions it faced in the final two conflicts of Louis's reign. Did these changes affect the *parlementaires'* perceptions of their role in the social and political process?

By contrast, today's eighteenth-century historians have made a persuasive case for the importance of parliamentary opposition in the ultimate collapse of the Bourbon monarchy. Whether the issue was taxes, religion, politics, or criminal trials, the writings of the *parlementaires* helped frame the growing discourse around these issues, and much of this language viewed the monarchy as despotic and appealed to a new public conception of authority. Did the *parlementaires* come to hold an alternative view of themselves and the monarchy in the eighteenth century, or can this apparent contradiction in their behavior be approached another way?

Examining the unique history of the Parlement of Bordeaux during the reign of Louis XIV will help answer these questions, and the arguments in this dissertation are intended to explain the often contradictory behavior of these powerful magistrates. This study will begin with an examination of the Fronde and its origins, since few events illustrate more vividly *parlementaire* perceptions of seventeenth-century social and political life. The Fronde, of course, began when Louis XIV was still a minor in 1648

and the government was in the hands of his mother and her close advisor, Cardinal Mazarin. It was, as most histories of the period point out, a traumatic and formative time for the young king. Like other sovereign courts at the time, the Parlement of Bordeaux ran into conflict with the monarchy as the fiscal demands of the Thirty Years' War mounted in the 1630s and 1640s, and it was one of four parlements to lead the revolt against Mazarin and the regency during the Fronde.¹³ The city itself was rife with anger and distrust toward Mazarin's client and governor of the province, the duc d'Épernon, and followed the Parlement into revolt.

During the initial phases of the Fronde, the Parlement was instrumental in leading the city against the governor and king. Beyond its financial motives, the court was eager to curb the powers of other provincial political authorities such as the intendant, governor, and Cour des Aides. The Parlement eventually turned the city into a center of the princely Fronde when it opened the city's gates to the Prince of Condé and his followers. The decision was made under popular pressure from Condé's supporters in Bordeaux and it proved fatal for the Parlement's command of the situation. The court then fled the city following the violence of the Ormée and only returned in December 1654, long after the crown had reestablished peace in Bordeaux.¹⁴ The Ormée created its own governing institutions in opposition to the perceived inequities of corporate bodies like the Parlement, and the court became a target of popular aggression and anger. It will

¹³ Nicholas Buck Fessenden, "Épernon and Guyenne: Provincial Politics under Louis XIII," diss., Columbia University, 1972, 34. The most immediate trigger for the parliamentary Fronde was the monarchy's refusal to renew the paulette, which made judicial offices inheritable property. When the crown finally agreed to renew the paulette it was on condition that all officers agree to relinquish up to four years of their wages. Led by the sovereign courts of Paris, this manipulation of the paulette was rejected and a general call for fiscal and political reform was articulated by the courts. The other three parlements to revolt were Paris, Rouen, and Aix

¹⁴ C. B. F. Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire du Parlement de Bordeaux depuis sa création jusqu'à sa suppression (1451-1790)* (Bordeaux, 1877), vol. 2, p. 190.

be important to understand why and how this transformation in attitudes came about, and I will argue that this shift in public opinion was more apparent than real. The Parlement did not transform from the peoples' champion into an emblem of the Old Regime's corrupt social and judicial system in course of the revolt: rather, the Parlement and city no longer understood their interests as being served by the other and both views were inherent in their relationship. The *parlementaires* were horrified by the radical proposals of the Ormée, and the Ormée was intolerant of any institution that did not embrace their broader conception of social and political justice.

This history has attracted considerable scholarly attention because of the city and court's importance in this period of upheaval. Much of this work has confined itself to analyzing Bordeaux's experiences in the larger context of the Parisian Fronde or some other aspect of the nature of early modern revolt. This study, however, is more narrowly focused on the thoughts, actions, and experiences of one group of magistrates and it seeks to explain how these individuals understood their attack on the very source of their authority. In addition to illuminating the *parlementaires'* view of royal privilege and power, the Fronde is also useful in exploring their relationship to their fellow citizens, and here the revolt vividly illustrated one of the central themes of this study – namely that the *parlementaires* maintained a profound ambivalence toward the concerns of the Bordelais, and they were deeply committed to the traditional social and political structures that Louis XIV's brand of absolutism did so much to both consolidate and undermine. Far from Bourdieu's commitment to the "public interest" or Mousnier's notions of provincial solidarity, the *parlementaires* were driven by a determination to protect their own power and authority within a recognized and accepted hierarchy.

Finally, the court's experiences in the Fronde also help explain its subsequent behavior following the consolidation of the Louis XIV's authority in the 1660s.

Chapter five will focus on the revolt of 1675 and the prolonged exile of the Parlement. Almost two decades after the conclusion of the Fronde, the Parlement of Bordeaux again fell from the king's graces when it was unable to suppress a popular tax revolt that erupted in the city. This time the court did not lead or even support the revolt, it simply failed to respond with sufficient force to the violence of the Bordelais. Out of concern for its own well-being the Parlement decided to rescind the offending taxes, and this led Louis XIV to exile the court for a period of fifteen years following the revolt's conclusion. The 1675 revolt was an unmitigated catastrophe for the Parlement and it shaped in many ways the court's history through to the end of Louis's reign over forty years later.

The events of the Fronde and 1675 underscore the delicate balance of power that existed in Bordeaux between the Parlement, community, and crown. Together these groups formed part of the structure of Old Regime political and social life, but the nature of their relationship was fluid, evolving, and often contingent upon complicated compromises and, or, the use of physical force. Just as in the Fronde, the ambivalent ties connecting the *parlementaires* and Bordelais were evident in both the authorities' coordinated attempts to suppress the revolt and the peoples' evident distrust of the city's leaders. Whatever momentary, superficial collaboration had been possible between the *parlementaires* and Bordelais during the Fronde was clearly not in evidence during the events of 1675.

Finally, this project will conclude with an analysis of the financial relationship between the *parlementaires* and crown in the final years of Louis's reign. The Parlement of Bordeaux's return from exile in 1690 proved expensive and damaging. In exchange for the right to return to the city, the court was forced to approve the creation of several new offices, including one president and six councillors. These new offices proved difficult to sell, and they marked the beginning of a serious decline in office prices in the Parlement.¹⁵ The city itself was also asked to pay for the return of its sovereign courts since it was believed that the city would also benefit. The rising cost of venality and its impact on the Parlement will serve as the focus of chapter six. According to John Hurt, the crown used various methods including *augmentation des gages* and office creations to attack the wealth of the *parlementaires* in the last decades of Louis's reign. While it is clear that these actions negatively affected office holders, we should ask certain questions about their overall impact on the *parlementaires*' wealth during this time. Were these extractions financially crippling as Hurt argued or were they accepted as simply part of the costs of office holding during wartime? My research indicates that Louis's manipulations of venality in the early eighteenth century were real and serious, but they were also based on circumstances that did not persist beyond his reign. Moreover, they were not as damaging to the economic positions of the Bordelais *parlementaires* as other factors such as poor harvests and disruptions to the city's trade networks.

This dissertation describes a critical period in the history of the Bordeaux Parlement and it points us toward a fuller understanding of these complex and powerful men. In order to explain how these jurists could fulfill such divergent, often conflicting

¹⁵ Boscheron des Portes, p. 217. Twelve of the fifteen years that the court was in exile were spent in the small town of La Réole and the remaining time was spent moving from town to town.

roles during the Old Regime, we need to explore the thoughts and attitudes that provided the basis for their actions. And once we come to a fuller appreciation of their own interior conceptions of their rights and responsibilities, we can begin to construct a model that accounts for the evident contradictions in their behavior without the teleological and ideological devices of Bourdieu and others. The *parlementaires* deserve to be understood as distinctive products of the world they inhabited and not as harbingers of our own. Finally, this model will also point us forward toward the eighteenth century and a fuller understanding of the motivations of the *parlementaires* as they faced down the monarchy.

Chapter One

The Parlement of Bordeaux and Municipal Politics

By the start of the seventeenth century Bordeaux was a city of about 40,000 people, making it one of the largest and most important in France. It was the political capital and trading center of the province of Guyenne, and it maintained a privileged status that dated back to British control of the city and region. Guyenne represented much of what is today Aquitaine and included nine current departments: Gironde, Dordogne, Lot, Aveyron, Lot-et-Garonne, Landes, Gers, Hautes-Pyrénées and Tarn-et-Garonne, and parts of two others, Haute-Garonne and Basse-Pyrénées. The region is divided by the Garonne River, which rises in the Spanish Pyrénées and is fed by the streams Neste, Salat, and Ariège and the rivers Lot and Tarn beyond Toulouse. Both the Garonne and Dordogne flow westward into the Gironde estuary and the rivers and their tributaries were the primary means of trade in the seventeenth century both within the region and beyond. Over millions of years, glacial melt and the retreat of the Garonne, Gironde, and Dordogne have left the region with a limestone soil made up of gravel, sandy stone, and clay, which along with a temperate climate has created ideal conditions for wine production. Wine along with grain produced in the upper Garonne valley (then called the *haut-pays*) represented much of the region's export crops in the seventeenth century.¹

¹ Fessenden, p. 27.

Political, social, and economic power was divided within the city among several governing bodies with the Parlement standing at the apex. The provincial parlements filled a unique political, social, and cultural role in early modern France, straddling a space between the crown and communities in which they operated. Their power and authority derived from their association with the king, but they were provincial institutions that were often disconnected from royal affairs in Paris. Moreover, proximity to their local communities made it difficult for magistrates to separate themselves from regional concerns and issues. The *parlementaires* were often torn between their personal interests and their loyalties to the crown and the community in which they lived and worked. No comparable political institution in the Old Regime stood astride the boundary between royal authority and local power in the same manner as the sovereign courts, and these relationships affected how magistrates understood themselves and their role in society.

The Parlement of Bordeaux was formed in 1462 following the turmoil of the Hundred Years' War, and its creation was part of an effort to tie this once foreign province more closely to Paris. It was originally composed of only one President and seven councillors, but it grew to a total of one hundred and seventeen offices on the eve of the French Revolution. Despite contestations with the Parlement of Grenoble over the issue, it is clear Bordeaux was in fact the third oldest parlement behind Paris and Toulouse. It was the final court of appeal for Guyenne, Angoumois, Saintonge, Périgord, Labourd, Bazadais, Landes, Gascony, Angenais, and Limousin in all civil and criminal

matters, and its jurisdiction covered nearly two million people, the second largest in France.²

The Bordeaux Parlement was divided into several chambers with each one serving a specific function. Sitting atop the court's hierarchy was the *Grande Chambre*, which included the most senior magistrates and dealt with the court's most pressing business. Promotion to the *Grande Chambre* came only after long years of service in the lower chambers, which often led to a generational divide that could have political implications. The *Chambre de la Tournelle* decided all criminal cases that came to the court and members of this chamber were rotated every year. The largest group of magistrates staffed the court's two *Chambres des Enquêtes*, which heard all civil cases that were presented to the court in written form. Finally, there was a *Chambres des Requêtes* that judged all civil cases involving a letter of *committimus*, which allowed the holder to have his case heard in the first instance by the Parlement.³

Members of the court were divided by rank and function. The First President was head of the court and responsible for its day-to-day operations. Unlike the other offices, the First President's office was not venal and the individual was chosen directly by the crown. Below him were the *présidents à mortier* (presidents of the *mortier* or cap because of the distinctive caps they wore in the beginning) who sat in the *Grande Chambre*. Next there were two presidents of the *Requêtes* and *Enquêtes* who presided over their respective chambers and ensured the smooth flow of cases through the court. There were three *gens du roi*, or king's men, including one *procureur général* and two *avocats généraux*, who were responsible for carrying out the crown's business in the

² Rebecca Kingston, *Montesquieu and the Parlement of Bordeaux* (Genève, 1996), p. 59.

³ J. H. Shennan, *The Parlement of Paris* (Ithaca, 1968), pp. 16-41.

court. The remaining members were simple councillors who, based on seniority, served in one of the court's chambers. Beyond the king's men and the First President, offices in the parlements were venal and could be bought, sold, or willed to other individuals. Based on the purchase price of the office, the crown paid gages, or an annual salary to the *parlementaires*, who were also allowed to levy fees on litigants before the court. Each member of the Parlement had rights and responsibilities that were determined by his place in the hierarchy of the court and these differences often served to divide the court in times of crisis. The court was not, as some have argued, a place of nascent egalitarianism whose internal structures pointed the way toward greater democratic freedoms and political access.⁴

The *parlementaires* were among the richest, most powerful people in Bordeaux, and many achieved their positions after generations of ancestors gradually climbed the social ladder. Their fortunes often fluctuated with the times, but it was not uncommon for a councillor to be worth several hundred thousand livres, while a president or First President could be worth much more.⁵

While there are no studies of the geographic origins of the Bordeaux *parlementaires*, considerable anecdotal evidence indicates that most of the magistrates were born and raised in the province. The First President was an exception to this rule because he was selected by the crown and was occasionally brought in from outside the region. Many offices were handed down from father to son, or father-in-law to son-in-law thus creating families with long traditions of service dating back centuries in some cases. It was also common for *parlementaires* families to intermarry, thus further

⁴ See David Bien, "Offices, Corps, and a System of State Credit: The Uses of Privilege under the Ancien Regime" in *The Political Culture of the Old Regime*, ed. Keith M. Baker (Oxford, 1987), 89-113.

⁵ Robert Boutruche, ed. *Bordeaux de 1453 a 1715* (Bordeaux, 1966), pp. 486-490.

consolidating their power and prestige.⁶ *Parlementaire* offices were theoretically limited to people at least 25 years old with a law degree, but the nature of venality made these requirements meaningless. When it needed money, the crown often sold special dispensations to prospective office holders who did not meet one or more of the requirements, and only occasionally were limitations placed on the deliberative and ceremonial functions of the new magistrate. The most common path of ascent was through the Jurade and the lower courts in Bordeaux and Guyenne, and many of the great *parlementaire* families of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries descended from members of the bourgeoisie and Jurade in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It was still possible for someone with ambition to make significant social and political advancement in the seventeenth century, and it is a mistake to see the Parlement as a closed caste of political insiders. Careful management of a family's resources and reputation, along with a few strategic marriages, continued to make office holding in the Parlement a realistic possibility for anyone with the necessary resources, skill, and patience.

The *parlementaires* were also among the largest, most significant landowners in Guyenne and their wealth was closely tied to Bordeaux's wine trade. As we learn from journals like the one kept by the eighteenth century jurist Savignac, revenue from these estates was a cornerstone of the *parlementaires*' wealth, often far exceeding revenues from their offices. The *parlementaires* had a natural connection to the people of Bordeaux because of their relationship to the wine trade. Thanks to its trade, taxes, and employment, wine was an important source of revenue for the city, and many people worked either part-time in the fields during the harvest or in other aspects of the

⁶ Boutruche, p. 485.

production process. Magistrates were closely tied to the surrounding countryside and most split their time between their country chateaux and city townhomes. Their annual recess coincided with the wine harvest every year so that they could oversee this critical process, and many *parlementaires* used their country homes as an escape from the pressures of life and work in the city.⁷

Virtually all members of the Parlement maintained a residence in the city and many of these were concentrated in the Chapeau Rouge neighborhood to the north and west of the Palais, in the parishes of Saint-Christoly and Saint-Éloi.⁸ The *parlementaires* were intimately connected to their local neighborhoods and were active in their parishes. Like most in the seventeenth century, magistrates took their faith and their Christian obligations seriously, often leaving considerable portions of their estates to the city's many churches in the hope of salvation. Their hotels tended to be large residences staffed by many servants and carefully decorated and maintained in an effort to project the symbolic power and wealth of their occupants.⁹

The Parlement also filled a variety of official and unofficial functions within Bordeaux distinct from its royal responsibilities. Some of its official duties included assisting in the election of the new Jurade each year as well as monitoring municipal meetings of the Thirty and One Hundred Thirty. The Thirty and One Hundred Thirty were meetings of the city's bourgeoisie and other authorities that were organized to address specific problems during times of crisis or difficulty. The Parlement also helped set the amount for one of the most important sources of revenue for the city, the *piéd*

⁷ Michel Figeac and Caroline Le Mao, "Le Parlement de Bordeaux et la cite, de la Fronde à la veille de la Révolution," in Olivier Chaline and Yves Sassier (eds.), *Les Parlements et Lavie de la Cité (XVI-XVIII siècle)* (Rouen, 2004), p. 251.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 265-267.

fourché, which the Jurade then managed. The *piéd fourché* (literally meaning forked foot or hove) was a tax on all livestock brought into the city for sale, and the tax was generally farmed out every year in exchange for a cash payment to the city's coffers.

In times of unrest the Parlement could take on a variety of governing or police functions that were normally filled by other governing bodies. As the most important court in the province, the people of the city often looked to the Parlement for leadership in times of crisis. These responsibilities could include policing the grain trade, ensuring the city's food supply, managing outbreaks of the plague, or, as in the case of the Fronde, directing its defenses. In difficult times, it was not uncommon for the Bordelais to direct their grievances to the Palais and demand action by the Parlement. When these concerns dealt with local matters the Parlement often took the lead, but when they concerned royal policy it had to carefully weigh its actions, since any conflict with the crown was likely to provoke retaliation against either the city, Parlement, or both.

The Parlement occupied a key place in the life of the city. According to the lawyer Le Blanc, the Parlement and the litigants who came to plead their cases were responsible for supporting as many as 10,000 people in the city (meaning one fourth of the city was dependant on the court). This was certainly an exaggeration but it is clear an important segment of Bordelais society lived in the shadow of the high court. In addition to the *parlementaires*, there were a large number of officers who worked in the Parlement, including bailiffs, secretaries, and fee collectors. Others, such as lawyers, notaries, and prosecutors, facilitated the judicial process and often rose to become *parlementaires* themselves. Finally, there were the servants and lackeys of the *parlementaires* who could themselves be numerous depending on the size and wealth of

the magistrate. All of these individuals had to housed, fed, and supplied in the city, which generated business for shops, hotels, and venders. The fact that the city was willing to pay 400,000 livres to the crown for the return of the Parlement in 1690 indicates that the court had significant economic, political, and symbolic value to the people of Bordeaux.¹⁰

The Parlement and the *sénéchaussée* both worked out of the palais de l'Ombrière, which was already old, rundown, and inadequate for the needs of the two courts by the seventeenth century. The palais had been the home of the Parlement from the time it was created in 146, and was occupied by the ducs of Guyenne prior to that time.¹¹ Its name came from a large bank of trees that shaded the avenue on which it was located. The palais's condition in the late seventeenth century forced the Parlement to ask the crown for funds to repair the building, and it was eventually torn down in the eighteenth century. Much of the palais, including significant portions of the Parlement's archives, was destroyed in a fire in 1704, and it was only with help from the crown that the structure was rebuilt. The palais was located a short walk from the river in the middle of the old city, making it easily accessible from the different neighborhoods and monuments of the city.

As the most powerful members of Bordelais society, the *parlementaires* occupied an important role in the city's cultural life. On all of the Christian holidays there was typically a procession to the city cathedral, *St. André*, which was led by the *parlementaires* in their handsome red robes, and there were special pews at the cathedral reserved for the *parlementaires* that highlighted their privileged place in the community.

¹⁰ Boutruche, p. 292.

¹¹ Figeac and Le Mao, p. 254.

At the beginning of every new year's session the various *corps* (groups of merchants and artisans) of the city were required to present themselves to the leaders of the Parlement. New presidents and officers of the court were also greeted by the *corps* and were presented with gifts such as wine to honor their new post. And when the *parlementaires* traveled to other villages, towns, and cities in the province as they often did when sent on missions by the court, it was customary for the *jurats*, *maires*, *échevins*, and *corps* to all present themselves to the magistrates in a symbolic show of deference and in order to coordinate their efforts.¹² These acts and customs served to reify the hierarchy that dominated this society, and they reconfirmed the real and symbolic power of the *parlementaires* themselves.

The population of Bordeaux was divided between nobles, bourgeoisie, and the rest of the population. Most of the nobility of Guyenne maintained at least a modest residence in Bordeaux, and their primary political function was as members of the Jurade. As a group, the nobility was closely linked through marriage and business with the other elite of the city, and many noble families from the seventeenth century could be traced back to non-noble origins in the preceding centuries.¹³

The rest of the population was divided between the bourgeoisie and everyone else. It is difficult to determine with certainty the criteria needed to become a member of the bourgeois, but we know that many came by the title through birth. For candidates it was necessary to own a home in the city, have a certain income (how much is not clear), and have the support and agreement of the Jurade who provided the official title after the

¹² Du Vigier to Desmaretz, 27 August 1710: AN G7 143, fol. 395.

¹³ Robert Étienne, *Histoire de Bordeaux* (Toulouse, 2001), p. 135.

candidate took an oath.¹⁴ According to an *arrêt du conseil* from 1622 anyone who lived in Bordeaux for five years and was worth 1,500 livres could receive a *lettre de bourgeoisie*. Evidence shows that between 1622 and 1641 of the 404 individuals who became members of the bourgeois roughly 65% were merchants, lawyers, and tax collectors, but we do not have information on the existing bourgeoisie.¹⁵ Only the bourgeoisie were allowed to take part in the city's management and they enjoyed certain privileges such as the right to export without paying tax.

It was the responsibility of the bourgeoisie to serve in the militia and defend the city when called to do so by the Jurade or Parlement. The militia was led by twenty-eight militia captains and comprised of about 2,000 bourgeois, and it was the bourgeois militia along with the Parlement that organized the city's defenses during the Fronde. Whether or not the bourgeois responded to the call to organize was often a factor in the severity and nature of revolts in the city, and fears for their safety often led many to stay in their homes when faced with violent crowds. An observer in 1420 estimated that of a population of 20,000 inhabitants a little over a quarter was bourgeois and a little less than three quarters were simple inhabitants.¹⁶ The bourgeoisie managed the city through their involvement in its political, social, and economic institutions, and they often infused the Parlement with new members and resources when offices became available.

Helping to police the city and its trade was a municipal governing council known as the Jurade. The Jurade and its powers were part of the historical privileges of the city that dated back to British control, and it shared its name with many other councils in

¹⁴ Étienne, p. 136.

¹⁵ Fessenden, pg. 37; Dast de Boisville, ed. *Inventaire sommaire des Registres de la Jurade (1520-1783)* (Bordeaux, 1896-1916), vol. 2, pp. 443-467.

¹⁶ Étienne, p. 136.

Aquitaine.¹⁷ Its power and privileges were closely linked to the city's bourgeoisie, which was represented in the Jurade and served the court through their duties in the militia. Until the middle of the sixteenth century the Jurade was comprised of 12 jurats who were simply recruited through a system of cooptation.¹⁸ Each jurat represented one of the twelve *quartiers* or neighborhoods of the city: la Rousselle, la porte Bégueyre, Saint-Éloi, Cayffernan, les Ayres, Dessous-le-mur, Saint-Project, Saint-Siméon, Saint-Pierre, la porte Médoque, Saint-Paul, Saint-Christoly.¹⁹ Every year a jurat would select two *prud'hommes* from among the bourgeoisie of his neighborhood and together they would select the new jurats. Candidates had to be members of the bourgeois and they had to be at least 25 years old and born in Bordeaux. The jurats were chosen from among the city's lawyers, nobles, and merchants, and an individual could only be reelected after an interval of five years out of office.²⁰

There were important changes made to the city government in the wake of a failed tax uprising in 1548 and these changes were still in effect during the reign of Louis XIV. First, the king no longer appointed the mayor of the city in perpetuity but made it a two year position elected by the jurats, although the choice still had to be approved by the king. The jurats were reduced from twelve to six, and the six members were made up of two nobles, two lawyers, and two bourgeois, while one from each group was replaced every year, meaning that no one served longer than two years.²¹ Elections were held on August 1 every year and each jurat named eight *prud'hommes* from his jurade and all six jurats then chose four *prud'hommes* from each set of eight. These thirty electors then

¹⁷ See Laurent Coste, *Messieurs de Bordeaux: Pouvoirs et hommes de pouvoirs à l'hôtel de ville (1548-1789)* (Bordeaux, 2006).

¹⁸ Boutruche, p. 296.

¹⁹ Étienne, p. 132.

²⁰ Boutruche, p. 296.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 306-7.

selected the three new jurats each year.²² The Parlement had the right to name two *commissaires* to oversee these elections every year, and the court frequently interjected itself into the process by issuing *arrêts* that regulated the procedures or disputed the outcomes. The governor was often able to exert influence on the Jurade by pressuring for the election of his own followers and clients, who could then be counted on to support his interests.²³ By the end of the seventeenth century, both the governor and Parlement saw their influence on the Jurade diminish as the power of the crown to shape local politics grew.

In the period before and during the Fronde, the Jurade had little independent authority of its own and instead fell under the influence of stronger authorities in the city such as the governor or Parlement, and both struggled to control the composition and direction of the Jurade during the Fronde. While the governor, the duc d'Épernon, managed to control the Jurade in the years before the Fronde, it was not long after the city revolted that the Parlement and Bordelais appointed their own supporters to the court. During the years of Louis's reign the Jurade gained greater independence at the same time that its power was undermined by new political actors like the intendant.

The Jurade was responsible for the city's defense (along with the militia) and finances, organized the *guet* or police patrol, guarded the city gates, and was the court of first instance for the city's criminal and civil litigation, including all violations of the city's communal ordinances. The Jurade set and policed the price of bread and grain, collected municipal taxes, and oversaw the city's guilds, taverns, and wine trade. The court also oversaw public health (especially important during outbreaks of the plague)

²² Fessenden, p. 32.

²³ Coste, *Messieurs de Bordeaux*, pp. 262-265.

and morality.²⁴ The Jurade was forced to share many of these responsibilities with the Parlement whenever the higher court felt inclined to interject itself into municipal affairs, a situation that often led to friction between the two. The Jurade's revenue came from the fees it levied on litigants, a tax of five sous on all heads of household, a tax on wine sold in the city's taverns, and various other levies on products that entered the city.²⁵ The jurats also selected the *clerc de ville* or secretary for the city, and *procureur-syndic*, both of whom held their positions for life. The secretary kept the city's correspondence and secret register, while the *procureur-syndic* was responsible for prosecuting the city's legal business. They also selected the *trésorier de ville*, normally a former jurat and someone intimately familiar with the city's rights and privileges, who was responsible for collecting the city's taxes. The position was held for a term of one year but it was possible to be re-nominated every year.²⁶

Along with the Parlement, it was the responsibility of the Jurade and bourgeois to help manage the city's primary institutions such as Saint-André's hospital, the university, and the college of Guyenne. Both courts selected members every year to help manage the finances of these institutions, which often included organizing fund raising activities and policing expenditures. These sorts of roles meant that the *parlementaires* were intimately connected to the everyday management and life of the city, and they were responsibilities that the judges jealously guarded. Particularly in times of trouble like the Fronde, the Parlement, usually at the request of the Jurade, was called on to help manage the city's trade and protect it from exploitation or threats to its supply.

²⁴ Fessenden, p. 33.

²⁵ Étienne, p. 132.

²⁶ Fessenden, p. 34.

When important municipal decisions had to be made the Jurade convoked the Assembly of Thirty *prud'hommes*, and when it was necessary to consult the broader community an assembly of One Hundred was convened that was joined to the Thirty. These were consultative bodies that were called to lend authority to important decisions that would affect the entire city. They were relatively commonplace in times of upheaval but were rarely called otherwise. These assemblies were often difficult to control and generally unproductive, but they could be leveraged in times of factional fighting to support one position over another. While limited to the bourgeois and other elite of the city, the Thirty and One Thirty represented a broader segment of Bordelais society and was generally considered to be more representative than the Parlement or Jurade alone.

In addition to the Jurade, Bordeaux was home to one of the oldest courts in the province, the *sénéchaussée* of Guyenne or Bordeaux. Appeals from this court were heard by the Parlement, and its jurisdiction included the regions of the Médoc, Buch, Born, Sauveterre-de-Guyenne, Libourne, Saint-Émilion, Saint-Macaire, and Cadillac. Its jurisdiction was eventually trimmed when the crown created a new *sénéchaussée* court of Libourne in 1639.²⁷

Starting in 1637 Bordeaux was also the residence of the *Cours des Aides* of Guyenne. The *Cour des Aides* was first established in November 1629 and was created to handle fiscal matters in the province. It was originally established in Agen, later transferred to Libourne, and finally took up residence in Bordeaux in 1637. The Parlement considered the *Cour des Aides* a threat to their offices and authority and immediately began to lobby for its suppression. There were almost constant disputes between these courts over jurisdiction in economic matters during the reign of Louis

²⁷ Boutruche, p. 284.

XIV, and these disputes often required intervention by the crown in order to reach a settlement. The creation and continued existence of the *Cour des Aides* was one of the lingering sources of friction between the crown and Parlement in the years leading up to the Fronde and its suppression was a primary demand of the Parlement during the unrest.

In addition to the city's governing bodies, one of the most important and powerful individuals in Bordeaux and Guyenne was the province's governor. Dating back to the sixteenth century, the governor was the king's primary representative in the province and the person most responsible for enforcing the king's will. His authority extended from Périgord to Lannes and eventually expanded to include La Rochelle and Saintonge. In addition to military authority throughout the province, the governor was responsible for an array of general administrative functions that were only loosely defined. This post was generally occupied by a great noble who often did not reside in the province and frequently delegated his authority to local officials or the lieutenant-governor. In the early seventeenth century this governorship was given to one of Henry III's favorites, Jean Louis de Nogaret de la Valette, who later became simply the duc d'Épernon. Épernon was a proud and difficult man whose time as governor was characterized by considerable friction between himself and many of the other provincial powers including the Parlement and archbishop of Bordeaux. Although Épernon and his son were eventually disgraced and removed from the governorship by Cardinal Richelieu, they were rehabilitated when Mazarin came to power in 1643.²⁸

All of these various institutions made Bordeaux the political capital of Guyenne and a focal point of political activity and conflict. There were almost constant disputes about jurisdiction and power among the competing courts and authorities of Bordeaux,

²⁸ Boutruche, p. 285.

and these disputes were exasperated during times of economic distress. These disputes were hardly unique to Bordeaux and reflected the often confused and fluid nature of power and authority in a society with many interested parties and a relatively weak, distant, and evolving central state.

In addition to its political functions, Bordeaux was the economic center of Guyenne. It was the largest city in the southwest and served as a trading center between the interior, other regions of France, and foreign countries. Landes exported honey, cork, turpentine, yellow wax, and resin through Bordeaux; Périgord sent chestnuts, paper, and hemp; Rouergue and Quercy exported prunes; and the *haut-pays* hemp and eaux de vie.²⁹ All of these products came through Bordeaux and the taxes collected on them was an important source of revenue for the crown and city.

Wine was the region's major crop and most of the area's vineyards were owned by the city's bourgeois and *parlementaires*. The city exported an average of 50,000 *tonneaux* (one tonneau being 900 liters) each year, at an average price of 60 livres per *tonneau*.³⁰ By the end of Louis's reign the total wine exports were on average between 80,000 and 100,000 *tonneaux* per year, but these figures fluctuated sharply from year to year and in 1709, a terrible year for the city and its wine trade, only 12,700 *tonneaux* of wine was produced.³¹ The *haut-pays*, Périgord, Agenais and Condomais produced another 15,000 to 20,000 *tonneaux* of lower priced, lesser quality wine annually.³² The value of the trade led to higher rates of taxation by the monarchy as the century unfolded and the crown sought new sources of revenue. A *tonneaux* of wine was charged 4 livres

²⁹ Fessenden, p. 39; Boutruche, p. 463.

³⁰ Fessenden, p. 40.

³¹ Boutruche, p. 465.

³² Fessenden, p. 40.

tax in the form of the *Convoi et Comptable* in 1600, by 1637 the amount had increased to 14, and by 1701 it had risen to just over 19 livres.³³ Wine accounted for as much as two thirds of the city's exports and disruptions to the trade had serious economic consequences.³⁴

In the period before and during the Hundred Years War, much of the wine produced in Bordeaux was exported directly to England, but the trade became more diversified following the reestablishment of French control. Still, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, the English were responsible for 20 to 25 percent of the trade in Bordeaux. The Bordelais generally limited themselves to circulating the Garonne and Gironde in small boats for the purposes of local trade. Bordeaux's trade changed dramatically in the seventeenth century with the rise of Dutch merchants who began to carry the city's commerce with Spain, Brittany, England, and the Baltic ports. The Dutch carried as much as seventy percent of the city's trade by the middle of the seventeenth century, while only two or three percent was carried by Bordelais ships.³⁵ These numbers dropped during the middle of Louis's reign as a result of Colbert's protectionist efforts to reduce the role of Dutch merchants, but they climbed back up following his death and the failure of French shipping to pick up the slack.³⁶ The city and region were forced to import grain from Brittany and the Baltic and other commodities, including copper, iron, textiles, and tobacco, from Sweden, Spain, and Holland.³⁷

Policing the wine trade was a priority of both the Jurade and Parlement. The Parlement was especially sensitive to threats posed to the region's wine trade by illegal

³³ Boutruche, p. 463.

³⁴ Fessenden, p. 41.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³⁶ Étienne, p. 153.

³⁷ Fessenden, p. 41.

practices such as cutting Bordeaux wines with inferior quality wines and then passing them off as authentic. The practice could be highly lucrative because Bordeaux wines were respected on the international market and fetched a high price, but as the Parlement recognized, it also threatened trade and city. If international consumers lost confidence in the quality of Bordeaux wines because of the practice of mixing, they might turn to other markets and regions like Burgundy.

By the second half of the seventeenth century Bordeaux was also closely connected to the Atlantic world. While much of the trade with the New World was dominated by Dutch merchants, the Bordelais began to invest more heavily in fishing off the coast of Newfoundland and later in trade with the West Indies. The draw of this long distance trade was that it offered big profits ranging from 25 to 40 percent, percentages that reflected the greater risk involved.³⁸ The number of ships that traded between Bordeaux and the West Indies grew from 13 in 1671 to 48 in 1685, and much of this growth came after the collapse of the French West Indies Company that was created by Colbert of cut the Dutch off from trade with the French colonies.³⁹ Although much of this commerce was carried on foreign ships, it was the Bordelais who provided the materials needed to maintain the colonists, including wine, grain, arms, clothing, and work tools. The foreign nature of this trade revealed the inadequacies of the French merchant marine, despite the efforts of Colbert and others. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the sudden flight of many of the city's protestant merchants, along with the wars of Louis XIV's later reign, slowed this trade dramatically but the trade routes had

³⁸ Étienne, p. 476.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 158.

been established.⁴⁰ While Bordeaux was well positioned to benefit from opportunities for trade presented in the eighteenth century, Louis's wars prevented the city from developing any sooner and trade actually went down in the final years of his reign.⁴¹

All of this trade set the stage for the eighteenth-century explosion in Atlantic commerce that contributed so dramatically to Bordeaux's wealth and importance in the period. Sugar production rose during the eighteenth century from 7,000 tons in 1714 to 43,000 in 1743, and much of this production came from the island of Saint-Domingue, which was acquired by Louis XIV following the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. To take advantage of this trade, Bordeaux began to develop industries to refine the West Indian sugar.⁴² By the end of the eighteenth century, Bordeaux would become the largest port in the kingdom and nearly half of all French colonial trade was funneled through the city.⁴³ Being among the wealthiest members of the city, the *parlementaires* invested heavily in the Atlantic sugar trade and often maintained plantations of their own in Saint Domingue. This became, like wine in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, an important source of supplemental wealth for members of the court.

As we have seen, the *parlementaires* stood atop Bordelais society but their authority had to be consultative and collaborative because there were other important political, social, and economic actors. The *parlementaires* could often influence community decisions and direct urban policy but they had their greatest success when they could use their symbolic authority to attract other urban elites to their position. The Parlement was the most important political institution in the city, and many were

⁴⁰ Boutruche, p. 478.

⁴¹ Étienne, p. 163.

⁴² Ibid., p. 479.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 163.

prepared to follow the court when it seemed beneficial. In times of conflict, however, the Parlement faced certain challenges. It did not have the ability to enforce its decisions, which meant the court had few options when its rulings ran counter to popular sentiment. In these situations, the *parlementaires* could try to persuade prominent elites and others to follow their lead but they had no way of forcing the issue. The Parlement's power was greatest when it was least visible – when it could conduct its everyday business with few outside interruptions or disturbances. When the court chose to play a more active role in public affairs, especially during times of unrest, it often risked internal division and external challenge, and this had to do with the nature of the court's authority. Beyond its local prominence, the Parlement relied on the monarchy to support its decisions. When the court was asked to enforce or implement unpopular or costly royal declarations, its relationship to the broader systems of power that dominated and exploited Bordelais society was made explicit. The *parlementaires* sometimes sympathized with local grievances, but they were too closely tied to the crown to entertain any real change to the networks of social and political power. In this way, the *parlementaires*' position in Bordelais society was reliant on strong, effective government and leadership from king, and when these were lacking the court was forced to confront the realities of its own precarious, local authority.

The *parlementaires* were able to rely on their symbolic authority to win support from the community because it was recognized and acknowledged by others. The city's bourgeois and petty functionaries all aspired to careers in the Parlement and they worked toward that goal through various business and familial strategies. It was still possible through hard work and luck in the seventeenth century to climb the social hierarchy from

petty merchant or functionary all the way to magistrate in the Parlement, although it usually took several generations. This process led to a steady influx of new families and new resources to the court and it was a vital part of the Parlement's survival and prosperity. Events like personal, public scandals, the creation of alternative courts, and conflicts with royal officials were thought to damage the court's standing in the city and were often problematic for the Parlement.

In the coming chapters we will examine in greater detail the ways in which the *parlementaires* dealt with the many upheavals they faced in the seventeenth century and how, when, and to what end they deployed their authority. Embedded in a complex mix of local and royal institutions, the magistrates always had to weigh benefits and risks posed by confrontations with those above and below them in the social and political hierarchy.

Chapter Two

The Origins of the Fronde in Bordeaux

The Bordeaux *parlementaires* drifted toward revolt during the Fronde when the regency attacked their economic and political status and their fellow citizens sought protection for their material needs. Beginning in the spring of 1649, popular pressure on the Parlement enlisted the court's authority in an effort to lower taxes and remove the province's governor, the duc d'Épernon. These pressures were compounded by the political and economic demands placed on the *parlementaires* by a regency government that sought resources and political power for its foreign policy objectives. The court's internal divisions and Mazarin's use of patronage generated additional anxiety and stress for the magistrates. Through it all, the *parlementaires* displayed a profound ambivalence to both the crown that undermined their status and the Bordelais who would eventually threaten their leadership. At different times during this period the interests of Bordeaux *parlementaires* both clashed and coincided with those of the crown and community, and the conflicted nature of these interactions resulted in *parlementaire* behavior that was often paradoxical and inconsistent. While this would seem to make it difficult to draw any general conclusions about their understanding of the social and political networks in which they were enmeshed, the attitudes and behavior of the *parlementaires* displayed an internal consistency that makes it possible to reconcile their otherwise incoherent behavior.

Interpreting the *Parlementaires*' Revolt

During the Fronde, the loyalties of the *parlementaires* were heavily influenced by changing and evolving circumstances in Bordeaux. The *parlementaires* were not, as some have argued, defending regional liberties and privileges against encroachment by the crown; nor did they use this split with the monarchy to articulate a new conception of their authority as civic and disinterested. The magistrates were primarily concerned with their own grievances with the monarchy and only reached a brief accord with the Bordelais in order to pressure the crown. As we will see, neither the Bordelais nor the *parlementaires* completely accepted the other's agenda and deep distrust existed between them throughout the revolt. The *parlementaires* understood that their ties to the crown and community could be both damaging and helpful depending on the circumstances.

For the *parlementaires*, the crown was a distant authority that could both amplify or undercut their interests, making it difficult for the magistrates to unite behind a static view or assessment of the monarchy. In times of severe economic and political distress, the bonds between *parlementaire* and sovereign could fracture under the weight of their conflicting agendas. Every magistrate understood the importance of hierarchy and order, but they could differ in their conceptions of what these terms meant. For the Frondeurs, royal financial and political attacks on the judges undermined their traditional place in provincial society and amounted to a reordering of their relationships to those above and below them.¹ In their view, the regency that perpetrated these attacks not only failed to

¹ Michael Breen, *Law, City, and King: Legal Culture, Municipal Politics, and State Formation in Early Modern Dijon* (Rochester, 2007), p. 225. Breen provides a rich analysis of Dijon's advocates during the reign of Louis XIV, and he concludes that royal efforts to undermine their traditional civic functions were largely successful at transforming them "from an active member of the local state to a passive, subordinate

serve the interests of the *parlementaires*, but it failed to serve its own interests by undercutting the central institution responsible for maintaining provincial order and enforcing royal policy. For the loyalists of the court, order could only come through obedience to the crown and any disputes needed to be settled peacefully through back channels. In some respects, these two understandings of the relationship between the magistrates and crown reflected the traditional, constitutional understanding of the judges' vocation on the one hand, and the prevalence and significance of absolutist theories by mid-century on the other.

The *parlementaires* were equally ambivalent about their bonds to the Bordelais. While the magistrates played a historic and fiercely defended role in civic affairs, it was a responsibility that was exercised to the exclusion of other political actors and in order to amplify their own authority. Disputes between the *parlementaires* and civic leaders over precedence, leadership, jurisdiction, and authority became a way of projecting and representing the court's status to both the Bordelais and the crown. Any meaningful defense of civic liberties, privileges, or welfare was inextricably tied to the *parlementaires'* own conceptions of order and hierarchy, which they viewed as the bedrock of society. Their defense of provincial interests at mid-century was part of an effort to reassert *parlementaire* authority that they believed had been eroded in recent decades. It was a self-serving defense that sought not to weaken the monarchy or empower local institutions, but to reaffirm the power and privileges of the magistrates themselves. All *parlementaires*, including the king's men, recognized a duty and obligation to protect their court against encroachment by other provincial institutions.

agent of municipal administration....” Breen’s study makes it clear that royal efforts to reconfigure provincial politics extended beyond the sovereign courts.

Viewed from this interpretive vantage point, the magistrates emerge as a group of individuals who were deeply committed to a traditional, heavily stratified polity and society, while some among them came to view the monarchy as a threat to that vision of the social order. Attempts to set right their damaged relationship with the crown would lead the *parlementaires* to collaborate with community groups who had their own grievances to redress. It was a collaboration based on a temporary confluence of circumstances, however, and the judges never viewed themselves as morally obligated to protect the community's welfare. The Bordeaux *parlementaires* momentarily saw their greatest threat coming from the crown to which they were so closely tied, but that would change as the revolt unfolded and popular crowds challenged their authority from below.

To varying degrees, all of the parlements encountered difficulties with the crown in the years leading up to the Fronde. Some of these were unique to specific parlements, while others were general and applied to nearly all the courts. In general, the crown and parlements clashed over issues such as the growing powers of the intendants, the *pauvette*, and the creation of new courts and offices, but the impact of these matters depended on the circumstances of each parlement. The friction these issues engendered highlights the difficult and conflicted position of the *parlementaires* on the eve of the Fronde. Acquiescence on the part of the judges posed a challenge to their economic welfare and primacy in provincial politics, while conflict threatened to undercut their historic and privileged relationship with the crown. In deciding to revolt or remain loyal, individual *parlementaires* weighted these two threats differently but their goals were the same. The *parlementaires*, both loyalists and Frondeurs, craved the support of the monarchy – support that some believed they already had but others did not. For loyalists,

order and stability were incompatible with revolt, while Frondeur *parlementaires* saw revolt as a way to reestablish relationships that were being undermined by the regency. The divide between these two did not represent different conceptions of royal authority but different understandings of how to represent and defend the *parlementaires*' authority before the crown. Approached from this perspective, the paradoxical and conflicted actions and motivations of the *parlementaires* during the Fronde can be reconciled as they all searched for order and stability.

In this and subsequent chapters, the terms Bordelais or community will often be used to refer to the various urban social groups that took to the streets to voice their displeasure with local and Parisian authorities. The terms, however, misrepresent the true dynamic of seventeenth-century French urban life. Bordeaux, like other major cities in the realm, was made up of different socio-economic groups ranging from lowly day labors who exemplified the "make-shift" economy of the day, to wealthy merchants and judges who dominated the political and economic life of the city. Some, like the lawyers and magistrates in lower courts, had aspirations of ascending the city's political hierarchy and were eager to curry favor with the *parlementaires*. For Bordeaux's merchant class, social advancement generally meant the purchase of judicial, tax, or functionary offices that could lead, albeit over several generations, to nobility and landed wealth. The majority of Bordelais society was made up of artisans and labors, many of whom were involved in producing and supporting the region's wine trade. It is not possible to know with certainty what elements of society formed the crowds that took to the streets during the Fronde, but it is reasonable to assume that a majority came from this disempowered and disadvantaged lower strata – these were the individuals most affected by the king's

taxes and least represented in the city's leadership. While it was always possible to have points of commonality between these groups, their dissimilarities were just as likely to divide them.

Royal Officials without Royal Support

There were several political problems that arose between the Parlement of Bordeaux and regency in the 1640s that contributed to the decision to revolt. Among the most bitter and long-standing sources of friction was the crown's creation of a new sovereign court, the Cour des Aides, in Bordeaux. The Cour des Aides was a court of last resort for all matters related to taxation (*aides, traits, gabelles, tailles*), and its creation was problematic for the Parlement for two reasons. First, these were generally matters that were decided by the Parlement, so the creation of the Cour des Aides meant a reduction in the court's jurisdiction and revenues. Second, the *parlementaires* feared that the creation of another sovereign court in Bordeaux would hurt the value of their offices. Conflict between the sovereign courts was common at this time, and of the thirteen cour des aides that were created by the crown, only four remained independent (Paris, Clermont-Ferrand, Bordeaux, and Montauban) while the rest were absorbed by other courts.

The Cours des Aides of Bordeaux was formed in November 1629 after the Parlement absorbed an earlier attempt at creation in 1557.² The Parlement tried again to prevent the creation of the new court by offering to create a new presidency, ten new councillor charges, and two *commissaires aux requêtes* in the palais. Although it was an

² Boutruche, p. 322.

attractive offer, the crown preferred the revenue that would come from the creation of an entire court including five presidents, twenty five councillors, and three men of the king. Due to the Parlement's opposition, Louis XIII created the new court through a royal decree that was never ratified by the Parlement, which was another blow to the court's authority and provided a rationale for obstruction.³ Fear of open hostility with the Parlement led the crown to install the new court first in Agen, then Libourne, and finally Bordeaux in 1637. Starting in 1631, the Parlement pressed for the suppression of the new court and the *parlementaires* took an oath not to purchase any of the offices for themselves or their children. The presence of the new court in Bordeaux only added to the enmity between the two courts and led to endless disputes over precedence in the city's affairs and public ceremonies.⁴

Not surprisingly, the Parlement decided to settle its old score with the Cour des Aides during the Fronde by issuing an arrêt calling for the court's abolition. The Enquêtes chamber was behind the move, and they justified their actions by noting that the king's original edict of creation was never ratified by the Parlement.⁵ The move was precipitated by two of the King's declarations that were issued to calm the troubles in Paris in 1648, which stated that decrees not ratified by the parlements were null and void.⁶ The *parlementaires* also noted that the absorption of the original Cour des Aides of Périgueus was done at considerable expense to the Parlement and thus this jurisdiction was rightfully theirs.⁷

³ *Registres secret*, 5 August 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369.

⁴ Boscheron des Portes, vol. II. p. 472.

⁵ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 791, p. 71. Arrêt was issued 13 March 1649.

⁶ Fonteneil, *Histoire des mouvemens de Bourdeaux*, vol. I (Bordeaux, 1651), p. 38. The first was a lit de justice from 31 July 1648 and the second from the 24th of October.

⁷ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 791, p. 71.

The trouble that ensued highlights the way in which popular pressure was used by the *parlementaires* to reconfirm their authority in provincial politics. The Parlement's arrêt was immediately countered by an arrêt from the Cour des Aides voiding it, which seemed to lead to a standoff between the two courts. On 19 March the *corps* of the city were to take part in an annual procession for Saint-Joseph, and the occasion presented the Parlement with an opportunity to assert its power and affirm its arrêt. The challenge for the Parlement was to get the *corps* of the city to recognize their arrêt and prevent the Cour des Aides from taking its usual place in the procession. When the Parlement met on the 18th, the Enquêtes chamber wanted to know how the Jurats and the syndic of Saint Andre's cathedral (where most of the *corps* heard mass on solemn occasions) intended to proceed. They were told by one of the canons of Saint Andre's that everyone was prepared to follow the Parlement's arrêt but they needed help with enforcement.

The Parlement then ordered the jurats to close the gates of the city and post guards at the doors of the cathedral to block members of the Cour des Aides from taking their usual places. But rather than leaving this important task to the Jurade, which was still under the influence of Épernon, the Parlement called on several councillors, including many of the most committed Frondeurs (Suduiraut, Blanc, Salomon, Cieutat, Useste, Taranque, Raimond, Darche, Cursol, and Duval) to guard the cathedral entrances themselves.⁸ Word of the Parlement's actions made its way back to the magistrates of the Cour des Aides who were told that if they appeared for the procession they risked a violent confrontation. Perhaps with the help of the *parlementaires*, a crowd of people formed outside the cathedral chanting "Long live the King and Parlement!" When asked

⁸ Paul Caraman, "La Fronde à Bordeaux d'après le registre secret du Parlement de Guyenne," in *Archives historiques de la Gironde*, vol. LIII (Bordeaux, 1919-20), pp.34-86, and vol. LIV (Bordeaux, 1921-2), pp. 1-84 [hereafter *Archives historiques*], vol. LIII, p. 53.

about their intentions they replied that they were there to block members of the Cour des Aides from attending the procession and they would attack any magistrates from the court who tried.⁹

In the wake of the incident, the Cour des Aides reached out to the only people who were in a position to help them now: Épernon and the crown. In March 1649, deputies from the Cour des Aides met with Épernon and asked for his help in their battle with the city and Parlement, and the duc offered assistance because he did not believe the Parlement had the authority to undo what the crown had created.¹⁰ Épernon recognized the potential volatility of the issue and was anxious to control the situation, but he was too closely tied to the crown to support the Parlement's demands and had little room to maneuver. He almost certainly tried to pressure his clients in the court, but the more radical members of the Enquêtes chamber now held sway and were not interested in negotiations.¹¹

The Cour des Aides was able to secure an arrêt from the king's council voiding the Parlement's, but the court refused to recognize it or back down on the issue, and the crown was preoccupied with the recent invasion of northern France by Spanish forces and attempts to resolve the Parisian Fronde.¹² The Parlement justified its actions by claiming that their arrêt conformed with "the king's intentions, since he aspires to nothing more than the well-being and peace of his people." By supporting the Parlement, the king will be "eliminating a large number of useless offices that are ruining the province

⁹ Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 17.

¹⁰ Épernon to Mazarin, 29 March 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 316. l'authorité du Roi est intéressée a leur conservation, puisque le parlement entreprend de ruiner et détruire ce que le Roi a établi, et ceste raison qui me suffit pour recommander la Cour des Aides à V. E. sera sans doute assés puissante pour engager V. E. a protéger ceste compagnie souveraine contre la violence du parlement.

¹¹ Épernon to Mazarin, 13 August 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol IV, p. 290.

¹² Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 17.

by the excessiveness of their gages, fees, and extractions, in addition to the increase in trials that they have instigated.”¹³ While it is possible that the Bordelais blamed the Cour des Aides for higher taxes, the court certainly produced revenue for the city and there is little evidence that it was a real target of popular anger. In fact, these statements likely represent a rhetorical strategy on the part of the *parlementaires* who never wanted to appear self-interested when making demands of the crown. As with much of the early Frondeur agenda, the clash over the Cour des Aides was fundamentally a dispute over provincial political authority but it was represented by the *parlementaires* as something else. The magistrates repeatedly justified their calls for suppression by stressing the court’s economic burden on the Bordelais, but we should not interpret these appeals as a provincial response to the encroachment of royal absolutism or the articulation of a new conception of public service and duty. The *parlementaires*’ primary motivation was their own economic and political domination of Bordelais society, which they viewed as the basis for order and stability in the province. The creation of new courts and new officers with new authorities posed a clear threat to the magistrates’ position within the French polity.

Throughout the Fronde the Parlement continued to press for the suppression of the Cour des Aides despite the king’s obvious resistance. On the eve of the city’s attack in 1649 on the citadel at Libourne, the Mazarinist councillor Duburg suggested to the cardinal that suppressing the court might calm spirits in the Parlement and prevent what

¹³ *Archives historiques*, vol. LVII, pg. 163. Aussi cet arrêt de la cour est conforme aux intentions du roy qui n’aime rien tant que le bien et le soulagement de son peuple, puisqu’en ce faisant il ôte l’exercice d’un nombre effréné d’officiers du tout inutiles qui, depuis leur établissement, n’ont cause que la ruine et la désolation de la province, tant par excéciveté de leurs gages, épices et autres émoluments, que par la multitude des procès qu’ils ont excité et fomenté”.

seemed like an inevitable confrontation.¹⁴ The crown responded to these attacks by moving the Cour des Aides to Agen where it remained until the end of the Fronde. The Parlement discussed and sought ways to ensure the permanent suppression of the Cour des Aides, and the *parlementaires* raised the issue in virtually all of their peace negotiations with the crown. Like the Semester court in Aix, the Cour des Aides posed a real political and economic threat to the *parlementaires* and they did everything in their power to ensure its suppression.

There were, however, other points of political contention between the Parlement and regency. The *parlementaires* were troubled by the king's creation of new sennechal and baillage courts that threatened to take away from the Parlement's work load. The king's decision to give part of the Parlement's traditional jurisdiction to the Parlement of Pau further alienated many magistrates. Finally, the renewal of the *paulette*, as it was with virtually all sovereign magistrates, was a source of friction.¹⁵ On the court's behalf, in 1647 the councillor Charles de Laroche pleaded with the crown to renew the *paulette* when it expired, and he noted that outbreaks of plague in the city in the last three years had caused many, including *parlementaires*, to flee. But the *parlementaires* continued to provide the "humble and loyal service they owed to His Majesty", and they "implored his (Séguier) favor and support to obtain from His Majesty the same grace that was given by the previous king." In July 1647, the king issued a brevet extending the *paulette* for only

¹⁴ Duburg to Mazarin, 6 April 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 320.

¹⁵ The *paulette* (named after Charles Paulet, who was responsible for the tax's initial collection) was first adopted in 1604 by Henry IV and it was an annual tax theoretically equal to one-sixtieth of the value of an office. It was paid by officers to gain exemption from the forty day rule, which stipulated that magistrates wishing to transfer their offices had to live at least forty days after all the necessary royal paperwork was processed in order for the transmission to be legal. This procedure could actually take months and if it was not successful the office reverted back to the crown. The *paulette* regularized the transfer of offices and was eagerly embraced by office holders who naturally wanted to protect their property.

four months, and less than a year later Laroche was again pleading for its renewal.¹⁶ As pleas like this went unanswered, traditional arguments about the importance of loyalty lost influence and the *parlementaires* drifted toward a growing uncertainty about their relationship to the crown.

The Parlement of Bordeaux, like many of the parlements around the kingdom, also wanted the removal of its provincial intendance. The intendants first appeared in the early years of the Thirty Years War and were used by the crown to circumvent conventional channels of political authority in order to make provincial management more profitable and efficient for the crown. In 1616, a Master of Requests named Pierre Hurault de l'Hôpital, sieur de Bellebat, great grandson of the *chancelier*, was sent to Guyenne to help the *maréchal* de Roquelaure maintain order in the province. Two years later he received the commission to act as intendant of justice for the new governor of the province, the duc de Mayenne. The position was responsible for the governor's judicial affairs, but Hurault de l'Hôpital was soon given more responsibilities by the king. In 1621, these responsibilities were expanded to include an intendance in Mayenne's army, which was being led against the Protestants at the time.¹⁷

For its part, the Parlement of Bordeaux was almost immediately distrustful of this incursion into its traditional authority. In 1620, the Parlement decided to limit the intendant's authority by announcing that no commission could be exercised in the province without first being registered by the Parlement.¹⁸ Almost a decade later, the Parlement of Bordeaux took issue with Abel Servien, one of the first intendants to appear

¹⁶ J. Hovyn de Tranchère, *Les dessous de l'histoire: curiosités judiciaires, administrative, politique et littéraires* (Bordeaux, 1886), vol. I, pp. 386-9. [hereafter, *Les dessous de l'histoire*]

¹⁷ Boutruche, p. 354.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

in Guyenne, for what they perceived as his efforts to encroach on their jurisdiction. Led by a handful of *parlementaires*, the court decided to strike back by issuing an arrêt that forbid Servien from exercising his commission. Louis XIII responded by simply voiding the arrêt and stripping the *parlementaires* who were behind the effort of their offices. When Louis XIII called the magistrates to Paris to explain their actions, their deputation was not allowed to see the king or present their remonstrances against Servien. A second deputation led by the great first President Marc-Antoine de Gourgue was finally given an audience with the king on 16 August 1628, which resulted in a famous exchange between the celebrated magistrate and his king. Although de Gourgue was allowed to present the Parlement's grievances this time, the results were only marginally better – the suspended *parlementaires* were again allowed to exercise their offices but all opposition by the Parlement to the king's commissions was forbidden. Difficulties with the intendants did not go away, and in a humorous incident in 1645 the intendant Jean de Lauson complained to the *Chancelier* Séguier of troubles he was having with the Parlement. Lauson went to visit three different *parlementaires* (the nature of the visits is not clear) and all three hid, one in his attic, upon his arrival. All of the men then complained loudly around town that Lauson had refused to visit them.¹⁹ Bitterness over this and later conflicts with the king's intendants was a significant source of friction with the monarchy in the two decades before the Fronde, and the revocation of the intendants was another early and persistent demand of the *parlementaires* during the Fronde.²⁰

These were all issues that affected the Parlement's relationship with the monarchy and together they represented a set of grievances that called into question the court's

¹⁹ Lauson to Séguier, 14 July 1645: *Archives historiques*, vol. XIX, p. 162.

²⁰ Boutruche, p. 323.

status in the evolving polity at mid-century. As Richard Bonney asserts, these sources of friction represented a political impasse in which the crown could not afford to yield if it hoped to maintain its fiscal strength and ability to wage war. According to Bonney, parliamentary opposition to the crown's fiscal and political expedients left Mazarin and Anne with only two choices: grant concessions, withdraw the intendants, dismantle the new courts, and risk a humiliating defeat to Spain; or, rebuke the parliamentary demands and see the policy through to the end. Since some of the parliamentary demands challenged aspects of royal authority, it was only natural for the crown to choose confrontation with the courts.²¹

While the crown may have viewed the standoff with the parlements and cities in these terms, the Frondeur magistrates did not. The *parlementaires* were not questioning the crown's sovereignty but the use of that sovereignty to attack the court's status. The *parlementaires* were largely disconnected from and disinterested in the larger geopolitical struggles that contributed to the crown's more aggressive posture, and focused instead on the way these changes upset the traditional provincial hierarchy. In this case, as in other standoffs with the crown in the Old Regime, the Frondeur magistrates understood their critique of royal policy as a defense of the true interests of the king, not as an attack on those interests. In their view, the crown was best served by a strong and vibrant magistracy that could serve royal provincial interests and not by one whose status was in decline. The king, unquestioned in his sovereignty, could always be led astray by his advisors and it was the duty of provincial leaders to enlighten the king's judgment in

²¹ Richard J. Bonney, "The French Civil War, 1649-53," *European Studies Review* vol. 8 (1978), p.74.

these situations. There is an obvious self-serving quality to this vision of the relationship between the *parlementaires* and crown, one in which any innovations must be mutually beneficial. We cannot, however, discount it as mere rhetoric on this basis alone. In defending their traditional arrangements with the monarchy, the *parlementaires* believed they were defending a political and social hierarchy that reflected the natural, religiously sanctioned nature of society and provided stability in a world often in upheaval. Protecting this vision of society, and not the promotion of public welfare or civic justice, was understood to be duty of the magistrates.

Patrons, Clients, and the Development of Factional Politics

To understand the Bordelais Fronde, we have to look closer at the concerns that were unique to the city, and here the regency's involvement in the Parlement's internal politics was especially problematic. As Sharon Kettering has aptly demonstrated in her study of the Parlement of Aix in the seventeenth century, the internal politics and personal rivalries of a parlement could have important implications for its external behavior and actions. Kettering's model can be usefully applied to Bordeaux and is particularly helpful in bringing a new understanding to the Fronde. As Kettering has done in Aix, it will be important to provide some background to the Fronde in Bordeaux in order to understand the growing insecurity and ambivalence some *parlementaires* expressed toward the regency government.

Following the deaths of Louis XIII and Richelieu, Cardinal Mazarin made several important personnel decisions that had profound consequences for the Parlement's

internal politics. Anne of Austria had a difficult and loveless relationship with Louis XIII and Richelieu distrusted and mistreated her. Now that she was in control, she sought revenge against Richelieu's creatures and rehabilitated the cardinal's enemies who had also suffered during his time in power. Mazarin had no personal disputes with Richelieu, who gave him his start in the French court, but he was anxious to establish his own people in places of power in order to consolidate the regency's authority.

In Bordeaux, the regency was poorly served by many of these rehabilitated individuals. Mazarin's decision to give the governorship of Guyenne back to the la Valette family was especially troubling. The patriarch of the family, Jean Louis de Nogaret de la Valette, died in 1642. Despite a meteoric rise under Henry III and Henry IV, the Duc d'Épernon had a falling out with Cardinal Richelieu, who was always concerned by the duc's power and influence. When his son, Bernard de Nogaret, duc de la Valette, was held personally responsible for the French defeat to the Spanish at Fuentarabia in 1638, Richelieu sent out orders for his arrest. La Valette fled to England and was subsequently implicated in several plots against Richelieu and the crown in the years that followed.²² Following the deaths of Épernon, Louis XIII, and Cardinal Richelieu, Mazarin, perhaps looking to win supporters for the regency, chose to absolve la Valette of his offenses and made him governor of Guyenne. Assuming his father's title, the new duc d'Épernon rewarded Mazarin's decision with unwavering support for the cardinal during the Fronde, but the move was not well received by many in the province who believed he had disgraced himself and did not merit the post. Some, like

²² G.R.R. Treasure, *Cardinal Richelieu and the Development of Absolutism* (New York, 1972), p. 263.

the de Gourgue family, had long standing grievances with Épernon's father that translated into bad relations with the new governor.²³

Mazarin also seemed to abandon the interests of some in the Parlement. Like virtually all of the parlements during the Old Regime, Bordeaux's was dominated by a handful of powerful families that were often linked by marriage or clientage. One of the most powerful family networks in the years leading up to the Fronde was the Lalanne/Pontac group, which was comprised of over two dozen councillors and several presidents. The Pontac family rose to prominence in the sixteenth century, primarily through the efforts of Arnaud de Pontac. Arnaud started off as a bourgeois merchant who was heavily involved in wine and other exports, but he also made money as *contrôleur de la comptabilité* and eventually invested in land, finally attaining noble status by the end of his life. His son Jean de Pontac followed his father in the office of *contrôleur*, augmented the family's fortunes as tax farmer of the *Grande Coutume*, and channeled much of his wealth into estates around Bordeaux. By the end of the sixteenth century the family had acquired considerable landed wealth, in addition to many fiscal and judicial offices that provided them with economic and political power.²⁴

Trouble started in 1639 when *Président à Mortier* Sarran de Lalanne was charged by members of the Enquêtes chamber with counterfeiting money. Among those leading the charge against Lalanne was one of the *Avocat-Généraux* at the time, Thibaut de Lavie. According to Lalanne, Lavie's prosecution of the case was largely motivated by Lalanne's refusal to allow his daughter to marry Lavie. Regardless of the motivation, Lalanne chose to flee the city rather than face the possibility of a lengthy imprisonment

²³ Léo Mouton, "Le duc d'Épernon et le Parlement de Bordeaux," *Revue Historique de Bordeaux et du Département de la Gironde*, tome XIII (Bordeaux, 1920), pp. 193-200.

²⁴ Boutruche, pp. 177-179.

and he was eventually convicted in absentia. Lalanne was stripped of his presidency and a new office was created and sold to Jean de Gourgue de Vayre.

De Gourgue came from an old Gascon noble family. His grandfather, Ogier de Gourgue, was vicomte de Juillac, seigneur de Montlezun, Gaube, Roquecor, Vayres, in addition to acting as intendant of Guyenne, *conseiller d'état*, and governor of finances for the province. Ogier's son and Jean's father, Antoine de Gourgue, went on to become First President of the Parlement and was considered one of the best legal minds of his day, and his defense of the Parlement against attacks by Richelieu and Épernon won him the respect and admiration of his fellow *parlementaires*. Antoine's first marriage was to the daughter of Jean Séguier and he was brother-in-law to Pierre Séguier, president in the Parlement of Paris and *chancelier* of France. His second marriage was to a member of the Lestonnac family, another prominent Bordelais *parlementaire* family. While Jean de Gourgue could not count as many supporters in the Parlement as Lalanne, he came from a distinguished and well-connected family.

The incident created considerable hostility on the part of the Lalanne family toward de Gourgue who was accused of having stolen Lalanne's charge and toward Lavie who was blamed for the conviction. The real trouble, however, started several years later in 1644. Mazarin, again looking for support in the early days of the regency, gave in to pressure from the Pontac/Lalanne families and had Lalanne's conviction reviewed and then overturned by the Parlement of Paris. The registration of Lalanne's reinstatement proved problematic from the start, however, because he refused to quietly retake his seat and forget the troubles of the past. Along with his many relatives in the Parlement, the

most conspicuous being Président à mortier Arnaud de Pontac (Lalanne's cousin), Lalanne immediately moved to have de Gourgue stripped of his presidency.

The letters calling for Lalanne's reinstatement were delivered during the Parlement's annual recess in the fall, and they were read to the assembled chambers at the start of the new session. It is evident the Lalanne clan was the aggressor in this confrontation, both by the way that the situation unfolded and by the statements that were made.²⁵ The decision to register the Parlement of Paris's arrêt that reinstated Lalanne was affirmed on 14 November, but the court put off deliberating the king's declaration, which stated that de Gourgue was to retain possession of his office, and forced de Gourgue to leave the palais and refrain from exercising his office. According to one account, de Gourgue protested but his relatives counseled him to exercise caution in the face of such powerful opposition. Dubernet and the others who supported de Gourgue hoped that the delay would calm tempers and allow them to register the king's declaration later.²⁶ De Gourgue lodged a formal complaint with the Parlement that he presented to the *greffier* as he exited the palais on the 14th in which he faulted the Parlement for failing to register the king's declaration.²⁷

Despite de Gourgue's efforts, on the 17th the Parlement issued an arrêt calling for the suppression of his office. Lalanne and his supporters justified the move with two arguments. First, they argued that article 28 of the Ordinance de Moulins stated that in situations where an office was created to replace another that had been suppressed in absentia, if the original office holder was exonerated within 5 years the new office holder

²⁵ Relation de ce qui s'est passé lors de la réception du président Lalanne, November 1645 ? : *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 252.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 253. Dubernet was a distant relative of De Gourgue's

²⁷ BN Ms. fr. 18752, fol. 362.

would lose their post. Secondly, they noted that the king's own edict justified the creation of de Gourgue's office by citing the need for seven presidents – a number that could only now be reached by excluding one of the men.²⁸ In a further provocation, Pontac and Lalanne attended two Sunday masses in January at Saint-Andre's Cathedral where they prevented de Gourgue from taking his usual place among the presidents of the Parlement. In the first case de Gourgue arrived late and they maintained that the bench for the presidents was full, forcing him to stand through the sermon, and in the second, de Gourgue arrived thirty minutes early (presumably to avoid a repeat of the earlier indignity) but president Pontac blocked the entrance to the bench and ignored de Gourgue as he pleaded to take his seat. The move was designed to publically humiliate de Gourgue by making it clear that his presidency was no longer recognized by the court.²⁹

The attempt to suppress de Gourgue's office ultimately lasted several months and generated considerable hostility on both sides. Signaling that it was likely Mazarin himself who was behind the decision to reinstate Lalanne, both Lalanne and Pontac wrote to Mazarin in the spring of 1645 to thank him for his help in the matter and for his continued protection as they attempted to suppress de Gourgue's office.³⁰

De Gourgue, perhaps sensing that he also needed outside help, reached out to the king's ministers for protection from the attacks.³¹ The pressure to suppress his office on the part of Lalanne and others was considerable, and it was this pressure in the face of the king's explicit orders that was at the heart of the perceived injustice of the situation

²⁸ BN Ms. fr. 18752, fol. 364.

²⁹ Lavie to Séguier, 3 February 1645: *Archives historiques*, vol. XIX, p. 153.

³⁰ Lalanne to Mazarin, 22 March 1645: *Archives historiques*, vol. II, pp. 35-6.

³¹ De Gourgue to Séguier, 2 February 1645: *Archives historiques*, vol. III, p. 244.

according to de Gourgue.³² For de Gourgue, the problem was not the regency, whose authority he recognized, but the ministers who were protecting his enemies. Mazarin's evident betrayal of his interests exemplified the instability and friction that was manifest in the political hierarchy on the eve of the Fronde, something all Frondeur magistrates understood regardless of their connection to the affair.

The Parlement's *Avocat-Généraux*, Jean-Olivier du Sault and Lavie, advised *Chancelier Séguier* that the Parlement had ignored the crown's orders because the affair concerned friends and relations of three of the most powerful families in the Parlement – de Pichon, de Pontac, and de Lalanne, all of whom were so closely related “that they in fact make up one family.” This powerful family network was just the sort of support Mazarin was looking for among the provincial parlements, but he failed to account for the lasting friction generated by Lalanne's desire for retribution.³³

Lavie was also attacked and complained to Séguier that he had endured “several storms and hidden many personal injuries, including threats to my family, to ensure that the king's will was done in this affair.” He feared leaving the palais because of intimidation, and he claimed that the decision to reinstate Lalanne and the ensuing troubles had made him the object of scorn in the Parlement. Finally, in what was a clear rebuff of Mazarin's decision to reinstate Lalanne, Lavie asked Séguier to consider the damage done to the king's authority and the Parlement by the reestablishment of a man whose crimes were well known. Du Sault and Lavie argued that it was prejudicial for the court to augment the position of a family that was already very powerful: powerful

³² De Gourgue to Séguier, 2 February 1645: *Archives historiques*, vol. III, p. 245.

³³ Du Sault and Lavie to Chancelier Séguier, 27 December 1644: *Les dessous de l'histoire*, vol. I, p. 355.

enough, they noted, to direct the court according to their private interests.³⁴ In a letter to Mazarin, governor Épernon (a Lalanne supporter) observed that “your eminence knows better than anyone how envy, animosity, and jealousy in the king’s courts are often the real cause of troubles that are often attributed to other things.”³⁵ The regency destabilized the court’s internal politics not by promoting the interests of some, which was commonplace, but by appearing to attack the interests of others for little more than political gain. When royal authority was perceived as a threat, the *parlementaires* could become ambivalent to the institution that was the cornerstone of their cherished order and hierarchy.

In a surprising turn, the crown eventually entertained the idea of suppressing de Gourgue’s office. Writing to Séguier in early 1645, Lavie cited a royal letter on the matter that had encouraged the Lalanne family - “the hope that the king’s letter has given for the suppression of Monsieur de Gourgue’s office has emboldened them (Lalanne and his allies).”³⁶ Even as late as spring 1646, the crown had again reversed itself and offered to suppress de Gourgue’s office if Lalanne could find the money to buy out the office.³⁷ Although the Lalanne clan was not able to come up with the money and de Gourgue’s office was not suppressed, it was not because of royal opposition.³⁸

One of the real losers in this exchange was First President Dubernet. He, unlike Mazarin, seemed to recognize the negative effects that empowering a family network like the Pontacs and Lalannes could have on the Parlement. He also did what he could to

³⁴ DuSault and Lavie to Chancelier Séguier, 27 December 1644: *Les Dessous de l’histoire*, vol. I, p. 355.

³⁵ Épernon to Mazarin, 22 December 1644: *Archives historiques*, vol. II, pp. 26-8. V.E. sait mieux que personne comme il y a des envies, des animosité et des jalousies dans les grandes compagnies, qui souvent sont les véritable causes des désordres que l’on attribue a d’autres.

³⁶ *Les Dessous de l’histoire*, vol. I, p. 358. les espérances que la lettre du Roy leur donne de la suppression de la charge de Monsieur de Gourgues, leur grossit le cœur.

³⁷ M. de Pontac (au nom du Parlement), 21 March 1646: *Les Dessous de l’histoire*, vol. I, p. 377.

³⁸ Ibid.

support the will of the king but this turned out to be a moving target. When he tried to support the king's original edict, which called for de Gourgue's retention, he opened himself up to attacks from Lalanne and his allies; and, when the regency reversed itself it weakened Dubernet's position in the court altogether and undermined his ability to lead.³⁹

In letter to Mazarin, Dubernet elaborated on his troubles:

It has been hard for me to serve the king and execute his express wishes that I have received from your eminence, and I do not want to trouble you with complaints against the agitators who recognize no authority. When your Eminence decided to provide grace and when they (the Lalanne family) received the king's pardon, they became even more bitter and rose up against me, who had pleaded for their pardon. They have the audacity to write things about me that are so far from the truth that the *gens de bien* of the company blush, and those outside the company are so astonished that it is hard for me to express to your Eminence. After having the courage to refute accepted truths, under the name of a court of justice, even though it is only an assembly of 19 selected judges, almost all of whom are family and allies of the interested party, they dare to ask the king to believe only their letters about the company's affairs and ignore mine.⁴⁰

Dubernet went on to say that his enemies had declared "open war" on him and he called for Mazarin's support.⁴¹ Lavie also recognized that it was the Pontac/Lalanne clan's intention to get rid of both de Gourgue and Dubernet, and a delegation of Lalanne's supporters was tasked with lobbying the crown for this purpose.⁴² According to Dubernet, the Lalanne family was spreading lies about him in order to have him replaced with someone more to their liking – someone "beholden to them and not the crown since they were the ones who controlled the Parlement."⁴³ According to Lavie, the only way to

³⁹ Dubernet to Mazarin, 9 January 1645: *Archives historiques*, vol. II, pp. 30-1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴¹ Dubernet to Mazarin, 10 April 1645: *Archives historiques*, vol. II, p. 37.

⁴² Lavie to Séguier, 20 February 1645: *Les dessous de l'histoire*, vol. I, pp. 358-9.

⁴³ Dubernet to Mazarin, 19 February 1645: *Archives historiques*, vol. III, p. 94.

reverse these attacks on the First President and the court was to remove some of the agitators.⁴⁴ The affair damaged the relationship between the *parlementaires* and the regency in two ways: first, it created instability by undercutting the court's leadership; second, it alienated a significant network of families who no longer believed that the regency represented their interests.

During deliberations in December, Dubernet was accused by de Verdier of leading the Parlement to ruin as he had done to the Parlement of Aix.⁴⁵ De Verdier also claimed that Dubernet did not merit his post in Aix or Bordeaux, despite all the respect and love that the Parlement had shown him. Other attacks prompted the First President to storm out of the palais before several councillors pleaded with him to stay. These attacks were begun in part because of Dubernet's relationship to de Gourgue, which led many in Lalanne's camp to conclude that he was not an appropriate arbiter of the dispute.⁴⁶ When Dubernet started his career as a councillor and president in the Parlement of Bordeaux he had a bitter dispute with Sarren de Lalanne over who entered the court first and held precedence. The dispute was taken all the way to the king's council and may have resulted in bitter feelings between the two families. This also would help explain the attacks that Dubernet endured during the de Gourgue affair.⁴⁷ Dubernet took the attacks on him and his post personally, and he was deeply concerned about the effect they would have on the Parlement and his authority.

⁴⁴ Lavie to Séguier, 20 February 1645: *Les dessous de l'histoire*, vol. I, pp. 358-9.

⁴⁵ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 789, p. 673. Il allait faire de la compagnie comme il avait fait du parlement de Province, qu'il la voudrait détruire et déchirer en pièces.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 694.

⁴⁷ AM Bordeaux, Sommaire du Procès pendant au Conseil Privé Pour Maistre Sarran de Lalanne, Conseiller du Roy, pourvue and reçue en l'office De Président au parlement de Bordeaux, défendeur Contre Mastre Joseph du Bernet, aussi Conseiller du Roy and Président au même Parlement, demandeur I 8/29

Lavie also suffered in the Lalanne affair. Lavie was an obvious target since he was blamed for the president's conviction in 1639. Long before the trouble started over the reestablishment of Lalanne, Lavie's father, the First President of the Parlement of Pau, wrote to Séguier to accuse the Pontac, Pichon, and de Lalanne families of unjustly treating his three sons.⁴⁸ In the early days of the dispute, Lavie and du Sault both complained about the verbal abuse they were subjected to by Lalanne's supporters outside the palais as they came and went from the deliberations, and the situation was not much better inside where they were often interrupted or shouted down. They maintained that while they would gladly suffer these attacks for the good of the king, they asked Séguier to consider whether it would help the king in the long run to have them and their offices endure these attacks and be the source of so much distain. Finally, Lavie asked Séguier to reconsider Lalanne's reestablishment on the grounds that it sent a bad message to the *gens de bien*, and it further empowered an already powerful family that was able to bend the Parlement to its will.⁴⁹ This sentiment was echoed by Dubernet who asked Mazarin rhetorically "if it is suitable for the king's authority and justice that such a powerful family, which included forty presidents and councillors, was able to completely control any court business that dealt with their interests."⁵⁰ Lavie was ultimately so concerned about the rancor that was generated by the Lalanne affair that he asked for and was awarded an *évocation* of all his legal affairs out of the jurisdiction of the Parlement.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Lavie to Séguier, 8 April 1644: *Archives historiques*, vol. III, p. 238.

⁴⁹ *Les Dessous de l'histoire*, vol. I, p. 355.

⁵⁰ Dubernet to Mazarin, 9 January 1645: *Archives historiques*, vol. II, p. 30. S'il est convenable a l'autorité du Roy et au bien de sa justice qu'une si puissante famille, qui embrasse quarante président ou conseillers, domine avec tant de puissance dans tous les intérêts qui la touchent et qu'elle prend à cœur.

⁵¹ Lavie to Séguier, 19 December 1644: *Archives historiques*, vol. III, pp. 241-249; Thibault de Lavie to Séguier, 28 July 1644: *Archives historiques*, vol. XIX, pp. 136-8.

Mazarin reestablished Lalanne's presidency expecting to gain the support of the most important network of families in the Parlement but he failed to recognize the possible consequences. In terms of sheer influence and power, he picked the right family to advance his agenda in Guyenne. Family rivalries and old vendettas dating back to 1639 and beyond, however, made Lalanne's reinstatement problematic and further aggravated divisions in the court, which rendered the Parlement unsteady and unpredictable on the eve of the Fronde. First, the crown failed to foresee the Lalanne family's desire for revenge, not just against de Gourgue and his family but also against Lavie. Second, the crown aggravated the situation by changing its position on de Gourgue's office. By giving the Lalanne family hope that de Gourgue's office might be rescinded, the crown gave tacit approval to Lalanne's attacks and further alienated the de Gourgue family. While the Pontac/Lalanne families were perhaps the most powerful clientage network in the court, the attack on de Gourgue alienated an almost equally powerful family network and in all likelihood this was not a trade off that Mazarin anticipated or intended.

The incident is significant because, not surprisingly, the de Gourgue and Lalanne families along with most of their allies ended up on different sides of the Fronde. De Gourgue's decision to revolt was likely motivated by what he perceived as the monarchy's abandonment of his interests in 1644, and his hostility to the regency provided others with a party around which they could rally. Conversely, Lalanne never forgot his obligation to Mazarin and remained loyal throughout. The de Gourgue/Lalanne affair cannot explain by itself the individual decisions of every councillor as they took sides in the revolt. These were personal decisions that in some

cases divided families and no single issue can provide a complete explanation. However, this was a bitter exchange that weakened key leadership positions and made some *parlementaires* more receptive to calls for revolt.

The *parlementaires* needed stable leadership from Paris that was equitable and served the interests of all. There was a personal quality to power in the seventeenth century that was understood by all and was essential to the functioning of the early modern state. It is important to understand, however, that the rising fortunes of some could mean the declining fortunes and alienation of others at a time when personal relationships functioned as channels of power. In their struggles for wealth, status, and power the *parlementaires* were often divided by personal rivalries and family loyalties that made it difficult for them to compromise during disputes. The *parlementaires* often exhibited a certain myopia in their relations with each other and with the crown, where access to power was generally exploited for personal gain. When the crown failed to balance the interests of all as it did on the eve of the Fronde, it created instability and ambivalence within the court that had no obvious way of resolving itself without changes to the distribution of power.⁵² In other words, the magistrates who saw their interests suffer as the channels of patronage changed during the regency had few options to address the perceived abuse of the king's interest other than by removing the individuals responsible for the innovations.

The rupture and cooptation of patronage ties that followed the deaths of Richelieu and Louis XIII caused problems for provincial governance around the country, and studies of Provence and Languedoc highlight the dangers faced by the regency government. In Languedoc, the appointment of Gaston d'Orléans as governor in 1644

⁵² Lauson to chancelier Séguier, 24 March 1644: *Archives historiques*, vol. XIX, pp. 129-130.

led to the creation of a clientage network that followed their patron into revolt in 1651.⁵³ To offset Gaston's growing power, Mazarin gradually began recruiting his own clients from among the nobility (sword and robe) and clergy, many of whom served the cardinal well during the Fronde. In Aix, Mazarin left the openly hostile governor Alais in office, but he tried to surround him with clients who could oversee his conduct and curb his authority.⁵⁴ Many of these clients were inherited from Richelieu, while others were Mazarin's own, but they were confronted with a hostile and powerful governor with his own client base who was determined to advance his own interests, even where they conflicted with the crown. In each of these provinces, Mazarin understood the need for local support and he was generally well served by his clients, but the personal nature of his power created instability and resistance that he had to confront. There was no governing plan in his construction of provincial clientage networks and he used whatever means were available to advance his and the regency's provincial interests. As is clear from the case of Bordeaux, however, these clientage ties could also produce hostility and apathy on the part of those left out.

Parlementaires, Bordelais, and the Challenge of Civic Leadership

In examining the Bordeaux Fronde we are confronted with a revolt that united magistrates and their fellow citizens against the provincial governor and regency. In the initial phase of the protest, the two groups worked closely together to reach their

⁵³ William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (New York, 1985), p. 239.

⁵⁴ Sharon Kettering, *Judicial Politics and Urban Revolt in Seventeenth-Century France: The Parlement of Aix, 1629-1659* (Princeton, 1978), pp. 140-141.

distinctive and common goals, and these events would seem to offer strong support for those who have interpreted revolt as a provincial reaction that united all social groups against the centralizing tendencies of the absolute monarchy. As we will see, however, this model does not reflect the experiences of the magistrates or Bordelais during this turbulent period. Rather, the *parlementaires* were just as equivocal and ambivalent in their attitudes toward the Bordelais as they were to the regency during the Fronde, and by probing the issues that momentarily united the two we can come to fuller understanding of their relationship.

The fiscal demands of the monarchy at the height of the Thirty Years War extended beyond manipulations of venality and included new levies on many goods and services. In some cases, the *parlementaires* were affected by these new demands, while in others they likely used popular discontent for their own benefit. In the early Fronde, the Parlement sanctioned causes that were important to the Bordelais, while the community recognized the Parlement's leadership and channeled their grievances through the court. This arrangement worked well when both groups trusted each other, but it was a cooperation that could not withstand the regency's intervention or the stress of a prolonged conflict because it was not based on mutual interests. The *parlementaires*, many of whom lived through the troubles of 1635, feared popular unrest at least as much as they did instability in provincial politics. The Frondeur *parlementaires* recognized the need for popular support in any standoff with the regency and Épernon, but they also understood the challenges and threats inherent in this sort of outreach.

On the eve of the Fronde, the *parlementaires* and Bordelais supported each other in their attack on a wine tax known as the *convoy* and Épernon's decision to allow the

export of grain at a time when the city was threatened with famine. Both issues were amplified by the difficult conditions that existed in Bordeaux on the eve of the Fronde. Wheat had tripled in price since 1632 and the city was struck by periodic outbreaks of the plague from May 1645 to March 1648. Merchants in the city were increasingly hostile to the *courtiers*, or intermediaries who oversaw the city's trade. The *courtiers* had been selected by the jurats, but in 1635 the crown turned these posts into venal offices and they were increasingly accused of manipulating the city's commerce for their own benefit.⁵⁵ The *convoy* was a tax imposed on all wine and eaux de vie coming in and out of Bordeaux, and it was originally imposed by the community itself to protect the city's merchant ships from raiders on the open seas. The crown took over the right to levy the tax when it claimed exclusive rights to build and operate a navy.⁵⁶ The tax rose dramatically during the first half of the seventeenth century from 4 livres in 1600, to 10 in 1628 and finally 16 by 1637.⁵⁷ This tax was distinct from the consumption tax that the crown had unsuccessfully levied on wine sold in Bordeaux's taverns and that led to the revolt of 1635. Because it was assessed on all wine traded in the city, it affected the city's bourgeois elite in ways that the levy of 1635 did not.

According to an anonymous piece entitled "Mémoire touchant le *convoy* de Bordeaux" the *convoy* was raised to two *écus* per tonneau of wine in 1637 because the city could not raise 450,000 livres in taxes levied on it by the monarchy. A year later the levy was extended for another 15 months to cover the costs of the war and then in 1640 for another three years. Finally, in 1643 the new tax rate was folded into a contract for

⁵⁵ Boutruche, pp. 330-331.

⁵⁶ Arnaud Communay, *L'Ormée à Bordeaux d'après le journal inédit de Jacques Filhot* (Bordeaux, 1887), p. 181.

⁵⁷ Paul Butel, *Vivre à Bordeaux sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1999), pp. 58-9.

the *convoy* tax that was not scheduled to end until 1652. The extension of the tax in 1643 was registered by the Cour des Aides, but it was never verified by the city or Parlement. On the eve of the Fronde the total levy on wine was up to 16 livres per tonneau, which represented a considerable escalation of the tax from the five to ten livres the city was accustomed to paying. In earlier times when the crown tried to increase this levy, as it did in 1628 and 1632, the city managed to get the measures revoked. According to the *mémoire*, the tax was pushing the province and city to the brink of collapse because “the city has no revenue outside of the wine trade, and with the taxes it (wine) is not selling at all and causing the ruin of many families. For those who make the wine, the king’s taxes now represent not a fraction of their profits but two or three times what the growers are making.” The *mémoire* concluded that it was in the king’s interest to suspend the tax because at its current rate it would be difficult for landowners to pay the *taille*.⁵⁸

Wine was the city’s main trade commodity in the seventeenth century and this tax posed a threat to the economic well-being of the entire city – everyone from barrel makers to merchants and day laborers were reliant on the wine industry for their livelihoods. The king’s tax also threatened Bordeaux’s connection to the outside world and the products it needed to import. Many of these themes were reiterated by First President Dubernet in a *mémoire* to Mazarin in August 1648. Dubernet asserted that the problem with the *convoy*, at least according to the bourgeois and jurats, was that the tax

⁵⁸ Mémoire touchant le convoy de Bordeaux, 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. III, p. 347. Elle n’a point d’autre revenu que le vin; et ce vin étant ainsi surcharge, ou il n ce vend point du tout, ce qui cause la ruine entière des familles, ou il se vend si peu, que ceux qui cultivent les vignes, peuvent dire que le Roy ne prend pas le quart, le tiers ou la moitié de leurs fruits, mais deux ou trios fois plus que le propriétaire, de sorte que la culture des vignes, laquelle autrefois faisait la richesse du pays, en est maintenant la ruine.

was now collected on all sorts of commodities, and it was affecting not just the *menu peuple* but also the city leadership.⁵⁹

A number of reasons likely led the *parlementaires* to take up the battle to rescind the tax. First, they were almost certainly opportunistic and saw the issue as a way to win popular support that could be used to advance their own agenda with the crown, including a chance to strike a blow against the Cour des Aides that had ratified the tax increase. They were also likely concerned about the impact of the tax on their own finances and the city's commerce. The interesting part about the Fronde is that these motivations were mutually reinforcing and provided the *parlementaires* with a basis for action that gave the appearance of being selfless. It is unlikely, however, that the magistrates would have taken up the issue of the *convoy* without their own set of grievances that they wanted to redress.

Events in Paris served as a signal to the *parlementaires* that the regency was weak and the time was right for such a dramatic rebuke. The sovereign courts of Paris came together in the Chambre de Saint Louis in May, and in addition to protesting attacks on their venal offices, they refused to register a new royal excise tax on Parisians. The example of the Parisian *parlementaires* provided a model for their Bordelais counterparts. As with much of the Frondeur agenda, it was the Enquêtes chamber that initiated the push to rescind the two *écu* tax on wine in July 1648.⁶⁰ Prior to the deliberations, the crown tried to preempt the confrontation through conciliatory measures including the remittance of a quarter of the *taille* revenues to the province and the rescinding of several alternative

⁵⁹ Mémoire (rédigé par le président Dubernet) de ce qui se passe au parlement de Bordeaux, tant sur les déclarations du Roy que sur les autres affaires publiques, 16 August 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, pp. 293-5.

⁶⁰ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 790, p. 600.

and triennial office creations.⁶¹ It was a positive gesture by the crown but not enough to forestall the Parlement's attack.

Épernon was concerned that the Parlement's suspension of the tax would give the people of Bordeaux hope for tax relief when, in his view, the court did not have the authority to overturn royal decrees.⁶² Dubernet echoed this view in his *Mémoire* when he noted that "publication of the court's actions will only give people hope that the constitution of the state will not allow."⁶³ Dubernet's choice of the phrase "constitution of the state" is significant, because it alludes to his view of *parlementaire* authority and provincial governance. Like other loyalists during the Fronde, Dubernet did not believe the magistrates had the right to rescind royal edicts; they could plead with the monarchy to change or repeal its directives, but there was no legitimate basis for open opposition and obstruction. Supporters of the crown feared that the Parlement's actions would give sanction and encouragement to further demands by Bordelais and this could lead to open revolt. Dubernet's *mémoire* was written seven months before the start of open hostilities in Bordeaux, and it shows a keen awareness of the potential threat posed by collaboration between the *parlementaires* and Bordelais. For the Frondeur *parlementaires* who no longer believed that the regency represented their interests, this was a risk that they were willing to take.

According to the lawyer and jurat Fonteneil, the Parlement's suspension of the two *écus* tax provided a pretext for Épernon to attack the Parlement as disloyal. The real

⁶¹ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 790, p. 588.

⁶² Épernon to Mazarin, 18 August 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 296.

⁶³ *Mémoire* (rédigé par le président Dubernet) de ce qui se passe au parlement de Bordeaux, tant sur les déclarations du Roy que sur les autres affaires publiques, 16 August 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 293. bien qu'on ayt représenté le péril de cette publication, par laquelle le peuple concevrait des espérances des choses que la constitution de l'état ne permettrait pas, outré plusieurs autres considérations. Ce que le premier président peut faire, fut de tempérer l'arrêt par certaines clauses et d'en retrancher quelque autre.

reason for Épernon's concern according to Fonteneil, however, had to do with the governor's own financial stake in the tax, since some of his men helped collect it and presumably skimmed some of the money. In fact, according to Fonteneil, the offer was made to reduce the tax to three livres but the move was blocked by Épernon's men in Paris.⁶⁴ This account of the governor's financial stake in the tax was cited by at least one historian as the reason for Épernon's hostility to the Parlement's actions.⁶⁵

The Parlement finally decided to suspend the tax on 4 September. By now, Parisians had taken to the streets on the Day of the Barricades in defense of the parliamentary Fronde, and it was probably assumed that the Bordelais would do the same if their magistrates or city came under attack. In Aix, the *parlementaires* were raising troops in anticipation of an armed conflict with Governor Alais over the creation of a new Semester court. Suspending the tax was a bold move on the part of the Bordelais *parlementaires*, but they were riding a growing wave of unrest in France that set the stage. In a strange twist, Épernon supported the removal of the increased tax a month later when he recommended that the crown void the Parlement's arrêt and then rescind the taxes by the king's own authority in order to take credit for the move. The governor was skeptical that the crown could collect the tax given the universal opposition to it, and it would only undercut the monarchy's authority if it was the Parlement that provided the relief.⁶⁶ Épernon maintained that the king's grace would also help prevent further collaboration between the Parlement and city. Dubernet also recognized that the tax issue

⁶⁴ Fonteneil, *Histoire des mouvemens de Bordeaux* (Bordeaux, 1651), p. 34.

⁶⁵ Théophile Bazot, *Le Parlement de Bordeaux et l'Avocat Général Thibaud de Lavie sous La Fronde* (Bordeaux, 1869), p. 10.

⁶⁶ Épernon to Mazarin, 5 September 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 300.

could lead to a wider revolt given the circumstances and he pleaded with the crown to reconsider.⁶⁷

In August 1648, Épernon expressed his concern about the potential trouble posed by the tax issue. According to Épernon, the people of Bordeaux felt it was “time to get rid of some of their taxes”, and they were taking their complaints to the *parlementaires* who were seen “by the people as persons who work for their *soulagement* and for the public good (*le bien public*).”⁶⁸ The assertion that the magistrates were viewed as individuals who were concerned with public welfare should be understood within the context of the circumstances that existed in the city at the time. In 1648 many in Bordeaux recognized that their sovereign magistrates were equally unhappy with the regency government and were prepared to take bold action. As the revolt unfolded, however, it is clear that both groups viewed each other with suspicion and distrust, and this statement did not reflect inherent loyalties or sympathies. Épernon acknowledged that the *parlementaires* were prepared to support the Bordelais because they were already agitated by attacks on their authority, the work of the intendants, and news coming out of Paris and the other parlements, and it appeared to the governor that the situation was going to turn violent if the crown forced the issue.⁶⁹

When rumors began to circulate in late October that the crown might agree to lower the tax to one *écu*, Dubernet noted that, even if true, the measure may be too late to have any affect since the Parlement had already suspended the tax and was preparing to suspend all the other recent tax levies on the city’s consumer goods.⁷⁰ To facilitate the

⁶⁷ Dubernet to Mazarin, 19 August 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 297.

⁶⁸ Épernon to Mazarin, 13 August 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 290.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁷⁰ Dubernet to Mazarin, 28 October 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 303.

process the Parlement ordered all the lower courts in the province to give an account of the taxes that were being collected.⁷¹ The move was sure to anger the crown and was of little benefit to the *parlementaires* themselves, but it would certainly win favor among the Bordelais. It was also an opportunity for the *parlementaires* to reassert their authority, which they believed had been undermined by the actions of Épernon and the regency.

The grain trade represented another opportunity for the *parlementaires* to capitalize on the growing unrest in the city. Concern over the city's supply went back to the beginning of 1648 when the jurats notified the Parlement of the king's intention to ship grain from Bordeaux to his armies in Flanders, to which the court raised no objections. Instead, the Parlement warned the jurats to keep the shipments quiet while the court wrote the king to advise him of the city's shortage and request an end to grain exports from the province. The *parlementaires* feared the province was on the brink of a famine and wanted the crown to understand the potential gravity of the situation. The jurats gave assurances that they would verify the amount of grain shipped and would ensure that no other produce was loaded on the ships.⁷² While the shipments went through without disturbance, everyone recognized the potential explosiveness of the issue.

Seven months later, the supply of grain to the city had not improved when it was learned that Épernon had allowed certain merchants to sell their grain stores to foreign markets, and news of the impending deal led to a confrontation between the Parlement and governor. Disturbances broke out in August 1648 when word of Épernon's plans spread through the city, and evidence suggests that he and his supporters in the Jurade

⁷¹ *Registre secret*, 31 July 1648: AM Bordeaux ms. 790 , p. 557.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 397.

had taken bribes to allow the shipments.⁷³ According to Fonteneil, Épernon received the staggering sum of 120,000 livres from various merchants for the passports to ship the grain.⁷⁴ When the Parlement learned of the deal on 27 August, it asked only that the jurats oversee the shipment and keep it quiet but news got out and the situation quickly escalated.⁷⁵

According to Épernon, the disturbance was led by the *menu peuple* but it was “no doubt promoted by the leaders of the community.” Some seven to eight hundred armed people went down to the port to seize the grain shipment, and after members of the jurats could not disperse the crowd, Épernon went personally with some of his followers and disbanded the protestors. He then called on Mazarin to give him men and material to enlarge the military contingent at Château Trompette, claiming that sedition could spread easily at the moment and he wanted to stop any unrest “at its birth.”⁷⁶ The attitude of the *parlementaires* toward the disturbance changed significantly in the days following the riot. Instead of backing the jurats and by extension Épernon, the Parlement decided to revoke the passports that allowed the shipments and then issued an arrêt to prevent any future grain shipments out of the city. According to Fonteneil, the Parlement was using the king’s authority to calm the public’s anger and prevent further unrest in the city by removing the people’s primary grievance.⁷⁷ This statement implies that the magistrates were concerned about the public’s welfare, but it conflicts with their initial attempts to conceal the shipments from their fellow citizens. The crown supported the Parlement’s

⁷³ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 790, pp. 548-9.

⁷⁴ Fonteneil, p. 29.

⁷⁵ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 790, p. 619.

⁷⁶ Épernon to Mazarin, 27 August 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 298.

⁷⁷ Fonteneil, pp. 31-2.

arrêt with a decree from the king's council, which further enraged Épernon because it seemed to undermine his authority and impugn his judgment.⁷⁸

For the Bordelais and *parlementaires*, the crown's actions reinforced the perception that it was ignorant or unconcerned with local circumstances. As other historians have observed, seventeenth-century parliamentary opposition to royal edicts and officials was often predicated on the belief that parlements, as provincial institutions, held special knowledge about local conditions. When royal officials and edicts seemed to threaten the province, the *parlementaires* often adhered to the useful fiction that the king himself must be unaware of the resulting problems. By doing so, the *parlementaires* could maintain their loyalty to the crown while they opposed the people and policies of the king. During the Bordelais Fronde, the *convoy*, grain exports, and Épernon's governance were all represented by the *parlementaires* as local mismanagement. In more strictly political struggles between the crown and Parlement, however, this argument was almost certainly used as rhetorical cover for the court's evident defiance of the king.

According to Épernon, the Parlement's arrêt amounted to nothing more than a cynical effort on the part of the *parlementaires* to "win support among the people." The Parlement was "touched by the same spirit as Paris" and was looking for support among the Bordelais for its impending confrontation with Épernon and the crown. Others echoed the sentiment that the *parlementaires* were simply exploiting popular unrest for their own political purposes.⁷⁹ For the governor, the next few months became a public relations struggle between himself and the *parlementaires* to win favor among the

⁷⁸ Fonteneil, pp. 30-34.

⁷⁹ Chevalier de Vivens to Mazarin, 19 May 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 334.

Bordelais, while efforts to increase troops in the province would give Épernon the upper hand when the situation turned violent.⁸⁰

Épernon asserted that wheat was cheaper than it had been in a long time and the disturbance was provoked by “those who like disorder.”⁸¹ This was almost certainly a self-serving explanation of the disturbance, and it was not the view of Fonteneil or the Bordelais. According to Fonteneil, Épernon was not only putting the well-being of the city in jeopardy, but he was doing it out of greed since the duc received a kickback from the deal.⁸² It is hard to verify this account of Épernon’s involvement in the shipments, but it does explain the deep personal animosity felt in the city toward the governor and it supports the allegations against the jurats. If, in fact, Épernon had a financial stake in the *convoy* and grain exports, then it is clear that his own personal finances were intertwined with royal authority and this would make it very difficult to sustain any attack on that authority. Fonteneil made this assertion when he noted that the duc reacted angrily to the Parlement’s arrêt and vowed to undercut it by requiring the communities of Guyenne to attest to the abundance of grain in the province.⁸³ Épernon often claimed that he was simply supporting the crown’s interests, and the issue of royal authority gave him a tool with which to attack his enemies.

From this point forward, Épernon became less interested in negotiations and his calls for more troops only raised tensions and hostilities in the province. There is little question that Épernon was not a popular figure in the Parlement or Guyenne prior to these events, but in 1648 there was a dialog between them that vanished by 1649.

⁸⁰ Épernon to Mazarin, 26 January 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 307.

⁸¹ Épernon to Mazarin, 27 August 1648: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 298. Ceux qui aiment le désordre ont inspire au peuple ceste appréhension vaine, mais puissante pour les émouvoir.

⁸² Fonteneil, p. 29.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Following these events, Épernon attempted to undermine the Parlement's position with the crown by questioning the court's loyalty, and he blamed the Parlement for manipulating the grain issue "in order to win over the *menu peuple*."⁸⁴ The deterioration of relations between Épernon and the *parlementaires* created the sort of political fracture that made a broader conflict possible. It was in the wake of these confrontations and the crown's unwillingness to compromise on the *convoy* that Épernon began assembling troops, seizing strategic towns, and building fortifications in anticipation of a confrontation. On the other hand, many of the sources of friction, like the *convoy*, the example of Paris, and royal political disputes with the Parlement, had little or nothing to do with the governor's leadership.

The attitudes and actions of the Bordeaux *parlementaires* were not unique at this time. As William Beik has demonstrated in a study of the Toulouse Parlement during the Fronde, other provincial courts were also concerned by attacks on their local authority and they used the Parisian Fronde as an opportunity to redress these grievances. The demands of the Toulouse *parlementaires* closely mirrored their Bordelais colleagues as they both sought to reaffirm their place in the changing polity at mid-century. The similarities in their reactions to the Parisian Fronde suggest a similar understanding of their rights and responsibilities within a political hierarchy that appeared to abandon their interests. The *parlementaires* were educated and steeped in a constitutional tradition in which they functioned as the supreme arbiters of local governance and royal policy. According to the French constitutional tradition, they had the right to advise the king and the crown was duty bound to listen, and fundamental and customary laws put real limits

⁸⁴ Fonteneil, p. 32; Épernon to Mazarin, 26 January 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 307.

on royal power and authority.⁸⁵ The policies of Richelieu and Mazarin interjected new political actors that called this tradition into question, and the *parlementaires* reacted with predictable hostility. The only meaningful distinction between the outcomes of the *parlementaires*' protests in these two cities was the ability of the Bordelais magistrates to broaden their struggle by exploiting popular resentment of royal taxes and the province's governor.

Despite the areas of apparent cooperation between the magistrates and Bordelais, there was an interesting incident in early 1648 that highlights the ambivalence that typified this relationship. In late April a disturbance struck the faubourg St. Seurin when rumors spread that tax collectors had recently come to town. The jurats claimed that the rumors were spread by malicious people looking to cause trouble, and they asserted they were doing everything possible to calm the situation.⁸⁶ The Parlement praised the jurats but called on them to make sure that maison de ville was well guarded and its arms and munitions were in good condition. The court also asked the curés to ensure that their bells were well protected so the people could not use them to sound a revolt, and it issued an arrêt "prohibiting anyone from spreading false rumors that could lead to sedition."⁸⁷ But the troubles continued. On 24 April Pierre de Briet, who owned a cabaret in the *faubourg* of Saint Seurin, was in his home when people from the neighborhood entered, took him by the throat, and started to curse at him. The crowd accused him of sheltering *gabelleurs*, a claim that he denied and allowed the crowd to verify. The scene repeated itself later that day with other people making the same accusation, which prompted de

⁸⁵ Nancy Roelker, *One King, One Faith: The Parlement of Paris and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 59-77. Roelker provides an excellent analysis of constitutional theory and its importance to the *parlementaires* of the sixteenth century

⁸⁶ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 790, p. 440.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 441.

Briet to lock himself in his house, only increasing suspicion. The Parlement again called on the jurats and authorities of St. Seurin to calm the situation and prevent additional violence.

Still, the troubles escalated and a little later another incident, this time outside the convent de la Chartreuse, was reported to the Parlement. According to accounts, one of Bishop Daire's men was staying at the convent when he was seen on the streets carrying a number of guns. Rumor spread that these were the guns of some *gabelleurs* (since no single person could need this many guns), and the cannon of Saint Seurin was forced into the streets to try to refute the rumor and calm the situation.⁸⁸ According to the jurat Sieur Desaugies, the rumor had circulated that the men thought to be *gabelleurs* were starting to collect a new tax on various products.⁸⁹ The Parlement responded with an arrêt declaring the rumors false, prohibiting the tax's levy, and stating that the king never intended to raise such a tax. They also forbid the spread of rumors that might stir the people and called on the jurats and militia captains to prepare themselves for additional violence.⁹⁰ The arrêt was posted throughout the city for everyone to see and the *parlementaires* were ordered to assemble at the palais with men and arms in case of further unrest. Finally, they called for two presidents and several councillors to remain in the palais to respond to any new developments, while the rest of the *parlementaires* were ordered back to their neighborhoods to try to calm the situation. The Parlement agreed to write Épernon "in order to join his authority to the court's so that both could be used to maintain the people in the king's service and prevent the trouble that often develops out of illicit assemblies

⁸⁸ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 790, pp. 444-5.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 449.

by commoners.”⁹¹ In other words, here was an incident of popular protest only months before the Fronde that underscored the *parlementaires*’ latent distrust, fear, and ambivalence toward the Bordelais. The rumors about the tax were clearly false because, aside from the court’s own declaration to that effect, there was no protest of the Parlement’s actions, so this cannot be interpreted as a defense of local interests. The written documentation on the incident abruptly ends here, and all indications are that the Jurade and Parlement were able to restore order to the city.

These incidents reveal both the Parlement’s latent fear of popular unrest on the eve of the Fronde and its willingness to work with the city’s authorities to control social conflict. The Parlement demonstrated during these troubles that it was prepared to defend itself and the crown against a popular uprising. It recognized the potential dangers posed by a popular revolt, and its actions make it easier to understand why the *parlementaires* gradually lost control during the Fronde. The Bordelais returned that distrust and were suspicious of the magistrates’ motives from the beginning of the Fronde. The Bordelais had an ambiguous relationship with the high court, and they were aware that the Parlement was deeply embedded in the social and political structures that dominated their lives. They may have seen the court as a means to pressure for changes in local governance, but they had no illusions about the judges’ ultimate loyalties or sensibilities.

Whether the issue was the *convoy*, grain trade, or Épernon’s imperious governance, the Bordeaux magistrates did not view the matter in moral or ethical terms. They reacted to these developments in a pragmatic fashion that was governed by their

⁹¹ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 790, p. 445. aux fins de joindre son autorité à celle de la cour et employer l’un et l’autre à maintenir le peuple dans le service du Roy et empêcher les mauvaises suites que ces assemblées illicites pourvoient produire.

need to protect their own status and position in society. This evident pragmatism and opportunism was obvious to their fellow citizens and made the *parlementaires* unreliable partners during the Fronde. As members of a community, the *parlementaires* were not impervious to local needs, but they understood their responsibilities differently from ordinary citizens. While the Bordelais expected strong civic leadership in times of distress, the authority of the magistrates was embedded in a strict hierarchy that placed limitations on their ability to fulfill this role.

By late 1648 the stage was set for the Fronde in Bordeaux. The Bordelais had enlisted the support of the province's highest court, the Parlement was hostile to Épernon and the crown, and the governor was arming himself for the coming confrontation. The Fronde presented the *parlementaires* with a unique opportunity. While they worked to achieve a more secure and substantial role for themselves in provincial politics, they were able to mobilize popular support and champion more selfless causes that promoted the community's welfare. Although the goals of the *parlementaires* and Bordelais had little in common, the targets of their hostility were the same and this allowed for a degree of cooperation in the early stages of the Fronde.

The best way to understand cooperation between the *parlementaires* and Bordelais in the early Fronde is to recognize its ephemeral nature and the immense social and cultural divide that pointed these groups toward different conceptions of order, hierarchy, and public welfare. Imagining the relationship in this way helps to explain events that are otherwise inconsistent – the most important being the speed with which the seemingly sturdy relationship between the *parlementaires* and Bordelais deteriorated over the course of the revolt. The people of Bordeaux saw the Parlement as the most

important political institution in the city and they were anxious to enlist its support when making demands of the crown. The community recognized that its best chance to win concessions from the crown would come through cooperation with the Parlement. For their part, the *parlementaires* were able to frame their demands in the moral context of community welfare at the same time they pursued their own agenda. In 1648 and 1649 the situation called for unity and collective grievances were enough to help launch the Fronde in Bordeaux, but the real nature of the relationship between the magistrates and their fellow citizens would soon become apparent to all.

Chapter Three

Magistrates and Municipal Politics in the Fronde

In recent years the provincial Fronde has attracted more attention, and we now have a better understanding of the dynamics of regional revolts. Why did some provincial cities and parlements rebel while others remained loyal? Why did some courts vacillate between loyalty to the crown and revolt? What sorts of reforms did the Frondeur parlements want? We now know enough to make certain generalizations about the provincial parlements during the Fronde and perhaps assume certain features that do not require repeating.¹ For example, it is clear that provincial parlements, whether they rebelled or not, were generally focused on their own regional authority and circumstances and were not advocating fundamental, constitutional change to the social, political or economic structures of French society. Where they made demands on the monarchy during the Fronde, the parlements often sought greater authority for themselves at the expense of other regional individuals and institutions. We also know that both loyal and Frondeur courts articulated similar demands of the monarchy, which makes distinctions between them less significant. However, the circumstances of each court and province were different and conclusions from one provincial study can only help inform the study of other cities and revolts. We cannot assume that the attitudes and experiences of the

¹ See William Beik, "The Parlement of Toulouse and the Fronde" in *Society and Institutions in Early Modern France* ed. by Mack P. Holt (The University of Georgia Press, Athens); Sharon Kettering, "A Provincial Parlement during the Fronde: The Reform Proposals of the Aix Magistrates," *European Studies Review* (SAGE, London and Beverly Hills), vol. 11 (1981), 151-169.

Bordeaux *parlementaires* mirrored their colleagues elsewhere and not all Frondeur revolts reflected the same pressures. Magistrates across France, however, may have understood their rights and responsibilities in a similar fashion and this could help account for their divergent reactions to the upheaval.

A synergy existed between the *parlementaires* and Bordelais in the early days of the Fronde, but it is important to understand what led to the deterioration of their relationship. Did the Bordelais accept the magistrates as leaders of a civic coalition and what did both groups believe that this responsibility entailed? What strange rationale allowed these proud judges to lead their city into revolt only to abandon their fellow citizens and reconcile themselves to the crown years later? Did the *parlementaires* align themselves with their broader community because they thought they were duty-bound to protect the welfare of the Bordelais, or were they motivated by a different conception of their power and authority? If we can answer these questions, we can begin to reconcile the often inconsistent actions of the magistrates and propose an alternative framework for understanding their behavior during the long and varied reign of Louis XIV.

An analysis of the *parlementaires*' experiences during the Fronde will help illuminate how they understood their place in Bordelais society and the rights and responsibilities engendered by their position. While a range of attitudes and behavior existed that changed over time, the *parlementaires* were generally ambivalent to the desires of the Bordelais on the one hand, and resentful of the monarchy's absolutist project on the other. The *parlementaires* were indifferent to the geo-political issues that led to the growing fiscal and political demands of the regency, and they viewed these burdens as an attempt to reconfigure the polity at their expense. These conflicting

attitudes forced the magistrates to strike a balance and led to a revolt against the crown that was destined to yield few tangible results. The *parlementaires*' ambivalent ties to the community below them and the crown above them provides a fresh interpretive framework for understanding the events of the Fronde and the attitudes and actions of the magistrates themselves. There were essentially a handful of moments during the Bordelais Fronde in which the dynamics of the relationship between the *parlementaires*, crown, and community changed. We will explore these moments to see what they can tell us about how these relationships worked and how the *parlementaires* viewed the crown and community in which they lived.

The *parlementaires* were among Bordeaux's social and political elite and they resented challenges to their authority. This was evident in disputes with the province's governors and newly created political and judicial institutions such as the intendants and Cour des Aides. While the *parlementaires* acknowledged the royal nature of their authority, they also understood that the demands of the Thirty Years' War provided incentives to the crown to undermine its own institutions. New courts, new administrators, and new taxes all provided the monarchy with the needed funds and political power to confront its foreign enemies, but they rarely benefited the country's traditional judicial elite. The *parlementaires* believed that they were guardians of a constitutional tradition that protected them against the sort of financial and judicial innovations the regency pursued prior to the Fronde. Under these conditions, rebellion became a means of addressing the perceived injustices that had developed between the *parlementaires* and their sovereign – that France was governed by a regency in the 1640s made it easier to justify their challenge to royal governance. The *parlementaires*

understood revolt against the crown as a way to reconfigure their relationship, while the Bordelais were ambivalent toward the political structures that dominated their lives and were willing to pursue more radical change in times of crisis. The Parlement's limited agenda and its failure to protect the city led to the breakdown of its authority. The *parlementaires* saw themselves as Bordeaux's rightful leaders and they accepted some responsibility for the city's well-being, but the nature of their authority and their commitment to the existing system of social and political stratification meant that there were limits to the sorts of changes they could accept. The *parlementaires* may have resented royal policy in the 1640s, but they were terrified of the social and political upheaval represented by the Ormée.

Libourne and the Foundations of a Collaborative Revolt

By the spring of 1649 Épernon was warning in virtually all of his correspondence about the danger of a provincial revolt if the crown could not reach a peace settlement in Paris. In the winter and spring of 1649 the royal court fled Paris for Saint-Germain-en-Laye, blockaded the city, and the Parisian militia mobilized for a confrontation with the royal army led by Condé. While armed conflict was avoided and the accords of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in February seemed to diffuse the standoff, the situation remained unstable and the example of a city under arms was a powerful symbol to the Bordelais.² According to Épernon, the Parlement was behind the troubles and the example of Paris

² Orest Ranum, *The Fronde: A French Revolution, 1648-1652* (New York, 1993), pp. 210-212.

was aggravating the situation.³ Épernon's efforts to blame external political factors for the city's unrest had the convenient benefit of absolving him of responsibility. The governor was aware that the Parlement was on the verge of revolt in the spring of 1649 and he needed support from the crown. He complained in a letter to Mazarin that it was increasingly difficult to control the *malintentionés* and the crown's supporters were rapidly vanishing or being covered into silence.⁴ Perhaps in fear of an imminent revolt, Épernon's actions took a belligerent turn in the spring of 1649.

Troubles began when rumors spread that Épernon was building a fort along the Dordogne at Libourne. It is difficult to know when the order was given to build the fortress, but it became a concern for the Parlement in March 1649. Libourne was a small and relatively unimportant outpost on the Dordogne at the time of the Fronde, but Épernon made the decision to turn it into a large and well fortified bastion that would dominate traffic on the river. The Parlement learned of the construction at the end of March when it was reported that troops and armaments were being sent to Libourne and the news was causing unrest in Bordeaux.⁵ The Parlement ordered two councillors, Monion and Cursol, to Libourne to investigate the rumors, and while we do not have an account of their trip, it is clear that the Parlement was troubled by what they found.⁶

After several weeks of unproductive discussions with Épernon over the issue, the Parlement called for a halt to the construction in an *arrêt*. According to the Parlement, the construction of Libourne was in direct violation of earlier arrangements with the king

³ Épernon to Mazarin, 19 March 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 313.

⁴ Épernon to Mazarin, 5 March 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 312.

⁵ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 791, 29 March 1649.

⁶ Paul Caraman, "La Fronde à Bordeaux d'après le registre secret du Parlement de Guyenne," in *Archives historiques de la Gironde*, vol. LIII (Paris, 1919-20), p. 39. [hereafter *Archives historiques*]

in which the city had paid the crown to block a similar construction.⁷ The Parlement, however, was never good at enforcing its decisions and traditionally relied on others to enforce its pronouncements. By early April the Parlement's *arrêt* had failed to stop construction, which prompted another *arrêt* to block the supply of men and material for the fortress.⁸

Épernon's military challenge forced the Parlement and Bordelais to work together. The construction of Libourne meant that Épernon's forces would be able to control Bordeaux's commerce in the event of open conflict, and this generated considerable anxiety within the city. Along with Épernon's existing château at Cadillac, Libourne would allow the governor to effectively blockade the city and starve it into submission. Épernon's actions have to be seen in the context of the events of 1648 and the hostilities that had developed between the city and its governor. The Frondeur magistrates rightly viewed Libourne as a political challenge that, if allowed to stand, would greatly increase the governor's authority and make it harder to resist future fiscal and political demands. Whether or not Épernon had royal sanction for the fort was irrelevant to the *parlementaires*, since they could always defend themselves with convenient narratives about local mismanagement and royal ignorance. Regardless of who was behind the construction, it posed an obvious challenge to the *parlementaires'* view of their place in the hierarchy of provincial politics. By contrast, the Bordelais were focused on the immediate subsistence concerns posed by the fort, and they showed little interest in the broader political issues at stake.

⁷ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIII, pp. 68-69.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Pressure began to mount in the city for direct action when it became apparent that the Parlement's *arrêts* were ineffective, and the court along with a group of civic leaders took the lead in raising troops to defend the city. The *parlementaires* formed a fund to pay for expenses and they each contributed 300 livres, while the other *corps* were to tax themselves.⁹ Two companies of cavalry and ten companies of infantry were organized and the search began for a general to lead them, which they found in the elderly marquis de Chambret.¹⁰ Chambret was a noble from the Limousin region who was reportedly brave and active for his age, but little more is known about him.¹¹ He arrived in the city to offer his services on 12 April, and he promised to bring 3,000 soldiers to Bordeaux's defense if he received the city's support. His troops never materialized but no other viable candidates presented themselves. As the wealthiest, most prominent members of Bordelais society, the *parlementaires* were able to use pressure and their own resources to build the city's army, but they needed fear and a common enemy to mobilize their fellow citizens who were otherwise disinterested in the rights and privileges of the judicial elite.¹² The *parlementaires* never had the power to impose unpopular decisions on an uncooperative public and instead had to rely on people's natural desire for leadership in times of crisis and their own ability to manipulate circumstances to their advantage.

The Parlement had few real choices at this point. Épernon had ignored the court's *arrêts* and shown no willingness to negotiate a settlement, while popular calls to tear down Libourne grew daily. The Parlement needed to respond to the duc's increasingly

⁹ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIII, p. 76.

¹⁰ AM Bordeaux ms. 304: Chambret was only offered the position after M. de la Force turned it down.

¹¹ Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 24.

¹² This was certainly clear in the case of Aix, where the city was generally apathetic toward the parliamentary revolt against the Semester court.

imperious and belligerent behavior, and exploiting popular unrest was an important means to rally support. Collaboration with the Bordelais was not the result of a rhetorical strategy or cultural affinity; it was a matter of necessity and survival. If the Parlement wanted to win concessions from the monarchy it needed to marshal its own resources to challenge Épernon.

In order to consolidate its position in the city the Parlement called for the first of many meetings of the *corps* on 1 May 1649.¹³ The meeting proclaimed a general union among the *corps*, demanded the removal of troops from around the city, and called for the dismantlement of Libourne.¹⁴ Everyone was to take the oath of union that afternoon following mass and those who could not attend were responsible for taking it within three days in their local parishes.¹⁵ The Parlement then named *commissaires* for each of the parish churches of the city to ensure the oath was taken. Only the Jurade defended Épernon, and it was made up of his supporters and deeply suspect in the eyes of the Bordelais. The oath of union may have placed the Parlement at the head of a civic coalition to defend the city, but it did not turn the court into a civic institution. The Parlement remained a royal body that could assume civic responsibilities, but this was a move that risked accentuating the divide between the magistrates and their fellow citizens because they understood civic governance in different ways. In the view of the *parlementaires*, their offices and status gave them the right to lead their fellow citizens but limited the types of reform they would embrace. For the Bordelais, however, there was a moral component to effective local governance, especially in times of crisis, which dictated a broader conception of the community's welfare.

¹³ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, p. 58.

¹⁴ Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 19.

¹⁵ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, p. 58.

The crown sent René D'Argenson to Bordeaux in late April to help diffuse the conflict, and he quickly announced that he had secured a peace agreement for the city.¹⁶ According to the terms of the agreement entitled "Ordre pour faire cesser les troubles de la province de Guiène et vile de Bourdeaus" both sides were to disarm, and Épernon was to withdraw his troops from around the city, restore commerce, and stop work on Libourne. The agreement also called for a general amnesty for the city and Parlement, the resupply of the Château-Trompette, and the release of prisoners on both sides.¹⁷ The Parlement greeted the announcement with a combination of relief and satisfaction, despite the fact that it failed to address any of the political disputes it had with the crown, and it quickly announced the agreement to the different *corps*, posted it around the city, and dismissed Chambaret from his duties. If Épernon had executed the terms of this early agreement it is possible that Fronde would have ended here. Popular pressure to act against Libourne was driving the Bordelais Fronde in the spring of 1649 and the *parlementaires* were willing to capitalize on it in their struggle with Épernon and the crown, but they had an innate distrust and fear of unruly crowds and an equally instinctive desire to preserve order.

It is hard to know what the Bordelais wanted at this point in the conflict but there is little evidence of dissatisfaction at this initial peace agreement. The peace agreement made no mention of the king's taxes but these remained suspended by the Parlement and the agreement did allow for the city's resupply, which was its most immediate concern. The problem with the agreement was not that it smacked of a sellout: it was that Épernon had settled on a military solution to the standoff and was not interested in making

¹⁶ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, pp. 58-60.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

concessions. Any peace agreement that was not a clear and unequivocal victory for the governor was unacceptable. He viewed his authority and the crown's as one and the same, but his actions belie a profound disinterest in royal edicts and matters of state where they contradicted his own. Like the *parlementaires*, Épernon was largely disconnected from decision making in Paris, and when those decisions undercut his position he held to a convenient belief that this reflected the monarchy's failure to understand local circumstances and its own provincial interests. The duc considered the very equitability of the agreement as a threat to his status, prestige, and authority.

The peace agreement addressed the city's concerns about Libourne and troop violence and should have brought an end to the trouble but it was not long before it began to unravel. Under the pretense that the city of Libourne had petitioned him to stop lodging Épernon's soldiers throughout the city, Argenson ordered the completion of the bastion.¹⁸ He also responded to rumors that Épernon was moving canon to Libourne by stating dryly that the comte d'Ognon, by order of the king, had sent canon to Épernon and he did not know where Épernon might have deployed them.¹⁹ Assuming the other issues could have been resolved, Épernon never intended to stop construction of Libourne, and his refusal to abide by the terms of the peace agreement left the Bordelais and *parlementaires* with few options. Both the magistrates and Bordelais believed Épernon had hijacked the king's goodwill and abused the rights and privileges of the province, and the *parlementaires* were eager to challenge their rival's authority. According to Argenson, reconciling the Parlement and governor following the peace agreement was his

¹⁸ Roland Mousnier, ed. *Lettres et mémoires adressés au chancelier Séguier (1633-1649)* (Paris, 1964), 2 vols. pp. 924-5.

¹⁹ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, pp. 71.

biggest challenge and the key to peace in the province.²⁰ The two were locked in a bitter struggle and both were actively pressing their positions before the crown, which was seen as the arbiter of provincial conflicts that could no longer be reconciled locally.²¹ For the monarchy, however, the resolution of these conflicts was never easy. There was a symbolic and personal quality to power in the Old Regime, and any proposed solution that was seen as a victory for one side and a defeat for the other almost necessarily engendered wounded pride and bitter feelings.

In addition to discrediting the Parlement, the continued construction of Libourne damaged Argenson's standing in the province. His inability or unwillingness to get Épernon to comply with the terms of the peace agreement confirmed Bordelais fears that direct action was needed to prevent the fort's completion. Many of the Frondeur *parlementaires* were equally frustrated with the situation by the middle of May and were themselves agitating for direct action. The Parlement responded with another *arrêt* prohibiting further construction, but it was not in control of the situation at this point.²² As Duburg colorfully put it, "it is strange that the once dominant judges of the bourgeoisie have now become slaves."²³

On 12 May the Parlement called for an assembly at the hôtel de ville to give its latest *arrêt* added force and convey the court's opinion of the situation.²⁴ Unlike the meetings of the Thirty or One Hundred Thirty which had specific election procedures, the Parlement frequently called informal assemblies of the *corps* to rally support for its decisions and actions. The decisions that emerged from these assemblies were used to

²⁰ Argenson to Mazarin, 3 May 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV. p. 331.

²¹ Épernon to Mazarin, 15 April 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV. p. 322.

²² Mousnier, *Lettres et mémoires*, pp. 924-5.

²³ Duburg to Mazarin, 19 May 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV. p. 337.

²⁴ Mousnier, *Lettres et mémoires*, p. 926.

leverage the court's authority and create an image of solidarity within the city. Although the *parlementaires* at these meetings invariably had an agenda they wanted to push, there was a certain unpredictability to them. While the meetings were limited to members of the *corps*, it is clear that outsiders often attended and the loudest voices usually carried the day, making it difficult for the *parlementaires* to direct their deliberations. For the *parlementaires*, the downside of these meetings was that they could push the court to act more radically than it wanted, and more importantly, they gradually politicized segments of Bordelais society that were traditionally excluded from decision making. These meetings encouraged the Bordelais to take positions on the challenges facing the city and to think critically about the solutions proposed by their superiors. When those solutions proved ineffective, misguided, or failed to address the broader concerns of the city, the citizens of Bordeaux were prepared to pressure their leaders for what they wanted – civic governance that accounted for the material security and welfare of the city.

The assembly demanded Argenson issue an ordinance for the demolition of everything built at Libourne since 4 May, and it asked the Parlement for permission to attack the fort but let it be known that they would go anyway if the court did not concede.²⁵ Argenson was eventually convinced to issue an ordinance but the commander of Libourne refused to accept it and this was used as evidence that there was no chance of a negotiated settlement.²⁶ Following a meeting of the council and another with the militia captains, Chambaret, who had never left the city, announced that people were clamoring to march on Libourne and he pressed the Parlement for its sanction.²⁷ By the next day the

²⁵ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, p. 77.

²⁶ Hovyn de Tranchère, *Les dessous de l'histoire*, vol. II, pp. 11-12.; Duburg to Mazarin, 19 May 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, pp. 336-338; *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, p. 81.

²⁷ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, p. 79.

Bordelais lost patience with the Parlement and poured into the palais to force the issue. After Dubernet complained that he was ill (crowds threatened his life only days earlier) and would not attend the Parlement's session that day, "the court was told that people were gathering around the city with the intention to go to Libourne. At that moment, we heard a loud commotion at the door of the *sale de l'audience* and the court's *greffier* went to investigate, whereupon, he found a large crowd that had forced the door of the *sale de l'audience* and filled the great room with people."²⁸ With few options, the Parlement responded with another *arrêt*, this time giving Chambaret the authority to enforce its earlier *arrêts* through military action.

Based on the sources, it is difficult to know what social groups were behind this or other popular actions taken during the course of the Fronde. The city was heavily stratified and hierarchical, and generalizations about the Bordelais risk reducing differences, solidarities, and antagonisms down to a one-dimensional abstraction. The crowds of the Bordelais Fronde represented fluid groupings of individuals that were motivated by their own distinct interests and concerns. That being said, it is likely that action against Libourne had broad general support because a blockade would have hurt everyone in the city. For their part, the Frondeur *parlementaires* were not necessarily opposed to using force against Épernon but they were not anxious to see the conflict turn violent either. The Parlement was happy to be reconciled with the crown and eager to consolidate its meager gains, while Épernon's provocations undercut the court's ability to maintain order in the city.

²⁸ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, p. 80.

By now even Argenson recognized the futility of further negotiations and asked the Parlement for protection and permission to leave the city, which the court granted.²⁹ Argenson immediately wrote to Paris and rightly absolved the Parlement of responsibility for the attack, even though members of the court were leading the city's forces.³⁰ Argenson later reiterated this account to Mazarin, this time from Agen, where he noted that "the people had forced the Parlement to issue an *arrêt* sanctioning the military action against Libourne." Argenson also stated that he needed an escort out of the city, "because the Parlement, which united with the rebellious Bordelais, is no long their master."³¹ This account was reiterated by the mazarinist *parlementaire* Gérard Duburg in his writings to Mazarin about the events leading up to the attack. For Duburg, however, the Parlement's complicity and acquiescence to popular pressure was a trap for the magistrates that was certain to end in their disgrace.³²

According to Duburg, the Parlement's decision to attack Libourne was a pivotal moment in the Bordelais Fronde, the moment where the magistrates went from peacefully, if stubbornly, protesting royal and provincial policy and leadership, to armed rebellion against the crown. In Duburg's view, "you (the *parlementaires*) have only to ask with submission, and you will easily obtain the destruction of this place (Libourne) – it will only cost you a word." For Duburg and other loyalist magistrates it was the Parlement's responsibility to prevent popular sedition, not support it. The *parlementaires* were the sovereign magistrates of the people who needed to lead their fellow citizens by

²⁹ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, p. 82.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

³¹ *Les dessous de l'histoire*, vol. II, p. 12; *Les dessous de l'histoire*, vol. II, pp. 16-17. Argenson would later change his account of the attack and blame the Parlement for initiating the violence, which led him to call for the court's suppression. This second account was written after he joined Épernon in Cadillac and likely reflects pressure from the governor to present a unified account of the violence, since his earlier view confirms other source material and was written independently.

³² Duburg to the parlement of Bordeaux: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, pp. 340-341.

their efforts and example toward the obedience they all owed the monarchy. The only hope the *parlementaires* had to win royal concessions was through submission to their prince and the indulgence and grace only he could bestow. In other words, some *parlementaires* did not accept that circumstances could warrant rebellion against the crown or its representatives, and they maintained that submission to the prince was a central attribute of a good magistrate. It is certainly possible that Duburg's words to the Parlement were simply part of a rhetorical strategy to forestall the attack, but the terms he used to reject the Parlement's actions were common to other loyalists.³³ According to this view, the *parlementaires* held a privileged place in the social and political hierarchy, and it was their responsibility to defend that hierarchy. The idea that they could support popular rebellion against their sovereign was anathema because it undercut themselves along with the monarchy.

Chambaret came to the Parlement on 17 May to announce the departure of his army for Libourne and ask the Parlement for funds to feed and care for his men while they were on campaign. In a telling request, the Parlement asked Chambaret to leave some men behind to protect the palais and ensure the court's peaceful deliberation.³⁴ The first days of the siege went well for the city's army despite its lack of experience and discipline, but they were unable to break Libourne's defenses. Épernon's men finally arrived on the 26th to break the siege and the result was an all out battle between the two sides in which Chambaret's army was easily routed and he was killed.³⁵

³³ Duburg to the Parlement of Bordeaux: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, pp. 340-341.

³⁴ *Archives historiques*, vol. LIV, p. 82.

³⁵ Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, pp. 34-35.

An Increasingly Unstable Alliance

Following the defeat, the Parlement called for a general assembly of the *corps*, bourgeois, and members of the court to decide on the next step, and it used the gathering to take the pulse of the city before moving forward. If the city was going to capitulate, the *parlementaires* did not want to take this decision on their own and expose themselves to the potential fallout. The assembly decided to seek an immediate peace agreement with Épernon and the Archbishop of Bordeaux, Henri de Béthune, was sent to help negotiate the terms.³⁶ It is often difficult to determine who was behind the decisions that came out of these assemblies because the sources can be imprecise, but in this case the city's leadership wanted peace and the popular classes seemed resigned to at least a temporary cessation of hostilities. Despite being covered with the assembly's sanction, the events shaped peoples' perceptions of the court. The dramatic defeat and calls for peace, according to Fonteneil, brought further popular suspicion down on the Parlement, which was now rumored to have orchestrated the defeat in order to bring an end to the Fronde.³⁷ On the surface, this would seem to be a bizarre and shocking accusation to level against the magistrates given the centrality of their involvement in early stages of the Fronde. And yet, it is easy to imagine a rumor like this gaining traction in the city because it spoke to the profound suspicion and distrust that people had of the haughty and powerful magistrates who dominated their lives.

Épernon claimed he had stopped work on Libourne in response to Argenson's ordinance and accused the Parlement of responsibility for the attack. He also assured

³⁶ *Archives historiques*, vol. LVI, p. 151.

³⁷ Fonteneil, p. 185.

Séguier that the battle could have been avoided if the Parlement and bourgeois had sent him representatives to ensure the enforcement of the peace agreement's terms. Épernon blamed the Parlement because it absolved him of responsibility, and it was a convenient and more accessible target than the Bordelais.³⁸ The record, however, shows that the Parlement was not behind the attack, and Épernon's efforts were surely part of an effort to undercut the authority and position of an old enemy.

Several things become clear concerning the events that led to the attack on Libourne. Perhaps most significantly, the Parlement and Bordelais were partners of convenience even in the early days of their revolt against the king. The *parlementaires* did not, as Bercé has argued, see themselves as defending the city against the power and authority of an encroaching monarchy. Nor did they see themselves as head of a civic coalition of groups struggling to bring peace to the city. The *parlementaires* recognized the limitations of their power and the tenuousness of their position, and they were continually looking for an honorable way out – a chance to consolidate their limited gains and reestablish order in the city. This was evident when the Parlement registered Argenson's peace agreement and then set about trying to implement it. The Parlement needed Épernon to negotiate in good faith, however, and the door opened for popular action when the court failed to secure the concessions that were demanded of it by the Bordelais.

The Parlement wanted strong, stable leadership from the crown, leadership that respected traditional constitutional arrangements and established power structures. When the *parlementaires* felt that their place in social and political hierarchy was threatened they were prepared to push back. Manipulations of clientage ties, new royal courts, new

³⁸ *Les dessous de l'histoire*, vol. II, p. 9.

royal officers with new powers, etc...all of these developments destabilized the relationship between the Parlement and crown and illustrates the ambivalent ties that united the two, ties that ranged from mutually reinforcing to self-serving and self-destructive. The *parlementaires* were not defending regional autonomy but their own position within the kingdom's existing political structures. Throughout the early modern period, fundamental changes to these political structures eventually led to *parlementaire* pressure, not to go back to some anachronistic past relationship between the crown and its high courts, but to reassert the court's authority in a rapidly growing, changing, and evolving political system. The court, however, had few resources of its own and was forced to reach out to other groups in the city for help.

Both Frondeur and loyalist magistrates understood the importance of hierarchy in this society but they disagreed on how best to maintain it. For Frondeur magistrates, the crown's evident attack on their traditional rights and privileges amounted to a betrayal of a historic and mutually beneficial relationship with their sovereign. Loyalist magistrates, on the other hand, understood rebellion as a failure to acknowledge the crown as the ultimate source of their sovereignty. Loyalists maintained that the court could pursue all the peaceful means at its disposal to affect royal policy, but in the end it had to submit to the will of the crown. By contrast, Frondeur magistrates believed they had exhausted the traditional channels to redress grievances and saw the crown's unwillingness to satisfy their many appeals as evidence that something was very wrong with the monarchy and the people that represented it. It was thought that removing these people and restoring these channels of dialogue and compromise would strengthen both the Parlement and crown, which meant that their revolt, far from being treasonous, was paradoxically

intended to reinforce the ties between the king and his magistrates. Both groups thought they were defending the monarchy, but they differed in their conceptions of their relationship to the sovereign.

Épernon was eager to exploit his victory and strike a blow against the Parlement, which he blamed for the troubles and perceived as a challenge to his authority. The *parlementaires* almost certainly knew that the governor and others were pressing for harsh actions against them.³⁹ In the weeks before the duc's entry, people began to gather in "illicit assemblies" that threatened the fragile peace. The Parlement called for *commissaires* to investigate the growing agitation, which concerned the apparent betrayal of the city by the Jurade. The Jurade had sent one of their own, Jacques Ardent, to Paris to disavow the events of the last few months and call for the suppression of the Parlement.⁴⁰ The move was intended to consolidate the governor's position following the victory at Libourne and his upcoming entry into the city, but it immediately raised suspicions in the Parlement and city since no notice was given and the jurats refused to turn over the minutes of their meeting concerning the trip.⁴¹

Épernon finally arrived on 23 July, and news of his intention to suppress the Parlement on orders from the king reached the *parlementaires* that day. The Bordelais tried to block the duc's entry into the city by barricading the Saint Julien gate, and when he finally did enter the city, according to Fonteneil, "he carried himself like a conquering general entering a subject city. Everyone looked on him with loathing and hid in their homes so they wouldn't have to greet him. His men had a hard time finding lodging

³⁹ Épernon to Mazarin, 6 June 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, pp. 357-361.

⁴⁰ *Registre secret*, 24 June 1649: AM Bordeaux ms. 791, p. 688.

⁴¹ Fonteneil, 217.

anywhere in the city.”⁴² Épernon was undisturbed and called on the Jurade to organize the bourgeois the next morning at the hôtel de ville to “show his affection for the Bordelais” and present the king’s declaration. The gathering was scheduled for seven a.m. but by nine o’clock only eight of the estimated four hundred bourgeois in the city had answered Épernon’s call and these were almost certainly clients.⁴³

Undeterred, Épernon, the royal agent Comminges, and dozens of supporters entered the palais the next morning to force the court into exile.⁴⁴ President la Tresne went to speak to Comminges when he learned that Épernon and his men were attempting to interrupt their deliberations. He objected to the violent manor in which Épernon’s men had entered the palais, insisted that the court would not submit to force, and demanded that Épernon’s men leave the palais before the Parlement would deliberate the king’s orders.⁴⁵ By the time that Épernon’s men withdrew from the palais news of the incident had spread through the city.⁴⁶

After reading the king’s decree, the *gens du roi* and the rest of the court decided to draw up remonstrances defending their refusal to register it. Exile would have meant a clear defeat for the Parlement, and the magistrates must have recognized that they could still rely on the support of the Bordelais if they stood up to Épernon and the crown. According to the decree, the king was deeply disappointed with the *parlementaires* who had “made such poor usage of the power that we have given them.” The king then noted that “the actions of magistrates are of great consequence; news of their actions circulate the city and are imitated by the Bordelais.” According to the crown, the *parlementaires*

⁴² Fonteneil, pp. 189-193.

⁴³ *Inventaire sommaire des Registres de la Jurade*, pp. 150-151.

⁴⁴ *Registre secret*, 24 June 1649: AM Bordeaux ms. 791, p. 686.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 689.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 690-693.

were responsible for regulating public life in the city and the Bordelais were poorly served by the court's provocations.⁴⁷ The monarchy viewed its sovereign judges as responsible for maintaining the crown's provincial authority. As the only sovereign authority, however, it was up to the crown to decide on the nature and characteristics of the political hierarchy. The crown placed blame for the revolt at the feet of the *parlementaires* because it was their responsibility to suppress social unrest regardless of its origins or goals. In the monarchy's view, like their loyalist supporters, no amount of burdens or abuse could ever justify open defiance of the king's will.

The remonstrances were to be presented to Lavie, de Gourgue, Jean de Montjon, and Mirat who were already in Paris to lobby for the Parlement. It is telling that when the regent, Anne of Austria, and Mazarin refused to meet with the delegation to discuss their grievances, Lavie and du Sault both reached out to the Prince de Condé to intercede on their behalf. We cannot interpret their letters of fidelity to Condé as support for his later rebellion, since Condé still supported the regency in the summer of 1649, but the *parlementaires* clearly saw him as a sympathetic figure that might support their cause.⁴⁸ Their *arrêt* refused to suspend the court's deliberations and detailed the perceived injustices committed by Épernon and his men.⁴⁹ The Bordelais defended the Parlement because it was the target of a common enemy and was seemingly punished for defending the city against outside aggression.⁵⁰

The Jurade was still made up of Épernon's men and it soon became the focus of public anger. Following the defeat at Libourne and the attempt to suppress the

⁴⁷ Fonteneil, p. 243.

⁴⁸ Lavie to Condé, 27 July 1649 and Du Sault to Condé, 8 June 1649: AC Series P Tome IV.

⁴⁹ *Registre secret*, 24 June 1649: AM Bordeaux ms. 791, p. 704.

⁵⁰ Fonteneil, p. 252.

Parlement, the jurat Constant wrote to Châteauneuf, *garde des sceaux* of France, that he and the other jurats had been threatened with the destruction of their homes and the murder of their families if they attempted to exercise their functions, and they were held responsible for the crown's reluctance to get rid of Épernon.⁵¹ In fact, many of the jurats had been chased from the city following the rebellion and only made their way back to Bordeaux when Épernon reentered the city.⁵² When the jurat Labarriere tried to calm a crowd of people on 24 July it was at great risk to his life, and when protesters gathered at the marché later that day, Labarriere, abandoned by his own men, found himself threatened at gun point. While he managed to flee to a friend's home near the city, he was discovered there and fatally shot by musket fire. According to one historian, he was so universally hated that no one would cooperate with the investigation into his murder and it went unpunished.⁵³ The other jurats, including Bechon, Frans and Lestrilles, also encountered hostile crowds in the streets and were forced to seek refuge in their homes. Two days later the jurats learned that Épernon was making plans to leave the city and return to Cadillac, and they pleaded with Comminges and the duc to remain, noting that the city on the verge of another revolt and they would be forced to face its fury alone since the bourgeois refused to follow their orders. If the duc could not be convinced to stay, they asked to leave with him since their presence would be pointless and dangerous; but despite their desperate pleas, Épernon and Comminges announced that they were leaving and the jurats must stay.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Constant to Châteauneuf, 28 May 1649: *Archives historiques*, vol. IV, p. 351.

⁵² Constant to Mazarin, 1 June 1649: *Archives Historiques*, vol. IV, pp. 355-357.

⁵³ Boscheron Des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 50.

⁵⁴ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, p. 150.

Épernon was determined to make one final effort to disband the Parlement before leaving the city, and he announced that if he could not arrest them all at once he and his men would go door to door to round the members up.⁵⁵ However, word of Épernon's intentions resulted in a call-to-arms among the Bordelais and the duc lost his nerve. First he tried to flee the city by the Saint Julian gate only to find it barricaded and forced to turn back to his residence at Puy Paulin. The duc then decided to leave by the Porte Dauphin when his men were attacked by a group of children with slingshots and rocks.⁵⁶ It was a humiliating exit from the city for this proud man. Despite his calls for the jurats to remain, Béchou and Lestrilles fled the city, Ardent was already gone, and Frans and Niac managed to hide from public view. No longer functioning and with its membership in disarray, the Parlement took the opportunity to appoint its own members as provisional jurats, but then substituted them with the chief *greffier*, Pontac de Beautiran and two lawyers, Constant and Emmanuel Hugla. The moves put the Parlement squarely in control of the Jurade.⁵⁷

The events of Épernon's entry and retreat from the city reflect the cooperation that existed at that moment between the Bordelais and *parlementaires*. The city rallied to the Parlement's defense when it was threatened with exile, while the Parlement stood firm in its opposition to Épernon. The basis for united action between the *parlementaires* and Bordelais that developed in 1648 remained in effect through 1649. With magistrates leading the effort, the city's militia was finally able to bring down the walls of the hated Château Trompette and force its surrender. It was a functional cooperation that required a common enemy and purpose to survive. For Épernon, the *parlementaires* intended to

⁵⁵ Fonteneil, p. 253.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 254.

⁵⁷ Boscheron Des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, pp. 50-51.

destroy royal authority and create a republic, an assertion that he made long before the Ormée came to power.⁵⁸ While the governor may have believed this, it was an argument that was self-serving and sought to undermine and destroy the one political power in the province that could challenge him. More importantly, republicanism threatened the very authority of the magistrates, and not surprisingly, there is no evidence in their writings to support the allegation. Both sides reached out to the provincial nobility for support in the fall of 1649, and their appeals both referenced the need to serve the king and protect his authority.⁵⁹ It is easy to dismiss these sorts of pronouncements from the *parlementaires* as purely rhetorical, and certainly few would have responded to calls to defend the Parlement *against* the king. But for the *parlementaires* and their targeted audience, these appeals struck at the heart of the problem, which was not a critique of royal authority but of their position within its descending hierarchy.

Calls for Épernon's removal increased in the fall of 1649 as du Plessis Praslin, the Parlement, and individual magistrates all wrote to Mazarin to argue that no lasting peace for the city could be negotiated without the duc's dismissal. In a letter from the Parlement to Mazarin, the court called for the cardinal's help in getting rid of Épernon and claimed that they had only the interests of the crown in mind when making the request – the Parlement could no longer control popular hostility toward the duc. In a more candid letter, du Plessis Praslin noted that hostility was growing in the city and Parlement toward Mazarin because he was increasingly viewed as the governor's protector.⁶⁰ The unwillingness of the regency to address the situation highlighted the

⁵⁸ Épernon to Mazarin, 18 September 1649: *Archives Historiques*, vol. IV, pp. 416-417.

⁵⁹ Lettre-Circulaire du parlement de Bordeaux aux gentilshommes de Guienne, 4 August, 1649: *Archives Historiques*, vol. IV, pp. 377-378.

⁶⁰ du Plessis Praslin to Mazarin, 18 November 1649: *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, pp. 305-307.

breakdown of traditional channels of discourse and compromise and reinforced an image of the monarchy as out of touch and disinterested in the tribulations of the province. By contrast, Épernon attacked the *parlementaires* and other opponents, not by reference to his own authority or person, but by noting that the revolt, if left unpunished, would “be very harmful to the state and the ruin of royal authority.”⁶¹ It was a defense that deflected personal responsibility for the escalating tensions and tried to link the crown’s authority to his own. If the crown yielded to calls for his dismissal, it would simply reward the rebels and encourage them to make future demands that might weaken the monarchy. Like the loyalist *parlementaires*, Épernon also argued that royal sovereignty was absolute and there was no legitimate basis for open revolt against the will of the crown.

To affirm their mutual support, another oath of union between the Parlement and *corps* was administered on the eve of Épernon’s final effort to take the city by force in December 1649. The oath was considered necessary because of the impending conflict and the possibility that spies or cabals could undermine the city’s defenses.⁶² After ignoring word of an imminent peace agreement from Paris, Épernon attacked the city in late December 1649, believing that one final definitive victory would allow him to dictate terms. He was defeated in dramatic fashion in a battle for the town of La Bastide, opposite the river from Bordeaux, in which the city’s troops won an improbable victory.⁶³ Épernon was left with no choice but to temporarily honor the king’s peace accord.

This was a bitter pill for Épernon to swallow. In fact, when de Plessis-Praslin presented Épernon with the king’s orders he refused to look at them or elaborate on how

⁶¹ Épernon to Mazarin, 14 December 1649: *Archives Historiques*, vol. IV, p. 331.

⁶² *Registre secret*, 18 December 1649: AM Bordeaux ms. 792, pp. 142-3.

⁶³ Lavie to Mazarin, 3 January 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, p. 356.

he would comply.⁶⁴ The peace agreement included no punishments for the rebellious city or Parlement, Libourne was to be demolished, and all of the properties that had been pillaged in the countryside were to be returned and restored. For the Bordelais, the peace agreement addressed all of their basic demands. It provided a general amnesty for all those involved in the revolt, rescinded the two écu tax on wine, and called for the removal of troops from around the city. While Château Trompette was to be returned to the crown, the city was given guarantees that it would not be garrisoned again.⁶⁵ The peace agreement was enthusiastically received by both the Parlement and Bordelais, and according to a tract that circulated entitled “Le Remerciement des Bourdelois au Roy sur le sujet de la Paix” the treaty finally struck the right tone. “What glorious people we are to be supported by the voice of our prince! What a kind prince to have lent his support to his abused people! We are pleased that war has given us peace! Pleased that our misfortune has produced happiness! Pleased that conflict has given rise to the king’s grace!”⁶⁶ For the Bordelais and *parlementaires*, it seemed as if the crown was finally listening and acting upon their many complaints. It is significant that this popular and generous peace agreement was widely considered to be the work of Condé and his influence in the Council of State. The Parlement wrote to the Parlements of Paris and Toulouse and the Prince de Condé for support in the fall of 1649, and while it only received lukewarm support from the courts Condé was receptive.⁶⁷ His efforts were likely intended to expand his influence, strike back at his old enemy Épernon, and win support for a showdown with Mazarin over control of the regency. To that end, his

⁶⁴ du Plessis Praslin, 4 January 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, p. 358.

⁶⁵ Fonteneil, pp. 419-421.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 426-431 Quel peuple plus glorieux d’être justifié par la voix de son prince! Quel Prince plus aimable, d’avoir tendu la main à son peuple abattus!...Heureuse guerre qui nous donne la Paix! Heureuse malheur qui produit le bonheur! Heureuse division qui enfante la grâce!

⁶⁷ Boscheron Des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 57.

efforts on behalf of the city were a success and Bordeaux would later repay him by siding with the prince during his imprisonment and rebellion.

By contrast, Épernon was unenthusiastic about the peace and eager to undermine it from the start. Du Plessis-Praslin sensed Épernon's hesitance and wrote Mazarin shortly after the treaty's announcement to ask the cardinal to write his client personally to demand compliance and remove any confusion or doubt about the crown's intentions.⁶⁸ Fonteneil maintained that the Bordelais promptly began to take down the city's fortifications and disband the militia in order to comply with the peace agreement and remove any pretext for further hostilities. While Fonteneil was a Frondeur and a less than reliable source in other situations there is no reason to doubt him here. First, the terms of the agreement were obviously not in Épernon's favor, and while he maintained his post as governor, his prestige and credit were seriously damaged. Second, the agreement addressed the Parlement and city's most pressing demands and gave them an honorable way out of the rebellion. Only their demand for a new governor was refused, which was a significant omission but would not have undermined the deal if the duc's desire for retribution had been controlled. Épernon's reaction to the treaty was similar to the comte d'Alais's reaction to the Bichi Treaty in Aix. In both provinces, a struggle was taking place between the *parlementaires* and their unpopular and vengeful governors, a struggle in which the governors saw royal intervention as unjustly tilting toward the rebellious parlements.⁶⁹

While the Parlement managed to maintain its civic leadership in the early stages of the Fronde through consultations with the *corps*, bourgeois, and Bordelais, its hold on

⁶⁸ du Plessis Praslin to Mazarin, 6 January 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, p. 362.

⁶⁹ Sharon Kettering, *Judicial Politics and Urban Revolt*, p. 277.

the city was slipping by the beginning of 1650. According to Sal Westrich's work on the Fronde and Ormée, the divide between the Parlement and Bordelais that developed in the spring of 1650 resulted from the separate peace the court extracted from the crown in January. He maintained that the *menu peuple*, who did most of the front-line fighting in the revolt, won few tangible benefits from the peace and were betrayed by the *parlementaires*. This led the Bordelais to look elsewhere, specifically to the Prince de Condé, for a new way to channel their grievances. This interpretation does not recognize the role played by Épernon and the crown as the peace unraveled, and it wrongly contends that the Bordelais were dissatisfied with the treaty. The Parlement did not "sell out" the people of Bordeaux with this agreement and there is every reason to believe that the peace would have held if not for developments in Paris and the continued hostility of Épernon.

While the duc had agreed to tear down Libourne, in fact, he simply ignored the king's order and hoped for the situation in Paris to change. Épernon also did little to repair the damage done by his troops in the countryside and he was slow to remove his men from around Bordeaux. Almost two weeks after Alvimare arrived with the king's orders, de Plessis-Praslin was complaining to Mazarin about Épernon's inaction and openly wondered if he was unaware of orders to the duc to continue the conflict.⁷⁰ All of these actions were seen as a deliberate provocation and led the Parlement to renew its call for a new governor.⁷¹ The *parlementaires* were concerned that Épernon's inaction would lead to popular violence that they would be helpless to prevent, and they issued

⁷⁰ du Plessis Praslin to Mazarin, 12 January 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, p. 365.

⁷¹ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 792, p. 242.

remonstrances to the king to forestall the threat.⁷² The *parlementaires* were not eager to be baited into another round of fighting by the governor or Bordelais.

Both sides began pointing fingers as the peace slowly disintegrated. The crown sent S. de Villemontée to Bordeaux to ensure the treaty's enforcement but the situation was hopeless.⁷³ In their first meeting with Villemontée, the *parlementaires* complained vigorously about Épernon's many infractions of the treaty, while emphasizing their own loyalty to the king and compliance with the peace agreement. The Parlement maintained that Épernon was obstructing the peace agreement and no further progress toward peace could be made without his dismissal.⁷⁴ Épernon countered that the city had levied a new tax to raise money for its troops and was furious over calls for his dismissal.⁷⁵ He also refused to tear down Libourne until the crown reimbursed him for all of his personal expenses incurred during the construction.⁷⁶ In correspondence with the crown, both sides professed their cooperation with the crown's peace treaty and blamed the other for the increasingly deteriorating situation. During this time, the Parlement held several meetings to discuss the duc's removal, and recognizing the need for unity on the issue, the court organized an assembly on 4 April at the hôtel de ville during which the call for a new governor won overwhelming support. According to Épernon, the *parlementaires* gathered people for this assembly by going door-to-door looking for supporters and the meeting was run by "furious and impassioned" people who shouted down their opponents.⁷⁷ In reality, the Bordelais and *parlementaires* both supported the call for a

⁷² *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 792, p. 245.

⁷³ *Registre secret*, 22 March 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

⁷⁴ *Registre secret*, 2 April 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

⁷⁵ *Registre secret*, 24 March 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

⁷⁶ du Plessis Praslin to Mazarin, 16 January 1650, *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, p. 367.

⁷⁷ Épernon to Mazarin, 8 April 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, p. 404.

new governor as the first step toward reconciliation with the crown, which they maintained was poorly served by the duc's behavior and actions. Pressure on the duc was mounting.⁷⁸

Princely Politics and the Collapse of Collaboration

Even more disruptive was Mazarin's decision to arrest the princes in January 1650. The arrest came as a blow to both the city and Parlement because Condé was widely recognized as a friend of the Bordelais and as one of the architects of the recent peace agreement with the crown. His arrest, along with his brother, the Prince de Conti, and brother-in-law, the duc de Longueville, made many in Bordeaux question the crown's good faith and undermined the peace agreement before it was fully implemented. The arrest also hurt Maréchal de Praslin's ability to mediate the conflict since he was considered a creature of Mazarin and the cardinal was blamed for the arrest.⁷⁹ There was a delicate interplay of local and national circumstances that sparked and sustained the Bordelais Fronde, and the actions of the regency were crucial at this moment.

With her husband in prison and needing to rally support for his release, Bordeaux was an obvious choice for the princess Condé when she fled and sought refuge at the end of May 1650. Her arrival in the city marked a turning point in the Bordelais Fronde and contributed to the decline of the Parlement's standing in the city. The princess and her entourage rivaled the Parlement and bourgeois for influence and they destabilized an

⁷⁸ *Registre secret*, 4 April 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

⁷⁹ Fonteneil, p. 439.

already unstable situation. For their part, the *parlementaires* and bourgeois understood the danger posed by the princess's entry to the city. According to Comminges, the bourgeois were opposed to opening the city gates for the princess and there was talk of having to sneak her in after dark.⁸⁰ As we have seen, the *parlementaires* and Bordelais were allies of convenience, and it is not surprising that the relationship could not withstand the introduction of outside pressures. Perhaps most importantly, sheltering the princess meant taking the city back into revolt and accepting the failure of the peace agreement. This was a direction the *parlementaires* wanted to avoid, but popular support for Condé and his cause, who was often contrasted with “despotic” representatives of the regency like Épernon and Mazarin, limited their ability to act.

Despite the apprehension of some, demands to shelter the princess got louder. In late May protests broke out when people found the gates of the city closed and feared that it was done to block her entry.⁸¹ The Parlement called on the Jurade to calm the situation but rumors were spreading that the Jurade had closed the gates on orders from the king.⁸² When the jurats emerged from the palais, crowds began yelling “Vive le roi et messieurs les princes!” and some of the most seditious removed the locks on the gates at Caillau and Chapeau Rouge and threatened to attack anyone who tried to stop them.

To show the people that they were not conspiring against the princess the *parlementaires* opened their debates to the public and called for an investigation of the broken locks. Condé's secretary and the princess's main advisor while she was in Bordeaux, Pierre Lenet, blamed Lavie for cabaling with the Jurade to close the gates of

⁸⁰ Comminges to Mazarin, 29 May 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, p. 439.

⁸¹ *Registre secret*, 31 May 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792. pp. 403-404.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 405.

the city.⁸³ While it is difficult to know the reasons, although his correspondence indicates that he became a client of Mazarin's around this time, Lavie went from backing the Fronde to supporting the regency and he was increasingly perceived as a traitor. In his correspondence, Lavie noted that his *courrier* had been intercepted with correspondence implicating him in double-dealings with the crown.⁸⁴ The material was quickly published around the city in the fall of 1649 and placards appeared attacking the *Advocat-Général*.⁸⁵ Lavie was part of a nascent party in the Parlement and city that believed that the revolt had run its course and they would be best served by supporting Mazarin and the regency.

It seems clear that Condé's supporters in the city were responsible for inciting the crowds that attacked the gates, but it is difficult to determine the extent of the prince's support during this period.⁸⁶ The Bordelais certainly sympathized with Condé's plight and recognized Mazarin as a common enemy, but they remained primarily motivated by local concerns and were only dimly aware of national events. The *parlementaires* recognized that admitting the princess to the city would undercut the court's fragile leadership and likely spark another wave of rebellion and unrest. With the exception of some clients, the *parlementaires* were not committed to the cause of the princes and they were not eager to restart the rebellion. According to Lavie, Condé offered the *parlementaires* "nothing but the glory of destroying themselves in his service." His statement alludes to an uncertainty many *parlementaires* felt toward the princely Fronde,

⁸³ Pierre Lenet, *Mémoires concernant l'histoire du prince de Condé* [Nouvelle collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, vol. XXVI]. (Paris, 1854), covering the years 1651-9; and *Mémoires de Pierre Lenet* [Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, ed. A Petitot and Monmerqué, vols. LIII-LIV] (Paris, 1826), pp. 282-4, covering the year 1650, [these two collections will be cited as Lenet, Mémoires, and the volume number].

⁸⁴ Lavie to Condé, 16 September 1649: AC Séries P, Tome V, fol. 307.

⁸⁵ Lavie to Condé, 8 November 1649: AC Séries P, Tome VI, fol. 56.

⁸⁶ Anonymous letter to M. de Guitaut, 5 June 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. IV, p. 458.

which they saw as offering no tangible benefits and many hazards.⁸⁷ Lavie himself was shouted down when he supported the crown during a gathering at the palais, but the jurat Constant blamed the duc de Bouillon, not the *parlementaires*, when “strangers” interrupted the meeting with shouts of “get the traitor!”⁸⁸

When the Princess finally entered the city on 30 May 1650, the Bordelais cheered her arrival and turned on the king’s representative Alvimar, who immediately asked the Parlement to provide for his safety.⁸⁹ He was not, however, the only one who no longer felt secure in the city. When the Parlement asked the jurats to protect Alvimar, they pointed out that they too were the target of popular anger and asked that the Parlement call for new elections. The Jurade, which had long since been purged of Épernon’s men, was now suspect in the eyes of the Bordelais and no longer able to influence events on the street.⁹⁰ According to one historian, the jurats, while selected by the Parlement the year before, had come under the influence of Lavie and had lobbied against protecting the princess and union with the princes.⁹¹ Two days later it was clear that most of the jurats had either hid or fled the city because Alvimar needed others to provide for his safety after failing to locate them. The Parlement called on them to reassume their charges under threat of having to answer for any trouble that occurred in their absence, but to no effect. A *huissier* of the Parlement was sent to the hôtel de ville and reported back that the jurats had not been there in days and had abandoned their offices. According to President d’Affis, the bourgeois had also stopped fulfilling their civic functions at this

⁸⁷ Lavie to Mazarin, 26 May 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, pp. 431-3.

⁸⁸ Constat to Mazarin, 26 May 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. III, p. 436.

⁸⁹ *Registre secret*, 1 June 1650: AM Bordeaux, ms. 792, p. 417.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 427.

⁹¹ Boscheron Des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, pp. 81-5.

time.⁹² The jurats feared for their lives and with good reason as posters appeared attacking them and some *parlementaires* as traitors to the city. The Parlement offered to protect anyone named in the placards and called on the *gens du roi* to research those responsible.⁹³

Christian Jouhaud's work on the mazarinades is informative in this situation. According to Jouhaud, the mazarinades were not texts that reflected historical realities or even public opinion but were designed to influence public opinion and generate action.⁹⁴ Without knowing the details or origins of these placards, their purpose is clear – they sought to rid the city of anyone who threatened the princess and her interests. The placards reflected a power struggle between the princess and the city's traditional elite for influence within the city. The decline of the Jurade and bourgeois militia's authority hurt the Parlement because these institutions enforced the court's decisions. While the *parlementaires* tried to maintain their leadership in the city, the loss of the Jurade's authority meant that they had few resources to call upon when their views differed from the princess or their fellow citizens.

Those in the Parlement who had spoken out against the princess now found themselves in danger. Lavie was attacked in his home but managed to flee to safety in the convent of the Feuillants, while his wife pleaded with Sauveboeuf to protect them. Threats against his family finally convinced a hesitant Lavie that it was time to leave, and Sauveboeuf led him under armed guard to a ship headed for Blaye.⁹⁵ Protestors then pillaged his home and would have burned it to the ground had Sauveboeuf not

⁹² *Registre secret*, 11 June 1650: AM Bordeaux, ms. 792.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 3 June 1650.

⁹⁴ Christian Jouhaud, *Mazarinades: la Fronde des mots* (Paris, 1985).

⁹⁵ Boscheron Des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 84.

intervened, and rumors circulated that the crowd was preparing to travel to Pessac and Taillan to pillage the magistrate's country homes. The Parlement ordered the city gates secured and called for the instigators to be found and punished, but the scene must have troubled the *parlementaires*. Lavie was one of their own and helped lead the city into revolt in 1648 and 1649, and while it is clear that he was working for the crown by this time, the destruction of his home and threats to his life were a grim reminder of the exposure and vulnerability faced by all.⁹⁶ The Parlement responded by requiring the city's printers to clear material with the court first in an effort to stop the growing number of libelous and seditious tracts that circulated the city but it is unlikely this had much of an effect.⁹⁷

Various rumors began to circulate the city following Épernon's capture of the isle Saint Georges. Some alleged that members of the Parlement were secretly supporting Épernon, while others claimed that the duc was planning to seize one of the city gates with help from people inside. Crowds stormed the palais on 21 and 22 June to demand a response to the duc's provocation, and the Parlement responded by calling an assembly and pressing the bourgeois to calm the situation.⁹⁸ The *parlementaires* de Boucaud vieux and de Cieutat were named to assist in the assembly.

The assembly did not go as the Parlement had hoped. Boucaud noted that when they arrived they found a "large number of school children and ordinary citizens and very few bourgeois." They were told by the jurat Pontac that the bourgeois were absent because they had not been properly notified. The *parlementaires* then decided to postpone the assembly until Saturday but when they attempted to leave the hôtel de ville

⁹⁶ *Registre secret*, 3, 11 June 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18 June 1650.

⁹⁸ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, p. 347; *Registre secret*, 22 June 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

a crowd blocked their exit and called for union with the princess and action against Épernon. The confrontation shocked and angered the *parlementaires*.⁹⁹ According to Lenet, the demand for unity was simply motivated by the danger posed by Épernon, and not by the princess's own need for protection, but still, union was exactly what the princess wanted and Lenet and his friends were quick to leverage their position.¹⁰⁰

On 24 June the Parlement assembled to discuss calls for union with the princess, but it was divided between those who favored obedience to the crown or feared renewed conflict and those who supported the princess.¹⁰¹ The crown offered to remove Épernon in exchange for the surrender of the princess and her supporters, an offer which was portrayed by the princess's supporters as a ploy to divide the city. By the summer of 1650 the *parlementaires* were reaching out to the duc d'Orléans for support because they no longer trusted Mazarin, and like others in the city they probably saw the offer as disingenuous.¹⁰² The issue was irrelevant to Lenet since the Parlement no longer had enough influence in the city to force the princess to leave against her will.¹⁰³ The court refused to receive the trompette that brought the offer, but that did not matter to the crowd of people who again stormed the palais with calls for union and threats to kill anyone who opposed them.¹⁰⁴ President d'Affis was attacked outside the palais and by the next day he prepared to leave the city. Boucaud found him "in the mood to leave the city because the day before, while leaving the palais, a large group of people accused him of being a mazarinist and threatened to drown him in the river if the Parlement did not

⁹⁹ *Registre secret*, 25 June 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792. Une grande quantité d'écolière et de menu peuple et fort peu de bourgeois.

¹⁰⁰ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, p. 349.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

¹⁰² Parlement de Bordeaux to duc d'Orléans, 18 July 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. VI, pp. 484-5.

¹⁰³ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, p. 350.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

unite with the princess.” The Parlement pleaded with d’Affis to return for “the service of the king” and promised protection if he returned to the palais but President d’Affis refused.¹⁰⁵

The *parlementaires* were shaken and angered by the threats and reached out to the princess for help calming the situation. The *parlementaires* still refused to call for union, but they were convinced to issue an *arrêt* that condemned Épernon and promised protection for the princess.¹⁰⁶ When a general assembly met to take up the issue again two days later, the call for an oath of union with the princes was even louder and preempted all other business.¹⁰⁷ The *parlementaires* were content with the original oath of union with the *corps* of the city and did not want to tie themselves directly to Condé’s camp. They tried to direct the meeting to other matters but were quickly shouted down by people in the crowd who called for a vote on the issue, and when the vote was taken a majority favored union with the princes, leaving the Parlement with no choice but to consent. The *parlementaires* called for armed guards at future assemblies that could be used to block “any propositions that were contrary to the service of the king” and immediately disavowed the oath. They also called on the jurats to organize the bourgeois to defend the streets if needed (although there is no reason to think that such a call could have been executed at this time) and for members of the court to bring armed men with them to the palais to “impart respect to the people.”¹⁰⁸ The magistrates were incredulous

¹⁰⁵ *Registre secret*, 25 June 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792. en disposition de quitter la ville et de se retirer par ce que le jour d’hier sortant de l’assemblée de relevée quelques uns de M. et lui furent menaces par grand nombre de peuple que s’il ne faisait l’union avec les princes qu’il les fallait noyer, qu’il était un mazariniste et qu’il ferait mieux de s’en aller a Toulouse.

¹⁰⁶ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, p. 351.

¹⁰⁷ *Registre secret*, 25 June 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, imprimer le respect au peuple.

that popular crowds had undermined their civic leadership and authority through their activism, and they were troubled by the outcome and precedence this set.

The assembly also called for new elections to the Jurade, since only two jurats were still exercising their charges, as well as new militia captains, many of whom had also abandoned their functions.¹⁰⁹ The new elections were a clear attempt by the princess and her supporters to seize control of the Jurade and militia away from the Parlement. Because elections to the Jurade were only a month away, the Parlement managed to delay these efforts but the intention was certainly clear. The *parlementaires* were trying to prepare themselves for the violent confrontation they knew was coming, and they were keenly aware of how much the situation had changed from the early days of the Fronde. In place of the mutual support that typified their relationship in 1648 and 1649, the magistrates and Bordelais were drifting toward open conflict.

Atop the hierarchy of Bordelais society, the *parlementaires* believed they alone had the right to determine what constituted service to the king and they were angered that ordinary people had the audacity to direct their deliberations. As Bercé has argued, there was a democratizing quality to the unrest of the Fronde that was deeply disturbing to the elite in French society.¹¹⁰ Uncertain of their ability to control unrest, authorities often reached out to groups and individuals, including the *petites gens*, who were not traditionally involved in the political process. Although Bercé does not acknowledge it, this was an implicit recognition that the elite could not speak for the public on matters involving their welfare. This kind of outreach provided the legitimacy needed to act but

¹⁰⁹ *Registre secret*, 25 June 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

¹¹⁰ Yves-Marie Bercé, "Retour à la Fronde," *XVII Siècle* 145 (1984), pp. 301-302.

it came with inherent risks, and as we will see during the Ormée this democratizing threat eventually became real for the Bordeaux *parlementaires*.

In the beginning of July a Spanish envoy named Osario arrived in Bordeaux with money to support the princess and the revolt, and his arrival posed a serious problem for the Parlement since negotiations with him were tantamount to treason. To maintain appearances or out of genuine disapproval, the Parlement ordered Osario's arrest and expulsion from the city. The move alarmed the princess who claimed she had no intention of upsetting the Parlement but insisted that its actions were extremely prejudicial to the cause of the princes. According to the princess, the *arrêt* gave the appearance that she and Parlement were not united, and it would undercut efforts to enlist Spanish assistance to continue the fight against Mazarin. Lenet claimed that the *arrêt* reflected inconsistencies in the Parlement's leadership and saw it as further evidence of the court's growing irrelevance.¹¹¹ If nothing else, the *arrêt*, powerless on its face, was a symbolic act of defiance against the cause of the princes and an attempt to strike an independent and increasingly royalist position on the part of the court.

Popular Violence and the Collapse of the Magistrates' Civic Authority

The tension between the Parlement, princess, and city came to a climax on 11 July when another large crowd stormed the Palais and demanded union with the princes. According to Lenet, the source of the trouble was the Parlement's *arrêt* and the rumor that the princess was leaving Bordeaux to seek shelter elsewhere after the Parlement

¹¹¹ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, p. 383.

refused its protection.¹¹² When the *parlementaires* tried to flee the Palais they were blocked and several magistrates scuffled with the crowd.¹¹³ The princess sent Lenet to calm the situation and when he entered the palais he found the *parlementaires* disoriented and outraged at the situation. President d’Affis was particularly agitated and cursed at Lenet that they were about to have their throats slit, but “they knew how to maintain their authority despite those who would undermined it.” This was almost certainly a challenge to the princess whom they viewed as responsible for the troubles.¹¹⁴ The Parlement pleaded with Lenet to handle the situation and he addressed the crowd, informing them that the Parlement had granted the princess everything she demanded. Lenet then led some from the crowd to the princess’s residence so that they could hear from her directly, but all of these efforts failed to disband the nearly three thousand people who now encircled the palais, many of whom were yelling that the court was made up of nothing but traitors who deserved to die.¹¹⁵

Help finally came around five in the evening when the jurat Pontac-Beautiran arrived at the palais with a few bourgeois, ordered the people to disperse, and then began firing on the crowd when they refused.¹¹⁶ Three people were killed and an equal number injured, but the violence finally succeeded in dispersing the crowd and the *parlementaires* were able to go home around seven o’clock.¹¹⁷ According to Lenet, Pontac’s actions were only successful because the princess intervened and called for a halt to the violence. She then declared “whoever supports me will follow me” and the rebels left bringing an end to the siege. The princess was anxious to take credit for

¹¹² Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, pp. 385-6.

¹¹³ Ibid., 11/7/1650.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 389.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 391.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 386.

¹¹⁷ *Registre secret*, 11 July 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

ending the siege, but it is unlikely that many *parlementaires* accepted her version of events. Lenet is certainly not a reliable source on the question of who was responsible for the attack, since he had obvious reasons for denying the princess's involvement. While the princess loudly proclaimed her innocence and immediately tried to repair the damage done to her relationship with the magistrates, she had to be happy with the outcome of the protest.¹¹⁸

As all the actors in this drama recognized, the events of 11 July were a measure of the political climate, the appetite for continued resistance, and each group's standing in the city. While the attack on the Parlement ended with the court still in operation and no mass expulsions of its members, the ability of the princess, either directly or indirectly, to mobilize popular crowds to fight for her interests symbolized her victory in the struggle for power and influence in the city. It also highlighted the princess's considerable popularity and the danger faced by anyone who opposed her. For both the princess and the *parlementaires*, the ability to mobilize popular crowds provided real and symbolic power and authority in their confrontations with other political actors. By contrast, the inability to win popular support symbolized shifting loyalties, declining political fortunes, and growing hostility toward the leadership that was offered to the Bordelais. There is little doubt that Lenet and others did what they could to help agitate the Bordelais in favor of the princess, but the large size of the crowds also speaks to a latent antipathy and ambivalence that many now felt toward the city's traditional leadership. The *parlementaires* had failed to bring lasting peace to the city and province, and their

¹¹⁸ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, p. 392.

growing unease with the continued revolt was increasingly interpreted as a betrayal of the city.

Following these events the Parlement grudgingly reached an accommodation with the princess. The court absolved the princess of responsibility for the unrest and called on her to help protect the city in the future, while she feigned obedience to the court's will.¹¹⁹ Their public pronouncements aside, the magistrates were now confronted with a situation beyond their control and had to make the best of a difficult set of circumstances. The evident reluctance of most *parlementaires* to support the princess also symbolized the court's turn away from the Fronde of the princes and toward reconciliation with the crown, and it was a signal to the Bordelais that the court could no longer be trusted to support future struggles against the regency or calls for civic change.

In the wake of the events of 11 July the princess learned that she could use popular pressure to manipulate the Parlement, and the Parlement learned that it no longer had the influence needed to guide the city. Despite holding a stronger position, the princess was confronted with a real dilemma in the weeks that followed. The king, regent, and Mazarin were touring the country to rally support and bring an end to the Fronde, and they were approaching Bordeaux. That summer the court had already visited Rouen and Dijon, and the young king, nearing his majority, was warmly received by cheering crowds and public celebrations that enhanced the crown's prestige and symbolized the bonds between the sovereign and his subjects. The princess recognized that the pressure on her and the city to negotiate a settlement would be intense because the king's person was likely to bring matters to a head. To strengthen her position the

¹¹⁹ *Registre secret*, 13 July 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

princess and her supporters repeatedly tried to link their hatred of Mazarin with the city's hatred of Épernon by noting their close affiliation. When one of Épernon's couriers was stopped and found with letters from the king professing his support for the governor, the princess immediately had them printed and circulated around the city to stir public outrage. And when the decision was taken to block Mazarin's entry to the city, opponents of the resolution in the Parlement were threatened with public denunciation.¹²⁰

To rally support, the princess orchestrated an assembly at the hôtel de ville on 19 July during which Mazarin was labeled an enemy of the state and the crowd announced that they would kill the first person to talk about admitting him into the city.¹²¹ The outcome of the meeting was enough to convince the Parlement to renew its promise to protect the princess and raise troops to defend the city, but she remained suspicious of the court's intentions and fearful about her fate.¹²² Popular pressure may also have played a part in leading individual members, like President d'Affis, to support the princess at this time. D'Affis had been a target of earlier threats, and this experience along with the promise of a pension from the princess convinced him to support her interests. As Lenet bluntly put it, "fear and money go a long way toward motivating people like d'Affis."¹²³ Fear certainly motivated the *parlementaires* since, as the events of 11 July illustrated, they could no longer count on the militia to defend them in the event of future unrest.¹²⁴ According to anonymous letters to Lavie at this time (perhaps from the *parlementaire* Mirat who was known to be writing Lavie), the magistrates tried to preserve their

¹²⁰ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, pp. 397-9.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 406.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

authority and moderate these proceedings, but overt, vocal support for the crown was dangerous.¹²⁵

Despite the Parlement's capitulation to the princess, individual *parlementaires* were singled out in libelous pamphlets and vicious rumors, and all of the people identified in the writings were asked to leave the city.¹²⁶ In order to consolidate her control over the Parlement, the princess pressured to have the magistrates identified in the pamphlets expelled from the city. According to Lenet, these *parlementaires* were not only linked to the crown, but they had no relationship to the princess and there was no hope of winning them over. The rest of the court wanted them to stay, arguing that the eleven could be controlled, their expulsion might lead to an alternative parlement outside the city, and their presence lent legitimacy to the court's decisions. Lenet remained unconvinced and continued to believe that they were a greater threat inside the city than outside.¹²⁷ Again, the point of these placards and attacks was to clear the city of anyone who might threaten the princess's influence.

The King's Arrival and the Momentary Return of Stability

Despite the princess's seemingly strong position in late July there were troubles looming that threatened to overturn her efforts. First, the city faced serious food shortages that made the prospect of an extended siege unthinkable.¹²⁸ Second, and more

¹²⁵ Anonymous letter to Lavie, 21 July 1650, *Archives Historiques*, vol. VI, p. 490; Anonymous letter to Lavie, 21 July 1650, *Archives Historiques*, vol. VI, p. 492.

¹²⁶ *Registre secret*, 26-7 July 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792. Among the *parlementaires* who came in for public ridicule were S. Duval, S. de Sabourin pere and fils, de Farnoux, Duzeste, de Pommies, Pres aux Enquêtes, Duval freres, Martin, Denis, Montaudon, et Peleau.

¹²⁷ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, p. 416.

¹²⁸ *Registre secret*, 30 July 1650, 22 August 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

importantly, the wine harvest was quickly approaching and the promises of Spanish aid had not materialized. It was during this time that the princess and her people began to realize that the Spanish would never provide the aid needed, but disclosing this fact to the Bordelais meant admitting the hopelessness of their cause. For their part, the Spanish had no intention of providing real aid to the revolt, but they repeatedly tried to leverage the promise of aid to prolong the revolt and weaken the French position.¹²⁹

On 25 July, the Parlement received a letter announcing the king's visit and calling for a deputation to be sent, but in a sign of the atmosphere in the city, the messenger's life was threatened and he was forced to seek protection in the home of the archbishop.¹³⁰ In late July the Parlement arranged to send deputies to meet with the king but they refused, perhaps under pressure, to meet with Mazarin.¹³¹ The difficulties of the situation led to divisions within the Parlement. Some were anxious to negotiate an end to the standoff, while others, many of whom were linked to the princess, wanted to pressure the crown for Mazarin's dismissal. By now the princess and her supporters had decided that to free Condé they would have to get rid of Mazarin, and they sought to enlist the support of the parlements in order to broaden the conflict and ratchet up the pressure on the crown. Despite the initial lack of enthusiasm for this more aggressive position, the lessons of the past few weeks and the magistrates' vulnerability was understood by all. When this position did not initially win support among the *parlementaires*, threats and popular pressure were applied until the Parlement conceded and issued a remonstrance calling for

¹²⁹ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, pp. 418, 423, 434.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 419.

Mazarin's dismissal.¹³² When an assembly of the Thirty was called to discuss the situation it reaffirmed the city's support for the princess and ducs.¹³³

Still, the situation was weighted against the princess. Everyone's thoughts were turning to the wine harvest only weeks away, while the hopes of Spanish assistance or a foreign attack that might force the crown to divert resources grew dimmer every day. Lenet claimed that the Bordelais during this time "think of nothing but the wine harvest" and with the city encircled by the king's army there was no hope of bringing it in until a truce could be negotiated.¹³⁴ While Lenet managed to secure a couple of small loans to help maintain the princess's troops, he feared mass defections without a large influx of funds from somewhere.¹³⁵

To complicate matters, Mazarin and the crown were actively trying to win favor among the city's elite in an effort to isolate the princess. The Procureur-Général Pontac noted in a letter to la Vrillière that he and his fellow royalists were on the verge of winning the city over for the crown. The crown's supporters still faced risks, however, as a placard that appeared at this time illustrates. It warned the bourgeois about the consequences that would follow from any parliamentary betrayal of their interests as the court negotiated with the crown.¹³⁶ The placard also included the names of twenty six *parlementaires* who were still in the city but were suspected of working for Mazarin. There was an evident struggle for influence going on the city between the crown and princess. As we have seen, the princess domesticated the Parlement through pressure and

¹³² Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, pp. 438-40.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 493. ils ne considérait que la saison des vendanges, la léthargie en laquelle étaient tombés la plupart de nos amis de Bordeaux, l'abandonnement de tous ceux de dehors et de Paris même, qui ne nous assistaient que de conseils inutiles et à contre-temps, et qui méprisaient les nôtres.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 483-6.

¹³⁶ BN ms. fr. 4209: *Mémoires et lettres de Mazarin et Colbert durant le voyage de Bordeaux en 1650*, Pontac to la Vrillière, 20 August 1650, pp. 452-3.

bribes but that threatened to change with President la Tresne's planning to come back to the court and the impending negotiations with the crown. If la Tresne came back he would be the most senior member of the court and in a position to direct its deliberations. In contrast to d'Affis, who was currently directing the court and in the pay of the princess, la Tresne could not be bribed and was sympathetic to the crown. Some suggested using popular pressure, as they had done with d'Affis earlier, to force la Tresne to stay home.¹³⁷

With Gaston d'Orléans acting as intermediary, the Parlement and city finally negotiated an end to the standoff with the crown despite the efforts of some to subvert the process.¹³⁸ When deputies from the Parlement asked the princess what she wanted from the negotiations, perhaps recognizing that her husband and brother-in-law would not be freed, she asked only for safe passage out of the city. She also took credit for Épernon's removal as governor, which she noted the city had pushed for unsuccessfully for a year before she arrived and began to exert her influence.¹³⁹ The princess repeatedly tried to link Mazarin and Épernon in the minds of the Bordelais because she recognized that for most people it was the governor and not a distant minister that was seen as the source of their troubles.

Following a convocation of the One Hundred Thirty to discuss the city's demands, a delegation of city leaders including *parlementaires*, jurats, and members of the bourgeois met the king and asked for a general amnesty, removal of Épernon's family from the governorship, suppression of the Cour des Aides, etc.... The final peace deal that was presented to the Parlement on 22 September addressed most of these demands

¹³⁷ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIII, pp. 492-94.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. LIV, p. 34.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

and allowed the princess to seek refuge in one of her ancestral homes.¹⁴⁰ It was certainly not what the princess had hoped for, but as one Frondeur reassured her, “the city had only capitulated in order to bring in the wine harvest and the revolt would begin again once it was over.”¹⁴¹

The main goal for Lenet and the princess all along was to win freedom for the princes and to this end the peace was a failure. Lenet called the Bordelais fickle and believed the Parlement was simply trying to consolidate its gains and protect itself from the vengeance of the monarchy.¹⁴² Lenet blamed the Parlement and other civic leaders for the city’s capitulation, and he was almost certainly right in doing so. By the spring of 1650 most of the *parlementaires* thought a settlement had been reached with the regency and they were not eager to be dragged into the noble Fronde. First, they were forced to admit the princess to the city and then they were coerced into a promise of union. While the noble Frondeurs and *parlementaires* shared certain goals, like a peace accord with Spain and a return to peace-time bureaucratic forms, fear of continued civil war made it difficult for the magistrates to support the noble revolt. As a result, office-holders had to be coerced into their support for the noble Fronde, and it is not surprising that they were eager to break that union. A similar dynamic unfolded in Paris, which, along with growing popular apathy, only served to undercut support for the noble Fronde and ultimately sealed its fate.¹⁴³ The peace of 1650, like earlier agreements, addressed the primary concerns of the *parlementaires* and was rightly seen by most as a victory of sorts. These agreements seemed to secure for magistrates a more stable place within the

¹⁴⁰ *Registre secret*, 17 September 1650: AM Bordeaux ms. 792.

¹⁴¹ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIV, p. 89.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. LIII, p. 364.

¹⁴³ Richard Bonney, “The French Civil War, 1649-53,” *European Studies Review* (SAGE, 1978), vol. 8, pp. 86-87.

French polity, and their attentions returned to their ever-present need for order, stability, and hierarchy.

While the people of Bordeaux were willing to hold out against the crown, in Lenet's view, the elite had the most to lose if the wine harvest spoiled on the vines so they pushed for a settlement. Lenet claimed that the Bordelais grumbled about the terms of the peace treaty from the minute it was signed, but because the city's authorities provided no support "the heat generated by them (the Bordelais) only produced a straw fire."¹⁴⁴ By September 1650 it was abundantly clear to the princess and her men that the Spanish were never going to fulfill their promises of aid, and without outside help they could not hold out against the king's forces. Despite her evident popularity and influence within the city, it was difficult to rally support for continuing the insurrection, especially with the king camped only a few miles away. All of this meant that the crown never really had to negotiate in good faith.

The deal was ratified in the Parlement on 28 September by a vote of 48 to 17.¹⁴⁵ Duburg claimed that people rejoiced at the news and supporters of the revolt had lost all credit in the city, while attempts to stir opposition to the deal failed.¹⁴⁶ The only consolation for Lenet and the princess was the promise to revolt again once the harvest was complete and the city had a chance to regroup. The councillor Mirat claimed that the city would be ready to start the Fronde again in springtime and he called on Lenet to secure some form of outside assistance. Lenet respected Mirat and believed that he was

¹⁴⁴ Lenet, *Mémoires*, vol. LIV, p. 97. Mais comme les principaux de la ville n'aspiraient qu'à faire leurs vendanges à quelque prix que ce fût, cette chaleur ne fut pas fomentée par eux, et ne produisit qu'un feu de paille.

¹⁴⁵ De Saintot to Mazarin, 29 September 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. IV, p. 548.

¹⁴⁶ Duburg to Mazarin, 23 September 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. IV, p. 544; de Saintot to Mazarin, 29 September 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. IV, p. 548.

in a position to fulfill his word. Despite the peace, some, like Arnaud de Pontac, refused to return to Bordeaux because of continued fears for their safety.¹⁴⁷

Several days later the young King Louis XIV arrived in Bordeaux and brought another round of the Fronde to a close. If we are to believe Lenet, the Parlement managed to reestablish a degree of authority in the fall of 1650 and forced the city and princess to agree to terms with the crown. Yet the institutional power of the Parlement was in its twilight. Individual members of the court remained in the city throughout the rest of the Fronde but they were powerless to control events. The supremacy of the *parlementaires* was based on support from the crown and local authorities, both of which were undermined by the princes and the growing assertiveness of their fellow citizens.

The magistrates embarked on the revolt in order to redress grievances, some of which they shared with the people of Bordeaux. These commonalities were fragile and short-lived, however, and the court's authority quickly deteriorated when it failed to produce results in its negotiations with the king. The Bordelais would come to attack the *parlementaires* as corrupt, duplicitous and unworthy of their deference, but in the first part of the Fronde the magistrates' greatest sin was their ineffectiveness. Their *arrêts* were futile and they were never able to secure a lasting peace agreement with Épernon and the crown. Fonteneil said as much when he claimed that the Parlement was simply engaged in a "combat of paper" and its *arrêts* could sometimes animate the people but they were useless against the king's armies.¹⁴⁸ The Parlement was never able to control Épernon's actions and its failure to stop his violence led to an erosion of confidence in

¹⁴⁷ de Pontac to Mazarin, 7 October 1650: *Archives Historiques*, vol. VI, p. 421.

¹⁴⁸ Fonteneil, p. 285. pendant ces coups fourrez ce n'était qu'un combat de papier. Ces arrêts qu'on opposait aux autres; les Ordonnances qui se cassaient entr'elles animaient les parties, mais ne défaisaient pas les troupes.

the court's ability to secure the city's most urgent needs. Just as importantly, the Bordelais did not understand the authority of the *parlementaires* in a civic or moral sense. In their role as civic leaders the *parlementaires* were expected to act as custodians of the public good, a role they never fully embraced or understood. For the Bordelais, above all, this meant a singular focus on the material conditions of their lives and it was largely disconnected from the political concerns of the *parlementaires*. When it became apparent during the course of the revolt that the magistrates, out of ambivalence and ineffectiveness, were unable to satisfy the essential needs of their fellow citizens they were no longer viewed as civic leaders but as selfish, corrupt elites.

For the Parlement, the revolt could have been brought to a successful conclusion following any of the peace deals if its opponents had been equally committed to the process. This is not to suggest that the Parlement did not have real differences with the crown during this time. Its demands at the beginning of the Fronde amounted to a frontal assault on royal authority, which the crown could not accept. Evidence shows, however, that the *parlementaires* were willing to compromise in order to prevent continued unrest, which they came to see as a bigger threat to their authority than the regency that was now willing to negotiate. Épernon supported the regency when it manipulated venality and attacked the *parlementaires* because these issues did not affect him and they were directed against the greatest threat to his provincial power. However, when the crown made concessions to the *parlementaires* in order to end the conflict, the duc saw this as an abandonment of his interests and he began to press his own agenda.

The actions and writings of the *parlementaires* during the Fronde do not indicate that they saw themselves as civic leaders or that they recognized a duty to protect

Guyenne or the Bordelais. The Fronde did not represent the Parlement's defense of the local population and traditional provincial liberties, and the court was not venerated as the 'fathers of the country' as Mousnier has argued.¹⁴⁹ While the Parlement certainly manipulated popular discontent for its own purposes during the revolt, much of its efforts on behalf of the Bordelais simply reflected shared concerns about the regency, governor, and their policies. The Parlement often defended itself and the city with talk about provincial liberties, but this was more of a rhetorical tool than an expression of some historic, cultural identity. Unified action between the Parlement and Bordelais was only possible on a discrete set of mutual concerns, and when the revolt radicalized during the Ormée it is not surprising that the court became one of its early targets. In fact, the powerlessness of the Parlement during the Fronde likely served as a compelling reminder of the court's close relationship to, and dependency on the monarchy in Paris. To suggest that the Fronde represented the protest of a vertically oriented cross-section of Bordelais society is to ignore the obvious and persistent friction, distrust, and anger that existed between the magistrates and their fellow citizens.

It is a mistake to overestimate the influence of the Parlement in the events of the Fronde. As we have seen, the Bordelais had their own concerns and the Parlement was a natural vehicle through which to channel those concerns. The Parlement was not solely responsible for the start of the revolt, and while it was able to exert considerable influence in the early days of the Fronde that influence deteriorated steadily over time. Just as the *parlementaires* distrusted the Bordelais, the Bordelais remained suspicious of the court's motivations throughout the Fronde. The concerns of the Bordelais were

¹⁴⁹ Roland Mousnier, "The Fronde" in *Preconditions of Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Robert Forster and Jack P. Greene (Baltimore, 1970), 131-160.

immediate and personal. They wanted relief from the king's taxes, protection of the food supply, and action against Épernon's provocations. They did not protect the Parlement because of some deeply ingrained cultural affinity, but because it was the only institution with the power and authority to negotiate on their behalf and they rejected that authority when it was unable to meet their needs. The Bordelais were integral to the Fronde from beginning to end, both for the Parlement and the revolt in general, and to ignore this fact is to diminish their agency and risk writing history from above. It is unlikely that the *parlementaires* would have revolted against the crown without pressure from the community, and their involvement in the Fronde was always conditioned by a deep concern for their own status and position within the social and political hierarchy.

Chapter Four

The Ormée: Corrupt Magistrates and a City's Betrayal?

The Ormée was the most radical, perhaps revolutionary, episode of the Fronde. Despite the scholarly attention it has attracted, there remains no consensus about the nature and significance of the Ormée. Some historians have argued that the revolt should primarily be viewed as a political struggle and they have downplayed the social implications and agenda of the rebels. According to Ernest Kossmann, the Ormée turned on the Parlement because the court, fearful of popular revolution, eventually reconciled itself with the crown and repudiated the Frondeur agenda. As Kossmann argued,

presented squarely with the choice of remaining absolutist and conservative or of embracing a political radicalism that would inevitably entail an attack on the hostile bourgeoisie, it (the Parlement) withdrew from the struggle seeing that it could neither profit from it nor bring it to an end. The Parlement preferred to make peace with the Crown rather than prolong a conflict that was inflaming the revolutionary spirit of the masses and the latter, feeling abandoned and betrayed, retaliated by including the Parlement in its attack.¹

According to this view, the Fronde was primarily a political conflict that was simply prolonged by the social concerns of the time. Orest Ranum has made essentially the same argument in a general study of the Fronde.² Kossmann was right to note that political conflict was a constant in every Frondeur city, but even in the early stages of the Fronde there were economic and social considerations driving the process.

¹ Sal Alexander Westrich, *The Ormée of Bordeaux: a Revolution during the Fronde* (Baltimore, 1972), p. 137.

² Ranum, *The Fronde*.

By contrast, Sal Westrich's excellent scholarship on the social composition and agenda of the Ormée has confirmed the movement's truly revolutionary nature. In Westrich's view, the Ormée's conflict with the Crown and Parlement was not a political struggle with social overtones, as Kossmann had argued, but a social struggle with political implications. It was a movement of small shopkeepers, artisans, merchants and petty officials who sought protection from patrician justice and the demands of the royal treasury.³ According to Westrich,

its (the Ormée's) goal was to free Bordeaux of centralized monarchical control and to destroy the power of the local oligarchy, above all, that of the Parlement. It failed in both attempts...because the two goals, neither of which could be abandoned, proved in the end mutually exclusive. For to defeat the Crown the Ormée would have had to ally itself with the Parlement (as the only force strong enough to turn the tide in its favor), and to defeat the Parlement it would have had to ally itself with the Crown (if only to prevent a coalition of the two). But to pursue either course was precisely what circumstances and its own orientation would not allow the Ormée to do: in making peace with the Crown, it would have had to sacrifice its only ally, the Prince of Condé; in reaching an accommodation with the Parlement, it would have had to renounce its social aims. And so the Ormée was compelled to struggle at once against the Parlement and the Crown, without hope of defeating either.⁴

According to Westrich, the Ormée sought a complete restructuring of the judicial system that would have created free and democratic assemblies. While initially monarchist, the Ormée came to oppose the Crown and promote republicanism only after it realized that the Parlement and Crown were inextricably linked. The Ormée could not oppose the Parlement without opposing the crown, and a royal victory over the revolt would inevitably lead to a restoration of the court. The Ormée illustrated the social stratification of Bordelais society and it highlighted the political maturity and self-awareness of the lower classes. Westrich was right to note that the Ormée was characterized by class

³ Westrich, p. 59.

⁴ Ibid., p. 134.

conflict and reflected an effort to remake Bordelais society to benefit the lower classes. This analysis effectively moves us beyond a view of the Ormée as a purely political event or a provincial response to expanding monarchical power. Of course, the differences between the interpretations of Kossmann and Westrich are more apparent than real, ultimately amounting to a matter of emphasis and timing. Both conceded that the Ormée had political and social origins and goals but they differed on the way in which these components interacted and influenced one another.

More recently, William Beik has argued in a general work on urban revolts that the Ormée was “a movement that improvised, that grew over time out of local experiences and eventually felt its way towards a dimly perceived vision of the way things ought to work. In a sense, it tried to answer the question of what the honorable people of a city could do to improve their lot beyond denouncing the duplicity of authorities and mobilizing to attack immediate targets.”⁵ Like Kossmann and Westrich, Beik argues that the Bordelais “turned against the very idea of rule by officers and set out to run their own city” only after the Parlement turned its back on them.⁶ In Beik’s view, however, the Ormée was fatally flawed by its dependence on a universal, common enemy like Mazarin and the movement’s social stratification made it difficult to agree on a common political or economic program. “It required a program based on goals accepted by all”, but the hierarchical and inequitable nature of Old Regime society made this impossible. By this reading, the Ormée had a class dimension that “pushed the outer limits of popular politics”, and “showed that popular crowds could advance beyond improvised mayhem if they had leaders who spoke the same language of indignation and

⁵ Beik, *Urban protest*, p. 245.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

retribution.”⁷ This interpretation explains both the Ormée’s sudden collapse in 1653 and the evident resentment among the Bordelais that remained afterwards.

Nonetheless, the present understandings of the Ormée fail to capture the persistent and troubled nature of the relationship between the Bordelais *parlementaires* and their fellow citizens. While the Ormée may have improvised its way toward a critique of the city’s leadership, as these authors have argued, it is clear that the Parlement was a natural, virtually inevitable target because of the starkly different conceptions each held of what constituted effective civic governance. Unlike the Frondeurs, the Ormists directly targeted the authority of the *parlementaires* and their words and actions can tell us something about popular views of the judicial system and its magistrates. Why did their fellow citizens reject the magistrates’ leadership and then attempt to dismantle the very basis of their power? Through a close examination of their interactions, we learn the judges were deeply ambivalent and unsure of their relationship to the broader society and the community was equally uncertain and resentful of the city’s judicial hierarchy. The *parlementaires* never championed notions of public service, “common good”, or provincial obligation, and they repeatedly expressed a latent fear of popular politics during the Ormée. The *parlementaires* may have been ambivalent to the monarchy that attacked their interests prior to the Fronde, but they were terrified of a popular movement that challenged their very existence.

The troubles that led to the formation of the Ormée began in the spring of 1651. According to the peace agreement of the previous year, Épernon was suspended from his governorship but no replacement was named. Perhaps more importantly though, the situation in Paris changed dramatically in the fall of 1650. The king’s visits to

⁷ Beik, *Urban protest*, p. 249.

Normandy, Burgundy and Guyenne, coupled with the royal seizure of Rethel and the defeat of the Frondeur army led by maréchal Turenne, had consolidated the regency's position and made the continued imprisonment of Condé and Conti seem incongruous. At the same time, Gaston d'Orléans, the frequent conspirator and brother of the late Louis XIII, took control of the Paris militia. Gaston had supported the regency from the beginning, but he resented Mazarin's power and, thanks to the efforts of Cardinal Retz, President Nesmond and other Condé supporters, began to press for the prince's release. Fearing for his own safety and that of the young king and his mother, who were by now back in Paris at the Palais Royal, Mazarin made the decision to free Condé. Mazarin was forced to flee the country in February 1651 and it was hoped that his fall would calm tempers in Frondeur cities around the country, but he continued to exert influence on Queen Anne and many feared his defeat was only temporary.⁸ The Condé/Gaston alliance of the spring of 1651 signaled a stunning reversal for Mazarin's position and it ensured that the struggle for control in the realm would continue.

As winter passed into spring, fears began to grow in Bordeaux that the crown had delayed naming Épernon's replacement because it planned to reestablish him once the situation calmed down. Friction between Gaston and Condé, Mazarin's influence on Anne, and shifting alliances made fears of a royalist resurgence commonplace in the spring of 1651. Rumors circulated that agents had been sent to Bordeaux to spread money around and win support for the duc's reestablishment, which led to protests in the streets and pressure on the Parlement and Jurade to block the possibility. At one point, as many as five hundred men gathered outside the hôtel de ville to force action on the part

⁸ *Registre secret*, 20 February 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369, p. 288.

of the Jurade.⁹ Épernon was pushing to retake the governorship, and he requested and received an *évocation* of his legal affairs from Bordeaux that appeared to set the stage for a confrontation. His provocation prompted a remonstrance from the Parlement detailing its right to judge these cases.¹⁰ Everyone hoped and expected the governorship would go to Condé, but the delay was leading to fears the crown might be preparing for another round of violence. These concerns ultimately forced the Parlement to issue an *arrêt* calling for the arrest of anyone caught spreading rumors of Épernon's return, and it petitioned the king to pick a new governor as soon as possible to forestall the threat of renewed popular unrest.¹¹ Finally, the court called on the Jurade to verify the city's preparedness in the event of another blockade or rebellion. According to one rumor, the newly reinstated royalists in the Parlement had been tasked with rallying support for the duc's return, which was the one thing everyone in the city was united against.¹² The *parlementaires* were trying to maintain their leadership in the city, battered the previous year by the arrival of the princess and the emergence of popular politics, but this was dependant on outside forces and required stability in Paris which did not exist in the spring of 1651.

⁹ *Registre secret*, 18 April 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369, p. 297.

¹⁰ *Registre secret*, 19 April 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369, p. 303.

¹¹ Les Jurats de Bordeaux to Condé, 20 April 1651 and Andrault to Condé, 17 April 1651: Bibliothèque du Musée Condé, Séries P Tome XI, Lettres de Condé; *Registre secret*, 19 April 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369, p. 303.

¹² Archbishop of Bordeaux to Mazarin, 5 January 1651: *Archives historiques*, vol. VI, pp. 286-8.

The Birth of the Ormée

It was in the context of these events that we see the first mention of assemblies on a platform near a row of elm trees.¹³ The platform was near the Château du Ha in a popular neighborhood on the city's fringe. The Parlement called on the Jurade to investigate the assemblies and their report reveals the challenges faced by the *parlementaires* at this moment. The jurats found a large number of "bourgeois" at the platform, some armed, who intended to block Épernon's return and force people with suspect loyalties to leave the city. While there is no list of the suspect individuals, it is likely some were royalist *parlementaires* who returned to the city following the last peace agreement. The Parlement replied that no one was allowed to assemble in the city without its permission and they called on the protestors to select representatives to bring their concerns to the palais. The crowd responded that previous complaints to the Parlement had been ignored, and they would not disband until they got action from the court. The Parlement called on its representatives in Paris to pressure Anne and her ministers for a new governor, but the fledgling movement no longer had confidence in the Parlement's ability to address its grievances.¹⁴ This account of the Ormée's inception was reiterated by Jacques Filhot, a chronicler of the Fronde, who noted that fear of Épernon's return led to protests and assemblies around the hôtel de ville that eventually migrated to the ormeaux platform.¹⁵

By these descriptions, the Ormée was born out of the Parlement's inability to satisfy concerns about renewed violence and aggression, but rebels would soon broaden

¹³ *Registre secret*: BM Bordeaux ms. 369, p. 320.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

¹⁵ Communay, *L'Ormée à Bordeaux*, pp. 172-3.

their critique of the court and judiciary to include the system's essential imbalances. For our purposes, the reasons for the Ormist attack on the *parlementaires*, which can be debated, are less important than the form of the assault and what it tells us about popular perceptions of these powerful magistrates. Why did the Ormists feel compelled to take such a radical and dangerous step when they called for a complete change of the city's political and judicial institutions? What did they hope to accomplish when confronted with the combined authority of the monarchy and Bordeaux's traditional elite? In short, was the Ormist critique of the city's magistrates an evaluation of their leadership or did it reflect deeper, historic misgivings about their loyalties and the nature of their authority?

Further unrest was forestalled in May 1651 by the appointment of Prince of Condé as the province's new governor, while Épernon was given control of Burgundy.¹⁶ The announcement came to the Parlement in the form of a letter that was read to the court on 20 May.¹⁷ According to President Pichon, the news of Condé's appointment changed everything and "dissipated peoples' fears and awakened their battered hopes."¹⁸ Several *parlementaires* wrote to congratulate Condé and ask for favors and patronage, and to them and others in the city, Condé's promotion to the governorship signaled a victory for the Bordelais Fronde that would hopefully translate into material benefits.¹⁹ To the extent that many saw Épernon and Mazarin as a common enemy, there was a general feeling of satisfaction and relief at the news of Condé's selection and public celebrations followed the announcement.²⁰ Many believed that the king had been poorly served by

¹⁶ AC Séries P Tome XI, Lettres de Condé: Andrault to Condé, 24 April 1651.

¹⁷ *Registre secret*, 20 May 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369, p. 331.

¹⁸ AC Séries P Tome XI, Lettres de Condé: Pichon to Condé, May 1651, fol. 70

¹⁹ Condé to the bourgeois of the assembly of the Ormée, 18 July 1651, *Archives historiques*, vol. VI, pp. 295-6.

²⁰ AC Séries P Tome XI, Lettres de Condé: Taranque to Condé, 22 May 1651.

Épernon and the new governor would once again unite royal and provincial interests.²¹ Even past enemies of Condé and the Fronde seemed to recognize the appointment as a defeat of their interests.²² The problem for the city, and especially the Parlement, was that little had been decided by Mazarin's flight and Condé's ascendancy. The struggle for power during the regency continued, and the Prince simply exploited Bordeaux and Guyenne as a base of support in the conflict. While Condé's release may have briefly calmed pressures from below, the Parlement and city were now confronted with a new and powerful actor who was not interested in peace for the city.

Condé's appointment, however, did not end the assemblies or the challenge they posed to the *parlementaires*. A month after his appointment seditious placards appeared on the door of the palais, and the Parlement called for an investigation of the authors and vigilance against the assemblies that were mentioned in the poster.²³ A month later the jurats informed the Parlement about similar seditious placards that appeared throughout the city, and the court ordered that anyone caught posting such writings be prosecuted for disturbing the peace.²⁴ The city was suffering from a shortage of grain in the summer of 1651 and this added to the stress and anxiety of the Bordelais.²⁵ According to one account, merchant ships loaded with grain for Bordeaux were stopped along the way and their cargos sold off under market value – a story that almost certainly heightened fears that the crown was planning another blockade.²⁶ Merchants claimed that pirating kept

²¹ AC Séries P Tome XI, Lettres de Condé: La Tresne to Condé, 22 May 1651.

²² AC Séries P Tome XI, Lettres de Condé: Pres. Pontac to Condé, 25 May 1651; Andrault to Condé, 25 May 1651; Fayard to Condé, 5 June 1651.

²³ *Registre secret*, 20 June 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 15 July 1651.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24 July 1651.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 August 1651.

them from sailing to Bordeaux, however, the actual causes were less important than the lack of grain and the rumors of its cause.²⁷

The Ormist view of the *parlementaires*

Following Condé's arrival in late September, the Parlement called on him to equip enough ships to protect the city's commerce, but funds for this and other pressing needs were hard to find because the city was heavily in debt.²⁸ The court was also informed that gold and currency were being removed from the city, which only worsened the city's financial troubles.²⁹ After consultations with the *corps*, the Parlement ordered new taxes, but the prospect of new levies sparked fear and distrust and further weakened the rapport between the *parlementaires* and Bordelais.³⁰ As leaders of the Fronde, the *parlementaires* had imposed several levies to pay for the fighting but they were always unpopular and difficult to collect.³¹ According to the mazarinade "Apologie pour l'Ormée", written sometime in 1652 by a local man named Lartigue and for a local audience:

It was customary for the more prosperous bourgeois – those not having to remain in their shops – to gather on an elevated platform in a corner of the city. Their discussions turned to the troubled times: the exactions, the forced contributions, the misappropriations, the fact that one who collected revenues had purchased a piece of land worth 6,000 livres per annum, that another had used the money to pay a debt of 40,000 livres... the public's curiosity having been aroused, the assemblies became larger and more frequent, with the result that the Parlement, whose ire had been provoked, ordered that they be outlawed, who gave it the name Ormée as a

²⁷ *Registre secret*, 20 September 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 25 September 1651.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20 September 1651.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 29 August 1651.

³¹ M. de Saint-Luc to Mazarin, 24 October 1650: *Archives historiques*, vol. VI, pp. 426-7.

form of mockery. These honest people, who have already suffered the theft of their goods, will not support the theft of their liberty.³²

Under *parlementaire* leadership the Bordelais had sacrificed themselves and their resources for nearly four years, but they had little to show for their struggles. The sums levied for the war by the *parlementaires*, “who held the same authority in war as they did in peace”, were for the common defense of the city and applied to all.³³ As the “Apologie” suggests, not only were the *parlementaires* not making similar sacrifices for the benefit of the city’s interests, they were allegedly profiting from the unrest and the opportunity to levy and pocket new tax revenues. Under these conditions, prosperous, civic-minded citizens came together to discuss an appropriate response to the perceived treachery. While there is no evidence that Lartique was from Bordeaux and he was handsomely paid for his writings, he was an Ormist and his words reflect the movement’s thinking.³⁴

As we have seen from earlier chapters, the Bordelais were generally ambivalent toward the Parlement and its role in civic affairs, but there was no talk of eliminating the institution itself. To the extent that there was any critique of the court during the Fronde, it was one that centered on politics and individual *parlementaires*. The Bordelais wanted the Parlement’s support against external enemies, and they were prepared to pressure the court when it was not forthcoming or failed to produce the desired outcome. But, there were no calls for the court’s suppression or changes to local governance because nearly everyone in the city was united behind the goal of removing Mazarin and Épernon. The Parlement, however, was never viewed as a natural ally and popular hostility grew as its

³² Westrich, pp. 11-12.

³³ Eckart Birnstiel, *Die Fronde in Bordeaux, 1648-53* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1985), pp. 274-5.

³⁴ Jouhaud, *Mazarinades*, p. 204.

effectiveness, integrity, and loyalty came into question and the suffering of the Bordelais intensified. It is difficult to substantiate the allegations of corruption by the court or individual magistrates, but the situation in Bordeaux in 1651 became increasingly extreme and the *parlementaires*, as leaders of the Bordelais Fronde, became a natural target for blame. The dispossessed people of Bordeaux did not embrace the hierarchical structures that were the basis of the *parlementaires*' authority, but the radically different conceptions each held of communal bonds and the common good only emerged in the extreme circumstances of the Fronde.

Criticisms of the magistrates' mismanagement and corruption reflected a broader perception that the judges had betrayed the city. It was common knowledge that once ardent Frondeurs like Lavie had switched camps and were now actively working to topple Condé and the Ormée, but according to the mazarinade *Le Courier de la Guyenne* he was not the only one. As the author notes, "the authority of their offices gives them the capacity to cause great damage, and it is a credit to the Ormée that they haven't killed the leaders of a party (the *parlementaires*) that is their enemy and that has betrayed the public's interest." *Le Courier* charged that President Pichon, having presided over the city's *Conseil de Guerre* (a post that required unquestioned loyalty), was now on the list of the proscribed because he had transferred his loyalties to the crown and facilitated the taking of Agen.³⁵ As more *parlementaires* went into hiding, left the city, or joined the court in Agen, it was increasingly apparent to Ormist leaders that the court repudiated their involvement in civic affairs. Far from being perceived as defending the public or general interest, or acting as defenders against the intrusiveness of the absolutist state, the

³⁵ Birnstiel, p. 260.

parlementaires were viewed as part of the social and political hierarchy that took advantage of the Bordelais and abused their trust. While this critique of the *parlementaires* only emerged after four years of bitter fighting and suffering, it was an assessment that was widespread and questioned the very nature of their role in local governance.

The “Apologie”, however, also highlights what must have been deeper misgivings about the *parlementaires*. In its defense of the assemblies at the ormaux, Lartigue argued that the Parlement’s ban on the assemblies would be acceptable if they were armed and held in secret (presumably such an assembly would have dubious motives), but the Ormée met in the open to discuss matters that effected everyone. The public nature of their meetings contrasted sharply with the secrecy and inaccessibility of the Parlement’s deliberations behind closed doors at the Palais. The Parlement’s historic lack of transparency worked against it and allowed the Bordelais to impart all sorts of sinister motivations and behavior to the *parlementaires*. Because the Ormist assemblies discussed allegations of the Parlement’s mismanagement of public funds, the court’s attempt to suppress the assemblies was characterized as little more than a cynical effort to hide the truth. According to Lartigue:

tyrants and bad magistrates have always suspiciously regarded public assemblies as possible tribunals of their crimes. Because, knowing that men possess two strong qualities, reason and community (la société), they (tyrants and bad magistrates) have tried to take away their community as a way of weakening the people and keeping them in ignorance about public affairs, fearing that if people came together to discuss these things the truth about their corruption would come out. The truth has shown itself through their (the Ormists) efforts...and coming to know their strength, they have united for their (the *parlementaires*’) destruction and ruin. As a result, one can see that the Parlement’s attack [on the Ormist meetings] is simply a way to frighten those who are poorly informed and weak, to extinguish understanding among men, to suffocate the public’s liberty; by

contrast the [Ormist] assemblies are in keeping with the community, the interests of the public, and the Law, particularly natural law which is the strongest, the most ancient, and the authority to which all others must give way when it speaks.³⁶

In this case, the hierarchy that was the basis of the *parlementaires*' authority was at the root of their efforts to block any real defense of community or public interests and any candid civic discourse risked disclosure of the magistrates true intent. The assemblies themselves were an attempt to rectify this serious and historic disconnect and imbalance between the Ormists (standing in for the public interest) and the self-interested and duplicitous *parlementaires*. The contrast between the community and its well-being on the one hand, and the corruption and mismanagement of the *parlementaires* on the other, served as a stark reminder of the incompatibility of the two.

The "Apologie" also raised a common concern about the cost of *parlementaire* justice. The *parlementaires* were among the wealthiest individuals in Bordeaux, and, with the exception of criminal cases, access to the court was limited to those individuals who could pay the fees necessary to bring a case. The *parlementaires* relied, at least in part, on these fees for their livelihood, and this created the perception that magistrates were more motivated by generating wealth than rendering justice. Even the outcome of criminal cases could be influenced by the wealth and connections of the individuals charged. It was easy for the Bordelais to imagine that magistrates were using the current crisis and circumstances to line their own pockets – something they seemed to do in the everyday practice of law. According to Lartigue:

We have seen persons destined to the practice of law not only take up arms, draw up fortifications, review soldiers, and similar military efforts, but to make use of the authority of their office to raise all sorts of sums

³⁶ Birnstiel, p. 277.

from our citizens, and pushing injustice to the extreme, render themselves both the collectors and dispensers of the sums, a practice truly in contempt of the customs of a city and a community, as indeed of human society and common humanity.

He continues later on:

The Parlement is less desirous of rendering us justice, as they profess, than of depriving us of our possessions; and the policies that they wish to introduce are inspired more by their own interests than by those of the public.³⁷

Lartigue argued the problem was not restricted to certain corrupt magistrates in an otherwise honorable court but applied to the institution itself. As he maintained:

Knowledge of civil laws often muffles natural inclinations, and maybe our enemies have been corrupted not only by the confusion of so many laws but by the quantity of their riches, which can overwhelm even the most elevated people and pervert the most steady wisdom.³⁸

The Ormée was made up of “good citizens, real Frenchmen” with the interests of the public at heart, in contrast to the *parlementaires* “who dreamed only of ways to squeeze money from the people and use the current troubles to feed their greed and ambition.”³⁹

The mixture of money and justice had corrupted the *parlementaires* and the two had to be separated as the city was reorganized according to Ormist thinking. Put another way, the public interest and private enrichment were incompatible because the latter had an inherently corrupting influence on the nature of municipal leadership and justice.

By contrast, “praise” or “vindication” for the Ormée was the result of its prudence, wisdom, and concern for justice. “That is what we have undertaken by a pure love of virtue and truth: to disabuse the public, to support the innocent, to bring glory to a Company (the Ormée) that has exhibited determination, humanity, and many other

³⁷ Westrich, p. 52.

³⁸ Birnstiel, p. 285.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 294.

virtues that were found in the ancient republics that have been immortalized by their great actions.”⁴⁰ Ormists writers often championed the virtues of republican government and some may have supported the creation of a city state. Republicanism had a close association with Protestantism in seventeenth-century France and the term “républicain” was often used as a term of abuse for those who opposed the crown. The link between spiritual and political revolt was made explicit by the Jesuit Father Gontéry when he argued that “by this means [heresy] the son will revolt against the father, the wife against the husband, the subject against the prince, the servant against the master, the flock against its pastor....”⁴¹ Contemporary political thought included a strand of republicanism known as “civic republicanism,” which stressed the moral dimension of self-government and the “public-mindedness of the independent citizen” who stood “in sharp contrast to the corruption and tyranny that characterizes monarchical rule.”⁴² In this sense, republicanism was viewed as a rejection of the natural order and traditional hierarchy that were the recognized basis for legitimate government.

It is still possible to debate the sincerity of the Ormée’s turn toward republicanism, but it seems clear that it was consistent with the movement’s overall critique of the political and judicial structures of seventeenth-century Bordeaux.⁴³ There is an obvious and powerful rhetorical quality to the Ormist statements about republican virtues, which were intended to draw sharp distinctions between the integrity and

⁴⁰ Birnstiel, pp. 273-4.

⁴¹ Arthur Herman, “The Huguenot Republic and Antirepublicanism in Seventeenth-Century France,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 53, no. 2 (April-June, 1992), p. 257.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 250. Herman argues that Protestant republicanism amounted to an aristocratic cabale to seize power by demagogues. The Ormée certainly had demagogic tendencies but it is wrong to view the movement as little more than a vehicle for the private interests of the political actors, as Herman has found in examining the Protestant assemblies.

⁴³ Beik, *Urban protest*, pp. 247-8. Beik dismisses the idea that the Ormists were republican “in any sustained way.”

righteousness of their cause and the moral bankruptcy and corruption of the city's traditional authorities. However, in order for these writings to have resonance they needed to use language and convey a message that had meaning to those who heard it. While only a revolt like the Fronde could embolden the Bordelais to such a radical critique, resentment of the *parlementaires'* wealth and power appears to have run deep among the *menu peuple*. In other words, the Ormée represented an attempt to create the kind of local governance that Bourdieu and others thought already existed – one in which magistrates were devoted to an ideal of “public service” and not their own economic or political self-interest. For the Ormists, public service was not a matter of status, prestige, and inter-municipal political competition, but a question of real concern and service to a broader conception of the community's welfare.

The Parlement's levies put the court in an awkward position because historically most were ordered by the crown, and it was accepted that the court, as a representative of the king, would sanction them. Without the crown's support, however, it was not clear by what right the Parlement imposed or collected new taxes, and this issue struck at the very heart of the court's authority. It was the Parlement's new role, not as a royal court, but as leader of a civic coalition that opened the door for this critique. As the “Apologie” argued, the court's levies represented voluntary contributions that were imposed on behalf of the city and not the Parlement, “as if the two were the same.”⁴⁴ The collections themselves were intended for the purpose of communal self-defense, which made their misappropriation and mismanagement all the more troubling to the Ormists. Moreover, the Bordelais were entitled to know where the money was going if it was being collected on their behalf.

⁴⁴ Birnstiel, p. 281.

The Bordelais had begun to question, in light of their revolt against the crown, the usefulness of a royal institution like the Parlement, and it is easy to imagine the shock and disgust this provoked among the *parlementaires*. The “Apologie” alluded to this reaction when it noted that “anytime anyone raises these concerns (about taxes), you (the magistrates) respond with outrageous and vicious reproaches and charges of injury; you treat them (the Ormists) as ignorant persons unworthy and incapable of understanding public affairs.”⁴⁵ The *parlementaires* were “noticeably annoyed when asked to give an account of the funds, as if they had been gravely injured by the request. They were struck by terror, not by the power of our words, but by the remorse of their consciences, which makes their crimes visible as if they were illuminated by a lightning strike.”⁴⁶ The *parlementaires* were not accustomed to giving an account of their actions to those below them in Bordelais society, whose involvement in public affairs they viewed as little more than a “tyranny of the people.”

The *parlementaires* understood their role in local governance as the result of centuries of tradition and the specific upbringing that was only accessible to the elite, and they were indignant at the idea that good leadership was possible without the sanction of these qualities.⁴⁷ It is abundantly apparent that the *parlementaires* and Ormists held two very different conceptions of good local governance: the *parlementaires* were deeply committed to a social and political hierarchy that they dominated, while the Ormists professed a more egalitarian ideal that claimed to represent the interests of the public. As Hillary Bernstein has demonstrated, municipal authorities often supported the ideal of the public good even if they struggled to explain or define it, and the Bordeaux

⁴⁵ Birnstiel, p. 281.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 287.

⁴⁷ Pontac to Mazarin, 1 January 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, p. 256-7.

parlementaires and other authorities were no exception. In practice, however, this notion was restricted by the nature of the magistrates' authority, and their appeals to the public good often appear disingenuous and rhetorical when contrasted with their conduct.⁴⁸

The Bordelais were willing to defer to the *parlementaires* under ordinary circumstances when the hierarchy of the Old Regime appeared insurmountable and unchanging, but they viewed the distinctions and pretensions of the judges as an obstacle to truly equitable public service and local governance. The Ormists declared that the *parlementaires* were allowed to deliberate in the city's assemblies, but only in their capacity as bourgeois, not magistrates, and they could "give their opinions, but they do not have the right to force their opinions on everyone else."⁴⁹ By this view *parlementaire* authority was acceptable when it was confined to narrow, private questions of civil and criminal justice, but matters of public welfare could only legitimately be decided by a broader cross-section of the city. Again, the suggestion was that the *parlementaires* could not be trusted to represent the public interest because they were incapable of selfless action. This critique of the *parlementaires* needed the extreme circumstances of the Fronde to force its articulation, when questions of public welfare were paramount, but nothing about the circumstances of its articulation calls into question the sincerity of its expression.

As many have noted, the Ormée was primarily made up of artisans and petty bourgeois who were not interested in real democracy. The Ormists had an economic stake in city affairs that they were keen to defend, but their calls for greater suffrage and

⁴⁸ Hilary Bernstein, *Between crown and community: politics and civic culture in sixteenth-century Poitiers* (Ithaca, 2004).

⁴⁹ Birnstiel, pp. 266-7.

influence did not extend down the economic and social ladder to the lowest elements of Bordelais society – although as Christian Jouhaud points out, Ormists wanted to be seen as more concerned for the well-being of the poor than the *parlementaires* were believed to be.⁵⁰ In fact, several mazarinades tried to refute charges that the Ormée was little more than a collection of “rabble” by emphasizing the social and economic status of the Ormists.⁵¹ The *Apologie* maintained that those gathering at the ormaux were “the most visible of the bourgeoisie who no longer needed to work in their shops,” and could partake in the kind of bourgeois sociability that was seen as a prerequisite for civic engagement.⁵² “There was not one who was not in an honest condition, not one whose poverty might force them into unseemly actions, not one who out of necessity does not have the leisure to work toward the acquisition of virtue.”⁵³ Economic necessity was still seen as incompatible with virtue because it prevented the acquisition of the social and cultural knowledge and understanding needed to see beyond one’s own circumstances. While the Ormée distanced itself from the lowest elements of Bordelais society, they also emphasized the gap between themselves and the rich *parlementaires*. Wealth and greed compromised virtue and were at the root of the *parlementaires*’ corruption. By contrast, the Ormists represented a sort of virtuous middle that was uncorrupted by riches or necessity and that was able to represent the kind of civic coalition needed for just and equitable governance.

In place of the corrupt and ineffective *parlementaires* and city elite, the Ormists portrayed themselves as reclaiming civic traditions that had been eroded after centuries of

⁵⁰ Jouhaud, *Mazarinades*, p. 187.

⁵¹ Birnstiel, p. 266.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁵³ Jouhaud, *Mazarinades*, p. 205.

assault by the monarchy and its institutions. Often there was talk of Bordeaux's historic rights and treatment under the Romans or English, but more recent promises to the city made by French kings were also cited in defense of the Ormist revolt.⁵⁴ According to the mazarinade *La Genereuse Resolution des Gascons*, "when necessity brings men together, it is the height of temerity to try to pull them apart. When the common good forms the cement of a society it is indissoluble, because the public good is sovereign law."⁵⁵ As sovereign law, no one, not king or Parlement, had the right to act in ways that would undermine the public good. The Ormists had no choice but to act because "our State has functioned so badly that we must do something before things get worse."⁵⁶ This need to act was contrasted with the Parlement's endless, self-interested, and ineffective deliberations which had failed to address the concerns of the Bordelais. As *Le Courrier* maintained, people supported the Ormée because "in times like these they consider it better for honest men to act on behalf of the common good, than to support people who know only how to deliberate."⁵⁷

Finally, through works like *Histoire veritable d'une Colombe*, which tells the story of a dove that mysteriously appeared at the Ormist meetings, the Ormée claimed divine sanction for its actions. Not only did Ormist governance represent the "common good" of the Bordelais, but it reflected Christian virtues of charity and social justice that were seen as the basis of communal life. As Sal Westrich has argued, this involved the "moral regeneration of society," and it demanded a moral commitment to the

⁵⁴ A good example is *Le Manifeste*. Fonteneil and others made similar claims about the city's rights under Roman control, which would seem to indicate that it was a fairly common assumption.

⁵⁵ Birnstiel, p. 254.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

dispossessed and exploited.⁵⁸ According to the *Articles de l'union de l'Ormée*, the Ormists promised to “love and protect one another as brothers, and to live in peace with Jesus Christ.” In this and other writings, it is clear that the Ormists picked up on the strand of Christian teaching that stressed fellowship and social justice more than hierarchy, social deference, and concerns for the afterlife.

The Ormée's and the Prince de Condé

Condé arrived in Bordeaux in September 1651 and stayed until March of 1652 but events in Paris affected the dynamics of his stay. Despite a clear resolution and victory for the Fronde in the summer of 1651, many saw the peace as fragile and were already preparing for the next phase of fighting. After struggling for control of the Council of State during the summer months of 1651, Condé suddenly saw his fortunes change in August and September. Anne and the Frondeur Paul de Gondi struck a deal in which the prelate gave his support against Gaston and Condé in exchange for a cardinal's hat and greater influence in the regency. Then, with Cardinal Retz's help, Anne issued a declaration denouncing Condé and prepared a *lit de justice* which declared Louis XIV's majority on 5 September 1651. Several days later, Louis XIV reshuffled the Council of State and stripped Condé of his influence.⁵⁹ Condé at first fled the capital to his fortress at Montrond where he strategized with supporters, but then made his way to Bordeaux to begin organizing support for a confrontation with the crown and Mazarin, who was organizing his own small army from his exile in Brühl near Cologne. Condé's goal was

⁵⁸ Westrich, p. 58.

⁵⁹ Ranum, *The Fronde*, pp. 300-302.

to rally all of the provinces south of the Loire to his side, form an army with funds from Spain, and then attack the capital.⁶⁰ In addition to freeing the king of Mazarin's influence and inserting himself as chief minister, Condé wanted to bring the war with Spain to an end.

Condé's arrival in Bordeaux shattered the fragile peace that existed since the time of the king's visit the previous fall and it led to factional splits in the Parlement. The peace agreement of 1650 allowed many royalist *parlementaires* to return to the city and their presence confirmed the court's conflicting loyalties and undermined its standing in the city. In the summer of 1651 the Parlement struggled to exclude known royalists at the same time it tried to confront the emerging threat posed by the Ormée assemblies.⁶¹ Repeated requests that Dubernet and other royalists leave the palais when Frondeur issues came up led the First President to ask for advance notification of such discussions so they could stay home – apparently, the sight of them being forced to leave the palais everyday was considered undignified and put them in danger.⁶² Rumors of Mazarin's return were common in the summer of 1651, and this created the impression that the current peace would be short lived.⁶³ In fact, one rumor maintained that Mazarin was preparing to lead an army to Guyenne in the fall of 1651 in order to remove Condé and suppress the Bordelais Fronde. Other rumors held that loyalist *parlementaires* like the First President Dubernet were actively caballing in the city to undermine the prince and his supporters.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Bernard Pujot, *Le Grand Condé* (Paris, 1995), pp. 195-7.

⁶¹ *Registre secret*, 12-3 July 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 19 July 1651.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 13 July 1651.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 25 September 1651, 30 September 1651, 2 October 1651.

Unlike the struggle that took place prior to the princess's arrival in Bordeaux, the Parlement immediately called for union with Condé.⁶⁵ The declaration of union called for the Parlement, Jurade, and princes to remain united and work together for Cardinal Mazarin's expulsion from France or death, leaving Condé to take his place as the king's primary advisor. The terms of the union were very much in the tradition of earlier demands placed on the crown: there were calls for the suppression of the intendants, reform of the king's finances, and calls for the payment of gages and rentes, but little mention of the concerns of the growing Ormist movement. It was a document that offered tangible rewards for Condé and the *parlementaires* but provided little of benefit for Bordelais who would be asked to support it.⁶⁶ Condé shared cultural and social affinities with the *parlementaires* and a common enemy in Mazarin, but the magistrates were troubled by the Spanish alliance and by Condé's relationship to the Ormée. While the prince appears to have always had misgivings about the Ormist agenda, he needed their support as the city's other authorities began to eschew his strategy.

During this time the Ormée continued to meet and organize, but it deferred to Condé's leadership and remained largely in the background. The situation changed, however, following Mazarin's return from exile and Condé's defeat at Agen in March 1652. As one of Mazarin's supporters wrote, "the Bordelais are infuriated at the Parlement's troops which left the city with 1200 men but only made it to Condé with 400...they enjoyed themselves by pillaging along the way rather than rushing to the prince's aid...the meetings of the Ormée are resuming...the persecution of suspects has

⁶⁵ *Registre secret*, 21 September 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369.

⁶⁶ Birnstiel, pp. 231-241.

begun again.”⁶⁷ Once more the motivations of the *parlementaires* were called into question as they failed the prince and city through incompetence and treachery. Incensed by the defeat and by the Parlement’s apparent lack of support for the prince, and Ormée prepared to step into the void left by Condé’s flight and the Parlement’s growing irrelevance.

The Ormée’s attack on the *parlementaires*

All of these factors brought about a decisive confrontation between the Ormée and Parlement in the spring of 1652. Overall, the Parlement still supported the Prince and opposed Mazarin, which would seem to provide a basis for cooperation between the court and Ormée. But it was precisely the challenges faced by the city and the evident corruption and disinterest of the *parlementaires* that made the attack desirable. By April 1652 the Parlement was sufficiently concerned about the power of the Ormée to issue an *arrêt* prohibiting unapproved assemblies outside the hôtel de ville.⁶⁸ The Ormists responded by calling for nine *parlementaires* to leave Bordeaux. The prospect of banishing its own members from the city posed problems for the Parlement. If the Ormée could determine the composition of the court it risked becoming little more than a tool for the rebels, while growing numbers of expelled magistrates made it more likely the court would be transferred outside the city. And yet, according to one mazarinade, all the expulsions were ordered by a special Chamber that included the Prince, several

⁶⁷ Note écrite de Blaye au cardinal Mazarin, 16 March 1652 : *Archives historiques*, vol. VI, p. 314.

⁶⁸ *Registre secret*, 14 July 1651: BM Bordeaux ms. 369.

parlementaires and jurats, and the city's *procureur syndic*.⁶⁹ While there were no known *parlementaires* in the Ormée, some supported the prince and would have cooperated with the Ormée when called upon. The Parlement accepted the extrusions, but it tried to reign in the Ormist assemblies by ordering them to meet at the *hôtel de ville*. None of these efforts slowed the movement's growing strength, prompting the Parlement on 13 May to issue one final order against the illicit assemblies. Leaders of the Ormée, evidently feeling more confident, ignored the attempt to bring them under control and threatened violence if the Parlement issued any more pronouncements prejudicial to them.

The Parlement's *arrêt* provoked an important expression of Ormist thought. The *Manifeste des Bordelais*, most likely written by a few radicals, exemplifies the profound antipathy that was felt by many toward the court, and it hints at some of the reasons for the scorn directed at the city's magistrates. First, it explained why these changes were taking place in Bordeaux and not elsewhere:

Those who want to judge the conduct of the Bordelais since they have been attacked by the domestic enemies of France, will find that they (the Bordelais) have not only given proof of their singular valor, but even more they have an advantage over the rest of the French people. They have shown themselves more zealous for the public good (*le bien public*), have done more to break their chains, and have done more to give back to France the liberty that we have lost over the centuries.⁷⁰

The notions of lost liberty and public good are at the heart of the Ormist critique of the existing political and judicial hierarchy, which violates the former and ignores the latter. After all, "the Athenians withdrew the authority they had given to the Areopagus (the place where the high Court of Appeal for criminal and civil cases met in Athens) because they had shown themselves to be more concerned with their own profit than they were

⁶⁹ Birnstiel, p. 260.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

that of the people.”⁷¹ The document then called for fundamental changes in the judicial process to make it more equitable. Cases would be heard within twenty-four hours by judges selected by the Ormée with no lawyers, prosecutors, “briefs, or chicanery,” all of which were thought to only corrupt the process.⁷² The entire nature of the judicial system of the Old Regime was to be changed in order to make it more open and accessible to ordinary citizens. The pamphlet argued that the procedures would soon prove their effectiveness and be adopted by the rest of France. Echoing other mazarinades, the *Manifeste* viewed traditional justice as a bastion of wealth and corruption that excluded those who could not afford the lawyers and fees demanded by the high courts. Magistrates and *les grands* were accused of being the “accomplices and support for tyranny,” and the Bordelais needed to look to themselves for the individuals and institutions to create a more equitable society.⁷³ While most mazarinades insisted on the Ormée’s loyalty to the crown, this critique of the judicial process was no more acceptable to the king, whose authority it undercut, than it was to Parlement, whose destruction it assumed. According to the *Manifeste*, the jurats went around the city posting the Parlement’s *arrêt*, but they were harassed by Ormists the entire time and the placards were torn down as soon as they were posted. The Ormée defiantly claimed that it would continue to meet with or without the Parlement’s sanction.⁷⁴

It is important to contrast this critique of the *parlementaires* with the considerable didactic writings that circulated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries about the *parfait magistrat*. Similar to the “mirror for princes” literature, these treatises were full

⁷¹ Birnstiel, p. 251.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 251-2.

of advice about how to be an upright and virtuous judge. According to the anonymous *Essai sur l'idée du parfait magistrat*, the good magistrate “is entirely devoted to justice and public service, is indefatigable, untainted by any form of corruption or scandal, lives simply, never wasting time or money, behaves with consistent prudence and propriety....”⁷⁵ While this was little more than advice and not an affirmation of the *parlementaires*' lived behavior, it is certainly not how the Ormists viewed the robe nobility.

In a move designed to isolate the Parlement, the Ormists warned the bourgeois not to help the court in the future or risk being denounced as traitors and forced to leave the city.⁷⁶ According to an account of events, “the Ormée has outlawed the Parlement at this time – something the king, with all his power and all his declarations, could not do.” The account went on to note that *parlementaire* offices had been suppressed and venality abolished, which represented not just an attack on “treasonous” magistrates but an attack on the institution itself.⁷⁷ Perhaps anticipating a standoff with the city, Mazarin called for the Parlement to be reorganized outside the city in April 1652.⁷⁸

In early June the situation between the Parlement and Ormée seemed certain to end in violence. The *parlementaires* were determined to have their *arrêt* against the Ormist assemblies published and enforced before they would begin to meet again, while leaders of the Ormée refused to be intimidated or back down.⁷⁹ The Ormée announced a new list of *parlementaires* to be expelled from the city, who were informed with notices that read, “having learned of your illness, we present you with an ordinance to go get

⁷⁵ Roelker, p. 143.

⁷⁶ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 16 May 1652: *Archives historiques*, vol. VIII, p. 385.

⁷⁷ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 20 May 1652: *Archives historiques*, vol. VIII, p. 386.

⁷⁸ M. Duburg to Mazarin, 15 April 1652: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, p. 370-2.

⁷⁹ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 23 May 1652: *Archives historiques*, vol. VIII, p. 387.

some fresh air; and if by tomorrow you have not left the city you will be stabbed and thrown in the river.”⁸⁰ On June 3 Ormists gathered to visit the homes of the proscribed magistrates. Fourteen *parlementaires* were exiled from the city, but, unsatisfied, the Ormists followed their victory with new accusations and a new list of suspects to expel.⁸¹ On 7 June the Ormée organized an assembly at the hôtel de ville in which they called for a new oath of union in defense of the movement and demanded the expulsion of anyone unwilling to take it. While few of the city’s bourgeois reportedly agreed to take the oath, the move was an obvious attempt to identify and eradicate the movement’s opponents. The oath amounted to a coup by the Ormée to seize power and it was a clear challenge to the Parlement. If the *parlementaires* had any hope of maintaining or reestablishing their authority in Bordeaux, they could not allow this obvious power grab to stand.

The final confrontation came on 24/25 June. On the morning of the 24th, a group of Ormists gathered to rally support to lift Harcourt’s siege of Cadillac when the jurat Guiraut ordered the assembly to disband. According to one mazarinade, “the people, filled with wine, mockingly replied that they would remain assembled whether he liked it or not.” Guiraut withdrew temporarily but he threatened to come back with 500 men and “tear them to pieces.”⁸² True to his word, Guiraut organized an armed force that clashed with the rebels on the rue du Pas Saint. “Stirred by the presence of the jurats, the bourgeois unleashed such a withering fire that the rebels were obliged to barricade themselves inside the houses and fire from behind the windows.”⁸³ The bourgeois troops

⁸⁰ Communay, *L’Ormée à Bordeaux d’après le journal inédit de Jacques Filhot*, p. 177.

⁸¹ Beik, *Urban Protest*, p. 235.

⁸² Westrich, p. 35; Beik, *Urban Protest*, p. 236.

⁸³ Westrich, p. 36.

were eventually forced to withdraw, but not before dozens of Ormists were killed and the seeds were sown for the deciding confrontation.

The next morning a band of Ormists seized the hôtel de ville, sounded the tocsin, and soon nearly 4,000 Ormists filled the streets and seized the city's armory. The magistrates then learned the Ormists were marching on the Chapeau Rouge, a *parlementaire* neighborhood, and nothing could stop them. The Ormists attacked from several directions with upwards of 3,000 men and women armed mostly with household weapons and two or three cannons they took from the armory. Recognizing the impending danger, the *parlementaires* and their supporters barricaded themselves in their homes and awaited the attack. When the battle finally began, the *parlementaires* had the benefit of strong defensive positions, but they were heavily outnumbered and vulnerable to being burned out of their homes. After heavy fighting, the Ormée won the day but at a heavy price with estimates of 50 to 100 killed and many more wounded. The *parlementaires* forces lost perhaps only five or six with another ten or so wounded, while nine of their homes were burned.⁸⁴ "All of Bordeaux now belongs to the Ormée," reported a mazarinade, and "we honor its standards." According to Lenet, "the entire Parlement with the exception of the grande fronde (those who supported the rebellion of the princes) talk of departing. President d'Affis fears his house will be pillaged while President Pichon's just was – both are in great despair and everyone is dismayed."⁸⁵ According to Lenet, the Ormée wanted 14 *parlementaires* who had recently returned to the city expelled again and they wanted to be included in any future assemblies and discussions with the princes. Villars and the rest of the Ormists finally withdrew from

⁸⁴ Westrich, pp. 38-39; Beik, *Urban Protest*, pp. 236-237.

⁸⁵ Le Comte de Cosnac, *Souvenirs du Règne de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1866), vol. III, p. 351.

the Chapeau Rouge on the night of 25 June after pledging their loyalty to Condé.⁸⁶

Fearing that the *parlementaires* would flee, Lenet pleaded with them to stay and restart their functions at the palais.

The next day d’Affis called on Lenet to issue him a passport to leave the city and when Lenet went to his home he found the president in an empty house, panicked and fearing for his life and belongings, all of which he had hidden in a nearby convent. Lenet had d’Affis brought to the archbishop’s house and arranged for several leaders of the Ormée to visit the president to reassure him of his safety, despite the fact that many disliked and distrusted the judge. At the Palais, Lenet found sixteen *parlementaires*, mostly representatives of the grande fronde, determined to retake their duties in the court the next day. The rest of the *parlementaires*, mostly from the petite fronde (those who opposed Mazarin and Épernon but did not support the princely rebellion), were all talking about leaving the city. Condé and his supporters did not want to see the *parlementaires* forced from the city, and they defended d’Affis and the others before the leaders of the Ormée. The princes were uncomfortable with the rise of Ormist power and authority because, despite the pledges of support, the movement represented a challenge to the political hierarchy and a threat to the very power structures the prince hoped to one day control. Still, the events of June 1652 make it clear that the Ormée, and not the *parlementaires* or princes, was in control of the city and its interests could not be ignored.

It is important to remember that as a *prince du sang* with an intimate and historic role in the royal state system, Condé, like the sovereign magistrates, had a commitment to the hierarchy that it represented. Condé repeatedly tried to win the *parlementaires* over to his position and protected the magistrates and court when it ran into trouble with the

⁸⁶ Cosnac, *Souvenirs*, vol. III, p. 349.

Ormée. His support and encouragement for the Ormists reflected his need to maintain a base of support in Guyenne in order to challenge Mazarin and the regency. The prince tried to maintain good relations with the *parlementaires* as a matter of course, but by 1651 the magistrates were divided over whether to embrace the prince and his agenda or not. The *parlementaires* were not so much afraid of renewing the rebellion against the regency, as they were troubled by Condé's treaty with Spain and the power of the Ormée, which was clearly building off the ongoing unrest. While Condé and the Ormée maintained working relations in their struggles with the crown, the prince was uncomfortable with Ormist demands such as the abolition of venality and more open civic governance.

By early 1653, there was considerable talk about the establishment of a republican city-state that would separate entirely from France and the institutions of the past. There is general consensus that Ormist thinking evolved as circumstances changed during their time in power. Whether the Ormist turn to republicanism was genuine or not, it represented a rejection of traditional, parliamentary leadership and power. Because the monarchy was too closely tied to the Parlement to allow its suppression, the Ormée was forced to reject its authority and establish new political institutions. The rejection of the Parlement's authority was built on both long-standing popular perceptions of the court and the circumstances that gripped the city. Some of the grievances articulated against the magistrates during this time, such as complaints about corruption and venality, represented deep and pervasive attitudes within the city. The denunciation of the Parlement's authority reveals the profound ambivalence that many Bordelais felt toward the central political institution that dominated their city and lives. Under ordinary

circumstances, the Parlement's authority was unassailable even if it was not embraced, but during the upheaval of the Ormée many saw an opportunity to eliminate the institution that seemed incapable of representing their interests.

In another assembly at the palais, Conti made the charge that he knew of a cabal against him and some of the remaining *parlementaires* were held responsible. M. de Massiot was personally singled out and members of the Ormée threatened to kill him and throw him in the river before Conti intervened and took responsibility for his safety. According to Massiot, it was nothing short of "tyranny for such lowly people (*petites gens*) as the Ormists to govern in place of the Parlement."⁸⁷ According to Massiot's defense, he never intended to harm Conti or his interests, but he simply could not support Ormist rule in the city and he claimed that most of his fellow *parlementaires* felt the same way.⁸⁸ According to Lenet, Massiot was eventually freed by Conti to appease what was left of the Parlement, which was sympathetic to the magistrate's plot against the Ormée.⁸⁹ In other words, his plot was an attempt, not to turn the city back over to the crown, but to reestablish some sort of traditional authority and hierarchy.

The failure of Massiot's plot led Gabriel de Pontac, Massiot's brother-in-law, to conclude that they should use patience in their attempt to topple the Ormée. Pontac proclaimed in a letter to Mazarin that he "never loses a chance to encourage his friends in the Parlement and city of Bordeaux to shake off the tyranny of the people and return to their duty. I had hoped for some success in my efforts, but I have to tell you sir that the Parlement is completely beaten (by the Ormée) and incapable of helping the crown."⁹⁰ In

⁸⁷ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 5 December 1652: *Archives historiques*, vol. VIII, p. 423.

⁸⁸ Communay, *L'Ormée à Bordeaux : le journal inédit de Jacques Filhot*, p. 183.

⁸⁹ Cosnac, *Souvenirs*, vol. V, p. 367.

⁹⁰ Pontac to Mazarin, 1 January 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, p. 256.

the view of the *parlementaires*, governance outside the traditional hierarchy of seventeenth-century French society was incapable of being anything but a “tyranny of the people” regardless of its merits or the failings of the established civic leadership.

It was during this time that rumors began to circulate that Lavie was being considered for the post of First President, since it was widely known that Dubernet was ill. According to an anonymous letter to Mazarin, Lavie was wrong for the post because he was a leader of the early Fronde and a sworn enemy of Épernon. The letter was probably written by one of Épernon’s supporters, and it recounted ugly personal stories from Lavie’s past as well as specific reasons why he was wrong for the post. According to the letter, Lavie would be resented by both the Frondeur and non-Frondeur camps because he was perceived as a traitor by the one and a rebel by the other. It was said that Lavie would only antagonize the loyalists in the Parlement and city who had suffered under the revolt that he and others initiated. Finally, the letter argued that Lavie did not have the resources to maintain himself in the post and he would be forced to sell justice to the highest bidder and steal from the public coffers.⁹¹ Lavie’s case is interesting because it represents in microcosm the transformation that was taking place more broadly in the court itself. While the abruptness and success with which he remade himself as a loyalist may have angered people on both sides of the revolt, his support for the crown represented the ascendant position in the Parlement.⁹²

⁹¹ AVIS (anonyme) adressé au cardinal M contre M. de Lavie, December 1652: *Archives historiques*, vol. VIII, p. 429.

⁹² Communay, *L’Ormée à Bordeaux: le journal inédit de Jacques Filhot*, pp. 115, 183.

Difficult Choices for the *Parlementaires*

By the beginning of 1653 the Ormée faced a number of challenges, but the military situation was probably its most urgent. By the middle of February, much of Guyenne was again in royalist hands and the city was essentially encircled. As a further challenge to the Ormée, Lavie and others began to pressure for the reestablishment of the Parlement outside the city, trying on their own to gather members of the court in Agen in the fall of 1652.⁹³ The crown issued a decree on 6 October 1652 calling for the court's reorganization in Agen, although it did not open its first session until 3 March 1653. The king's edict also called for the other courts and *corps* of the city to be transferred to Agen, although it's unclear whether or not the order was obeyed. The crown justified the move by asserting that it was impossible for the *parlementaires* to exercise the king's justice without threats to their personal security in Bordeaux. The list of members in attendance at the first session included mostly mazarinists who had opposed the Fronde from the start but that would change in the coming months.⁹⁴ In a letter to Mazarin from late January 1653, Lavie discussed his efforts to rally the *parlementaires* outside Bordeaux to come to Agen, which was a difficult task since many were at their country estates or outside the province. According to Lavie, an earlier effort to reconstitute the Parlement in Dax failed after death, low morale, and mounting expenses led everyone to flee. The Ormée's attack on the petite fronde was the signal for Lavie that it was time for the *parlementaires* to reorganize and work toward the destruction of the popular

⁹³ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 793, p. 16.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

movement.⁹⁵ The people of Agen were happy to have the Parlement take up residence since the court meant increased revenue and prestige for the town, and town leaders quickly turned to the court for assistance in various community matters. As the Ormée demonstrated, the *parlementaires* were powerful men but they were also vulnerable. Their elevated status and reputation were the basis of their authority, and while they always had the ability to flee to their country estates, doing so risked diminishing their status and relevance. Above all, the power of the *parlementaires* required the stable functioning of traditional municipal institutions and the general acceptance of those in their community. Isolated on their estates, the magistrates were powerless to affect circumstances in Bordeaux or fight the Ormée's new vision of civic governance. Agen promised a resumption of their traditional duties, revenue for their depleted coffers, and royal reconciliation, but it would also require them to accept that they had been chased from Bordeaux by their fellow citizens. From among these unpleasant choices, a growing number of *parlementaires* chose to reorganize themselves at Agen but it was a difficult decision that brought humiliation and recognition of their powerlessness when faced with organized, popular opposition.

The spring of 1653 was a difficult time for the *parlementaires* who remained in the city, which by some accounts still numbered as many as forty-four. According to one account of events in early February, the *parlementaires* claimed to be anxious to reestablish their authority and they called for a meeting with Conti at the palais. Only eight magistrates attended the meeting and the lack of support confirmed the court's irrelevance. The attendees issued an *arrêt* calling on the remaining magistrates in the city

⁹⁵ Lavie to Mazarin, 30 January 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, p. 261.

to retake their positions in the court but with no success.⁹⁶ Conti claimed to support the Parlement's efforts to reconstitute itself, but at least one account maintains that he was doing everything he could to weaken the court and the remaining *parlementaires*.⁹⁷ The remaining *parlementaires* were in a terrible position – if they fled the city, perhaps to the new court in Agen, their homes might be burned, while if they stayed to work against the Ormée they risked personal injury. According to one account, the *gens de bien* of Bordeaux were especially troubled by the prince's turn toward Spain for assistance and were anxious to get rid of Conti and work toward an agreement with the crown.⁹⁸ Overtures to the Spanish had always been troubling to the *parlementaires* who never lost sight of the fact that their authority came from the crown and were not interested in turning their city over to a foreign power. If the *parlementaires* were able to rebel against the regency with the useful fiction that the king was being deceived and misguided by his ministers, there was no way to rationalize the use of foreign assistance in their struggle. More importantly, it was never the intention of the *parlementaires* to replace the existing political structures or hierarchy with a foreign power or local, republican government, but to find for themselves a more secure position within that hierarchy.

The Ormée used the occasion of the Duc de Bourbon's baptism at Saint Andre's cathedral in February to once again demonstrate its dominance. When, as was the custom, the various *corps* of the city arrived for the procession that would precede the baptism, the Ormists announced that the *corps* could only march if they renounced their affiliations and marched as members of the Ormée. The Ormée maintained that *it* now

⁹⁶ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 17 February 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, p. 271.

⁹⁷ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 20 February 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, p. 273.

⁹⁸ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 10 February 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, pp. 266-8.

composed all the orders and was the sole master of the city. According to one account, some among the *corps* wanted to use the occasion to rally the people against the Ormée, but most were “cowardly” and preferred to endure the insult rather than risk retribution at the hands of the Ormists. It is important to remember that public processions and ceremonies were strictly regulated by deep and historic rights of precedence and privilege. The ceremony or procession was a chance to reify and project the authority of the civic elite, and it served as a reminder to the Bordelais of the limitations of their own power and status within this society. By claiming to represent all the *corps* of the city, the Ormée was in fact rejecting the very idea of *corps* and the society that they represented. The intent of the Ormists was to overturn the city’s hierarchy, which they viewed as corrupt and unrepresentative of their interests.⁹⁹ In contrast to the earlier ceremonial dispute where the Parlement managed to mobilize popular support to attack the Cour des Aides, now the Bordelais were determined to reconstitute the meaning of political power and upend the entire municipal hierarchy. This effort reflected the Bordelais’ deep ambivalence toward the *parlementaires* and their determination to find leadership that represented their interests.

By the middle of March, the reconstituted Parlement in Agen had grown to 14 members, while only seven or eight magistrates remained active in Bordeaux. The majority of the *parlementaires* were living on their country estates or were in hiding in Bordeaux and the fact that only a handful were still meeting in Bordeaux meant that the Agen court was increasingly winning the battle for legitimacy.¹⁰⁰ Despite a handful of *parlementaires* who were still loyal to Conti (and these were almost certainly clients), the

⁹⁹ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 20 February 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, p. 273.

¹⁰⁰ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 13 March 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, p. 278.

overwhelming majority were hostile to the Ormée and Prince by the spring of 1653. Indeed, there were several rumors of plots backed by Lavie and d’Affis, and several councillors were sent to the Château du Hâ for their involvement, but the plots were not taken seriously because these individuals had long been discredited in the eyes of the Bordelais. According to one account, magistrates like Bordes were deeply unpopular in the city because they were blamed for initiating the Fronde only to abandon the revolt when it served their interests. Some Bordelais felt betrayed by the *parlementaires* who were blamed for abandoning the revolt without bringing it to a successful conclusion, and news of these sorts of plots reconfirmed the judges’ apparent treachery against the city.

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Arnaud de Pontac was announced as the Parlement’s new First President in the middle of March 1653. Dubernet had been forced out of the city in 1651 when Condé took over the governorship because it was feared that the First President, being closely linked to Mazarin, would cabal against the new government. Dubernet fled to his country estates in Limoge where he lived for another year before he died in May 1652. His death created a highly prized vacancy to which Pontac and Lavie both aspired.¹⁰² Lavie would seem to be a curious candidate considering his role in the early days of the Fronde and the powerful enemies he had made along the way. According to a later assessment of Lavie’s character, he was said to be a capable and eloquent magistrate who was not well liked by his fellow judges.¹⁰³ His evident duplicity during the Fronde almost certainly left him with few supporters as he vied for the post, yet he seemed to believe that his

¹⁰¹ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 24 March 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, pp. 303-7.

¹⁰² Communay, pp. 93-6.

¹⁰³ Georges Depping, ed. *Correspondance administrative sous le règne de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1850-5), vol. II, p. 129.

shifting loyalties and active assistance to Mazarin in the later years of the Fronde were enough to place him in a position to claim the post. Pontac, on the other hand, was a loyal Mazarinist from the beginning and had fled the city in the early days of the revolt. To the faction that opposed the Fronde from the beginning, Lavie's promotion would have been the height of betrayal. Despite the concerns raised by Lavie's candidacy, it is unlikely that Mazarin took the bid seriously and chose instead to reward a loyal supporter who he could count on to push his agenda in the restored Parlement. Unlike the dispute that erupted between the marquis de Régusse and the baron d'Oppède for the first presidency in the Parlement of Aix, Mazarin's choice was not between a Frondeur judge with powerful clientage ties in the court and a loyalist magistrate with relatively weak ties. In this case, Mazarin was able to reward a staunch supporter in Pontac at the same time that he promoted the individual with the strongest family network within the court. Lavie was clearly hurt by the loss of the office, but there was little that he could do under the circumstances.¹⁰⁴ Pontac was not the only Mazarinist to benefit from their loyalty to the cardinal during the Fronde. Jean-Gaston de Montesquieu (uncle of the great philosophe) was also promoted to president following the revolt in return for his unflagging support for the crown, and he was given a series of commissioned portraits of Anne, Mazarin, and Louis XIV as thanks for his efforts on their behalf.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Lavie to Mazarin, 27 March 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. VII, pp. 308-10.

¹⁰⁵ *Registre secret*, 30 August 1653: AM Bordeaux ms. 793.

The End of the Ormée

The end for the Ormée finally came on 25 July when representatives from the city presented peace terms to Candalle and Vendôme, which called for a suspension of the two écus tax on wine, general amnesty for those involved in the revolt, Parlement's return, no quartering of the crown's troops, razing of the city's forts, and the right to levy taxes to pay the city's debts. The terms were accepted with some restrictions, such as who would qualify for amnesty, and on 2 August Conti and his followers left the city and Candalle and Vendôme entered.¹⁰⁶

Attention turned to the fate of the Parlement following the defeat of the Ormée. The Parlement was officially reorganized, but many members were still absent and there was almost immediate pressure to move the court back to Bordeaux. In a letter to Mazarin in August 1653, the *parlementaires* claimed that they left the city in order to serve the crown but they should now be allowed to return to their homes, and they maintained that it was more difficult to restore order to the city from a distance.¹⁰⁷ Pontac and others pleaded with Mazarin in August to allow the court to return, once again arguing that the court could help calm tempers in Bordeaux.¹⁰⁸ Beyond their protestations of obedience and calls for return, the magistrates were anxious to demonstrate their authority following the unrest. The court registered the king's peace agreement, including the parts that detailed the conditions on amnesty and plans to rebuild the Châteaux Trompette and Hâ, but the court decided to remonstrate over the issue. Councillor Duburg, a Mazarinist from the beginning, preferred that the court

¹⁰⁶ Nouvelles de Bordeaux, 4 August 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. XV, pp. 381-2.

¹⁰⁷ Parlement of Bordeaux to Mazarin, 20 August 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. XV, p. 403.

¹⁰⁸ Pontac to Mazarin, 23 August 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. XV, p. 407.

simply register the edict and not do anything to “please the people.”¹⁰⁹ Another letter from the Cordelier monk P. Berthod to Mazarin, the *parlementaires* were to blame for stirring up trouble over the forts and he claimed that the Bordelais were disinterested in the issue. In fact, he claimed that the Bordelais were so disgusted with the Parlement that there was talk of having the Jurade publish the king’s edict. Berthod asserted that the Parlement was still “infected with ill will” and he called on Mazarin to punish the agitators in the court.¹¹⁰ The king’s council then issued an *arrêt* that reiterated the terms of the peace and ordered the Parlement to have no further dealings with the city of Bordeaux, and it was not until February 1654 that the court registered the edict “pur et simple.” The exchange over the peace agreement represented an attempt by the *parlementaires* to reassert their authority within the city and before the crown.¹¹¹ Toward this end, the *parlementaires* stayed informed about plots and cabals in the city and vigorously prosecuted anyone involved. Although the court itself still did not have royal permission to return to Bordeaux, it appointed commissioners to return to the city and investigate and prosecute agitators who were threatening the public peace.¹¹²

When the Parlement opened session in December 1653 in La Réolle, it is clear that the *parlementaires* were not happy with their accommodations. The court was meeting in a local château but the facilities were not to their standards and there was no place to keep prisoners, so the *parlementaires* collected 100 écus from each councillor to pay for repairs.¹¹³ It was also necessary to transport criminal defendants from Bordeaux

¹⁰⁹ Duburg to Mazarin, 7 September 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. XV, p. 425.

¹¹⁰ Berthod to Mazarin, 8 September 1653: *Archives historiques*, vol. XV, p. 426-8.

¹¹¹ Declaration of the King to the Parlement of Bordeaux, 22 January 1654: *Archives historiques*, vol. VIII, p. 454.

¹¹² *Registre secret*, 20 August 1653: AM Bordeaux ms. 793.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 1 December 1653.

to La Réolle, a task that was given to the court's concierge, M. Valens.¹¹⁴ Later on, the court learned of the terrible state of prisoner accommodations and called on all members of the court to contribute another 60 écus to help pay for their food and lodging.¹¹⁵ Perhaps because of complaints, the crown issued another edict transferring the court in January 1654, this time to Nérac about twenty miles to the west of Agen. Given the damage to the city during the Fronde and its considerable distance from Bordeaux, the court resisted the move and the crown eventually rescinded the order.¹¹⁶

Just as the Parlement preferred to be back in Bordeaux, the city, no doubt, was eager to see the court return. While the Bordelais may have wanted a more equitable and representative form of local governance, the Parlement remained a source of prestige and revenue for the city and many lobbied for the court's return. Hope for the kind of radical change envisioned by the Ormée could not be sustained against the resurgence of traditional governance, and money that would have gone to Bordeaux's artisans, churches, and merchants was now being spent in La Réolle.¹¹⁷ In September 1653 one of city's jurats traveled to La Réolle to inform the court about conditions in Bordeaux and he explained that everyone was thankful for the peace and amnesty given by the king, but they were eager to see the Parlement return.¹¹⁸ For their part, the *parlementaires* made it clear to the crown and other provincial royal authorities that they were prepared to put the past behind them and work toward reconciliation. At different times, individual magistrates met with Épernon and Estrades, the new governor of the province, and the meetings were marked by a civility and deference that had been missing at the outbreak

¹¹⁴ *Registre secret*, 4 December 1653: AM Bordeaux ms. 793.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 12 February 1654.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18 December 1653.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 September 1653.

of the Fronde.¹¹⁹ The Parlement was also eager to punish the leaders and sympathizers of the Ormée. In a letter to Pontac in November 1654, Mazarin argued that the king's authority depended on the respect given to him by the Parlement and people of Bordeaux, and he was prepared to reward the magistrates for their alacrity in dispensing punitive justice.¹²⁰ Mazarin singled out the original Frondeurs of the Parlement as individuals who now needed to demonstrate their loyalty to the crown through this process, but the *parlementaires* needed no incentives to repress the leaders of a movement that sought their destruction. In 1654 the court confirmed the sentence of banishment for a man convicted of threatening masons working on the Château Trompette.¹²¹

In the fall 1654, the Parlement sent a deputation to Paris to lobby for the court's return.¹²² The court paid all of their expenses and the trip seems to have been part of an effort to have the court reconvene in Bordeaux following the recess. According to correspondence, Pontac and Estrades were also both actively working to secure Parlement's transfer back to Bordeaux, while Mazarin assured them that he was doing all he could as well.¹²³ While we do not have an account of the negotiations, the Parlement did finally reconvene in Bordeaux in December. The king's letters were issued on 19 November 1654 and after taking several days to repair the palais de l'Ombrière, the court finally met in the second week in December. The stated reason for the crown's actions were that the court had proved its loyalty and devotion to such an extent during its exile that the king felt compelled to listen to the remonstrances of the Parlement's deputies. It was also believed that the court's return would help maintain the city's obedience and

¹¹⁹ *Registre secret*, 9 December 1653: AM Bordeaux ms. 793, pp. 112-3.

¹²⁰ Mazarin to Pontac, 19 November 1654: *Archives historiques*, vol. VIII, p. 494.

¹²¹ *Registre secret*, 22 July 1654: AM Bordeaux ms. 793.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 5 September 1654.

¹²³ Mazarin to Pontac, 1 November 1654: *Archives historiques*, vol. VIII, p. 490; Mazarin to d'Estrades, 14 November 1654: *Archives historiques*, vol. VIII, p. 492.

restore the king's authority in Bordeaux.¹²⁴ When the Parlement registered these letters it was clear that it intended to use its return to Bordeaux as an opportunity to demonstrate its new-found loyalty to the crown by prosecuting those involved in the previous troubles, but there was no acknowledgment of the magistrates' own involvement in much of the unrest. Certainly, the *parlementaires* understood their revolt against the crown differently than the Ormists, but their prosecution of the Ormists also reflected a deep antipathy toward the populist aspects of the movement. The *parlementaires* feared the Ormée's challenge, and they were prepared to use their newly reconfirmed royal power to defend themselves. In a symbolic gesture to illustrate their power, the court ordered a special mass at Saint André's to celebrate their return and all the magistrates were to attend in their black robes.¹²⁵ If the Ormists once attempted to eliminate the distinctions and privileges of the city's *corps* by absorbing them, this ceremony was a clear message that the *parlementaires* were not interested to changing the social and political structures of Bordelais society.

The radicalness of the Ormée made it easier for the Parlement to reconcile itself with the crown. By targeting the court for destruction and then instituting reforms that would have remade Bordelais society, the Ormée forced the Parlement back into the arms of the crown. Order and hierarchy were cornerstones of the *parlementaires'* understanding of their role in society. It was their responsibility to protect that hierarchy and maintain people "in their duty," and duty, not welfare, was the primary motivation of the *parlementaires* as they assessed the needs and concerns of the Bordelais. Whether that order and hierarchy was upset by the crown or community was less important to the

¹²⁴ *Registre secret*: AM Bordeaux ms. 793, p. 200.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2 December 1654.

magistrates than the impact that any changes had on them. The evolving loyalties of the *parlementaires* during the Fronde reflected the conflicting ways in which they believed they could best achieve stability and reconfirm their own position in a fluid polity. The *parlementaires* during the Fronde and Ormée did not try to represent some emerging notion of the “public good” or local interests, and they did not attack royal authority because its expansion posed an inherent threat to their own interests. What the Fronde and Ormée make clear is that the *parlementaire mentalité* was intensely traditional, hierarchical, and self-interested. While the *parlementaires* often invoked the public interest in their correspondence, these invocations were often self-serving and rhetorical in nature.¹²⁶

If the *parlementaires* expressed a profound ambivalence toward the Bordelais throughout the Fronde, the Ormée indicates those perceptions were returned by many of the Bordelais themselves. The *parlementaires* did not see themselves as defenders of the public interest and neither did the Ormists, who often depicted themselves as standing in for the broader community. Ormists specifically targeted the judicial system for reform because they viewed it as inherently corrupt and incapable of addressing the needs of ordinary citizens. Corruption was the natural result of a judicial system that was only accessible to the wealthy and was suffused with emollients, payoffs, and financial machinations. To the extent that the Ormists intended to create a republic, it is likely that these efforts were motivated by a desire to move beyond the Old Regime institutions and hierarchy that were seen as an obstacle to real service to the public interest. Finally, while it may have taken an upheaval like the Fronde to bring this assessment of the

¹²⁶ Julian Swann, “Disgrace without Dishonour: The Internal Exile of the French Magistrates in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past and Present*, no. 195 (May, 2007), pp. 87-126. Swann takes a more forgiving view of the *parlementaires*’ sense of public service.

parlementaires to the surface, there is every reason to believe that they were widely and deeply held by the Bordelais. After all, their critique of the judicial system and *parlementaires* has the ring of truth to it.

Chapter Five

The Revolt of 1675 and the Parlement's Painful Exile

The Parlement, city, and crown found stability in the decades following the Fronde, and the peace that followed the French victory against the Spanish in the Thirty Years War provided a period of prosperity for the country and its young monarch, Louis XIV. The hardships and financial strain that were at the root of the Fronde disappeared and the *parlementaires* were content to bask in the glow of the Sun King's early successes and renewed royal authority. Louis's education under Mazarin, however, made him acutely aware that his *gloire* was a matter of international, geo-politics and his primary role was that of warrior-king. For Louis to become the king he wanted to be, he would have to augment his power both at home and abroad, and this inevitably meant conflict with his neighbors and higher taxes for his people.

For its part, the Parlement of Bordeaux learned from its experiences in the Fronde that pressures from below could be as menacing as those from above, and it remained loyal when Louis's quest for *gloire* led him to war in the 1660s and 70s and fiscal demands mounted. Of course, the circumstances had changed dramatically. In place of an eleven-year-old king and regency led by his mother and Mazarin, Louis XIV had established himself as a powerful monarch. Louis's overwhelming success in the first of his wars, the War of Devolution, added to his mystique and prestige. The war lasted less than a year and was relatively bloodless as most of the fortified towns of Flanders simply capitulated when confronted with the overwhelming superiority of Louis's forces. The

most troubling aspect of the conflict was the Triple Alliance (Holland, England, and Sweden) that formed during the peace negotiations and threatened to renew the conflict if France refused to negotiate on reasonable terms. Europe was coming to realize how significant and dangerous the war machine of Le Tellier and Louvois could be to its neighbors, and there were signs that further French aggression would face a broad coalition of countries.

The other significant development to come out of the War of Devolution was a general desire among many in the French court, including Louis, to teach the “fish merchants” of Holland a lesson and permanently cripple Dutch power. After supporting the Dutch in the Thirty Years’ War and again in a war with England, Louis perceived Dutch efforts to limit his gains in the Spanish Netherlands as the height of ungratefulness, while Colbert, his Finance Minister, saw the destruction of Dutch economic power as a prerequisite to French growth and prosperity. After careful military and diplomatic planning designed to isolate Holland, Louis invaded in 1672 and nearly overran the country before the dikes were opened and flooding made a French advance on Amsterdam impossible. The move gave the Dutch time to break their diplomatic isolation and turned the war from a victory march into a drawn out conflict that strained the French taxpayer.¹

By the middle of the Dutch war Louis was faced with two significant revolts in Rennes and Bordeaux, and the roots of his troubles were financial as he sought new sources of revenue to supply his armies. The revolt has attracted less scholarly attention than the Fronde, perhaps because of the brevity and limited scope of the unrest, but it is

¹ John Wolf, *Louis XIV* (New York, 1974), pp. 211-227.

important for understanding how the Bordeaux *parlementaires* perceived their rights and responsibilities at the height of Louis XIV's power.

In 1673 Louis instituted a series of new consumption taxes on a number of commodities including pewter, tobacco, and paper.² These taxes fell the hardest on the artisan class and the *parlementaires* had no real interest in rescinding them. While the *parlementaires* had certainly seen some of their political authority curbed by new royal edicts that limited their right to remonstrance, there was little appetite for renewed revolt against the crown. The Fronde represented an attempt by the *parlementaires* to renegotiate their relationship with the crown, but it failed in this goal and had the unintended consequence of giving rise to an attempt by the Ormée to suppress the court. The result was that the *parlementaires* emerged from the Fronde with a renewed distrust of popular politics and violence. The ambivalent ties linking the *parlementaires* and Bordelais that were obscured by moments of cooperation in the Fronde, were plainly evident in 1675 as the magistrates arranged themselves unambiguously on the side of the crown.³ Still, the revolt of 1675 is significant for this study because it illuminates the fragile position of the *parlementaires* at the height of Louis's power. Despite its efforts to suppress the unrest in Bordeaux, the Parlement was forced into a painful, expensive, and humiliating exile by the king that lasted for nearly fifteen years. As this chapter will demonstrate, the *parlementaires*' struggles to maintain their status in an evolving polity continued to be threatened by an aggressive and resurgent royal authority.

² William Beik, *Urban Protest*, p. 146.

³ These findings conflict with John Hurt's analysis of the experiences of the Rennes *parlementaires* during the same period. Hurt has argued that the Rennes *parlementaires* felt threatened and were combative with the crown leading up to the revolt, and they gave tacit support to the people's rejection of the king's taxes that became the origin of the unrest. See John J. Hurt III, "The Parlement of Brittany and the Crown: 1665-1675," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4 (Autumn, 1966), pp. 411-433.

By 1674 seditious posters began to appear around the city. The first posters appeared in March on several private homes and in the place Saint Project and prompted the intendant de Sève to call on the jurats to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice. The posting of placards was fairly common in seventeenth-century Bordeaux and it served as a means of expressing popular frustration with individuals or policies, and they were a signal to the authorities to be vigilant even if they did not always lead to violence. By June a second round of posters appeared that caught the attention of the Parlement. One in particular was affixed to the door of a merchant named Philis, near the boucheries of Porte Medoc, who was most likely involved in collecting some of the new taxes. The Parlement issued an *arrêt* against the authors of the placards and informed the jurats that they were pleased with their conduct.⁴ The posters were a preview of things to come and illustrated the level of popular frustration these taxes generated.

The real trouble started in spring 1675 when violence erupted on the popular rue du Loup.⁵ In early March, when tax collectors began to institute some of the new levies, especially the pewter tax, they were immediately confronted by hostile crowds.⁶ However, it was not until the early afternoon of 26 March that the situation turned serious when the *commis* (clerks of the *traitants*, or tax farmers) of the pewter tax collector were at the home of a merchant named Cigoigne on the rue du Loup. They were there to mark the *étain* when several (regretieres) women armed with knives and rocks began to harass

⁴ *Inventaire sommaire des registres de la jurade 1520 à 1783*, vol. V [vol. X of Archives municipales de Bordeaux] (Bordeaux, 1913) [hereafter *Inventaire sommaire*], 13/3/1674; 13/6/1674; 20/6/74; 7,9/6/74.

⁵ Louis Desgraves, *Évocation du vieux Bordeaux* (Vivisque, 1989), pp. 113-4. One story has it that the street got its name from a particularly ferocious band of wolves that invaded the city in the sixth century. The rue du Loup was also home to the parlementaire Pierre de Ragueneau and his townhome, considered one of the best examples of 17th century architecture in the city, has been home to the city's archives since 1939.

⁶ Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade, 9 March 1675: *Archives historiques*, vol. XXXXI.

them. When the verbal attacks gave way to physical attacks the tax collectors fled and were followed by the crowd with chants of “*Aux Gabelleurs!*” as they made their way to the rue d’Arnaud-Miqueu.⁷ Being alerted to the disturbance, the jurats Fonteneil, Boroche, and Minvielle, along with the *chevalier du guet* and some archers, found the tax agents in a home where they had taken refuge and after working to disperse the crowd, they led them back to the house of Cigoigne to again mark the pewter. Perhaps because of the actions of the jurats, or a hard rain that had begun to fall, the crowds dispersed and after a brief period of work the jurats escorted the tax collectors back to their hotel. According to their account of the incident, the jurats then announced to the agents that they would do everything in their power, including risk their lives, to serve the king. At around five that evening Fonteneil walked down the rue du Loup and found everything tranquil and he called on the artisans to submit to the will of the king when the *traitants* returned.⁸ Perhaps disingenuously, the artisans all replied that they had nothing to do with the unrest that morning and they posed no threat to the tax collectors.⁹ The jurats had momentarily managed to defuse the situation.

The calm, however, did not last. On the 27th the *corps* of the city assembled in the hôtel de ville around eleven o’clock. The jurat Minvielle announced in the meeting that he had heard grumbling and talk of impending violence in the quartier de Saint Michel, a popular neighborhood and the site of previous unrest. The news came to him from a group of bourgeois from the neighborhood, and Minvielle and the jurats expressed

⁷ *Inventaire sommaire*, vol. V, 26/3/75.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XXXXI, p. 147.

confidence in the loyalty of the bourgeois should the situation turn violent.¹⁰ The Procureur-Syndic, de Jehan also informed the group that he knew of a meeting of artisans at a home on the rue du Loup in which preparations were being made to “deal” with the new tax collectors.¹¹ Fearing the worst, Fonteneil and Minvielle decided to notify Governor Albret who they found “attaqué de paralisie” and unmoved by the news. Albret calmly stated that rumors like these were common among the “rabble” and they often came to nothing.¹² Still, Albret called on the jurats to help the tax collectors and the Parlement to issue an *arrêt* against street gatherings, while the jurats assured him that they would do their duty even though the pewter taxes were part of their jurisdiction and this particular tax had been ratified by the Cour des Aides. This level of cooperation among the authorities indicated that, at least for the moment, local rivalries and jurisdictional disputes were less important than serving the crown and maintaining order.¹³

Faced with the threat of popular unrest, the jurats decided to organize some men from the *guet* and lead the tax collectors back to the rue du Loup, which only aggravated an already delicate situation. Ominously, the first two shops they went to were missing their master pewter makers and they were forced to find another.¹⁴ While again marking the pewter at the merchant Cigouille’s shop a crowd of women armed with rocks and knives began to assemble outside yelling “*Vive le Roy sans gabelle!*” The cries of the

¹⁰ Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade, 27 March 1675: *Archives historiques*, vol. XXXXI, p. 149.

¹¹ Dom Devienne, *Histoire de la ville de Bordeaux* (Bordeaux, 1771), p. 483; Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XXXXI, p. 148.

¹² *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 27/3/75; Devienne, pg. 483; Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XXXXI, 27 March 1675. In the *Inventaire Sommaire* it says “attaqué de paralisie” while in the procès verbal in the *Archives historiques* it says “très incommode d’un commencement de paralisie sur la moitié du visage.”

¹³ Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XXXXI, 27 March 1675.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

crowd expose the disconnect that existed among the protesters between their acceptance of the crown on the one hand and their rejection of royal taxes and authority on the other. Just as during the Fronde and Ormée, they defended public welfare as a communal right, which superseded the dimly understood and unrecognized needs of the state. Of course, the nature of taxation in the seventeenth century facilitated this disconnect, since many of the king's taxes were farmed out to private individuals who paid for the right to collect them. Many of these taxes enriched tax farmers as much as the crown, which created a situation that was difficult to justify or endure in difficult times. It was easy for the Bordelais to imagine that the king was unaware of local events and circumstances, or that he was being poorly served by his local representatives. The Bordelais understood that issues of public welfare, such as new taxes that threatened people's livelihood, were seldom addressed by the authorities whose interests they did not share.

The people called on the jurat Fonteneil to leave so that they could take care of the *commis*, but he refused to be intimidated and ordered the people to disperse.¹⁵ The growing throng responded with a shower of rocks and insults that forced the group to retreat to the hôtel de ville. Having made it as far as the market, the men were forced to take refuge in a nearby residence when it was apparent that angry crowds were approaching from both directions. Ever defiant, Fonteneil stood at the doorway of the home and announced that he would sooner die than allow the rioters to lay a hand on the *commis*.¹⁶ The men were saved when the jurats Boisson, Boroche, and Minvielle arrived with two officers of the *guet* and several archers, all of whom helped the men back to the hôtel de ville, despite a barrage of rocks and occasional musket fire. The initial threats of

¹⁵ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 27/3/75.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

violence were specifically directed at the tax collectors, but once it was apparent the authorities were defending the *commis*, the rioters “lost all respect” and began an all out assault on the group.¹⁷

Back at the *hôtel de ville*, they immediately notified Albret and the Parlement of the mounting unrest. Albret called out the militia but only about one hundred of them responded, and they were divided into two groups and ordered to patrol the city and maintain calm.¹⁸ The people of Saint-Michel also began to organize and arm. Illustrating the gravity of the situation, rioters dragged the mutilated *corpse* of a suspected *traitant* to the *hôtel de ville* where they began to attack the jurats inside.¹⁹ The jurats barricaded the *hôtel de ville* but did not have enough men to restrain the crowds, and the order was given to move the *commis* to the Château Trompette under cover of night.

After patrolling the streets all night, the jurats Fonteneil and Dubosc gave an account of the riots to the Parlement on the morning of the 28th, while the *parlementaires* praised their actions and called on Albret to come to the palais.²⁰ The order was again given for militia captains to organize their companies to protect the city’s gates, streets, and the *hôtel de ville*, but the bourgeois refused to obey the orders and, fearing for their safety, sent their domestics instead. According to accounts, their domestics were animated by the same spirit as the protesters and proceeded to cry “*Vive le Roy sans gabelle!*” in front of the magistrates at the *hôtel de ville*. The fact that the bourgeois would not mobilize exhibited both the gravity of the situation and the realities of local

¹⁷ Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XXXXI, 27 March 1675, pg. 153.

¹⁸ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 27 March 1675.

¹⁹ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 27 March 1675, pg. 158. According to William Beik, the *traitant* was either a wine merchant or an agent of Francois de Vivey, subdelegate of the intendant. Beik, *Urban Protest*, pg. 149.

²⁰ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 28 March 1675.

government. Unlike the *parlementaires* and other local authorities, the bourgeois were local merchants and wealthy artisans who had few direct political or economic links to the crown. They had little in common with the rebels in the streets, and they held a privileged and prominent place in Bordelais society that made them an important part of the city's hierarchy. But their support for the city's political and judicial elite had limits that were evident in times of unrest and personal risk. The bourgeois were primarily focused on protecting themselves and their property and they were not willing to take risks in support of political actors and policies that were beyond their interests.

On the 28th the Parlement issued an *arrêt* that prohibited people from assembling and named *commissaires* for each jurade to help call up the bourgeois but with no success. According to the Jurade's procès-verbal, the *arrêt* was actually counterproductive and made the rioters more determined to take control of the city.²¹ The city's authorities had virtually no physical presence and for the moment the streets of Bordeaux were controlled by the rioters. Protesters also broke the locks and seized the gate of Sainte-Croix and were, according to accounts, inviting peasants from the surrounding countryside to join them in the revolt. The Parlement's *commissaires* and jurats were subjected to insults and threats as they made their way around the city, and rioters threatened to put "tout a feu et en sang" if their demands were not met, including the release of prisoners held at the Château Trompette.²² The authorities informed the crowds that their demands could only be fulfilled by the king, and their only role was as intercessors and mediators – after all, it was not the Parlement or Jurade that had instituted the taxes. While this may have simply been an attempt to reduce tensions and

²¹ Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, 28 March 1675, pg. 159.

²² *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 28 March 1675.

absolve themselves of responsibility for the offending taxes, it accurately reflected the difficult position in which the authorities found themselves. Any action taken in this situation would eventually have to be reconciled with the will of crown, something the crowds seemingly refused to recognize. They called on the rioters to put down their weapons and “await the kindness of the king’s grace,” to which the crowd responded that they wanted immediate action on their demands.²³ The authorities rejected their fellow citizens’ calls for tax relief and seemed to recognize that nothing positive could come from a violent protest against the resurgent authority of the Louis XIV. The *parlementaires* were primarily motivated by concerns for order and hierarchy and popular revolt, regardless of the circumstances or “justice” of its cause, was problematic because it threatened the very nature of their authority. For the *parlementaires*, their authority came from the crown and it was supported by centuries of tradition and culture, and it was inconceivable to the judges that ordinary citizens could take matters into their own hands and impose their will on those above them.

It was at this point that one of the *commissaires* of the Parlement, M. de Tarneau, was killed by a musket shot and his body mutilated. The rioters also seized several hostages, including President Lalanne and councillors d’Andraut and Marboutin, and announced that they would hold them until the prisoners at Château Trompette were released.²⁴ In order to protect the men and calm the situation, Fonteneil offered to free the prisoners, but he continued to encounter crowds on the way to the Château that threatened to burn the city if the rioters’ demands were not met. The pressure worked and Montegu, the governor of Trompette, released of prisoners, who were then paraded

²³ Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, 28 March 1675, p. 159.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

around the city as a symbol of the rebels' success. The rioters finally withdrew to the quarters of Sainte Croix and Saint Michel, and the jurats had no choice but to continue to guard the hôtel de ville and try to stir the bourgeois to action.²⁵

Unfortunately for the authorities of Bordeaux, the following day did not bring calmer spirits. The Jurade informed the Parlement that peasants from the countryside were assembling and trying to enter the city and they called on the court to act. Fearing the rioters growing numbers, Albret tried again to organize the bourgeois, and then went in the morning to the hôtel de ville where he was told that rioters were gathering. It was reported that four to five thousand people were in the streets and they were waiting for a similar number of peasants under arms to enter the city's gates at any moment. In desperation, Albret took to the streets himself to rally the bourgeois, and while some turned out they quickly dispersed into the crowds of protesters.²⁶ The bourgeois did not want to be identified with the authorities responsible for the taxes and their collection because to do so was dangerous and they had little to gain.

Albret was preparing for a confrontation when messengers reported that the rioters would end the violence if their demands were met, and after learning of these developments through Albret and Fonteneil, the Parlement called on the rioters to present their grievances.²⁷ The curés of Sainte-Croix, Sainte Michel, and several leaders of the rioters were chosen to present their grievances, and Albret took the risky step of receiving them in person at place Saint Michel. When he arrived in the quartier de Sainte Croix he discovered a large number of rioters gathered in the cemetery yelling "Vive le Roy sans gabelle," in addition to hundreds of peasants who were entering the city through the Saint

²⁵ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 28 March 1675.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 29 March 1675.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Croix gate. When Albret tried to retreat back to the palais his path was blocked by hundreds, perhaps thousands, of men “who came before him with swords drawn yelling that they would kill everyone if their demands were not met.” When Albret arrived back at the palais he found it overrun by more than a thousand rioters who refused to leave until the Parlement took action against the taxes. The *curé* of Sainte Michel informed the *parlementaires* that he would be killed if he emerged from the palais empty-handed and the magistrates’ homes would be burned and pillaged.²⁸ Finally, the *parlementaires* were also told that the bourgeoisie who were guarding the gates of the city on the side of Graves had yielded to the crowds and peasants in the countryside were destroying the vines and burning estates.²⁹

Given the gravity of the situation and with Albret in attendance, the Parlement yielded to the rioters and suspended the king’s taxes.³⁰ An *arrêt* calling for amnesty and suspension of all new taxes was given to the *curé* of Saint Michel and to the Jurade to publish around the city.³¹ The *arrêt* had the desired effect and the following day the jurats Roche and Carpentey informed the Parlement it had been well received and everything was peaceful in the city.³² According to Fonteneil’s account, the Parlement had no choice but to suspend the taxes.³³ The jurats quickly sent out a series of letters to

²⁸ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 29 March 1675. qui venaient au devant de lui, l’épée nue, criant qu’ils voulaient tout tuer si on ne leur accordait leurs demandes.

²⁹ Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, 29 March 1675, pg. 161.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 165.

³¹ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 29 March 1675.

³² *Ibid.*, 30 March 1675, pg 163.

³³ Procès-verbal de jurade, Délibérations de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, 29 March 1675, pg. 161.

various ministers to justify their actions during the riot, and while it is likely that the *parlementaires* did the same, we do not have any surviving documentation.³⁴

A letter from the King granting amnesty to the city was received on April 6 and declared “*nous voulons et nous plust que la memoire en demeure esteinte et amortie comme de chose non avenue.*” The amnesty included no exceptions and the city was not held responsible for damages, but the settlement’s moderation was cause for suspicion among the Bordelais who sensed that reprisals were still likely.³⁵ In the months that followed the Bordelais and authorities established a fragile accord that was built on mutual distrust. The people were convinced that the king would find a way to disown the actions of the Parlement and reestablish the taxes, while the authorities were vigilant for additional outbreaks of violence. Placards continued to appear around the city throughout 1675 that illustrated the people’s distrust, including one attached to the hôtel de ville that read “the ‘lost children’ know that the intendant has given the order to reestablish the stamped paper tax and they are prepared to kill and burn the jurats who help in these tyrannies, including the maréchal d’Albret and his supporters.”³⁶ The jurats immediately informed the Parlement and Albret but the threats were empty and the city remained calm. Two individuals were found guilty of posting the placard and were quickly sentenced to the galleys. As the author of the placard feared, the king reestablished the tax on stamped paper, despite the grumblings and threats of more

³⁴ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 30 March 1675, pg 164

³⁵ Déclaration of Louis XIV portant amnistie en faveur de ville de Bordeaux, Délibération de la Jurade: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, p. 181.

³⁶ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 19 June 1675, p. 165.

violence.³⁷ Still, the fears were real enough to prompt Albret to request that additional troops camp outside the city in the event of further unrest.³⁸

As Albret feared, problems resurfaced several months later in August when news of the renewed taxes spread around the city. According to the jurats, word of an *arrêt* of the king's council concerning the *papier timbré* led to trouble on 16 August when the people found bails of stamped paper on a boat docked in the harbor. Albret and the jurats immediately organized the *corps* of the city and sent Boroche and the Procureur Syndic de Jehan to investigate. While the authorities were attempting to calm the situation, people gathered near the boat and threatened to burn it and tear up the paper. News of the commotion circulated around the popular neighborhoods of Saint Michel and Sainte Croix, and when the jurats returned to the *hôtel de ville* they were followed by crowds “who cried that they (the authorities) had lied about the reestablishment of the stamp tax.” Outside the *hôtel de ville* the archbishop tried to calm the situation but the people were “heated up with wine” and tried to force their way into the building. They were repulsed by musket fire that killed one and injured five others, and the rioters were finally dispersed with the help of soldiers from Château Trompette. This was the end of the incident, although Albret called on the jurats to find some of the leaders from the riot to hand out “une punition exemplaire.”³⁹ For its part, the Parlement responded with an *arrêt* that forbid gatherings and called on the bourgeois to be ready to turn out with their arms if needed.⁴⁰ At least according to one account, the bourgeois were motivated by the same

³⁷ Seve to Colbert, 9 June 1675: BN Mélanges Colbert ms. 171 bis, fol. 454.

³⁸ Seve to Colbert, 20 June 1675: BN Mélanges Colbert ms. 171 bis, fol. 628.

³⁹ *Inventaire Sommaire*, vol. V, 17 August 1675.

⁴⁰ *Arrêt du Parlement défendant les attroupements*, 17 August 1675: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, pg. 203.

spirit as the rioters and could not be trusted to defend the city.⁴¹ Several weeks later, the Parlement ordered the execution of several leaders of this latest revolt, expressing their unwillingness to tolerate further unrest.⁴² Three were burned alive in the place Cantaloupe, while another ten were executed in the neighborhoods they had agitated and one was decapitated and his head was placed next to that of the Ormée rebel Duretteste. Plaques were placed next to the bodies to explain their punishments and a stone monument was built outside the home of the parlementaire Tarneau to remind people of their “crimes.”⁴³

It is hard to know how to interpret the actions of the rebels in 1675. The extent and violence of their protests speaks to an obvious frustration, perhaps desperation, with the king’s new taxes, which they clearly hoped to reverse. Their pressure on the *parlementaires* and other authorities in the city represented the only possible means of accomplishing their goals, which unlike the Fronde were limited to immediate relief from new levies and did not seek to change the nature of local governance. However, from the historian’s vantage point there was an obvious hopelessness to the cause in 1675 that did not exist in the Fronde. Not only did the protesters not have the support of the local authorities, but the monarchy in Paris had changed and was not likely to tolerate a tax revolt. Once the rebels had successfully pressured the Parlement to rescind the taxes, they braced for what many believed would be a muscular response from Paris, one they hoped to avoid with threats of continued violence but had no real defense against.

⁴¹ Depping, *Correspondance*, vol. II, pp. 201-2.

⁴² Châteauneuf to jurats au sujet de l’exécution des chefs des séditieux, *Délibérations de la Jurade*, 2 September 1675: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, pg. 210-1.

⁴³ Devienne, pg. 494.

The events of 1675 only give us a partial view of the relationship between the *parlementaires*, Bordelais, and crown at the time because our primary accounts of the incident were written by the jurats and were clearly self-serving. The Parlement appears only intermittently in these accounts when the Jurade or Bordelais call on it to take action. Several things, however, are clear from the surviving documentation. While the jurats were careful to emphasize their defense of the king during the revolt, they did not implicate the Parlement in any of the violence. Unlike the early stages of the Fronde, there was little friction between the city's authorities and they worked together to quell the unrest. The Bordelais turned to the Parlement out of necessity, and the Parlement responded out of pressure and fear. The *parlementaires* were unwilling to support revolt against a powerful monarch over taxes that had little effect on them. Moreover, the *parlementaires* had a different view of their relationship to the monarchy now that the regency was over and the government in Paris was stable and authoritative. Louis's early reign did little to help the sovereign courts as John Hurt has argued, but the *parlementaires* cherished order and stability above all and the Sun King certainly represented these qualities.

For its part, the city of Bordeaux was subjected a troop encampment in the winter of 1675 that was expensive and violent. Perhaps still fearing violence, the jurats were only notified of the encampment a day before the arrival of troops and the Bordelais were ordered by d'Albret to turn in their weapons and remain in the city.⁴⁴ The soldiers entered the city on 17 November 1675, just days after the king issued a decree that

⁴⁴ Délibérations de la Jurade, 16 November 1675: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, pg. 212; Devienne, pg. 494.

annulled the Parlement's *arrêt* from 29 March and transferred the court to Condom.⁴⁵

While the troops were paid regularly, there were the usual problems that came with troops lodgings including rape, murder, and theft. Only a week after their arrival, the jurats wrote to Colbert of the “groans of a city that was feeling the severity of the king’s justice where the innocent and the guilty suffer alike, despite the fact that the innocent far outnumber the guilty.”⁴⁶ According to the jurats, the removal of the sovereign magistrates and their dependants only worsened the situation by placing more of the responsibility for supporting the troops on the remaining citizenry.⁴⁷ An ordinance issued by Albret and the intendant detailed the city’s responsibilities to the troops and regulated their conduct, but it was rumored that the troops were told to treat Bordeaux as a conquered city.⁴⁸ According to one estimate, the final bill for these troop lodgings was not supposed to exceed 100,000 écus but it ended up closer to one million livres.⁴⁹ The bells were taken out of the church towers in Saint-Michel and Saint-Eulalie, and the tower of Saint-Michel was ordered torn down, an order which the Bordelais ignored and the king eventually rescinded.⁵⁰ The king also declared that the Château Trompette would be enlarged and the city would have to pay much of the demolition and construction costs. Interestingly, the jurats later complained to the king’s ministers that the harshness of the city’s treatment during the occupation only had the effect of undermining the Jurade’s authority by making it more difficult for them to control future unrest. Despite Albret’s decree that everyone remain in Bordeaux, more and more people

⁴⁵ Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, pg. 206.

⁴⁶ Lettre Jurats to Colbert implorant sa pitié pour la ville et demandant l’autorisation pour des députés bordelais d’aller se jeter aux pieds du Roi, Délibérations de la Jurade, 25 November 1675: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, pg. 222.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 225.

⁴⁸ Devienne, pg. 495.

⁴⁹ Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, pg. 207.

⁵⁰ Devienne, pg. 497.

fled the city as conditions worsened, many leaving their homes and possessions behind to be pillaged.⁵¹ Many of the Bordelais blamed Albret, as they had Épernon before, for their troubles, refusing to believe that Louis XIV would treat one of the great cities of his realm in this manner.

Despite its lack of culpability, the Parlement was exiled from Bordeaux, a punishment meant to be punitive and exemplary. According to a letter concerning the unrest from governor Albret to Colbert, the Parlement, and especially its leadership, fulfilled its duties well.⁵² In another letter from Châteauneuf to the jurats following the troubles in August, Louis was said to be satisfied with the conduct of the Parlement and Jurade during the revolt.⁵³ The Cour des Aides was also exiled from the city and it was virtually invisible during the revolt, playing no role in the revocation of the taxes or the pursuit of the rioters. According to some older histories, the king's decision to exile the court may have been influenced by maréchal Albret's desire for revenge against the Parlement after its lenient treatment of the chevalier de Courbon Saint-Léger, who killed the maréchal brother in a duel. According to this interpretation, Albret was intentionally slow to act in the early days of the revolt because he hoped that it would spread. He then forbade the Parlement from sending delegates to the king, and painted the court in a poor light in his own reports to Paris. This would explain Albret's inaction in the beginning and the Parlement's harsh punishment, but it does not explain the treatment of the city or

⁵¹ Devienne, pg. 499.

⁵² Albret to Colbert, 16 June 1675: BN Mélanges Colbert ms. 171 bis, fol 523.

⁵³ Châteauneuf to jurats au sujet de l'exécution des chefs des séditieux, Délibérations de la Jurade, 2 September 1675: *Archives historiques*, vol. XLI, pg. 210-1.

the Cour des Aides and it contradicts some of Albret's own correspondence on the matter.⁵⁴

Royal Officers without Royal Grace: The Long and Painful Exile

Life in exile was not easy on the court or its members, who almost immediately began to lobby for their return. In addition to the expenses and inconvenience of moving to another town, the Parlement was humiliated by its treatment following the revolt in 1675. The Parlement was first exiled to the city of Condom, but a lack of accommodations forced it to move to Marmande within a few months.⁵⁵ Marmande was hardly more accommodating for the *parlementaires* and after several months the Parlement assembled to discuss its difficult circumstances. In their meeting the *parlementaires* complained that prices were so high that no one could afford the added expenses without bankrupting themselves. They also complained about bourgeois cabals and monopolies which they believed were designed to inflate prices for lodging and food. The Rennes *parlementaires* had similar difficulties finding affordable housing when they were exiled to Vannes in 1675 and ultimately issued an *arrêt* to regulate prices.⁵⁶ Finally, they noted there was not enough wine in the town for the court and its entourage and it was not good quality (some actually got sick from it, including dysentery).⁵⁷ We cannot substantiate these claims, and it is possible they were exaggerated in an effort to speed the court's return to Bordeaux. On the other hand, it is likely that a small town like

⁵⁴ Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, pp. 209-10.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 209.

⁵⁶ Julian Swann, "Disgrace without dishonor," pp. 105-106.

⁵⁷ *Registre secret*, 13 November 1676: AM Bordeaux ms. 796, pg. 8.

Marmande would have tried to exploit the rich *parlementaires* who, thanks to the king's orders, were not free to leave. These were wealthy, powerful men who adjusted poorly to small-town life that did not reflect their elevated status. Julian Swann has recently written about the experiences of eighteenth-century magistrates in exile, although he does often mention earlier exiles, including those of the Rennes and Bordeaux *parlementaires* following the 1675 revolts. While Swann presents a compelling argument about the way in which the *parlementaires* cast themselves "as secular martyrs suffering for a just cause," we will see that many of his findings do not match the circumstances of the Bordeaux magistrates in their fifteen years of exile.⁵⁸

An outbreak of the plague shortly after the Parlement's arrival eventually forced the court to relocate to La Réole in 1678 where it stayed until 1690, but conditions in La Réole were little improved.⁵⁹ As late as 1684, the intendant de Ris noted that it was still important to regulate the cost of rent in La Réole to protect the *parlementaires* against abuse. Some of the locals had been forced from their homes to make room for the magistrates and this led to complaints, but de Ris was unsympathetic because rent was high and homeowners were well paid. Still, it was important to keep word of the town's housing troubles quiet because de Ris feared that magistrates would use it as an excuse to absent themselves from the court.⁶⁰

Morale in the court was very low during its entire exile. The magistrates were forced to support the added living expense of maintaining a new residence for themselves and their servants, and they were often separated from their families back in Bordeaux.

⁵⁸ Julian Swann, "Disgrace without dishonor."

⁵⁹ *Registre secret*, 13 November, 1676: AM Bordeaux ms. 796, pg. 16; Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, vol. II, pg. 209.

⁶⁰ A. M. De Boislisle, ed. *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux Avec les Intendants des Provinces*, (Paris, 1874) 3 vols. M. de Ris to the Contrôleur Général, 13 March 1684, vol. I, pg 16.

Many councillors found reasons to avoid La Réolle and their responsibilities in the court, and the frequent and prolonged absences made it difficult to manage the workload. It was not uncommon for the court to start its day only to discover it did not have enough councillors or presidents to hear cases, forcing the different chambers to find substitutes or suspend their operations.⁶¹ If the president of a chamber was absent and a replacement could not be found, the court typically asked that the most senior of the presiding councillors assume the functions.⁶²

When these expedients did not work the court was simply unable to hear cases, and the result was a backlog that slowed access to justice and filled the court's prison. By 1684 the problem was so bad in the *Tournelle* chamber that the court was forced to appoint new members in order to prevent further disruptions. Troubled by the trend, the *procureur général* Jacques Denis stated plainly that if current members of the *Tournelle* were absent from the court for more than four months they would be assigned to the chamber again the next year.⁶³ Similar troubles arose two years later in the *Requetes* chamber when a lack of magistrates caused the chamber to cease its functions. The Parlement responded with an *arrêt* that called on all members absent without leave to report back to the court and ordered other members to substitute in the depleted chamber. The court's time in exile was marked by a steady stream of demands for *congé* and a lack of members, and it seems clear that some in the court endured the exile by simply abandoning their posts.⁶⁴ Unlike exiles from the eighteenth century, there is no evidence

⁶¹ *Registre secret*, 27 July 1683: AM Bordeaux ms. 796.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 7 August 1683.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 11 February 1684.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 10 July 1686.

that the crown took any real disciplinary action against the *parlementaires* who absented themselves from the court.

The Parlement's exile also represented a difficult time in its relationship with the crown. Suffering the indignity and expense of exile, the Parlement was singularly focused on winning the king's good graces and returning to Bordeaux. Toward this end, the Parlement dutifully endorsed the crown's agenda in the 1670s and 80s at the same time they negotiated for their return. Whether the issue was new taxes or persecution of the Huguenots, the Parlement was hesitant to provoke the crown or challenge its agenda, and it was never demanding or threatening in its attempts to return. While clearly a difficult period, the *parlementaires* endured their exile with a certain stoicism and patience that demonstrated their powerful desire to please the king. The magistrates no doubt believed their punishment was unwarranted but this was never the language they used in pleading their case before the king and his ministers. At different times the Parlement wrote the crown concerning its prolonged exile and when it had representatives in Paris they were often instructed to raise the issue with the king's ministers. Certain issues like the expense and personal hardship of their exile were common themes in these letters and meetings. The exile was a blow to the status of the *parlementaires* and they struggled to understand the possible implications and ramifications of this evident rupture in their relationship to the sovereign.

Some have argued that the *parlementaires* made claims of independence from the crown based on social status and heredity beginning in the late sixteenth century, but the exile of the Bordeaux *parlementaires* was a stark reminder of their vulnerability and

dependence on the crown.⁶⁵ Moreover, this exile bears little in common with the principled actions of eighteenth-century magistrates who could take satisfaction in the support of public opinion and the “righteousness” of their cause. As we have seen, the *parlementaires* did little to help the Bordelais in 1675, and there is no evidence of any real popular support for the magistrates in their exile. Finally, there were few high ideals at stake in the Parlement’s exile and no evidence that the *parlementaires* themselves saw their disgrace as empowering or principled.⁶⁶ Far from the “secular martyrs” that Swann has found in the eighteenth century, the Bordeaux *parlementaires* were not entirely clear on the reasons for their exile and there was no attempt to paint themselves as “patriotic and virtuous victims of government despotism.”⁶⁷ And when we consider the scant rationale for this remarkably harsh punishment, the *parlementaires* would certainly have been justified in calling their treatment despotic.

Rumors concerning the fate of the Parlement were common. According to a letter from First President Jean-Denis Daulède de Lestonnac to Colbert in May 1682, rumors were circulating that the Parlement was going to be transferred back to the small town of Condom. Daulède was to be paid a yearly stipend of 14,000 livres by the bishop of Condom if he would support the move. Daulède responded that the move would ruin the Parlement, and he complained about the current circumstances in the hope that the crown might move them closer to Bordeaux.⁶⁸ Perhaps recognizing that personal enrichment at

⁶⁵ Jonathan Dewald, “Magistracy and Political Opposition at Rouen: A Social Context,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 5 (1975), pp. 76-8. Dewald argues that during the years of the League the Rouen *parlementaires* came to “see their office as existing independently of service to the crown or the state.”

⁶⁶ Swann, “Disgrace without Dishonour,” Swann notes that the *parlementaires* exiled during the *Unigenitus* or Maupeou standoffs often cast their actions as principled and warranted when the crown was thought to have overstepped its authority.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 119.

⁶⁸ Daulède to Colbert, 26 May 1682, AN G7 132, fol. 196.

a time of general distress in the court would undermine his authority, Daulède put his private interests behind those of the Parlement.

Prompted by the difficulties of the moment, in 1684 the Parlement took its case to minister Châteauneuf in hopes that he would press the king.⁶⁹ In a letter to Châteauneuf, the *parlementaires* noted that according to the king's own declaration of October 1675 the Parlement was moved to Condom to assure the safety and liberty of the Parlement's justice (*la liberté des suffrages des officieres*). The letter went on to explain their hope that "their respectful submission to the king's orders," would prompt the king to show his paternal kindness (*bonté*) by reestablishing the court in Bordeaux. They pleaded with Châteauneuf for his protection and assistance, noting that the *parlementaires* were rapidly running out of money due to the added expenses of exile.⁷⁰ When the Parlement met several weeks later to discuss the situation they decided to ask the crown to move to Libourne if Bordeaux was still not an option – Libourne being a larger, closer, and more comfortable town than La Réole.⁷¹

Although these efforts proved unsuccessful the Parlement remained persistent. When Louis Boucherat took over from Le Tellier as *chancelier* in 1685, the Parlement, following the lead of the Parlement of Rennes, took the opportunity to both congratulate the new minister on his promotion and to plead their case. They decided to send President la Tresne and other councillors who were already in Paris "to show M. le *chancelier* their personal joy at his promotion and to explain how the public, justice, and

⁶⁹ *Registre secret*, 19 July 1684: AM Bordeaux ms. 796.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 28 July 1684. Il ya néanmoins neuf ans M. que nous souffrons toutes les peines qui peuvent accabler une compagnie qui serait tombée dans la disgrâce de son Prince, il nous reste dans nos malheurs l'espérance de l'honneur de votre protection que nous vous supplions de nous accorder pour obtenir du Roy la liberté de lui représenter la misere dans laquelle nous nous voyons éloignes depuis si longtemps de nos familles avec des dépenses excessives par lesquelles nous avons consommé la meilleure partie de nos fonds.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 18 August 1684.

the Parlement have suffered over these many years.” The *gens du roi* were asked to give their opinions on this proposed deputation to which Lavie said that the company must take advantage of their meeting with the new *chancelier* to press their return, even though the effort might be received more “as a solicitation than a compliment.” The *parlementaires* would ask Boucherat for his protection and reiterate the sad state of the Parlement’s affairs.⁷² The Parlement was clearly concerned that their well wishes to the new minister would seem disingenuous when followed by pleas for assistance, but they could not pass on the opportunity to present their case to a fresh face.

These efforts failed because the crown was not ready to begin the negotiation process. The crown recognized that it could leverage its position with the two exiled parlements, Bordeaux and Rennes, for financial gain when the time was right. That moment came when Louis began the third costly war of his reign by invading Germany, thus starting the War of the League of Augsburg in 1688. Not surprisingly, the financial strains of the war prompted Louis to look for creative new ways to fill the crown’s coffers and extorting money out of the Parlements for their return was an obvious option. The Parlement was eager to return to Bordeaux and was willing to discuss the crown’s terms.

The punishments of the city and sovereign courts were exemplary and intended to demonstrate the king’s power and deter future unrest through dramatic action, and its excessiveness was precisely the message. The difference in punishments between the Fronde and 1675 reflected the difference in the approach of a First Minister eager to put the Fronde behind him and that of a king at the height of his power and mystique. According to the king’s decree, the Parlement was exiled as punishment for the city’s

⁷² *Registre secret*, 11 January 1686: AM Bordeaux ms. 796.

rebellion (ostensibly, so that the Parlement would be free of outside pressure in its deliberations) and not for anything the court had done. This explanation may seem dishonest, but it is evident that the Parlement's removal did mean a loss of revenue for the city since all the magistrates, litigants, and lawyers of the sovereign courts were no longer living or consuming in Bordeaux.

As we will see in the coming chapter, however, the court's fifteen years of exile were extremely painful and expensive for the *parlementaires* and this was the Louis's intention. Louis's punishment for the Parlement was a reminder to the other parlements of the realm that there were no circumstances under which they had the right to rescind royal taxes. At a time when the country was at war and the fiscal demands of the crown were increasing, Louis was eager to send the message that sedition would not be tolerated to other communities that were beginning to feel the weight of new taxes. He understood these courts could pose a challenge as the pressures of war finance continued to build, and manipulations of venality undermined the wealth and status of the *parlementaires*. The clearly excessive punishment of the Bordelais *parlementaires* let them know what Louis expected of them and laid the groundwork for future abuse and manipulation of their economic and political status.

Even more than the Fronde, the revolt of 1675 illustrated the ambivalent ties between the *parlementaires* and Bordelais. For their part, the Bordelais turned to the Parlement for help because it was the one institution with the authority to rescind the taxes and intercede with the king on their behalf. They did not turn to the Parlement because they shared any innate sympathies or loyalties with the court or because the *parlementaires* recognized any moral imperative to protect them. The union that was

unstable and fragile in the Fronde did not exist in 1675 because the circumstances were different. In 1675 the *parlementaires* demonstrated their desire for order and stability by uniting with the city's other authorities to bring an end to the unrest.

The *parlementaires* did what they could to stop the violence and prevent its spread. They called on the Jurade and bourgeois to patrol the streets and called for the governor's intervention as soon as events began to spiral out of control. With no real ability to enforce their own pronouncements, this was the best that could be asked of the magistrates during times of unrest. They led by example and relied on the real and symbolic power and authority of their offices to mobilize and direct others, but had no ability to force their will when traditional modes of governance broke down. When the Parlement finally rescinded the king's taxes it was under extreme duress and with the knowledge and approval of the governor. The *parlementaires* did not make common cause with the city in 1675 because the nature of its relationship with the crown had changed. Despite the burdens placed on the Parlement in the second half of Louis's reign, the *parlementaires* remained loyal for several reasons, perhaps the most significant being that they valued the relative order and stability that Louis brought to the country, and they were acutely aware of the dangers posed by popular sedition following the Fronde. Most importantly, however, the punishment meted out to the *parlementaires* in 1675 made it clear that loyal opposition was going to be the only kind of opposition that would be tolerated under the Sun King. The *parlementaires* obeyed Louis in the beginning out of respect and mutual support, but they obeyed him in the second half of his reign primarily because they feared the consequences of confrontation. Following 1675, the stability and order that were the basis for cooperation between the

parlementaires and their sovereign gradually yielded to an adversarial relationship that was based exploitation, mistrust, apathy, and resignation.

Office Prices and the End of Louis XIV's Reign

For several decades historians have recognized the importance of venality of office to the fiscal and political development of the early modern French state. The adoption of the *pauvette* in 1604 and the monarchy's chronic need for new sources of revenue helped make office holding an entrenched aspect of state finance and a coveted form of property. Yielding strong returns and offering privileges and advantages to their holders, offices became a popular investment strategy and path toward advancement in the seventeenth century. Once the initial capital for an office was presented to the crown, the purchaser could expect many tangible benefits in return. First, officers received *gages*, which were annual royal payments of around 4% to 5% of the value of the initial investment. This amounted to interest on the money lent to the king and it was roughly equal to the returns collected on government *rentes*. Some offices allowed for the collection of *épices*, or fees charged to litigants or others who fell under the purview of the officer.

Offices also included certain privileges, the most important being exemption from royal taxes and fees, and many, like offices in the parlements, ennobled the holder and provided hereditary family nobility over several generations. The *pauvette*, which insured heritability and made offices a stable form of property within a family's patrimony, facilitated a rise in office values over the first two thirds of the seventeenth century. Beyond the *gages* and fees, an office in the parlements presented its holder with a degree of prestige and local authority that was coveted and significant. Offices in the parlement represented the pinnacle of provincial society and they offered their holders a unique

opportunity to place their progeny within other parts of the social and cultural elite. Dressed in their beautiful red robes, the *parlementaires* held the most privileged place in all public ceremonies and they issued rulings that affected nearly all aspects of life in their communities. With their large, well-staffed and well-decorated townhomes, and their expansive country estates, the *parlementaires* reified their power and authority within their communities through a daily display of their elevated status.¹ Because of the real and symbolic authority of sovereign offices, they offered social climbers an opportunity to validate their wealth and advance their standing within the community. An office in the parlement also created a new and special bond with the monarchy that could lead to royal patronage, which was most often lavished on the court's elite, but all had the potential to benefit from the crown's largess.

The developing power of the state that served to guarantee and protect the privileges and authority of officers, however, could also, especially in times of war, turn on these same individuals. According to a seminal article by David Bien, the early modern state and office holding grew together to form an alternative system of state credit. As Bien noted, the crown could raise revenue from offices in one of two ways: it could create and sell new offices or it could try to raise money from existing office holders through *augmentation des gages* or other inducements (there were many). Raising money from office holders was important to the monarchy because many of these individuals were members of the nobility or bourgeoisie and were tax exempt, thus making offices a tool for tapping resources that were otherwise unavailable to the crown. Just as importantly, all officers belonged to occupational organizations called *corps* and

¹ Michel Figeac and Caroline Le Mao, "Le Parlement de Bordeaux," pp. 249-276.

these groups allowed the king to more easily and quickly access the resources of individual members. As a juridically defined group of individuals, *corps* could borrow money collectively and use their combined resources as collateral, which along with their overall reputation as good credit risks meant they could borrow at a relatively low rate. By forcing *augmentation des gages* and other expedients on the *corps*, the king was able to borrow money from these individuals at economically than he could on his own, and he was spared the difficulties inherent in trying to collect funds from thousands of individual office holders. Because the *corps* itself contracted the debt, all of the individuals were collectively responsible for its payment, and the organization was responsible for ensuring that everyone paid their share. Borrowing as a *corps* provided an efficient, low cost way for the crown to tap the resources of individuals who were otherwise outside the traditional tax structure.

As Bien noted, the crown always had to balance both the number of offices it created and the demands it placed on existing office holders with the realities of the market and economic conditions. Both office creations and *augmentation des gages* were widely recognized by office holders as a threat to their authority and economic standing because they made office holding more expensive at the same time that they cheapened the market.² If the crown created too many offices or made too many demands on existing office holders, it risked undermining some of the features of venality that attracted those with resources to the system.

Bien was right to focus our attention on the financial relationships between the officers and crown and the role that *corps* played in raising funds for the king. However,

² David Bien, "Offices, *Corps*, and a System of State Credit," pp. 89-113.

even if the crown understood the *corps* and officers as an alternate system of state credit that had a certain coherence and consistency over time, we might wonder how these principles worked in a specific *corps* at a specific time. While Bien argued that there existed a balance between the crown's desire to raise revenue and its need to protect existing officers from financial ruin, the example of the Bordeaux *parlementaires* at the end of Louis XIV's reign demonstrates that the crown could treat its magistrates harshly in its relentless drive for revenue. However well the system functioned at a global level, it is clear that it could break down during moments of stress and it was the officers who suffered in the process.

While James Collins has also acknowledged office holding as a form of taxation on the bourgeoisie and nobility, he argued that "France would remain partially hamstrung as long as its middle class and its nobility, as well as the clergy, remained outside the mainstream of the tax system."³ According to Collins, seventeenth-century French society represented a struggle between local elites and the central government for control of the country and the compromises that were made affected the extent of the monarchy's authority. Both Bien and Collins have argued that the crown had to balance its fiscal needs against those of its office holders, and the compromises that resulted became obstacles to the extension of royal authority and any meaningful reform of the system. Office holding and the privileges that it engendered helped the monarchy to survive, especially in difficult times, but it also limited the monarchy's ability to reform the system and extend the tax burden to those most able to pay. The result was that financial crises quickly became political crises and the different outcomes of the Fronde and the

³ James Collins, *Fiscal Limits of Absolutism: Direct Taxation in Early Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 221.

Revolution were more a matter of the social and cultural conditions of each period than the basic dynamics at work. When Louis XVI antagonized the political elite on the eve of the Revolution, he did so at a time when those elites had more intellectual and cultural weapons with which to strike back.

Louis XIV, under the leadership of his controller-general Jean-Baptiste Colbert, showed some initial interest in attacking venality and severing the link between the monarchy's fiscal and political troubles. Colbert saw venality as a waste of productive resources and a drain on the king's finances, and he was determined to abolish the practice. But, the king's interest receded after Colbert's death and the military needs of the second half of his reign led him to rely more heavily on revenue from venal offices. According to recent work by Mark Potter, this led the crown to strengthen property rights, which blunted judicial opposition and made it easier for officers and the crown to borrow against that property. Potter argued that Louis XIV "met his growing financial needs in large part by shoring up the property rights to offices and then by pressuring office holders to borrow for him.... Shoring up the succession rights of venal offices worked in the favor both of officers, able to rest more secure in their hold over their property, and the crown, with its strategy of war finance that elicited the financial intermediation of privileged *corps*."⁴ According to this interpretation, stronger property rights helped to consolidate the elevated position of the *parlementaires* in relation to potential rivals and ensured their patrimony for future generations.

⁴ Mark Potter, "War Finance and Absolutist State Development in Early Modern Europe: An Examination of French Venality in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Early Modern History* 7, 1-2 (2003), p. 145; and *Corps and Clienteles: Public Finance and Political Change in France, 1688-1715*. (Hampshire, 2003).

William Doyle's work on venality has argued similarly that "Louis XIV... while exploiting venality to the limit, never threatened the fundamental conditions and institutions which made it work."⁵ A lack of contention, however, between office holders and the crown in the later years of Louis's reign is not accommodation and stronger property rights at a time when the property in question was an increasingly dubious investment was of little value to the holders themselves. There was little opposition to Louis's manipulations of venality at the end of his reign (especially when compared to the 1630s and 40s), however, and if it was not due to stronger property rights and accommodation as Potter has argued, how can we account for this actuality?

John Hurt has argued that the monarchy approached the *parlementaires* not as partners in a system of state credit, but as obstacles to the use and expansion of royal power that needed to be dealt with harshly. Hurt's research addressed the economic and political interactions between the parlements and crown, and in both cases he concluded that Louis XIV and his ministers deliberately undercut the wealth and authority of the courts in order to raise funds and extend the power of the crown. Unlike other historians who have questioned the implementation of Louis XIV's absolutist program, such as the edicts of 1667 and 1673 which limited the parlements' right of remonstrance, Hurt noted that these measures were consistently and effectively enforced and served to pacify the parlements for the remainder of Louis's reign and beyond.⁶ Unlike revisionists who perceived a cooperative and reciprocal economic and political relationship between the crown and provincial magistrates, Hurt maintained there was nothing cooperative about

⁵ William Doyle, *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1996), pg. 57.

⁶ For an alternative view of Louis's handling of the parlements see: Albert Hamscher, *The Parlement of Paris After the Fronde, 1653-1673* (Pittsburgh, 1976).

the way the crown manipulated the venal system to squeeze the sovereign courts.⁷ To support this claim he detailed the various office creations, *augmentation des gages*, and other means used by Louis to systematically extract money from new and existing venal office holders. Bien and Hurt viewed the relationship between the crown and its magistrates differently: the former as partners in a network of privilege and state finance that functioned effectively despite moments of stress, the latter as antagonists in a struggle for resources and political power that ultimately favored the crown and undercut the *parlementaires*.

In order to evaluate these conflicting interpretations, this chapter will examine the nature of venality in the Parlement of Bordeaux from its exile until the end of Louis XIV's reign. Was the monarchy and its magistrates partners in a system of state credit that functioned more or less smoothly and brought benefits to each institution as Bien, Potter, and others have argued; or, were the manipulations of venality a violent assault on the power, wealth, and status of the *parlementaires* that crippled them for decades to come as Hurt maintains? Did the *parlementaires* sustain these attacks because they received other, significant material benefits from their close association with the crown, or were they simply powerless to fight back? If we recognize that the *parlementaires* under Louis XIV were motivated by status, order, and stability and maintained an ambivalent and conflicted relationship with the monarchy, we can posit a different view

⁷ Some of the most respected examples of the revisionist interpretation of absolutism are: William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (New York, 1985); James B. Collins, *Classes, estates, and order in early modern Brittany* (Cambridge, 1994); Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York, 1986); Albert Hamscher, *The Parlement of Paris After the Fronde, 1653-1673* (Pittsburgh, 1976); David Parker, *Class and State in Ancien Régime France: The Road to Modernity?* (London, 1996). Each of these works deals with different aspects of seventeenth-century social and political life, but they all share the view that the early modern state collaborated in various ways with provincial elites in order to meet the growing demands of the monarchy.

of venality. The magistrates suffered in real and meaningful ways during Louis's later reign, but they endured these attacks because they feared the social unrest that might develop from protest and they valued the monarchy's strong rule. This troubled period, however, illustrated the conflicted nature of this relationship and may have laid the groundwork for future ruptures. At the very least, these attacks demonstrated the magistrates' vulnerability and the ambiguous ties that bound them to their sovereign. Manipulations of venality threatened the jurists' view of order and hierarchy in the same manner, albeit to a lesser extent, as the popular protests of the Fronde and 1675. Louis XIV's personal rule held this delicate web of relationships together and allowed it to function even under extreme pressure, but the institutional nature of these conflicts was apparent to all and they were never resolved.

The crown encountered many difficulties in selling the offices created as part of the Parlement's return from exile, and while the offices eventually sold, it took time and a tremendous amount of effort and negotiation on the part of Guyenne's intendant, Jacques Bazin de Bezons.⁸ In the years that followed, it is clear that the market for offices did not rebound in any meaningful way. While office holding provided other benefits and represented a minor portion of some magistrates' overall wealth, the monarchy made membership in the Parlement a dubious form of investment. The waning years of Louis's reign were a difficult time for the *parlementaires*, and there is no doubt that the collaboration model that has been powerfully supported by other research does not fit the experiences of this court. Louis's manipulation of venality impoverished many and drove others out of the court, while everyone saw their investments and the court's

⁸ Jacques Bazin was the son of Claude, who had risen under Louis XIII to become an intendant in Languedoc and Soissions and was rewarded with the lordship of Bezons, a small fief near Paris.

standing decline. The relative consistency and stability that characterized the relationship between the *parlementaires* and their sovereign from the end of the Fronde to the events of 1675 gave way in the second half of Louis's reign to a more exploitative association. Office prices rebounded quickly, however, after Louis's death and most of the changes in the relationship between the *parlementaires* and monarchy were undone in the eighteenth century.⁹ While the *parlementaires* did not openly rebel against Louis XIV during these difficult final years, the antagonistic nature of their relationship to the crown was evident. It is hardly worth repeating that parliamentary opposition was a central feature of eighteenth-century politics and pre-Revolutionary France, but that opposition had its roots in the fiscal, religious, and political turmoil of the turn of the century.

A Costly Return from Exile

Negotiations concerning the Parlement's return to Bordeaux began in 1689 and they were long, labored, and difficult. Louis was interested in ringing as much money as possible out of the Parlement, while the Parlement highlighted the difficult circumstances of the last decade and a half in an effort to reduce its burdens. Complicating the discussions was the fact that the crown was also negotiating with the Cour des Aides for its return and with the city of Bordeaux for the return of both the courts.

For its part, the people of Bordeaux were eager to see the two courts return, since they were a source of prestige and wealth for the city. However, like the beleaguered courts, the city had few resources at the time and it was clear that finding creditors would

⁹ Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux*, pp. 27-31. As William Doyle has noted, office prices in the Parlement of Bordeaux did eventually stabilize and then decline after the 1730s, with some fluctuations, until the Revolution, but this does not change the fact that prices rapidly rebounded after Louis's reign.

be a challenge. Interestingly, the city complained that one of the reasons for its immediate difficulties was the fact that, instead of paying creditors, it was forced to use its meager cash reserves to build a statue of Louis XIV.¹⁰ Perhaps more importantly, however, the expulsion of the Huguenot in 1685 seems to have drained money from the city and slowed commerce. This was a gradual process in which many converted to buy time, protect their property, and make arrangements to eventually flee, and their ongoing flight from the city hurt trade. According to Bezons, the Huguenots and Jews were responsible for most of the city's trade, and he was concerned that any action taken against Jews or the newly-converted would bring trade to a halt.¹¹

In an assembly at the hôtel de ville, the Jurade decided to offer the king "a gift" of 200,000 livres and they would try to borrow the money in Paris at 20 denier (5 % interest), to which some objected that no one would lend them the money at this rate. It was discussed that the city could probably borrow at 16 (6.25 %) but that according to an ordinance they were obligated to borrow at 18 (5.5%) or above.¹² The effort to win the Parlement's return was spearheaded by the Jurade and the city's other authorities, and should not be interpreted as a popular initiative. The revolt of 1675 demonstrated the *parlementaires'* deep concern for order and fear of social unrest. Considering the Parlement's unambiguous efforts to suppress the uprising, it is unlikely that most Bordelais took much interest in the court's return. However, the Parlement had a clear economic impact on the city, and many artisans, shop keepers, and merchants stood to benefit from its return.

¹⁰ AN G7 134, fol. 182.

¹¹ Bezons to the Contrôleur Général, 12, 21 December 1688: *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux Avec les Intendants des Provinces*, vol. I, pg 167; Contrôleur Général to Bezons, 6 May 1688, *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux Avec les Intendants des Provinces*, vol. I, pg 148.

¹² AN G7 134, fol. 189.

In April 1689 the king agreed to the Jurade's offer of 200,000 livres as long as the city's creditors were paid back out of municipal revenues. The king did not say anything about the interest rate, but it was later announced that the money would be borrowed at 18 denier and the crown approved. Since the city only found lenders for 50,000 livres, leaders decided to write to Paris to see if the rest of the money could be borrowed at 16, which, along with the king's approval, they hoped would get them the needed money.¹³ According to the king's arrêt, the money was a gift from the city to the crown to help with the war and the crown's extraordinary expenses at the moment – there was no mention of the sovereign courts.¹⁴ Despite its efforts, the city had difficulty raising the promised sum, and it was the bourgeois of Bordeaux who provided most of the money after ministers in Paris began to pressure for payment.¹⁵ According to one estimate, the city was weighed down by debt totaling over 2.5 million livres in the wake of the Fronde and sedition of 1675 and only emerged from the debt in 1733.¹⁶ When the discussion turned to the return of the sovereign courts, Bezons backed away not wanting to make any promises without guidance from Paris.¹⁷ Bezons knew that the crown had secured 500,000 livres from the city of Rennes and another 500,000 from the Parlement for its return when he opened negotiations, and he was told that the crown expected more from Bordeaux.¹⁸ Interestingly, Bezons had long been pleading the city and court's impoverishment, but the *contrôleur général* Louis Phélypeaux, comte de Pontchartrain,

¹³ AN G7 134, fol. 270.

¹⁴ Ibid., fol. 269.

¹⁵ AN G7 134, fol. 271; Contrôleur Général to Bezons 31 October 1689, *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux Avec les Intendants des Provinces*, vol. I, pg 199.

¹⁶ Caroline Le Mao, *Chronique du Bordelais au crépuscule du Grand Siècle: le Mémorial de Savignac* (Pessac, 2004), pg. 51.

¹⁷ AN G7 134, fol. 274.

¹⁸ Contrôleur Général to Bezons 31 October 1689, *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux Avec les Intendants des Provinces*, vol. I, pg 199.

refused to discuss lowering the cost of return and he suggested that Bezons delay negotiations if it was clear that the crown would not get the money it wanted. The relationship between the *parlementaires*' exile and city's growing impoverishment was evidently lost on the ministers in Paris.¹⁹

For its part, the Cour des Aides offered no direct payments to the crown, but instead proposed to create and sell new offices in the court that it believed would generate about 100,000 livres for the king. The First President of the Cour des Aides, Suiduiet, informed Bezons that he had a prospective buyer for a presidency (forty thousand livres) and councillorship (eighteen thousand) and claimed that the other two offices would be relatively easy to sell. The court also offered to create a new office of king's secretary, which Bezons did not believe would be necessary if one hundred thousand livres could be raised through the other sales.²⁰

By contrast, the Parlement's negotiations with the crown were long and painful. In the early going the Parlement attempted to use the upcoming renewal of the *paulette* (or *annual* as it was also known) by offering to raise 50,000 écus for the *augmentation des gages* that would be required, which some hoped would be enough to win their return. *Augmentation des gages* were essentially loans made to the crown by office holders who were then paid a higher *gages* or salary in return. It was a way of extracting money from existing office holders, and it was generally demanded by Louis XIV in return for renewing the *paulette* in the last decades of his reign. All of the *parlementaires* were required to pay *augmentation des gages* in order to gain admittance to the *paulette*, and the crown did not take the offer seriously – in fact, the *parlementaires* eventually

¹⁹ Contrôleur Général to Bezons 2,2,15,24,28 November 1689, *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux Avec les Intendants des Provinces*, vol. I, p. 200.

²⁰ AN G7 134, fol. 255.

paid this sum with no mention of their return. Bezons also claimed that some *parlementaires* were willing to lend the city the money still owed to the crown, but he would not commit to any terms without the crown's input.²¹ Months later, Bezons announced that the Parlement was still trying to come up with the remainder of its *augmentation des gages*, but if the king was willing to discuss the court's return the *parlementaires* might be able to find the money among themselves rather than borrowing it in Paris.²²

The *paulette* was a tax equal to one sixtieth of the value of an office and it allowed the holder to pass the office down to whomever he chose. Prior to the adoption of the *paulette* in 1604, any office holder resigning his office had to survive his resignation by forty days or it would revert back to the king. Since many office holders only resigned their offices on their death beds and did not survive the forty days, this policy allowed the crown to regain control of a considerable number of offices, which it could then resell. The *paulette* was generally renewed by the king every nine years in the seventeenth century, and its renewal generated considerable anxiety among the *parlementaires* and was seen by the crown as an opportunity extort funds from them. Offices could represent an important part of a family's patrimony and the thought that it could be lost to the crown in the event of the holder's sudden death (fairly common in the seventeenth century) was not acceptable.

In an effort to make its case to the crown, First President Daulede wrote out a *mémoire* that articulated the court's position. Daulede began by noting that it was important to support the king in times of war, and he argued that the Parlement's seeming

²¹ AN G7 134, fol. 255.

²² *Ibid.*, fol. 274.

lack of zealousness simply reflected its desperate circumstances.²³ This was an important point for the *parlementaires* to make because it alerted the king that they understood their role in state finance and shielded them from accusations of greed or selfishness. Daulede then pointed out that the thousands of troops garrisoned around Bordeaux in 1675 and 1676 caused considerable damage to the area, and the city had still not fully recovered from the expense. The situation was worsened by the king's removal of the bourgeois right to import and export from the city tax-free, a move that brought money to the king but hurt commerce. He also reiterated the common complaint that the exile had seriously damaged the *parlementaires'* economic position thanks to the added expenses and decreased revenues. Since a great many of the *parlementaires* were involved in Bordelais commerce, the exile also hurt their business affairs.²⁴

Daulede also noted that the Parlement's exile hurt the city of Bordeaux. The city was without the revenues generated by the courts for fifteen years, which he claimed employed eight to ten thousand people including officers, their domestics, plaintiffs, and the artisans and business owners needed to provide for them. Daulede also claimed that many homes were vacant and the ones that were occupied only produced half the rent, half the consumption, and half the commerce. Further aggravating the situation was the collection of new taxes the king levied on the city, which, it was argued, made the cost of living in Bordeaux as expensive as Paris. In addition, much of the revenue from traditional taxes like the *convoy* and *taille* was being taken out of the province and channeled directly into the king's coffers, rather than being spent on local needs. Finally, Daulede maintained that most prosperous merchants in Bordeaux were Huguenots who

²³ Mémoire envoye par M. Daulede concernant le retour du parlement de Bordeaux: AN G7 134, fol. 279.

²⁴ Ibid.

had either fled the country with their money or were no longer engaged in trade and hid their money.²⁵

Yet while revenue was down, the city's expenses continued to grow because the king had forced the Bordelais to pay for the homes that were demolished during the expansion of Château Trompette, a project that was estimated to cost a staggering 2,700,000 livres. Daulede also pointed out that in 1674 the city paid 50,000 écus to the king to confirm their privileges, especially the *franc alleu* (freehold estates without a lord), which the king did not honor and eventually rescinded. Finally, the city had also incurred other extraordinary expenses at this time, including outfitting two frigates and a company of soldiers for close to 100,000 livres. Daulede's detailed assessment of the city's finances was intended to show that the Bordelais were struggling and the public coffers were empty.²⁶ This was evident by the fact that Bordeaux had to look to Paris for the money it promised the king, since no one in the city had the needed resources.

Daulede maintained that despite the disgrace and expense of recent years the *corps* of the province continued to do all they could to help the king, including the Parlement's recent payment of 150,000 livres in *augmentation des gages*. According to Daulede, Bordeaux was the first parlement to take *augmentation*, thereby showing the way for the other courts despite the fact that their officers were "more impoverished than any others."²⁷ When the Parlement and city pleaded impoverishment and were unable to meet the crown's demands, it was not a sign of a moral deficiency but an inescapable reality. However, according to the First President, if the Parlement were back in Bordeaux its presence would be good for commerce and would help improve the city's

²⁵ Mémoire envoyé par M. Daulede concernant le retour du parlement de Bordeaux: AN G7 134, fol. 279.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

economic position. Daulede's *mémoire* can be seen as little more than a calculated attempt to soften the crown's demands, but it is clear that the magistrates did not want to be viewed as uncooperative or self-interested in this process. They appear to have understood their broader role in the French polity and their responsibility to the country and monarchy in moments of distress.

Daulede offered to take on an additional 50,000 livres in *augmentation* if the Parlement were allowed to return and he claimed that the court would search "house to house" in the province and Paris to find the money. He further offered to borrow the money individually or as a *corps* depending on what lenders preferred, but claimed that taken as a *corps* the debt would ruin them. Daulede alluded to the crown's negotiations with the Parlement of Rennes, which were more profitable for the king, claiming "the state of affaires that was bankrupting Bordeaux was making Rennes rich." Daulede was referring to the fact that Northern Europe was an important trading partner for Bordeaux, not just as a market for Bordelais products but also as a supplier to Guyenne. All of these countries had greatly diminished or stopped trade with France since the start of the war, and Bordelais wines were no longer fetching the prices they had from international buyers. Meanwhile, much of the trade that was ongoing was carried on Breton ships and to their advantage.

According to Daulede, if the *parlementaires'* 200,000 livres in *augmentation* was not enough to win their return, they would consent to the creation of offices, however, he advised the crown that they already had a crowded chamber and "more than half of the them have no work and the other half were not very busy," especially after the removal of jurisdictions like Xaintonge, De Bragerac, de Nerac, de Castolialoux, de Clairac, de

Moneims and the other cities. Moreover, the Chambre des Requests was in “such a state of disorder that half the charges remained vacant with no prospective buyers.” Daulede concluded that under these circumstances it would be counterproductive to create new charges, since they would either not sell or they would sell so cheaply the crown would not really profit and the Parlement would be ruined in the process.

Daulede even tried to turn the situation to the Parlement’s advantage by suggesting the king could raise 800,000 livres if he gave the court part of the jurisdiction of the Paris Chambre des Comptes and then created new offices to handle the work load.²⁸ In a subsequent letter, the First President conceded that the Parlement was prepared to accept some office creations that would bring the total amount going to the king, including *augmentation*, to one hundred thousand écus (300,000 livres). However, he continued to push the idea of granting Bordeaux the Chambre des Comptes jurisdiction as a way to expand the court, which was almost certainly unacceptable to the crown since this amounted to a zero sum gain.²⁹

Despite Daulede’s efforts, the crown was not interested in the Parlement’s difficulties and it was not receptive to any of these suggestions. Louis was once again at war and every livre he could squeeze from the kingdom’s courts was needed for the war effort. In fact, there was considerable pressure on Bezons to raise the combined offers of the city, Parlement and Cour des Aides to eight hundred thousand livres.³⁰ Bezons informed Daulede that while he was unsure of how the king would react to his suggestions, he was certain that simply increasing the amount of the court’s *augmentation des gages* would not be sufficient since this required the king pay interest

²⁸ Mémoire envoye par M. Daulede concernant le retour du parlement de Bordeaux: AN G7 134, fol. 279.

²⁹ AN G7 134, fol. 282.

³⁰ AN G7 134, fol. 276.

on the money every year. Finally, the Parlement suggested the creation of several offices, but the *parlementaires* did not want to be responsible for their sale despite assurances to the crown that they already knew of several prospective buyers. Still, the total value of these office creations and other efforts by the city and Cour des Aides only amounted to six hundred thousand livres, well short of the one million livres the crown received from Rennes. Daulede maintained that a similar amount from Bordeaux would require credit the city and courts did not have.³¹

The crown ultimately settled on office creations as the most effective way to generate funds from the Parlement's return, but the sale of these offices proved to be a slow and difficult process. Louis XIV granted permission for the Parlement to return to Bordeaux in September of 1690, but it was not until several years later that all the new offices in both the Parlement and Cour des Aides were sold and the crown's difficulties reflected the unfortunate circumstances of these courts.³² These office sales also illustrated the nuanced and fluid relationship that existed between the parlements and intendants under Louis XIV. While the intendants have traditionally been characterized as powerful engines of royal absolutism, more recent scholarship has highlighted the cooperative nature of their relationship with provincial authorities. (give citations) In this case, the King's intendant, Bazin de Bezons, worked diligently to raise money for the crown at the same time he took up the Parlement's defense.

³¹ AN G7 134, fol. 284.

³² La Collonie. *Histoire curieuse et remarquable de la ville et province de Bordeaux* (Bruxelles, 1660), vol. II, p. 446.

An Alternative View of the Provincial Intendant

Bezons was intimately involved in the sale of these offices and his correspondence with Paris detailed his efforts to move the offices on terms acceptable to the crown. A delicate struggle between the intendant, crown, and prospective buyers developed in the years following the Parlement's return. Bezons recognized his obligations to the crown, but he was more closely connected to local circumstances in Bordeaux and was better positioned to evaluate the market for the new offices. This meant that Bezons often echoed provincial accounts of the city's struggles at the same time that he pressured Paris to make compromises.

The crown settled on the creation of one presidency and six councillor offices, which it expected to sell for 320,000 livres total (eighty thousand for the presidency and forty thousand for each councillorship).³³ Difficulties in their sale first appeared in Bezons's correspondence with the crown in 1691 (the correspondence for 1690 is missing). By January 1691, only a presidency in the Cour des Aides and one councillor office in the Parlement had been sold for a total of 85,000 livres.³⁴ Bezons claimed that he also had two prospective buyers for offices in the Parlement, but one (Cornut) expressed interest in a less expensive office in the Cour des Aides. Bezons assured the Pontchartrain that he would do all he could to steer the buyer away from the Cour des Aides, since these offices were easier to sell and of less value to the crown. However, he claimed that there was no interest in the office of *président à mortier* and that prospective buyers would have to be found in Paris or elsewhere. As to the offices in the Cour des

³³ Boscheron des Portes, *Histoire*, vol II, p. 217.

³⁴ AN G7 135, fol. 22.

Aides, Bezons hoped to sell two of them shortly, but he noted that the money for them would have to come from outside the province because of the city's desperate financial condition. The city's debts to the crown totaled 400,000 livres of which only 50,000 had actually been collected, while Bezons hoped that another 50,000 would come in soon and another 100,000 could be borrowed from Paris.³⁵

A few weeks later, Bezons believed he had worked out a deal with de Cornut and his son Jean to buy the office in the Parlement, and he was optimistic that a fourth office would sell shortly. For the crown it was irrelevant where the money came from as long as it was *l'argent comptant*, or upfront, and whatever risks or debts were incurred to pay for the offices were the responsibility of the lenders and borrowers. Bezons also claimed to have leads for the offices in the Cour des Aides, but he did not want to elaborate because sales had fallen through in the past, either because the individuals could not borrow the money or because of family problems.³⁶ Bezons appears in this correspondence not as an imperious official imposing a royal mandate but as a skillful negotiator trying to work both sides of the exchange.

In February 1691, Bezons proposed another arrangement to the crown in which Madame de Lavie would purchase one of the new offices for her son and pay for it by selling her late brother's office in the Requetes chamber, which had fallen to the parts casual.³⁷ The correspondence indicates that Madame de Lavie worked out an arrangement with the crown to get the office back, but as an existing office it could not be sold until after all of the new office creations found buyers. Months later, Bezons

³⁵ AN G7 135, fol. 22.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 42.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 55; The parts casual (bureau des parties casuelles) was established in 1522 to collect occasional and non-recurring funds, generally from office holders. It sold existing offices that had fallen vacant, managed the creation of new offices, and collected mutation fees on offices that changed hands. See Doyle, *Venality*, p. 4-10.

believed that he had convinced Lavie to buy the new charge without waiting for the sale of the existing office, provided the money could be raised. She had 10,000 écus which she had already put down on the office, but she still needed to borrow the other 10,000 livres.³⁸ When the sale to Madame de Lavie was finally concluded, Bezons used it to illustrate the province's economic woes. He wrote to Paris that Madame de Lavie was one of the richest people in the province, and yet she needed more than a month to come up with the 40,000 livres to buy the office and ultimately had to borrow some of the money.³⁹ There can be no doubt that the market for offices in the Parlement was not strong in 1691, but it is also possible that Bezons was trying to downplay expectations in an effort to win concessions and time from the king. The crown acknowledged the difficulties in Bordeaux and Rennes when the Pontchartrain agreed to give exceptions for age and education to virtually anyone who came forward to purchase one of the offices.⁴⁰

By July 1691 there remained two offices to sell in the Parlement and two in the Cour des Aides. Bezons claimed he was doing his best to sell these offices but could give no assurances as to when they would be sold considering the “great misfortune of the province” and the king's continued demand for all the money upfront. If the king was willing to reconsider the latter demand, Bezons knew of someone interested in one of the offices in the Cour des Aides, but he only had 12,500 livres cash and wanted to pay the remaining 7,500 with money owed to him by the city for a home that was demolished when the Château Trompette was expanded. This was a crafty proposal on the part of the buyer since he was unlikely to collect these funds in the foreseeable future, if ever, but for the crown it meant selling an office for considerably less than the stated price.

³⁸ AN G7 135, fol. 116.

³⁹ AN G7 135, fol. 128; AN G7 136, fol. 106.

⁴⁰ Daulede to Pontchartrain, 6 March 1692: AN G7 135, fol. 134.

Bezons recognized that the crown would likely reject the offer, but since it would mean 12,500 in cash and there were no other prospective buyers he felt obligated to mention it. The city was struggling to come up with the money it promised the crown and would not be able to cover the difference. Moreover, if the crown was willing to entertain this offer, Bezons knew of other, similar offers. According to Bezons, it was in the interest of the *parlementaires* to do all they could to see that these final two offices sold because there were currently eight vacant offices that could not be sold until buyers were found for the new offices.⁴¹

For his part, the First President Daulede acknowledged the slow pace of office sales and suggested that one way to accelerate their sale would be to lower the price.⁴² The crown, however, had other ideas. In a letter from Bezons to Pontchartrain, the minister and intendant hatched a plan to call on the existing magistrates to purchase the offices for their children. Among the members that they thought would be interested were president la Tresne and the councillor Jean-Jacques Duval. La Tresne had a son nearly of age for an office, but he had shown interest in a military career and it would take some effort to make him reconsider. Moreover, la Tresne contended that he could only raise 35,000 livres for the office and would only buy at that price. President Sarran de Lalanne (son of the prominent anti-Frondeur president) was also interested in buying an office for his son, but again at a price of 35,000 livres. Duval expressed interest in the offices but later revealed that he had no resources to invest at the time.⁴³ Bezons

⁴¹ AN G7 135, fol. 258.

⁴² Daulede to Pontchartrain, 10 October 1691: AN G7 135, fol. 361.

⁴³ Daulede to the Contrôleur Général, 24 November 1691, *Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux Avec les Intendants des Provinces*, vol. I, p. 267.

recommended that they take the offers, especially since the *paulette* was coming up for renewal and everyone was conserving their money for the coming expense.

Similar efforts were taking place in the Cour des Aides to sell the remaining two offices there, but as Bezons acknowledged, the creation by the crown of many lower judicial offices had taken prospective buyers away from the sovereign courts. In late 1691, Bezons defended his efforts and noted that “the province and the commerce is in such bad shape after three years of war that nothing is certain and the ‘*misère*’ is so great that even wealthy people are having to borrow just to live.”⁴⁴ Seeming to coordinate their efforts, First President Daulede echoed Bezons’s assessments in his correspondence with the crown, and reiterated his suggestion about incorporating the jurisdiction of the Paris Chambre des Comptes.⁴⁵

In a subsequent *mémoire* concerning the state of the office sales in the Parlement and Cour des Aides, Bezons summed up the situation. Of the 300,000 livres that the crown had expected from the Parlement it had collected a total of 240,000, which came from the sale of one presidency and four councillor offices. However, two offices in the Parlement remained to be sold at 40,000 apiece, and Bezons suggested that it might be better to have the Parlement buy out the remaining 60,000 livres and suppress the offices. Bezons cautioned that this might not be possible considering the Parlement’s lack of credit and the poverty of the *parlementaires*. He also noted that of the 100,000 livres owed by the Cour des Aides, only the president’s office and one councillor office had been sold for a total of 65,000 livres and two offices remained to be sold. Bezons concluded that if the crown wanted to sell these remaining offices it would have to

⁴⁴ Bezons to Pontchartrain, 24 November 1691: AN G7 135, fol. 395.

⁴⁵ AN G7 135, fol. 410; Daulede to Pontchartrain, 24 November 1691: AN G7 135, fol. 396.

consider lowering the prices in an effort to entice buyers.⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that, as Bezons pointed out to Pontchartrain in late 1691, if the crown accepted the offers by Lalanne and la Tresne for the remaining offices in the Parlement the crown would still come out 10,000 livres ahead of the 300,000 livres figure originally promised for the offices.⁴⁷

Since no existing offices in the Parlement could be sold until after the new office creations, this tended to drag office prices down further and created considerable inconvenience for those looking to sell their offices. The goal in doing this was to force prospective buyers toward the new office creations, thus giving the existing *parlementaires* a motivation to work toward their sale. With few buyers, however, the move created a backlog of vacant offices that further stressed the finances of the *parlementaires* and their families. This was the case for the widow Madame Pichon Muscadet who was unable to sell her late husband's charge because of the office creations and was forced to ask for delays in selling the office.⁴⁸ The delay would allow her to maintain ownership of the office while it was vacant, and she requested one that would not start until after the last of the new offices had been sold. Others had the same problem. In a letter to the king's council, Pierre Allain de la Vergerie and his brothers complained that their father died on 30 April 1690, and they had not been able to sell his charge in the Parlement because of the king's office creations. They were now faced with the expiration of the *paulette* and a terrible market for offices in the province. They noted that while their father paid the *paulette* and they paid their 8th denier of the price of

⁴⁶ Mémoire sur ce qui reste a vendre des charge de crue au parlement, et a la cour des Aides de Bourdeaux: AN G7 135, fol. 422.

⁴⁷ Bezons to Pontchartrain, 26 November 1691: AN G7 135. fol. 423.

⁴⁸ Ibid., fol. 52, 77, 80.

the office, they were threatened with the loss of the office because they still had not found a buyer and needed more time from the crown.⁴⁹

By the spring of 1692 the situation was little improved for the crown and its efforts to sell the remaining office creations. In March, Bezons told the crown that he had not mentioned the office sales in recent months because there was no new information to relay and no one with money had come forward. La Tresne's standing offer was 35,000 livres, however, he only had 12,000 in cash and the remaining 23,000 was to be paid to him by M. de Lubert *trésorier de la marine* as part of a settlement for a home of his that was destroyed on the esplanade du Château Trompette. Because these funds would be coming from the king's treasury, the crown would only net 12,000 for the office. Of course, for la Tresne the proposed deal was clearly advantageous since it was possible, perhaps likely, that he would otherwise receive nothing for his lost property.⁵⁰ In the case of Lalanne, Pontchartrain was hesitant to consider a lower price for the office since several exceptions were needed in order for Lalanne's son to take the office in the first place. Lalanne recognized the strength of his position, however, and calmly noted that he was not really interested in an office for his son right now and was only offering to buy it in order to help the Parlement and crown. Bezons maintained that there were no other prospective buyers and the crown should take these offers, since there were ten vacant charges in the Parlement at the moment not including the two that remain to be sold.⁵¹

The crown was no closer to collecting the full amount owed by the city, which by 1692 came to 160,000 of the 400,000 livres originally demanded. According Bezons,

⁴⁹ AN G7 136, fol. 88.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 124.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

the remainder was to be paid in 1692, but there were fears that the city would not be able to raise the money.⁵² By the summer 1692 the city had raised an additional 80,000 livres but still owed 80,000.⁵³

Finally, in the spring of 1692 Bezons announced the sale of the remaining two offices in the Parlement to la Tresne and Lalanne for a total of 35,000 livres each. The receiver Lubert was ordered to pay the 23,000 livres owed to La Tresne and once these funds were received the office would be paid in full. Lalanne for his part found the 35,000 livres and was simply owed his receipt from the parts casual for the office. The crown had finally succeeded in selling all of the offices in the Parlement and roughly at the prices that were set.⁵⁴ The remaining offices in the Cour des Aides also sold in the spring of 1692 for 18,000 livres apiece, which was 2,000 less than the amount originally set by the crown.⁵⁵

Bezons pressed the crown hard to accept these negotiated deals for the remaining offices in the Parlement and Cour des Aides, in part, because of the impending renewal of the *paulette*. Even after successfully selling the remaining two charges in the Parlement, Bezons acknowledged that there were still many others for sale in the court that were not moving in the current market.⁵⁶ As he noted in the summer 1692, there were few buyers for venal offices in the city.⁵⁷ While the crown collected most of the money it wanted from the office creations, the lengthy and involved negotiations reveal the difficult financial conditions of the *parlementaires*. Acting as a middle-man, Bezons pressured both sides of the negotiations in order to strike a compromise that would satisfy

⁵² AN G7 136, fol. 130-2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, fol. 185.

⁵⁴ Bezons to Pontchartrain, 1 April 1692: AN G7 136, fol. 135.

⁵⁵ AN G7 136, fol. 155; AN G7 136, fol. 138.

⁵⁶ Bezons to Pontchartrain, 8 July 1692: AN G7 136, fol. 178.

⁵⁷ AN G7 136, fol. 199.

everyone, but he was never in a position to enforce royal dictates that were out of touch with market forces. In addition to offering a coveted piece of property, the crown could rely on various forms of pressure on the provincial elite to encourage buyers to come forward, as in the effort to get current office holders to purchase new offices for their sons. Provincials, on the other hand, had time and an intimate knowledge of local circumstances and markets on their side. They could wait, as la Tresne and Lalanne did, until the crown was sufficiently frustrated by the pace of sales and impatient for new revenue to strike the best deal possible. Given the continued slide in office prices during the rest of Louis's reign, the crown appears to have done well for itself in these negotiations, but it is clear that buyers were also able to use circumstances to win concessions from the crown.

The *paulette* posed its own difficulties for the Parlement. As the First President Daulede noted in a letter to Pontchartrain in September 1692, the *parlementaires* were eager to pay the *paulette* that year, but he pleaded with the crown to lower the amount being demanded. According to Daulede, the court paid the same amount for their *paulette* as the Parlement of Paris and yet offices in the Paris court sold for three times what they did in Bordeaux.⁵⁸ Since the *paulette* was supposed to be equal to one-sixtieth of the value of the office, the most expensive offices in the land should have paid the highest *paulette*, but Bordeaux's experiences suggest the crown was the ultimate arbiter of its value and cost. After discussions with members of the Vacances chamber, Bezons seconded Daulede's assessment and encouraged the crown to compromise on the amount of the *paulette*. He warned that the *parlementaires* were not in a position to take on the necessary *augmentation des gages* to gain access to the *paulette*, and that "revenues in

⁵⁸ Daulede to Pontchartrain, 22 September 1692: AN G7 136, fol. 221.

the province were down substantially since the start of the war because of the lack of commerce.”⁵⁹

Indeed, not more than a handful of magistrates in the Parlement were in a position to pay *augmentation des gages* out of their own pockets, while the rest would have to borrow the money in Paris. The solution to the problem was to get the Parlement to borrow and pay as a *corps* rather than individually, and if the king were willing to lower the amount of the *augmentation*, Bezons was confident that the *parlementaires* would do their best to raise the money. He mentioned again the ten offices that were vacant following the last of the new office sales, with only one being sold in the interim.⁶⁰ In addition to trying to lower the amount of the *paulette*, Bezons later raised concerns about the prospect of units of the crown’s infantry wintering in the province. Bezons noted that the cost to the province would be upwards of 200,000 livres and actually supplying the troops would be difficult because of the scarcity of foodstuffs in Guyenne.⁶¹ Bezons understood that in addition to the cost, troops lodgings were deeply unpopular and could lead to social unrest and the spread of disease.

As this correspondence illustrates, Bezons’s task was to sell the offices created in the Cour des Aides and Parlement, but the lack of demand put him in a difficult position. He understood that the king expected him to sell the offices at the determined price, but this was difficult given the extant circumstances in the Parlement and city in the 1690s. As a result, he became increasingly receptive to any offers made for the offices and lobbied the crown on behalf of prospective buyers. In order to fulfill the crown’s demands, the intendant sought to soften them through a careful and steady stream of

⁵⁹ Bazin de Bezons to Pontchartrain, 23 September 1692: AN G7 136, fol. 223.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Bezons to Pontchartrain, 6 November 1692: AN G7 136, fol. 253.

correspondence intended to change royal fiscal expectations of the province. In this sense, Bezons served his own-interests by lowering expectations of him at the same time that he raised his local standing by appearing to defend provincial interests. Bezons emerges in the correspondence of the period as a skilled bureaucrat who used all of his resources and connections to strike a compromise between the demands of the crown and the circumstances of the province.⁶²

While the crown was free to create offices in the sovereign courts, these offices were subject to market forces beyond its control and the king needed help from the provincial elite to get the results he wanted. The Parlement certainly had its own reasons for exaggerating its difficulties, but there is little doubt that fifteen years of exile had taken its toll on the market for offices in the Bordeaux Parlement. The fact that no other offices could be sold until after the office creations meant that upwards of 15 offices were vacant at a time. While at one level the *parlementaires* recognized that their fortunes were intimately connected to the authority of the crown, at another level they understood the challenges that relationship could pose, especially in times of war or economic hardship.

While Louis XIV's relationship with each of the sovereign courts was unique and it is a mistake to generalize based on one case study, it is clear that he acted in harmful and punitive ways toward the Parlement of Bordeaux in the late seventeenth century. While certain *parlementaires* continued to benefit from the king's munificence during the tough years of exile, the court on the whole suffered greatly. It lost part of its jurisdiction

⁶² Richard Bonney, *Political Change in France under Richelieu and Mazarin, 1624-1661* (Oxford, 1978). Bonney characterizes the intendants of the seventeenth century as more forceful and efficient mechanisms of royal provincial policy than this study suggests.

to other courts, the price of offices declined, and living expenses for the magistrates increased dramatically. Indeed, the circumstances of the exile were so difficult that many simply abandoned their responsibilities altogether. After their return, the Bordeaux *parlementaires* were anxious to put the whole experience behind them. If Louis XIV's intention in exiling the parlements of Rennes and Bordeaux was to demonstrate his power over the sovereign courts and cities of the kingdom, his actions succeeded. The consequences of the revolt were severe and long-lasting, and starkly illustrated the potential dangers faced when confronting Louis XIV.

However, as the sale of the crown's office creations and the renewal of the *paulette* illustrates, the crown's authority and power did not exist in a vacuum. Indeed, this fact was recognized by Bezons and influenced the way he negotiated his relationship with the crown and Parlement. While the crown dealt with the Parlement harshly for much of Louis's later reign, the nature of that relationship imposed limitations on the crown's policies. These limitations were not a result of efforts by the Parlement to undermine the king's authority, but were imposed by market forces and the venal system. Caught between the demands of the crown and the realities of local circumstances, the intendant was forced to find middle ground amid the conflicting interests of the groups involved.

The *parlementaires* viewed their relationship to the crown as essentially adversarial during much of Louis's reign and especially in the later years. While Louis XIV provided much needed stability and order to France following the Fronde, the *parlementaires* understood that their finances were intimately connected to the crown's, and the financial stress that resulted from Louis's wars would inevitably result in pressure

on the robe nobility. While some have traced the oppositional politics of the *parlementaires* back to the religious wars and early seventeenth century, the economic nature of their relationship had the potential to lead to conflict at any time.⁶³ Financial pressure on the *parlementaires* was universal and applied to everyone in the court, while royal patronage was only channeled back to certain individuals and was inadequate to the circumstances of the late reign.

The Declining Value of Offices

More generally, the crown's difficulties in selling the offices created in 1690 were linked to a continual slide in office prices during Louis's later reign. First, let us look at the overall trend in office prices during the final years of Louis's reign. While the remaining two office creations in the Parlement sold for 35,000 livres apiece, this was down from 45,000 in 1680 and 60,000 in 1660 at the beginning of Louis's reign. This slide in the price of offices continued throughout the remaining years of Louis's reign. In his *compte rendu* of the province in 1698, Bezons noted that there were many open offices in the Parlement and the current price of 25,000 livres for a councillorship was down substantially from the 40,000 they fetched eight years earlier, and the intendant blamed the large number of vacant offices for dragging down prices.⁶⁴ He also worried the situation was about to get much worse because there were a lot of elderly members of the *Grande Chambre* who had no heirs. Bezons also observed that presidencies were

⁶³ Jonathan Dewald, "Magistracy and Political Opposition," pp. 66-78.

⁶⁴ Bazin de Bezons, *Mémoires sur l'État général de toutes les Provinces de France... Province de Bordeaux. Année 1698, Le mémoire de Bordeaux a été fait par l'intendant Bazin de Bezons*. AM Bordeaux ms. 216-217, p. 100.

selling for as little as 72,000 livres, down from 80,000 in 1690 and considerably less than the 120,000 livres they sold for by the middle of the eighteenth century.⁶⁵ By 1704 offices in the Parlement were selling in the range of 23,000 to 27,000 livres and by 1710 they had slid even further to around 20,000 livres. At least one office sold in 1709, an especially difficult time in Bordeaux, for only 15,000 livres.⁶⁶ In 1715 an office in the Parlement could be purchased for only 19,000 livres, which marked the culmination a serious and persistent devaluation of the property during the final years of Louis's reign.

Particularly hard hit by the decline was the price of clerical offices, which found very few buyers and often required a dispensation from the king to sell. To illustrate this point, let us take a closer look at the experiences of the *parlementaire* Sieur Montaigne, a distant relative of the great jurist and writer. In 1695 Bezons wrote to Paris to alert the crown that François Montaigne had been ill for a while and was hoping the crown would allow him to now take *augmentation des gages* and pay the *paulette* so he could pass his office down to his son. For whatever reason, most likely a lack of funds, Montaigne had not kept up with the payment of the *paulette* and his office now risked being seized if he died. Bezons recommended to the crown that they accept Montaigne's offer because it was a clerical office and if it fell to the parts casual it was not likely to sell anytime soon or fetch a good price. As Bezons noted, the last clerical office that fell to the parts casual four years ago had still not been sold.⁶⁷

Montaigne died a week later without having paid the *paulette*, thus leaving his office in limbo. Bezons again voiced his concerns about the difficulties of selling a

⁶⁵ Bazin de Bezons, AM Bordeaux ms. 216-217, pp. 101-2.

⁶⁶ Savignac. *Mémorial général de Mr. de Savignac, conseiller au parlement de Bordeaux, 1708-1713*, (Bordeaux, 1931), pg. 50.

⁶⁷ Letters from Bezons and la Tresne, 9 October 1695: AN G7 137, fol. 241-3.

clerical office and recommended the crown set a fair price and give a dispensation so it could be sold to a lay person. The set price for the office at the time was 25,000 livres and Bezons noted that no one in the province would be able to come up with that much money for a clerical office.⁶⁸ Despite Bezons's warnings, the crown took no action on the office and it was allowed to fall to the parts casual, where it remained for two years until the intendant made another effort to sell it to Montaigne's son. By this time the office was being sold by the parts casual for 18,000 livres, already a 7,000 livres decrease from its value in 1695. Michel de Montaigne was offering 14,000 and *les deux sols pour livres* (10% fee paid to the crown when offices changed hands), and although the office would remain clerical, he would need a dispensation from the crown in order to occupy it. If the crown was willing to convert the office to a lay office, thus making it easier for Montaigne to transfer it, Bezons was confident that he could get 18,000 livres. Bezons maintained that if the crown was intent on selling it as an ecclesiastic office they would not get more than 10,000 livres and they might not even get that since there were no buyers. He also pointed out that while the Parlement had seven ecclesiastic offices at the moment, there was only one cleric holding office and the rest were held by lay people who had received dispensations from the crown. Bezons concluded his letter to Pontchartrain by asserting that if the crown did not sell the office to the son, it would not sell since there were already four lay offices and one clerical office open in the Parlement with no potential buyers.⁶⁹ The office was eventually sold to Michel de Montaigne the following year, and unfortunately we do not know the final price that was negotiated, but it is clear that the market for clerical offices was virtually non-existent at this time.

⁶⁸ Bezons to Pontchartrain, 21 October 1695: AN G7 137, fol. 249.

⁶⁹ Bezons to Pontchartrain, 10 August 1697: AN G7 137, fol. 424.

There is plenty of additional evidence, however, that the price of lay offices suffered a similar fate. The office of Jean de Martiny also fell to the parts casual when he died without paying the *paulette*. His widow, Madame de Sallegourde, wanted to purchase the office for her son, but she was hoped the crown would negotiate a better price; the crown was selling it for 25,000 livres and Madame Sallegourde offered 12,000 in cash. Bezons suggested the crown take the offer because cash was very difficult to find in the province, and he was anxious to sell the office before more fell to the parts casual. He noted that many *parlementaires* were not paying the *paulette* and this trend was likely to worsen. He also observed that while the last two offices sold had fetched 30,000 livres apiece, only a small percentage of the asking price was paid upfront and the rest was still owed.⁷⁰ In 1696 the son, Henri de Martiny, purchased the office but we do not know the final terms of the sale. Similarly, when Monsieur Baritaut proposed purchasing an office for his son François he asked Bezons for some relief on the price, ostensibly because he had been a loyal servant of the king, but it is also likely he recognized the weakness of the market and was trying to negotiate a better deal. Bezons again suggested the crown should negotiate with Baritaut because there were already several offices open in the parts casual, and he feared that more would become vacant in the near future because of the age of many of the members of the *Grande Chambre*, thus putting more pressure on office prices.⁷¹

An office purchase from 1700 also illustrates the weakness of the market in Bordeaux's Parlement. In 1699 Étienne de Gombaudo approached Bezons about the possibility of purchasing his brother's office, which had fallen to the parts casual. The

⁷⁰ AN G7 137, fol. 222-7.

⁷¹ Bezons to Pontchartrain, 25 February, 1698: AN G7 138, fol. 33.

office was being offered by the parts casual at 26,000 livres and the *deux sol pour livre* tax making the total cost 28,600 livres. Gombaudo, already a *Trésorier de France*, seems to have recognized the market's weakness at the time and leveraged his position as a potential buyer. As Gombaudo noted, offices that sold between private individuals were going for between 28,000 and 30,000 livres at the moment, but that usually involved some type of financing over time. Gombaudo decided to offer 20,000 livres plus the tax in cash for the office, provided that the king also gave him the necessary dispensation so that he could occupy both offices at once.⁷² Bezons claimed that he tried hard to get Gombaudo to pay more for the office but was told that he had no more money to offer for the office. Gombaudo was a savvy buyer and let it be known that he was in no hurry to buy and might still consider investing his money in land rather than an office. Bezons recommended that the crown take the offer and pointed out to the new *contrôleur général*, Michel Chamillart, that there were not many people in the province who had the resources necessary to purchase the offices that were now vacant in the parts casual.⁷³

Chamillart wrote back to Bezons to authorize him to offer the office for 24,000 livres and *les deux sol pour livres*, and if Gombaudo paid this price he could be assured of the necessary dispenses to hold both offices at once. Gombaudo responded that the dispense was commonly given by the king in these circumstances, meaning that it was not a point of leverage for the crown, and his offer remained 20,000 livres. He said he would stand by this offer because he gave his word to Bezons, but if Chamillart continued to insist on 24,000 livres for the office he would have to find another buyer. Bezons reiterated that money was extremely scarce in the province and recommended

⁷² Bezons to Chamillart, 2 January 1700: AN G7 138, fol. 383-4.

⁷³ Ibid.

that the crown take the offer since it would be virtually impossible to find a buyer at the higher amount.⁷⁴ Bezons also noted that there was little work for members of the Enquetes Chamber at the moment and thus little revenue from *épices*. In addition, the office owed 400 livres for the *paulette* each year and this was 25 livres more than the *gages* collected, meaning that the office was a financially dubious investment. Gombaudo did finally buy the office in the spring of 1710, and while we do not know the final terms, there is little reason to believe that he paid much over his original offering price. As this and other sales illustrates, it was very much a buyers market.

The number of open offices in the Parlement was clearly one of the factors dragging down their price, thus damaging the wealth and status of the *parlementaires*.⁷⁵ The crown recognized the danger posed to the venal system by too many offices open in the parts casuels, and in the case of the Parlement of Bordeaux the crown stipulated that no more than one office could be open in the Parlement at any given time. In reality, however, the crown often gave exceptions to this rule and it was not strictly enforced.⁷⁶

Even the value of the First President's office went down in the 1690s. While the *brevet de retenue* (the fee paid between First Presidents for the office) was fixed by the crown, it was lowered to more accurately reflect the downturn in prices in the Parlement as a whole. According to a letter from the son of former First President Jean-Denis Daulede, his family was only paid 150,000 livres for their father's *brevet* despite the fact that it was supposed to be valued at 210,000 and his father had paid 200,000 to the previous owner. He also called on the crown to pay the family its *gages* from the office

⁷⁴ Bezons to Chamillart, 12 January 1700: AN G7 139, fol. 8.

⁷⁵ la Tresne to Pontchartrain, 15 July 1698: AN G7 138, fol. 96.

⁷⁶ Louis de Sabourin to Chamillart, 18 February 1702: AN G7 139, fol. 389; la Tresne to Chamillart, 18 March 1702: AN G7 139, fol. 404.

from the time that his dad died until the office was occupied by Jean-Baptiste la Tresne.⁷⁷ Despite the lower *brevet*, within months of taking office la Tresne himself was complaining that the price he paid had left him financially strapped, and he asked the crown to ensure that he was paid a pension that had been collected by Daulede.⁷⁸

The *gens du roi* offices in the Parlement were equally vulnerable to the slump in prices as the family of the late *procureur-général* Jacques Denis found out in 1697 when the *brevet* for his charge was set at 30,000 livres despite the fact that he had paid 100,000 for the office in 1682. Even Bezons felt that the price was not fair to the Denis family, did not recognize his service to the crown, and should be raised.⁷⁹ While he was not awarded the charge, we know that Romain Dalon offered Denis's widow 25,000 écus for the office, which was still less than what Denis had paid but more than the original fixed price.⁸⁰

One of the problems that served to drive down office prices during Louis's reign was the creation of new offices in the Parlement. In addition to the seven new offices created in 1690 following the Parlement's return to Bordeaux, the king also folded the *Chambre de l'Edit* back into the Parlement in 1679 and this led to an increase of one president and eight councillors in the court. The *Chambre de l'Edit* (also known as the *Chambre de mi-parties*) was a chamber affiliated with several parlements following the Edict of Nantes and handled cases involving religious matters and the Huguenots.⁸¹

⁷⁷ AN G7 137, fol. 282-3.

⁷⁸ La Tresne to Pontchartrain, 31 October 1696: AN G7 137, fol. 289.

⁷⁹ Bezons to Pontchartrain, 11 November 1697: AN G7 137, fol. 473.

⁸⁰ Dalon to Pontchartrain, 20 December 1697: AN G7 137, fol. 486.

⁸¹ Diane C Margolf, *Religion and Royal Justice in Early Modern France: The Paris Chambre de l'Edit, 1598-1665*. (Kirksville, 2003); Paul Bart, "Histoire de la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes à Bordeaux et dans le Bordelais," *Revue Historique de Bordeaux et du Département de la Gironde, Tome I* (Bordeaux, 1906). There were four such chambers created in Grenoble, Bordeaux, Languedoc, and Paris, but only the

Since the chamber was essentially independent of the Parlement, this amounted to the creation of new offices and meant that the court's membership increased from 98 in 1669 to 115 in 1704, an increase of almost twenty percent.⁸² Two additional offices of *chevalier d'honneur* were also created in 1710 and these provoked a certain amount of anger and resentment among the members of the *Grande Chambre* who refused to honor all of the provisions of these offices, thus prompting one of the new occupants to write to Paris seeking protection.⁸³

The cost of *augmentation des gages* paid to gain admittance the *paulette* was also a problem for the *parlementaires*, because it was higher than any other provincial parlement even during the magistrates exile when expenses were high and many judges simply abandoned their posts. Even Gillet de la Caze, who entered the Parlement during the office creations of 1690 – beginning his rapid ascent up the judicial ladder – was soon complaining about his inability to pay his *annuel* because of the cost of *augmentation des gages*. De la Caze purchased an office of president in the Parlement in 1692 and then asked for the right to sell his councillor office as a way to help him pay his *augmentation*.⁸⁴

Indeed, First President la Tresne made the circularity of the court's financial problems explicit in a letter to Pontchartrain in 1698. According to Bezons, La Tresne was a man full of virtue and merit who came from one of the oldest robe noble families in

Paris chamber was incorporated with the Parlement, while the other chambers were simply affiliated with their respective courts.

⁸² *Mémoire sur l'augmentation de mandée par le parlement de Bordeaux de nombre des parens necessaire pour les évocations fixe par l'ordonnance de 1669*. AN G7 141, fol. 126-131; AN G7 141, fol. 129.

⁸³ Mémoire of M. le comte de Guillerques: AN G7 143, fol. 386-8; Du Vigier to Desmaretz, 27 August 1710: AN G7 143, fol. 395- 396.

⁸⁴ AN G7 137, fol. 280-1.

the province and had always been attached to the king's service.⁸⁵ La Tresne maintained in the letter that the high price to access to the *paulette* was making it difficult for judges to renew it, which meant more offices were falling to the parts casual. As more offices became vacant, offices prices edged lower, and perceptions of venal office holding and holders suffered. Perhaps for self-serving reasons, or perhaps out of concern for the Parlement as a royal institution, la Tresne explained that low prices had resulted in offices being filled by "people of low birth who had little education," which he suggested was dragging down peoples' image of the Parlement and keeping better families from entering. For the endogamous *parlementaires* raised to view themselves as the provincial elite, the prospect of sharing their functions and status with "people of low birth" was certainly alarming. La Tresne concluded his letter by asserting that it was his "duty" to relay this information to the crown and he feared the reproach of the crown and public if he kept silent.

It is difficult to know how to interpret la Tresne's complaints since offices still remained inaccessible to all but a few, and we clearly cannot read this to mean that shopkeepers or laborers were entering the Parlement. Hierarchy was central to the *parlementaires* and crown, however, and the claim that it was being undermined by the current state of affairs was likely meant to alert the crown to the collateral effects of lower office prices. As la Tresne asserted, he only had the interests of the king and the welfare of royal justice in mind as he recounted the Parlement's difficulties. It is evident that la Tresne believed that the crown would be equally troubled by the admission of people into the court who did not belong.

⁸⁵ Bazin de Bezons: AM Bordeaux ms. 216-217, p. 102.

La Tresne explained the unfortunate state of affairs in the Parlement in the hopes that the king would give them some relief on the amount of their *augmentation des gages*.⁸⁶ In another letter, La Tresne asserted directly that if the Parlement's *augmentation* was not lowered it would have to borrow much of the money and that would be difficult in the current financial climate where little currency was circulating. While the *parlementaires* may have understood the necessity of the crown's wartime fiscal expedients, the demands themselves created an association between the crown and their own difficulties. The severe financial hardship that one new levy after another imposed on the *parlementaires* made it difficult for the magistrates to withstand the pressure and easy for them to view the crown with suspicion and resentment. As other historians of provincial politics have noted, pleas of insolvency were a common response to the demands of the crown and amounted to a form of negotiation. There is little doubt that office prices were edging lower and the *parlementaires* were struggling under the weight of the king's demands at this time, but it is equally clear that their appeals were part of a strategy to win concessions from the crown.

To press the Parlement's case, they agreed to send the councillor Amable-Louis de Bigot to Paris, and while we do not know the outcome of those negotiations, we know from later correspondence that the Parlement was given substantial relief on the *paulette* and the price of charges in the Parlement.⁸⁷ La Tresne was overjoyed to learn that the Parlement's *augmentation des gages* had been cut from 829,600 livres in 1692 to 340,000 in 1701 and he personally thanked Chamillart for his help in intervening with the king on the Parlement's behalf. Even the Cour des Aides was given relief on their *augmentation*

⁸⁶ La Tresne to Pontchartrain, 15 July 1698: G7 138, fol. 96. remplir des personnes de basse naissance, et qui ne peuvent avoir reçue q'une assés mauvaise éducation.

⁸⁷ La Tresne to Chamillart, 17 July 1701: AN G7 139, fol. 335.

des gages, which was now valued at a little over a 100,000 livres.⁸⁸ While most of the *parlementaires* were still outside the city overseeing the wine harvest, la Tresne was certain the Parlement would be able to raise the money as soon as it came back from recess in November.⁸⁹ Recognizing the valuable relief given the Parlement, the intendant Labourdonnaye argued that the crown should now leverage its position to extract other funds from the court, such as money owed for a new system to light the city at night.⁹⁰ Some, like the *Procureur-Général* Du Vigier who owed 6,000 livres, wanted to show their good faith and paid their *augmentation des gages* promptly.⁹¹

Despite the substantially lower amount of *augmentation* demanded by the crown, not all of the magistrates were able to pay. In fact, the councillor Pierre du Mirat, whose family had a long history in the Parlement, complained that if he was not paid his 500 livres in *gages* he would have difficulty paying the remaining 3,600 livres in *augmentation* he owed.⁹² It turns out that du Mirat was paid close to 1,200 livres for years of back *gages*, but that money was used to pay the *taxe des lanterns* and part of the *augmentation*, and there was nothing left for him make up the difference.⁹³ According to then First President Dalon, the problem in some cases was more a matter of will than finances. As Dalon noted in a letter to Chamillart in 1705, the Parlement was having difficulties paying off loans it had taken during the *augmentation des gages* of 1701, and

⁸⁸ Arquier to Chamillart: AN G7 139, fol. 398.

⁸⁹ La Tresne to Chamillart, 14 October 1701: AN G7 139, fol. 344; John Hurt, *Louis XIV and the parlements: The assertion of royal authority* (New York, 2002), p. 71.

⁹⁰ Labourdonnaye to Chamillart: AN G7 139, fol. 355.

⁹¹ Jean Du Vigier to Chamillart, 25 October 1701: AN G7 139, fol. 347.

⁹² du Mirat to Chamillart: AN G7 139, fol. 424.

⁹³ AN G7 140, fol. 5-9.

he maintained that the problem was perfectly solvent members were choosing not to pay, prompting Dalon to ask the king to take stern action to force them.⁹⁴

Following France's entry into the War of Spanish Succession in 1701, the monarchy sought to raise money for the army through another round of *augmentation des gages* the following year in 1702. When word of this new round of *augmentation des gages* made its way to the Parlement, the chambers assembled to discuss how to respond. It was decided that the Parlement would offer 150,000 livres to the crown and claimed it was impossible to pay more.⁹⁵ Days later la Tresne wrote to the *Contrôleur Général* Michel Chamillart to press the Parlement's case for leniency, claiming that no parlement was in worse shape than Bordeaux. To drive home his point, la Tresne noted that there were currently eight vacant offices in the court and no buyers for them despite the fact that office prices had dropped a quarter from 40,000 to 30,000 livres since the Parlement's return from exile. Adding to the Parlement's troubles, recent cold weather threatened the wine harvest for the coming year and was costing the *parlementaires* a great deal of money to repair the damage. Finally, la Tresne noted that the Parlement of Paris often raised money by selling *rentes*, which was a method of borrowing not available in Guyenne where money was only lent at high rates and over short periods.⁹⁶ The effort seems to have worked because the Parlement was eventually assessed a surprisingly low 67,000 livres for the *augmentation des gages* of 1702.⁹⁷ By way of comparison, the provincial parlements of Rennes, Rouen, and Toulouse paid between

⁹⁴ AN G7 141, fol. 136.

⁹⁵ AN G7 140, fol. 68.

⁹⁶ La Tresne to Chamillart, 16 October 1702: AN G7 140, fol. 70-1.

⁹⁷ John Hurt, *Louis XIV and the parlements*, p. 97.

521,000 livres and 760,000, and Bordeaux was assessed less for the *augmentation des gages* of 1702 than every other parlement in the realm.

By February 1703, la Tresne and the Parlement were looking to borrow the money in Paris since no one in Bordeaux was willing to lend. This was certainly a statement of how bad a credit risk the Parlement was perceived to be at this time and the serious financial troubles of the *parlementaires* themselves who could not raise the money on their own. La Tresne reiterated that the war was hurting the wine trade and the wealth of the *parlementaires*, and he included himself among the magistrates who were struggling financially at the time. Despite his troubles though, la Tresne promised that he would use all of his *crédit* to find money for his *augmentation des gages* and thus provide an example for the rest of the *parlementaires*.⁹⁸ When the issue was eventually resolved, la Tresne was recognized and praised for his leadership in pushing through the latest *augmentation des gages*.⁹⁹ Although the Parlement was eventually able to borrow the money for this latest *augmentation*, at least according to one source, the court had problems paying the money back.¹⁰⁰ And while the Parlement was able to raise the money, Labourdonnaye continued to argue in the spring of 1703 that he would have a hard time meeting the figure of 800,000 livres owed between the *tailles* and *augmentation des gages*.¹⁰¹ Even as late as 1710, it appears the court was enough of a credit risk that it was not able to borrow as a *corps* and each councillor was forced to make his own financial arrangements when it came time for the *pauvette*'s renewal.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ La Tresne to Chamillart, 10 February 1703: AN G7 140, fol. 84.

⁹⁹ Pontchartrain to La Tresne, 14 January 1703: BN Ms. FR 21122, pp. 44-45.

¹⁰⁰ AN G7 143, fol. 291-3.

¹⁰¹ Labourdonnaye to Chamillart, 3 April 1703: AN G7 140, fol. 100.

¹⁰² Savignac, *Mémorial général*, 8 January 1710.

This evidence contradicts what Mark Potter has called the “one telling feature of Louis XIV’s approach to venality that indeed sets it apart from that of his predecessors – the widespread tendency of *corps* to borrow collectively, under royal encouragement, in order to intermediate finances for the crown.” It is true that the crown preferred the parlements to borrow as a *corps* because it was easier and faster to collect the money, but in the case of the Parlement of Bordeaux, the court was a bad credit risk (again, largely due to Louis’s manipulations of venality) and could not borrow collectively. As Potter has argued, “*corps* of venal office holders staved off royal threats to manipulate privileges and property by borrowing for the crown and pledging their offices and incomes accruing to them as collateral.”¹⁰³ The Parlement of Bordeaux was often unable to borrow as a *corps* and whatever legal protections Louis XIV provided office holders to protect the heritability of their property only made it easier for the king to extort money from them. The Parlement’s legal status as a *corps* was largely irrelevant to the personal distress that manipulations of venality created for the magistrates of Bordeaux.

On the heels of the *augmentation des gages* of 1701 and 1702, the crown launched a plan to create a new chamber in each of the parlements called the *Eaux et Forêts*, which would take over the jurisdiction of the existing *Tables de Marbre* court. The Parlement’s new First President Romain Dalon suggested they make an offer to buy out the new chamber, but there was opposition from many who wanted to see how the rest of the parlements would react before deciding on a course of action. Dalon claimed that the opposition came from members who had still not paid their *augmentation des gages* from the year before, which prompted Chamillart to demand a list of their names. Many of them then quickly paid up, which made Dalon believe they would soon be able to

¹⁰³ Potter, “War Finance and Absolutist State Development,” pp. 145-6.

make a “reasonable” offer to buy off the chamber. To push his case against the new chamber, Dalon claimed the province was very short of wood and water, which meant there would be very little work for the new magistrates.¹⁰⁴

After negotiations, the new chamber was suppressed in return for a cash payment of 200,000 livres from the entire Parlement, but this was simply followed by the creation of several new offices, including a new *Advocat-Général* and new Enquetes chamber, which put further financial pressure on the *parlementaires*. The office sales went slowly with many low offers and young buyers in need of special dispensations.¹⁰⁵ The existing *Advocat-Généraux*, Pierre Dudon and Jean Baptiste Albessard, strenuously objected to the creation of a third office and offered to buy it out for 40,000 livres with each magistrate paying half. They complained there was barely enough work for the two of them and a third office would seriously hurt the value of their posts.¹⁰⁶ According to a letter from Dalon, the Parlement had only paid half of the promised 200,000 livres that was owed for the suppression of the *Eaux et Forêts* chamber, and he blamed the delay on obstructionist magistrates in the court, whom he believed should be treated harshly by the crown in order to make an example of them.¹⁰⁷

It was a theme of Dalon’s correspondence with Paris that the court’s problems in raising money were the result of willful obstruction by certain *parlementaires* and not a reflection of general impoverishment, and he continued to call for strong, exemplary action against them.¹⁰⁸ Dalon’s apparent complicity in these financial dealings, along with other problems he faced, served to undermine his leadership in the Parlement and he

¹⁰⁴ Dalon to Chamillart, 3 May 1704: AN G7 140, fol. 289.

¹⁰⁵ AN G7 140, fol. 384-5; AN G7 141, fol. 13-4.

¹⁰⁶ Mémoire of Pierre Dudon and Jean Baptiste Albessard: AN G7 141, fol. 62.

¹⁰⁷ Dalon to Chamillart, 5 December 1705: AN G7 141, fol. 227.

¹⁰⁸ Dalon to Chamillart, 4 June 1707: AN G7 142, fol. 99.

was deeply unpopular with his fellow magistrates from his first days in office.¹⁰⁹ Given the overwhelming evidence of financial struggles during this period and the singularity of Dalon's assessments, it is hard to find his complaints credible. Once again, claims of insolvency by the *parlementaires* were often part of a ritualistic bargaining process that both sides understood, and it is probable that some judges hid funds and were uncooperative. We should read these actions, however, as part of an effort to protect the remaining resources of the *parlementaires* and not as a willful effort to deceive the crown about their overall financial health - otherwise prosperous magistrates did not plead desperation simply to win favorable treatment from the crown. As a general rule, it would never have been prudent for the magistrates to admit being prosperous at a time when the crown needed revenue. However, there was a drumbeat of correspondence at this time that lends credibility to the claims, some of which came from First President Roman Dalon himself who rarely advocated for the court before the crown.¹¹⁰ Equally important, many of the complaints came from the *gens du roi* and presidents of the court, who were generally better off than simple magistrates.¹¹¹

The primary problem the *parlementaires* now faced was the bitter cold and bad weather of 1709 and 1710 that made it difficult for the judges to use funds from their estates to pay for expenses in the Parlement.¹¹² Adding to their troubles, the crown stopped paying the *gages* of the *parlementaires* at this time. While *gages* typically only amounted to a few hundred livres for the average magistrate and everyone's circumstances were unique, there was considerable pressure on Paris to resume their

¹⁰⁹ Dalon to Chamillart, 3 February 1705: AN G7 141, fol. 19, 22; Dalon to Chamillart, 13 February 1705: AN G7 141, fol. 23.

¹¹⁰ Dalon letter, 29 July 1710: AN G7 143, fol. 380-2.

¹¹¹ Dudon to Desmaretz, 20 August 1709: AN G7 143, fol. 167.

¹¹² Lalanne to Desmaretz, 29 October 1709: AN G7 143, fol. 205.

payment. Some claimed they had no other sources of income to pay expenses, while others complained they would not have the money to pay the *paulette* without these funds. Because the *annuel* and *gages* were roughly equivalent, not paying the court's *gages* was, in effect, a way for the crown to raise money.

The issue reflected badly on First President Roman Dalon, whom many blamed for not working hard enough to make the court's case to the crown.¹¹³ First President Dalon had strong ties to Michel Chamillart and other ministers in Paris but relations with his fellow *parlementaires* were strained from the start. Along with other doubts about his leadership, the issue served to make Dalon increasingly unpopular among his fellow magistrates.¹¹⁴ Despite being a royal appointee beholden to the crown, first President Dalon was expected to lobby Paris on behalf of the court's interests and he seemed to fail at this task. Interestingly, Dalon was dismissed as First President by Louis XIV in 1713 following a dispute over protocol in the palais in which his failure to defend the Parlement's interests was strongly criticized by several ministers in Paris in addition to his fellow *parlementaires*. Perhaps one reason Dalon did not have the same sense of urgency on the issue as the rest of the magistrates was that his *gages* were paid out of local taxes at this time, specifically the *comptablerie de Bordeaux*, instead of the royal treasury. This was well known to many *parlementaires* who began to ask for similar treatment.¹¹⁵ When it was unclear if Dalon would again be paid out the *comptablerie* in late 1710, he himself pleaded financial desperation in the hopes of collecting.¹¹⁶ Dalon

¹¹³ Dalon to Desmaretz, 6 April 1709: AN G7 143, fol. 155.

¹¹⁴ Dalon to Desmaretz, 16 November 1709: AN G7 143, fol. 210; Dalon letter, 29 July 1710: AN G7 143, fol. 380-2.

¹¹⁵ du Vigier to Desmaretz, 9 May 1710: AN G7 143, fol. 382.

¹¹⁶ Dalon to Desmaretz, 17 October 1710: AN G7 143, fol. 407; Dalon to Desmaretz, 29 November 1710: AN G7 143, fol. 428.

was eventually paid his *gages* but the rest of the court was not.¹¹⁷ Even families as rich and powerful as the Lalanne clan took the time to plead their individual cases with the crown in the hopes of getting the *gages* owed to them.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the intendant Courson wrote to Paris to ask for assistance in these matters, which again lends credibility to the magistrates' claims.¹¹⁹ When *gages* were again paid to the entire Parlement for the first time in years in 1713, many demanded that the practice be maintained because of the desperate financial conditions.¹²⁰

The Broader Context of the Magistrates' Struggles

Another problem for the office market in Bordeaux was the economy itself, which had little money in circulation for office purchases and was struggling to support the population. Bordeaux was first and foremost a commercial city reliant on trade with other parts of France, the rest of Europe, and the Atlantic world. While the Bordeaux region did grow other crops, it was primarily dependent on its viticulture, which was traded for products not produced in sufficient quantities by the local economy. When commerce suffered, as it did during Louis's numerous wars, many aspects of Bordelais society were affected. As Bezons explained in a letter to Chamillart in 1699, the lack of money in circulation in the province made it hard to get credit and this in turn was hurting the city's commerce.¹²¹ This was also a point that la Tresne made directly when

¹¹⁷ Dalon to Desmaretz, 26 December 1710: AN G7 143, fol. 453.

¹¹⁸ Mme. Lalanne, 20 September 1712: AN G7 145, fols. 72-3.

¹¹⁹ Courson letter: AN G7 145, fols. 55-6.

¹²⁰ Du Vigier to Desmaretz, 9 February 1715: AN G7 146, fol. 164.

¹²¹ Bezons to Chamillart: AN G7 138, fols. 386, 399.

he explained the Parlement's difficulties with their *augmentation des gages*.¹²² Perhaps most importantly, and as William Doyle has pointed out, much of the new membership for the Parlement came from wealthy merchant families anxious to climb the social ladder through the purchase of ennobling offices, and these buyers often disappeared from the market in hard times.¹²³

Equally important to trade were the effects of natural disasters and crop failures that struck the region particularly hard in the later years of Louis XIV's reign. At different times during the 1690s and 1700s the region around Bordeaux was hit by especially damaging bouts of cold temperatures, frost, snow, and hail, which devastated the wine and wheat harvests. Often these disasters required Louis to lower the amount of *taille* paid by the countryside and required local authorities to organize assistance for the poor. Bordeaux was especially vulnerable at these moments because peasants often fled there in search of help when they could no longer maintain themselves on the land. In 1709, particularly bad flooding left grape vines and wheat fields underwater for five days, completely destroying the year's harvest and forcing the Parlement and intendant, Labourdonnaye, to call on Paris for assistance to help feed the poor.¹²⁴ The winter of 1709 was exceptionally cold and harsh and damaged the region's vines, shortened the growing season, and stretched everyone's resources.

The *parlementaire* Joseph François de Savignac provides us with a detailed and colorful first-hand account of this difficult winter. By December 1708 the city was already desperately short of flour and steps were being taken to prosecute anyone

¹²² La Tresne to Chamillart, 10 February 1703: AN G7 140, fol. 84.

¹²³ William Doyle, "Le prix des charges anoblissantes à Bordeaux au XVIII siècle," *Annales du Midi* 80 (1968), pp. 66-67.

¹²⁴ Labourdonnaye to Desmaretz, 1 June 1709: AN G7 143, fol. 86; Labourdonnaye to Desmaretz, 2 July 1709: AN G7 143, fol. 109.

rumored to be hoarding grain. A month later in January, heavy snow and bitter cold made it impossible to cross the Garonne to La Bastide because “icebergs the size of houses” were flowing down from the *haut pays*. The ice flows damaged ships in the harbor and essentially blockaded the city from resupply or trade by sea. Ink froze in its wells, bottles of wine froze and shattered, the city clocks stopped working, and the *jurats* began lighting open, public fires and distributing food to help the poor. Savignac’s mother ordered him to make sure they drained some of the wine from all their barrels so that they would not rupture as the wine froze and expanded.¹²⁵ Banditry and theft in the countryside were common problems, while bands of peasants descended on towns like Libourne in search of grain and the Bordelais authorities struggled to control the situation.¹²⁶ Many *parlementaires* visited churches and toured the streets and public squares distributing assistance, which Savignac stated bluntly was done out of fear of potential unrest if the authorities were seen as disinterested in the suffering of the poor.¹²⁷ Crowds of beggars confronted the *parlementaires* and other authorities on the streets to demand assistance and mocked their sense of Christian charity if they were refused. Exemplary justice, including public hanging, was handed down to anyone caught stealing or threatening the public order.¹²⁸

By May 28 the situation became so desperate that more than a thousand women descended on the palais to demand action by the Parlement and Jurade. They demanded bread to feed their starving families and blocked members of the Enquetes chamber as they attempted to leave for the day. The Parlement ordered that bakers be resupplied

¹²⁵ Savignac, *Mémorial*, 20 January 1709.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 19 March 1709.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8 May 1709.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10 May 1709.

with any flour that could be found in the city, and they placed three notable bourgeois in charge of ensuring the availability of bread. The authorities did not work well together in the crisis, as the Parlement blamed the Jurade for not enforcing its orders and going around the court to plead its case directly to the intendant and governor. The incident did not lead to further unrest because conditions improved over the summer, but the welfare of the city remained fragile. Moreover, the fall wine harvest was severely damaged and many saw their revenues and trade decline sharply. While it is only anecdotal, Savignac's experiences were likely similar to other large wine producers in the region. In 1709, all of his estates yielded only 30 *tonneaux* and one *barrigue* of wine, while in subsequent years the yields were on average about 60 *tonneaux*.¹²⁹ At an average of 40 écus per *tonneau*, this would have meant a decline in revenue of about three to four thousand livres.¹³⁰ These sorts of disasters led to bankruptcies among the city's merchants, which further tightened credit and forced the crown to take action to prop up the city's struggling trade.¹³¹ Although distinct from royal policy, these natural disasters made it more difficult for the *parlementaires* to withstand Louis's financial demands.

Finally, the market for offices in the Parlement was hurt by the number of other venal offices created by the king, which made office holding available to anyone with a little money. Louis's mass office creations cheapened the overall market and made it even harder for the *parlementaires* to find prospective buyers and lenders. While most of these offices did not carry the same honors and privileges as an office in the Parlement, they were less expensive and more readily accessible to the bourgeois investor looking

¹²⁹ Le Mao, *Chronique du Bordelais*, pp. 136-137. A tonneau of wine contained just over 900 liters of wine, while a barrigue was roughly a quarter of a tonneau, or about 225 liters.

¹³⁰ It fluctuated between a low of 35 écus per tonneau and 50 écus for the years that he recorded the sale, although some parts of his estates produced wines that sold for as much as 100 écus.

¹³¹ Pontchartrain to Dudon, 22 May 1707: BN ms. fr. 21126, p. 410.

for a place to put his money. Louis's new offices served to dry up capital in the province and made it more difficult for *parlementaire* families to borrow money to pay for things like new offices, *augmentation des gages*, and the *paulette*.¹³² The intendants were just as aggressive in selling these new offices as they were in their financial dealings with the *parlementaires*, which they saw as a measure of their job performance in their competition with other intendants.¹³³ In other cases, the intendants recognized the offices were either inappropriate or difficult to sell and recommended the crown suppress them.¹³⁴ As with new offices in the sovereign courts, many of these posts were seen as harmful to commerce and existing office holders and they were followed by attempts to buy them out and suppress them.¹³⁵ In some cases, the cost to buy them out was too high and the creations went ahead.¹³⁶ One of the largest and most lucrative office creations for the crown during this period involved establishing a new president and six new offices in the Cour des Aides, which never sold and the court was eventually forced to buy them out for 175,000 livres. According to a letter from the court, however, conditions in Guyenne were so bad that it was not possible for the magistrates to borrow the money to pay the crown.¹³⁷ Following the Peace of Utrecht and the death of Louis XIV, the city had considerable difficulty buying out many of the municipal office creations when the crown began to favor their suppression.¹³⁸

¹³² AN G7 140, fols. 124, 203-4, 226, 264, 275, 379.

¹³³ Labourdonnaye to Chamillart, 1 December 1703: AN G7 140, fol. 233.

¹³⁴ AN G7 140, fol. 379; Labourdonnaye to Chamillart: AN G7 141, fol. 346.

¹³⁵ Labourdonnaye to Chamillart, 23 December 1704: AN G7 140, fol. 390; Labourdonnaye to Chamillart 25 April 1706: AN G7 141, fol. 371; AN G7 141, fols. 21-32, 52, 403.

¹³⁶ Labourdonnaye to Chamillart, 27 July 1706: AN G7 141, fol. 399.

¹³⁷ Royal edict: AN G7 145, fol. 270-1; Cour des Aides to Desmaretz, 24 September 1712: AN G7 145, fol. 76.

¹³⁸ Courson to de la Garde: AN G7 146, fol. 191; Courson to Desmaretz, 7 May 1715: AN G7 146, fol. 214.

The Parlement also saw its jurisdiction contract during this period, thus reducing its workload and *épices* or fees it charged litigants. Specifically, in 1713 the crown stripped Labour, St. Sever, Dax, and Bayonne from Bordeaux and awarded these regions to the Parlement of Pau, while other types of cases and jurisdictions were given to the Parlement of Paris.¹³⁹ It is unclear what benefit the crown received from the Parlement of Pau to enlarge its jurisdiction, but the move was a blow to the Bordeaux *parlementaires*. In addition to these attacks, the *parlementaires* also complained about the *évocations* that were given to many of the city's elite allowing them to have their cases heard in the Parlement of Toulouse. Unpaid wages coupled with the courts diminished jurisdiction, prestige, and standing served to drag the image of the court down in the later years of Louis's reign.

While it is clear that office prices collapsed in the final years of Louis's reign it is a mistake, as Hurt has done, to assume that this collapse permanently crippled the market for offices or the financial positions of the magistrates themselves. First, we should note that office prices in the Parlement rebounded quickly in the years following the end of Louis's reign. So, for example, a lay office in the Parlement that had been selling for a low of 19,000 livres in 1715 sold for 30,000 just two years later in 1717. A year later a lay office sold for 34,000 livres and by 1723 it was selling for 40,000 livres. Presidencies in the Enquetes chamber went from 22,000 livres in 1708 to 30,000 in 1721. Prices did not, as Hurt has suggested, inevitably continue "to decline under the duc d'Orléans, partly because the regency failed to resume paying *augmentation des gages*."¹⁴⁰ Prices rebounded following the end of Louis's reign quickly and dramatically, most likely

¹³⁹ Pontchartrain to La Tresne, 24 September 1702: BN ms. fr. 21121, pp. 453-4; Du Vigier to Courson, 8 April 1713: AN G7 145, fol. 194; Dalon to Desmaretz, 8 April 1713: AN G7 145, fol. 195.

¹⁴⁰ Hurt, *Louis XIV and the parlements*, pg. 189.

because the country was finally at peace and it was understood that the main pressures on office holders had been removed. Indeed, many of the attacks on venality that were so problematic in Louis's reign ended or were reversed at the beginning of the regency. Office creations were suppressed in exchange for cash payments to the crown and the holders were reimbursed for their investments, usually in the form of *rentes*.¹⁴¹ The creation of these offices diverted capital and buyers that would likely have been directed toward traditional channels of venality, and their removal restored the attraction of conventional venal positions. Whatever the reasons, Louis's assault on venality, which precipitated the decline in office prices, did not have reverberations in the market during the regency.

Louis XIV, however, attacked the wealth and status of the Bordelais *parlementaires* in a myriad of ways that eventually made office holding difficult for many and impossible for some. Some *parlementaires* were in a better position to withstand the king's financial demands than others, but all saw the price of their offices go down and this was not offset by any meaningful recirculation of funds back to the province. Some, like Savignac, were likely more interested in the real and symbolic power afforded by an office in the highest court in the province and were less concerned with making money off their investment. Holding an office in the Parlement meant being part of an elite and powerful institution that provided its members with a social status, no matter how diminished, that was unavailable to all but a few provincials. In some cases, offices represented a relatively small percentage (10%) of the *parlementaires*' overall wealth, and as Savignac noted, he often gave the proceeds of his legal work to charity.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ AN G7 146, fol. 168-73.

¹⁴² Savignac, *Mémorial*, 23 August 1710

However, this does not change the fact that pressure on venal office holding typified the later years of Louis XIV's reign, and declining prices, a lack of buyers, vacant offices, and desperate pleas for help demonstrate that not everyone was able to withstand these pressures. While offices in the Parlement continued to offer social, cultural, and political benefits to their holders, the financial benefits that were so evident during the first two thirds of the seventeenth century were gone by the end of Louis's reign, transformed into a financial millstone around the necks of the *parlementaires*.¹⁴³

Finally, it is important to contrast these findings with studies of absolutism that have argued in favor of fiscal and political collaboration between the monarchy and provincial elites and generally focused on the first half of Louis's reign. This study suggests that while the relationship between Louis and the Bordelais *parlementaires* does not fit the collaborationist model, the pressures on that relationship were fundamentally different. The first half of Louis's reign was marked by comparative peace and prosperity, which meant that the crown had more resources to funnel back to the provinces, imposed fewer taxes, and exerted less pressure on venal offices. France was at war with much of Europe for the last two and a half decades of his reign, however, and the demands of these conflicts pushed the country to the breaking point. Out of necessity, the crown compelled the robe nobility to help fund the army and protect the country's borders. It seems clear that the Parlement quickly rebounded financially after 1714 because these pressures were finally lifted and the regency and sovereign courts were momentarily reconciled. While their correspondence demonstrates that the *parlementaires* understood their obligation to help in times of crisis, they viewed Louis's

¹⁴³ This supports Hurt's conclusions about the Parlement of Rennes during Louis's reign. See John J. Hurt, "Les Offices au Parlement de Bretagne sous le règne de Louis XIV: Aspects financiers," *Société d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* (1976), 3-31.

manipulations of venality as punitive and misguided in light of the extant circumstances. In their view, the crown was strengthened by a strong and vibrant magistracy, not one that was held in low esteem and open to people of dubious birth and status.

The financial nature of the magistrates' relationship to the crown always risked leading to confrontation and this was a reality that was understood by all. Dating at least back to the late sixteenth century, the crown had manipulated sovereign offices in order to raise money in times of need and nothing changed during Louis XIV's reign. In fact, Louis appeared more ruthless and determined than his predecessors to squeeze every livre he could from the *parlementaires* and they had few weapons with which to defend themselves. While the Bordeaux *parlementaires* (and those from every other court, for that matter) never rebelled against Louis XIV in these painful last years, this lack of open hostility does not change the adversarial nature of their relationship. The *parlementaires* in the seventeenth century came to understand that venal offices represented a dubious investment that would always leave them exposed to the possibility of royal extortion. However, the primary goal of the *parlementaires* was not to create an independent basis for their authority or fundamentally alter the political hierarchy, it was to find for themselves a more secure place within the existing order. In this sense, open opposition to the crown was always a last resort that had inherently dangerous pitfalls of its own and was generally avoided whenever possible. While we know that open confrontation between the *parlementaires* and their sovereign was a crucial factor in the decades leading up to the French Revolution, certain antagonisms were built into their relationship and could provide the basis for oppositional politics. The gradual deterioration of the relationship between the monarchy and its sovereign magistrates in

the eighteenth century may have its roots in the obvious disinterest that Louis XIV showed for their welfare in the waning years of his reign.

Conclusion

The Bordeaux *parlementaires* struggled through a very difficult period during the reign of Louis XIV. Beginning with the upheaval of the Fronde, through the long and difficult wars of its concluding years, the *parlementaires* labored to successfully navigate the many challenges they faced from the crown and community in which they lived. Sovereign magistrates of the seventeenth century occupied a uniquely challenging mental and physical world involving different identities and commitments – as royal servants they were closely tied to the crown, but they were also provincial leaders with a strong sense of their own rights and responsibilities. During Louis's reign the crown was primarily preoccupied with raising the revenues needed to fund its nearly constant wars with the rest of Europe. To do so the crown placed a premium on maintaining order and discipline within French society, which it achieved through both coercion and collaboration with the kingdom's established political and social elite. By contrast, local communities like Bordeaux were mainly concerned with their own immediate needs and were largely disconnected from, and disinterested in, the geo-political objectives of the monarchy. In moments of extreme hardship, pressures from the crown and Bordelais forced the *parlementaires* to articulate their own view of their authority.

Whether we are talking about the nascent public-minded bureaucracy of Pierre Bourdieu and others, or the communal bonds that united provincials in their struggles with the monarchy, scholars have asserted that the *parlementaires* viewed their power and authority as primarily, although not exclusively, focused on provincial public welfare. There is a common language about the public nature of robe noble authority in the seventeenth century in much of the scholarship about the *parlementaires*, but it does

not reflect the historical attitudes and experiences of the Bordeaux magistrates. As we have seen in examining the thoughts and actions of the Bordeaux jurists during the reign of Louis XIV, judges during this time neither claimed to represent the public interest, nor were they viewed by the people as legitimate representatives of the common good. In fact, the nature of their authority, which was venal and came from the crown, was viewed as positively incompatible with service to municipal welfare. Money was an integral part of office holding in the seventeenth century, and this was seen as a corrupting influence that made it impossible for judges to see beyond their own selfish interests. More importantly, the system was closed off to all but a few in Bordelais society, and its inaccessibility made it difficult for ordinary citizens to identify with the people who controlled their lives.

It is more accurate to view the *parlementaires* as primarily motivated by a desire for status, which they saw as inextricably linked to order and stability in the seventeenth century. During the Fronde, the *parlementaires* were prepared to revolt against the crown when they believed their own position within the political hierarchy was threatened. These threats came from a regency government perceived to be weak and unresponsive to traditional channels of grievance negotiation. Political power in the seventeenth century was above all personal, and the crown could often provoke provincial discord through its use of patron/client relationships, as in the case of the de Gourgue/Lalanne affair. While patronage was an important tool used by the monarchy to govern the provinces, one family's good fortune always risked becoming another family's misfortune. Because these ruptures were personal in nature, there was no obvious way to resolve them without attacking the individuals and authority that were

held responsible. Royal attacks such as the increased role of the intendants and the creation of new offices or courts threatened all members of the Parlement and were universally unpopular. Together these factors made it seem to many of the *parlementaires* as though Mazarin and the regency had abandoned their interests and abused the king's authority, and they revolted in order to reassert and reconfirm their position within the social and political hierarchy.

This emphasis on order, stability, and hierarchy is also essential to understanding the magistrates' relationship to the Bordelais. The *parlementaires* were deeply suspicious and fearful of popular protests, and they were generally ambivalent toward the concerns of the Bordelais. The momentary collaboration that existed between the *parlementaires* and their fellow citizens during the Fronde was superficial and did not survive the stress of an extended revolt and outside pressure. From the very beginning of the Fronde, it was evident that the *parlementaires* were uncertain about the nature of their relationship to the broader Bordelais community. While recognized as leaders in the early days of the revolt, the *parlementaires* needed regular meetings at the hôtel de ville and oaths of union to maintain that position and gauge the mood of the city. These were the hesitant steps of judges who understood the risks of being perceived as self-interested and out of touch with the will of the people. While the magistrates often organized these meetings to win popular support and sanction for their actions, they also served to politicize the Bordelais and led them to question the nature of robe noble leadership. The Bordelais did not channel their grievances about taxes, Épernon, and the grain trade through the *parlementaires* because they saw them as "fathers of the country", but because they shared a common enemy and there was no other institution with the status

and authority needed to win concessions from the crown. The failure of the *parlementaires* to bring the revolt to a successful and lasting conclusion, coupled with the impact of the princely Fronde, ultimately undermined the *parlementaires*' ability to lead the city. By stepping into the role of civic leaders, the magistrates were expected to assume responsibilities on behalf of their fellow citizens that they neither fully understood nor accepted.

The Ormée is especially informative about popular perceptions of the *parlementaires*. During this final, radical phase of the Bordelais Fronde, members of the community came together to articulate an entirely new conception of effective and just government. As the Ormée demonstrates, many in the city viewed the *parlementaires*, not as their rightful leaders, but as inherently corrupt and incapable of representing the common good. Of all the changes the Ormée hoped to affect, it is significant that the movement targeted the city's judicial/political system for its most radical reforms. In the view of the Ormists, the judicial system was corrupted by money, which was at the center of venality and early modern justice. Fees and the price of offices meant that justice was only available to the wealthy, and more importantly, it meant that magistrates had a motivation to manipulate the system for their own financial gain. The Bordelais believed the *parlementaires* had used their access to the public coffers during the revolt to line their own pockets, and while this can be narrowly interpreted as a critique of the judges' actions during the upheaval, it is more accurately read as a deep-seated mistrust of venal justice. Unlike traditional levies that came from the crown and were sanctioned by the Parlement, the funds collected by the *parlementaires* during the Fronde were gathered on behalf of the community and with the city's defense as their stated purpose. In this sense,

the Ormists believed they had a right to know where and for what purpose the money was being spent, and such an accounting of their actions was not something the *parlementaires*, with their elevated status and inflated egos, were accustomed to giving to ordinary citizens. This lack of transparency coupled with established tropes about the *parlementaires*' greed and corruption turned the magistrates into targets of Ormist anger and violence.

Above all else, the Ormists wanted to establish equitable local governance that represented the public's interest. They targeted the Old Regime hierarchy of *corps* because these were seen as bastions of privilege and inequality that excluded ordinary citizens and failed to address their needs. They proposed to make justice available to all by abolishing venality and eradicating the fees and protocols that were required under the old system. In doing so, the Ormists claimed to represent the common good of the Bordelais, which was something the *parlementaires* were incapable of doing. Whether the Ormists were truly republican or not is less important than the social and political critique implied by this rhetoric. The contrast between republican virtue and corrupt traditional justice was meant to conjure imagery and experiences that were widely understood. The ability of the Ormée to mobilize thousands of protestors to risk their lives in attacks on the *parlementaires* speaks to the evident pervasiveness of these attitudes. The critique itself accurately characterized the nature of early modern justice, and there is little evidence from the Fronde or Ormée that refutes this assessment of the motivations or mentality of the *parlementaires*.

Popular revolts in the early modern period were inherently unpredictable and unstable. The *parlementaires* recognized that they stood atop a rigid hierarchy that was

innately inequitable and powerfully slanted in their favor. It was a system in which wealth, patrimony, personal connections, and education were more important than skill or ability. The *parlementaires* reproduced their position in society through endogamy, vigorous defense of their status, and careful attention to the upbringing of their children. It was certainly the case that wealthy, talented members of the bourgeois could work their way into the Parlement, usually over several generations, but it was far more common to follow a father or uncle into office. As the most powerful judicial officials in the province and representatives of the crown, the *parlementaires* occupied a privileged and closely guarded position in Bordelais society. Their power and authority, however, depended in part on their ability to fend off rivals and present themselves as the city's natural and rightful leaders, and they were indigent when people of lower birth and status refused to recognize these claims.

Popular revolt, regardless of the circumstances, posed a potential threat to this hierarchy. Despite their power and wealth, the *parlementaires'* authority depended on collaboration with other local officials and support from the crown. It was an authority not based on physical strength and the threat of violence, as with the sword nobility or monarchy, but on general acceptance and recognition. The *parlementaires* could always call on the Jurade and bourgeois militia for help in difficult times, but both groups could be unreliable for different reasons. The Jurade, particularly during the Fronde, was heavily influenced by the province's governor, and it often viewed the Parlement as a competitor for local influence. By contrast, the bourgeois militia was made up of prominent citizens who were not always willing to risk their physical or material security to support an institution that offered them no real rewards for their efforts. After all,

there were no punishments for ignoring calls by the governor or Parlement to mobilize, but mobilization itself risked identifying the individual as an enemy of the people and target for popular violence. Rather, *parlementaire* authority was most effective when it appeared absolute, unchanging, and unassailable in the context of everyday rituals and ordinary life, and it needed passive acceptance in order to work properly.

If the relationship between the magistrates and their fellow citizens was often ambiguous and strained, the judges' association with the monarchy could be equally problematic. Like the attacks on the *parlementaires* at mid-century, Louis XIV's manipulations of venality at the end of his reign demonstrated a profound ambivalence for the magistrates and may have provided the basis for future oppositional politics. Louis's efforts to extort money from the Bordeaux *parlementaires* was a prolonged and painful process that drove some from their offices. Others were able to endure the pressure with strained finances and personal sacrifice, but it was hard for many to reconcile the royal nature of their authority with the evident antagonisms that existed with the crown. Relentlessly, the monarchy forced *augmentation des gages* and new offices on the magistrates, while any tangible benefits returned to the *parlementaires* were inadequate and highly personal. While some have argued that Louis XIV's brand of absolutism is best understood as collaborationist, this scholarship has generally focused on the first half of his reign, and the findings of this study do not support this interpretive framework for the second half. Still, we need to recognize that the circumstances affecting that relationship had fundamentally changed in the last decades of Louis's monarchy. Following two comparatively successful, short, and inexpensive wars in the early years of his reign, Louis XIV spent his final two and a half decades embroiled in a

series of continental wide conflicts that put immense strains on the crown's finances and necessitated the burdens put on the *parlementaires*. The lack of an organized opposition to these policies should not be interpreted as collaboration but as acquiescence to a king who had already forced the court into fifteen years of painful exile. While the *parlementaires* were able to rebound relatively quickly from the burdens placed on them by Louis XIV, the nature of this relationship and its stress points were evident to all. The *parlementaires* understood that their offices and the crown's finances had fixed antagonisms, and moments of stress and financial need were likely to lead to personal hardship and strained relations with the crown.

If the *parlementaires'* overriding concerns focused on order, hierarchy, and status, the crown's nearly constant attempts to reorder that hierarchy and undermine the status of the *parlementaires* provided the foundation for oppositional politics in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Offices were a source of status and prestige, but they were also a significant investment that could play an important role in a family's patrimony. The *parlementaires* were motivated to protect their investments, while the monarchy was bound to view these offices as an opportunity to tap the otherwise inaccessible wealth of the robe nobility. As many historians have pointed out, venal offices were an important source of funds for the monarchy and they amounted to an alternative system of state credit that allowed the crown to borrow money more economically than it could on its own. This struggle over venal office holding began in earnest in the Fronde but would continue until the end of the Old Regime.

There was nothing in the relationships of the *parlementaires* with those above or below them in the social and political hierarchy that led them to see power, status, and

authority anything but self-interested and self-motivated. While the magistrates often did what they could to ameliorate difficult circumstances within the city or province, they were deeply distrustful of popular crowds that threatened their physical and symbolic authority in moments of distress. Concerns for public welfare were always weighed against the desire for stability and order and the magistrates' need to impose their will on other political actors within the city. On the other hand, each *parlementaire* stood in his own relationship to the king and understood that relationship in largely personal terms. Some magistrates were able to endure the crown's manipulations of venality better than others because close personal ties to the king and his ministers provided for special treatment. But none of these relationships encouraged the *parlementaires* to view their profession as the fulfillment of a civic duty to protect either the public's welfare or the crown's authority.

If we understand the *parlementaires* as primarily driven by a desire for order, stability, and hierarchy, we can finally resolve some of the questions that have occupied historians of the Fronde and parlements under Louis XIV. For example, the Bordeaux *parlementaires* revolted against the crown not out of any desire to protect the local community or public good, or even reconfigure the nature of the royal bureaucracy or political hierarchy. The *parlementaires* rebelled because they believed their own position and status in society was being undermined by an aggressive and unresponsive regency with no real concern for their status. This study has also offered a new interpretive model for understanding the relationship between sovereign magistrates and their communities. A close examination of the events of the Fronde and 1675 demonstrate that the *parlementaires* were not viewed by their fellow citizens as virtuous guardians of

traditional liberties and provincial welfare. This view is misguided and ignores the persistent and evident hostility and ambivalence that typified the relationship between these groups. The Bordelais, when pressured, were capable of understanding and critiquing the political/judicial structures that ruled their lives, and they articulated and proposed solutions that would have had serious implications for the nature of early modern municipal society. The radical nature of these efforts condemned them to fail against the arrayed powers of the absolute state, but this experiment in civic governance reflects a pervasive and profound understanding of the inherent iniquity and inequality of a society heavily weighted against the unprivileged majority.

The material presented in this study also demonstrates that Louis XIV's relationship to the Bordeaux *parlementaires* in the second half of his reign does not fit the collaborationist model that has been so powerfully supported by other studies. We can credit the change in circumstances for much of the abuse that followed in these later years, but it also suggests that conflict was just as prevalent as cooperation and it reveals the very personal nature of Louis's brand of absolutism, which could not and did not survive his death. Moreover, if we want to understand the roots of the modern state bureaucracy we need to look elsewhere. There was nothing in the attitudes or behavior of the Bordeaux *parlementaires* to suggest they had begun to re-conceptualize their authority as distinct from the monarchy. They may have been ambivalent to the king who attacked their status, but they were devoted to the hierarchy that he stood atop. It has been tempting for scholars to understand these humanistically educated, legal-minded sovereign magistrates as the distant ancestors of modern technocrats, but this leads into a teleological trap that does not reflect what we know of these individuals. In fact, to the

extent that the struggles between the *parlementaires* and monarchy were intended to return the relationship to a prior equilibrium of power (either real or imagined), these individuals were more focused on the past and were hesitant to embrace change or innovation. Looking forward to the eighteenth century, this study has suggested that there existed chronic and persistent antagonisms in the relationship between the *parlementaires* and their sovereign and it is likely that this antipathy manifested itself in various ways over the remaining years of the Old Regime. This view of the relationship between the robe nobility and monarchy offers an interpretive framework that can help bridge the gap between the historical traditions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In order to maintain their status the *parlementaires* had to be constantly vigilant against royal efforts to reconfigure the political, fiscal, and judicial machinery of the state; and while many factors prevented the emergence of oppositional politics among the Bordeaux *parlementaires* at the end of Louis XIV's reign, we should not be surprised to see more organized and consistent challenges to the theory and practice of royal absolutism in the decades to come.

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